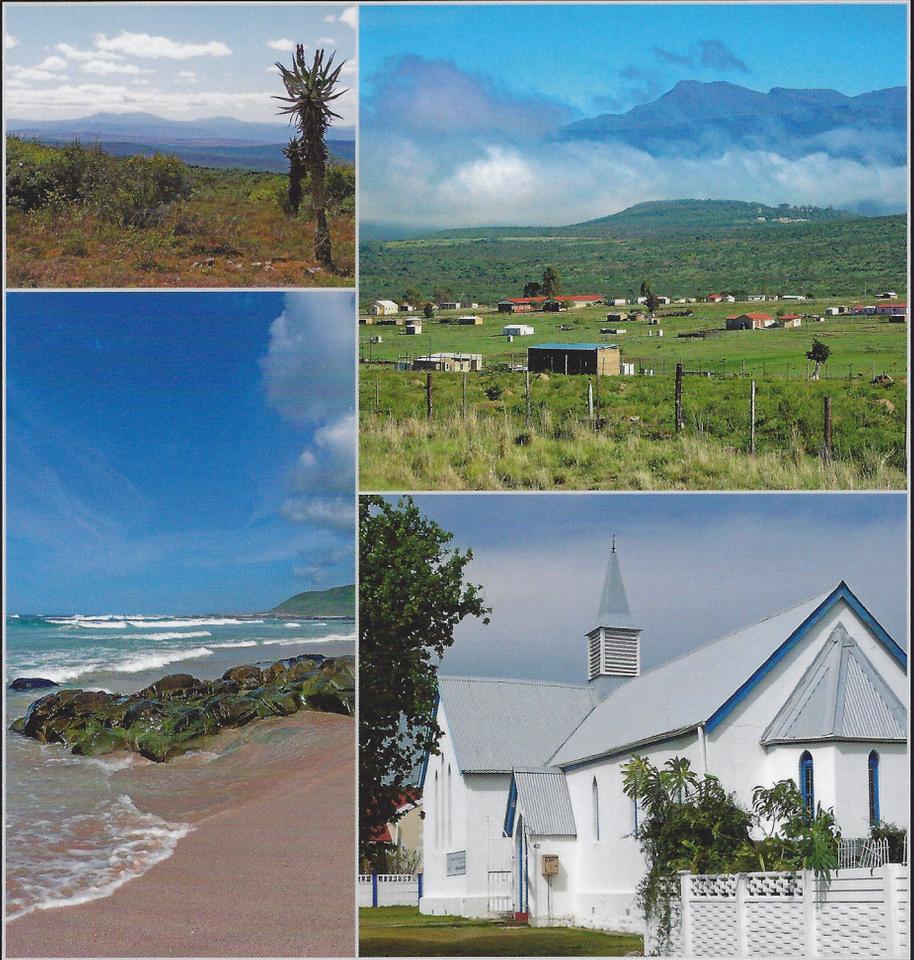


# HADDINGTON HOUSE JOURNAL

*An International Theological Journal*



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VOLUME 15

2013

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## Editorial Policy

1. The journal will seek to provide an annual publication reflective of the theological basis and ethos of the Trust for students, laity, ministers, and lecturers to develop their minds and souls through in-depth articles and reviews.
2. The journal will seek to keep readers informed about new books or other publications and thus will strive to be a means of encouraging stewardship of time and money.
3. The selection of articles and works for review in each journal will usually reflect the fourfold division of the departments in the theological curriculum: biblical theology, systematic theology, historical theology and applied theology, thereby providing balance as to the content of the journal but also providing harmony for the readers to see the unity of the curriculum. It will not be a journal devoted to one department of the theological curriculum.
4. The journal will endeavour to highlight, by way of articles and reviews, works to assist students and others in their ongoing studies and training.
5. The journal will encourage the cultivation of writing and provide an avenue for publication and exchange of knowledge.
6. The journal will include one article or review devoted to the theme of theological education.
7. The journal will also endeavour to include some news about the wider international, evangelical community of churches and their efforts in mission or theological work.
8. Prior to publication, all articles and reviews will be read by select individuals who uphold the theological basis and ethos of the Trust. It will be their task to comment, proof and ensure the quality of the journal.

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## Editor's Preface

I want to start by drawing your attention to the cover for our 2013 *Haddington House Journal*. We have decided to highlight scenes from the Eastern Cape province in South Africa. The reasons for this are several. First, this is a region of long-standing importance to the historian of missions and the continent of Africa – rich in Moravian, Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist mission history and the African Independent Churches. The Eastern Cape is literally a mine of African missions history and worthy thereby alone to be highlighted. Secondly, it is a province of incredible diversity and beauty. I think you will agree that the photo collage gives a glimpse of that. Thirdly, the Eastern Cape province is where there are strong links between Haddington House in Canada and Dumisani Theological Institute in King William's Town in the Eastern Cape. (See our website – [www.haddingtonhouse.org](http://www.haddingtonhouse.org).) Thus we wanted to symbolically highlight this 2013 partnership in global missions.

Now for the inside of the 2013 *Journal*. Once again we begin with a devotional selection that was originally given as a sermon at the launch of a new Korean mission organization in Canada. This article is followed by a warmly written contribution from “down-under” on Matthew Henry. Henry has received good attention recently, since 2012 was the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. This article is followed by an interview with one minister in America about his experience in bi-vocational parish ministry. I believe it will be of global interest. Next a print copy of the New City Catechism of 2012 by Tim Keller and Sam Shammas has been included. Not everyone has access to this electronically, and we hope that seeing it in print form will help to spread the word about this new catechetical resource. Also, it is a wonderful complement to our translated studies of Andrew Murray's sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism in volumes twelve and fourteen of the *Haddington House Journal*, as the New City Catechism borrows in part from the Heidelberg Catechism, the Westminster Shorter Catechism and the Geneva Catechism.

Our middle section contains book reviews and book briefs, with over fifty books commented upon. These are organized into categories to help the reader to turn to their immediate area of interest. There is a great variety here, from the popular to the very technical. Please note that Cameron Fraser has continued on from last year's journal by submitting two in-depth reviews related to the nouthetic counseling movement.

Finally, our last section is the Academic Articles. The first is a detailed exegetical study of a New Testament text by Alistair Wilson of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. This is followed by a lecture on interpreting Scripture

given at Taylor University in Indiana by Fergus MacDonald of Scotland. Then François Bodenstein, of South Africa, shares his thoughts on some rather thorny matters of Reformational spirituality, highlighting the reality of diversity of approach here. The final academic submission is a unified critical review article related to Athanasius by patristic scholar Theodore Sabo of Washington state.

Please recall that we endeavour to be a unique journal by striving to divide our articles into two categories – the general and the academic; we have appreciated the positive response from readers about this approach.

Once again, it is my pleasure to commend the *Journal* to a wide audience. Readers will be delighted to learn that past volumes are now available online at the Haddington House website ([www.haddingtonhouse.org](http://www.haddingtonhouse.org)). We encourage all to make use of this electronic resource. A sincere word of thanks to all of our authors, who make this work possible. We appreciate your writing and look forward to your future contributions and also to welcoming new writers. I sincerely hope that this volume will promote a healthy exchange globally and enrich all readers not just mentally but also spiritually.

*Jack C. Whytock*  
*Editor*

# Sermon: “WORD and DEED”<sup>1</sup>

Jack C. Whytock

*In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach . . . (Acts 1:1NIV)*

## Introduction

Christians must always turn to the Lord Jesus Christ for direction, example and testimony in the great work of worldwide evangelization and missions. So tonight I want to take us to the example of the Lord Jesus Christ in Acts chapter 1, verse 1. I believe it is foundational to the purpose of Canada Christian Vision Foundation as an organization.

I want to begin by borrowing two stories told by that amazing missiologist, Roger Greenway.<sup>2</sup> The stories come from West Africa.

### The first story:

One beautiful Sunday morning, I watched hundreds of people arriving for worship in a West African town. “How was the church started?” I asked. “Who first brought the gospel here?”

The answer was this: “A woman missionary came to this town, and she was a nurse. Before she arrived, half of our children died before they reached the age of five. Then the missionary vaccinated our children. She taught the mothers how to keep their children healthy. She kept our babies from dying, and she taught us about God.”

The church in that village was started through missions by word and deed.

### The second story:

I visited an elderly man in a slum where most of the people are Muslim. He, along with his four sons and their wives and children, had all become Christians. I asked the man what led him to leave Islam and put his faith in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> This sermon was first delivered 8 June, 2012 at a special meeting for Canada Christian Vision Foundation at Open Heart Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Ontario. Canada Christian Vision Foundation is a word and deed mission to Northeast Asia.

<sup>2</sup> Roger S. Greenway, *Go and Make Disciples! An Introduction to Christian Missions* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1999), 123-124.

He told me this story: “Christians came every week to our community and taught the Bible to a few Christians who lived here. They saw we were very poor, and they helped everyone. They helped the Christians, and they helped us Muslims. They did not charge anyone.

“For a long time I watched them to see what trick they intended to play on us. It made no sense to me that they helped Muslims and Christians in the same way, and without making us pay. There had to be a motive for the things they were doing.

“One day I asked them, ‘Why are you doing this? What is your motive?’ They answered me, ‘We do it because God cares for everybody. God cares so much that He sent Jesus to save us by dying and paying for our sins.’

“God cares, and Jesus paid! That was a motive I had never heard before. I began to believe it was true. I started to pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ. My sons followed my example, and that is how we became Christians.”

### Here is the point:

Missions by word and deed makes a powerful witness to Jesus Christ. It has opened up homes, towns, and nations to the gospel. It follows the example of Jesus himself, who “went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness” (Matthew 9:35).

Now let us turn back to our Scripture text for tonight, Acts 1:1 –

*In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach . . . (NIV)*

Of course the book of Acts is about evangelization, church-planting, and missionary work. It is also about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in evangelization, church-planting and missionary work. But it is still a book primarily about Jesus Christ – the fact that it is Jesus Christ Who, as Head of the Church, is building His Church and extending it. Verse 1 of Acts identifies Jesus Christ as the centre of the book, just as Jesus Christ was the centre of Luke’s other book, the Gospel of Luke. It is not a book about Theophilus but about Jesus Christ and the Kingdom.

Let us look at three things tonight:

- #1. Jesus Declares the Word – And What This Means for Us**
- #2. Jesus and His Deeds – And What This Means for Us**
- #3. Canada Christian Vision Foundation – Our Place in Missions**

## #1. Jesus Declares the Word – And What This Means for Us (verse 1)

Quickly review the life of Jesus Christ from the commencement of His public ministry until the 40<sup>th</sup> day when He ascended into heaven. The immediate thing anyone will conclude in reading the four gospels is that Jesus was a teacher, a preacher, an instructor, a proclaimer. Mark chapter 1, verse 15 makes this abundantly clear. The first thing Jesus did when He began public ministry in Galilee was to make a great proclamation, that is He began with the Word, speaking about the Good News and saying, “*The time has come, ... the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!*” Now, Jesus Christ is our director, example, and testimony in missions. Speaking His Word must not be forgotten in missions. If it is, we are on a slippery-slope to forgetting that there is a great spiritual poverty in this world. Men and women truly need the **WORDS** of Jesus Christ.

Here are some of those words of Jesus:

- “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.”
- “I am the Door.”
- “Repent and Believe.”
- “It is written – Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.”
- “Follow Me.”
- “Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life . . .”
- “Go and make disciples of all nations . . .”

We could keep going. But the point has been made. **The words of Jesus confront people. The words of Jesus disturb people. The words of Jesus are a great blessing to people.** Luke was wanting to make it very clear that he was telling Theophilus the words of Jesus – all that Jesus taught both publicly and privately. The verbal or written proclamation of Jesus must ever be part of our Christian witness.

You may well recall in that famous document produced in 1974 called “The Lausanne Covenant”, article 4 is on “The Nature of Evangelism”. Let me quote to you what Billy Graham, John Stott, and others composed:

“But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God. In issuing the gospel invitation, we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship.”<sup>3</sup>

The Lausanne Covenant accords with Scripture and with the example of Jesus Christ – He went about teaching and proclaiming the Word. On some occasions we have more freedom to do this than on other occasions. **We just**

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<sup>3</sup> For the Lausanne Covenant, see <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lausanne-covenant.html> .

**have to learn to be wise, creative and dependent upon the Lord, for He opens the doors and the hearts for the Word to go forth.** There are many missionaries who are not pastors, but every missionary **MUST** be Word-focused. Recognize that you must yourself study the Word of God and study with great care the life of Jesus. Recognize that you are to seek out opportunities to communicate verbally to unbelievers about Christ. The Word must be central to our missions or we will become a secular social agency and lose sight of the Kingdom mandate of Jesus Christ, the Way of salvation for sinners.

## **#2. Jesus and His Deeds – And What This Means for Us (verse 1)**

Secondly, Acts 1:1 tells us that Luke wrote about “all that Jesus began to *do*”. What kinds of things did Jesus *do*? Answer –

- He healed people.
- He drove out demons.
- He fed people.
- He prayed.
- He went to the cross.

We must again study carefully the four gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – and see what specific deeds Jesus did for others. As we study this, we see that Jesus showed mercy, compassion, kindness, love, respect and care.

I remind you that Jesus associated with lepers, something unheard of! See Mark 1:40 and the encounter of Jesus and the man with leprosy. The Scripture tells us in verse 41 that Jesus was “*filled with compassion*” towards the leper. This is an eternal reminder of how Christians must deal with the diseased, the sick and the dying. We minister by deeds of mercy and compassion. This is part of the mandate of Canada Christian Vision Foundation.

Allow me to make reference once again to the Lausanne Covenant of 1974. The very next article after number 4 on evangelism is number 5, entitled “Christian Social Responsibility”. This article is very well worded and reflects a penetratingly clear and well-crafted statement for missions today. Article 5 affirms that we are all made in the image of God and we should respect and serve all people. John 4 shows the respect which Jesus accorded the Samaritan woman. Article 5 goes on to affirm that evangelism (Word) is not mutually exclusive to social concern (deed). Faith without works is dead (James 2:20), and we must not divorce evangelism from social concern. It is because of the Word of God that we undertake deeds of compassion, mercy, and instruction for lifting others up. Our theology of the Word governs our social deeds in missions. Thus we agree that “*both evangelistic and social involvement are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and humankind . . . , of our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ*”

(John Stott).<sup>4</sup> As Christians we must be concerned about being salt and light here on earth. Every word we proclaim, every deed we undertake is spreading salt and light upon the earth (Matthew 5:13).

### #3. Canada Christian Vision Foundation – Our Place in Missions

Finally, I want to draw out applications for us here tonight, specifically for Canada Christian Vision Foundation. I will make a list of several affirmations. It is not exhaustive but at least a starting point.

- 1.) As believers in Jesus Christ, the only Way, **we start with our relationship with the Son of God.** There is much humanitarian work done by many organizations, but the starting point for these organizations is not Christ (although there may be Christians involved). **Our starting point is Jesus Christ,** and thus for a Christian organization this means that all involved in governance and as missionary practitioners have a living and growing faith relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. We profess faith and love for Him and desire to walk obediently in His will and commands. This sets us apart from humanitarianism – the starting point is fundamentally different – we live by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 2.) From our relationship to Christ will overflow love and compassion to the **spiritually** impoverished and to the **physically** impoverished. We do not separate these needs – both spiritual and physical impoverishments are real for us as Christians.
- 3.) **Thus we cannot separate the word from the deed.** We are here as believers to address both. We are thus **holistic**<sup>5</sup> in our very core values as Christians. As Roger Greenway wrote:

A “holistic” way to do missions recognizes that both the spiritual needs and the material needs of human beings are real and important. It is not biblical to ignore one or the other.<sup>6</sup>

- 4.) We affirm that there are **diversities of callings for believers.** Yes, some are preachers, but there are other ways of being missionaries for Christ. We want to see those with medical backgrounds and those

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<sup>4</sup> John Stott, *For the Lord We Love: your study guide to The Lausanne Covenant* (The Lausanne Movement, 2009), 28.

<sup>5</sup> It is very common in Latin-American missiology to use the term “integral” in mission rather than “holistic/wholistic”. See C. René Padilla, “Introduction: An Ecclesiology for Integral Mission”, in *The Local Church, Agent of Transformation: An Ecclesiology for Integral Mission*, eds. Tetsunao Yamamori and C. René Padilla (Buenos Aires: Kairos, 2004), 19-20. See Book Briefs, p. 132.

<sup>6</sup> Greenway, 125.

with nutritional, children's, youth and seniors' backgrounds raised up by the Lord as missionaries in word and deed.

- 5.) **The whole redeemed Church family is to be seen as a mobilized, missional community.** Jesus Christ is the Head of His Church. He is making us into a new family. We want a mission to labour in unity under Jesus' headship. Therefore, respect the diversity of callings in missionary societies and agencies across the whole family of God. We want the whole family mobilized for mission. Canada Christian Vision Foundation can help mobilize some of God's family for mission work in Northeast Asia, but we respect and are one with any others who are spreading the Gospel. We must never see ourselves as the only mission group – God has others.
- 6.) The work of Canada Christian Vision Foundation must be undertaken with **prayer, planning, and praise.** **Prayer** is our dependence upon the Lord. We are a Christian organization. **Planning** involves much more for Christians than strategy meetings. Planning for Christians requires spiritual discernment, which involves humility in waiting together for unity in the Lord's will and honest assessment, again together. **Praise** is directed to God's glory for every victory we see in Canada Christian Vision Foundation. It is not about us; it is about the Lord receiving the glory and honour.

**In conclusion,** let me remind you where we started tonight, Acts 1:1 –

*In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach . . . (NIV)*

1. **Jesus Declares the Word – And What This Means for Us**
2. **Jesus and His Deeds – And What This Means for Us**
3. **Canada Christian Vision Foundation – Our Place in Missions**

Canada Christian Vision Foundation is called to a carefully balanced ministry of *word* and *deed* to the whole person through medical and social missions. May the Lord be honoured; may the Kingdom be extended in Northeast Asia; may workers be raised up by the Lord; and may unity and large-heartedness be evidenced.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at this special inaugural event. Let us pray.

## **‘A Well-Spent Life’ Matthew Henry: Pastor and Writer**

**Allan Harman\***

*\* Dr. Allan Harman has been Professor of Old Testament at the Free Church College, Edinburgh, the Reformed Theological College, Geelong, and the Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne, where he also served as principal for twenty years. He has served as Moderator-General of his denomination, the Presbyterian Church of Australia (1994-1997), and is the author of Matthew Henry: His Life and Influence (2012).*



The year of Matthew Henry’s birth, 1662, was not a good one for his family. His father, Philip Henry, had lost his position as an Anglican minister and the family had been put out of the minister’s residence. Like over two thousand other Anglican ministers, Philip Henry would not conform to the new requirement compelling them to use the Book of Common Prayer and to be ordained by a bishop. They were forced to leave their parishes and were deprived of regular income.

The Henry family were somewhat better off than many others. Philip Henry had been an excellent student at Oxford University, where he studied under the great Dr. John Owen. He had come to Worthenbury in Shropshire and married Katherine Matthews, an only daughter, whose parents owned a farm, Broad Oak, that was just over five miles away. The Henry family moved to her family home, and ultimately the property was owned and worked by Philip and Katherine. He never had the privilege of being a minister of a congregation again, though he continued to expound the Scripture in his own and other family residences.

Matthew was a precocious child, early starting Greek and Latin. He had a tutor for a time, but his father was his main teacher. In spiritual things he listened to his father explain Scripture and teach the Westminster Shorter Catechism. At the age of eleven he came to personal faith in the Lord Jesus and seems to have set himself the goal of becoming a pastor. Apart from a period of about eighteen months in London studying mainly law, his father’s instruction and example prepared him for pastoral ministry.

The dissenters or non-conformists were forbidden to meet together publicly, but in the late 1680s it became clear that a change was coming. Groups of people were starting to meet openly for worship, and one of these in Chester invited him to become their pastor. He was ordained in London by a small

group of Presbyterian pastors, and he commenced his ministry in June 1687. The congregation grew, and the meeting place had to be enlarged. By 1700 the congregation realised they had become too big for the premises they were using, and so bought land in Crook's Lane in the centre of Chester.

The new chapel (pictured below) was opened almost free of debt, though it is interesting and significant that Matthew Henry's own donation of £20 was the largest contribution to the building fund. Within a few years he had 350 communicant members connected with his congregation, and the chapel had to be enlarged by the addition of a gallery.



Soon after starting at Chester, Matthew Henry married, but his wife died after giving birth to their first child. He married again, and six children survived that marriage. In addition, he and his wife took into their home one of his sister's children, when both she and her husband died.

### **A faithful pastor**

Several things mark out Henry's life as important. First of all, he was a diligent pastor. Every week he had two services on the Lord's Day, at which he both expounded chapters of Scripture in sequence, but also preached. He was very systematic in his selection of passages for sermons, and a record exists of his schedule for the whole of his ministry at Chester. He was plain and simple in his style, with almost no illustrations, but with many memorable sayings and references.

In addition to preaching and catechising in his own congregation, he preached to the prisoners in Chester Castle. Neighbouring centres around Chester were often favoured by his preaching on weekdays, and even congregations in London heard him with pleasure. Some tried to get him to become their pastor.

### **A commentator on the Bible**

Out of his parish preaching and teaching came his commentary on the Bible. He started to write in 1704, and by 1706 he had completed the section on the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. The reception was exceptional from the outset, and so he continued to work away, day by day, on his task. By the time he moved to Hackney near London in 1712, he had completed the whole of the Old Testament. Just before his death in 1714, he finished up to the end of Acts, and left notes on considerable parts of the rest of the New Testament, especially the book of Revelation. Other pastors completed the remainder of the New Testament books.

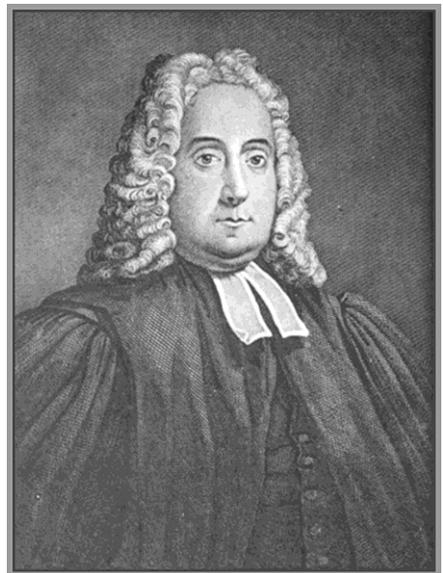
This was one of the first commentaries aimed not at pastors but at the ordinary Christian people. Its style was unpretentious, and much of it had the characteristics that marked out his preaching, such as abundant references to Scripture, the use of alliteration for his headings, and practical application.

### **A writer of Christian literature**

Amidst all his other activities, Matthew Henry wrote many books. He was the author of a large biography of his father, who died in 1696, and this passed through three editions in his lifetime. He produced songs for congregational singing, many of them Psalms but including other passages such as Mary's song (Luke 1) and parts of Revelation. More than once, he defended the position of the dissenters over and against the Church of England, rejecting claims that they were schismatics. The area of spiritual life was his main focus. In particular, his writings on prayer have been often reprinted.

### **His influence**

Henry's personal ministry and writings brought blessing to many in his own lifetime, but his works have continued to bless for three centuries. Jonathan Edwards in New England knew and used Matthew Henry's books. The Wesleys were well-acquainted with them, and even though John Wesley did not agree with his Reformed position, he still utilised parts of his writing in his notes on Scripture. Charles Wesley was more sympathetic and many of his hymns were sayings of Matthew Henry that he incorporated into Christian poetry. The words of his hymn "A charge to keep have I, a God to glorify" are taken exactly from Mat-



thew Henry's commentary. George Whitefield, when short of time for sermon preparation, would kneel on the floor with his Greek New Testament, Cruden's concordance, and Matthew Henry's commentary open before him. The structure and outline of his sermons often betray the influence of Henry.

Many others, ever since his time, have testified to the blessing of his writing. No other commentary has been kept in print for three hundred years as has happened with his. Now it is available in many editions, sometimes with newer English translations replacing the Authorised Version. His collected works are available in two volumes, his biography of his father has been reprinted, and his writings on spiritual and family life have reprinted many times and are currently available.

Of course, we have much other Christian literature available to us, both from the past and from the present, but still Matthew Henry's commentary sets a pattern. It was an attempt to explain the meaning of the Bible, book by book, verse by verse. He knew what others had written, but his aim was to faithfully expound what he believed the text meant.

### **His final days**

Reluctantly, Matthew Henry left Chester in 1712 for Hackney, believing that God was calling him to minister there. The near proximity to his publisher was clearly an attraction. Though not well in health, he made the move and entered into a very busy period of ministry. However, ill-health was starting to take its toll. He suffered from kidney stones, and he had developed diabetes. On leaving Chester after a final visit in 1714, he fell from his horse, continued on to Nantwich, preached in the evening, and died the following morning. At the age of fifty-two he had completed his ministry. As he himself had said shortly before returning to Chester for his final visit, "a holy, heavenly life, spent in the service of God and communion with him, is the most pleasant and comfortable life that any one can live in this world".

## **An Interview with Charles Edgar about Bi-vocational Parish Ministry**

**Charles Edgar with Jack C. Whytock\***

*\* The following is an interview with Charles Edgar, a retired Presbyterian minister living in Huntsville, Alabama. I believe that our readers will find this interview of great interest and hope it will stimulate much discussion about current trends in ministry globally. (Ed.)*

Charles, thank you for engaging with me in this interview. I will begin by making an observational comment and a statistical reference.

The subject of bi-vocational parish ministry or bi-vocational ministry is increasingly becoming a global phenomenon. It used to be thought that bi-vocational ministry was the way of ministry in the majority or developing world only, but evidence suggests that this model of ministry is growing throughout the Christian church community, Western and Global South. For example, I recently read that in non-urban Canada, 47% of parish ministry is being conducted in a bi-vocational manner. I realize there may be a need to get some definitions with that statistic; nevertheless, the statistic reveals a contemporary challenge for us here in the West: the struggle many small congregations face in trying to support a full-time minister. This topic offers a point of discussion with our brothers in the Global South. Likewise, it is a very relevant topic for us to take up in theological education.

Charles, I am going to start our interview with getting a definition of the subject before us.

***What is “bi-vocational parish ministry” as you would define it?***

Serving a parish that is unable to provide full-time income. Thus, one generally receives a portion of their income from the pastorate but the remainder of their income is from other sources.

***That is a very helpful definition and accords well with what others are saying. Two leading writers on bi-vocational ministry have this to say: “one who has a secular job as well as a paid ministry in the church” (Dennis Bickers) and “persons who serve more than one vocation or institution and/or whose income is partly derived from some other source than the institutions of their primary religious employment” (Doran McCarty). Charles, let me now ask what did you do bi-vocationally?***

Private investigations and real estate sales and management and serving as a pastor.

***How many years did you do this?***

Thirty-seven years.

***Charles, I have not met many pastors who operated a private investigations business. Could you tell us how you ended up being a private investigator?***

I graduated from the University of Tennessee (UT), Knoxville, with a degree in Business Administration and a major in motor carrier transportation in 1956. The Korean War was winding down, and we had a two-year draft requirement. With that hanging over my head, I had a hard time getting a job. A UT alum was the head of the Interstate Commerce Commission, Bureau of Motor Carriers and wanted to hire UT grads to work for them. The position was Safety Inspector and Special Agent enforcing the Motor Carrier safety regulations including hours of service and equipment. We also investigated accidents.

I was able to go to Officer Candidate School in the U.S. Navy and was commissioned and served a three-year tour on active duty. I did this and then spent nineteen years in the Naval Reserve.

I then moved to Huntsville, Alabama as a claim adjustor for State Farm Insurance investigating and settling primarily big claims with bodily injury. I left this to work for a Real Estate Developer for a couple of years, then worked for Allstate Insurance and bought into an Independent Agency. My partner in the business had a law degree but had never taken the bar exam. He was offered a position in the U.S. Army legal office. He had worked fire insurance claims and I did auto and Workmen's Compensation. Since I had little experience in the fire insurance work, we elected to sell the firm.

I then obtained a real estate license and sold real estate for several years. I began doing work for lawyers that I had dealt with on insurance claims doing their investigations. I was able to do that work and sell real estate for a couple of years, but then as more investigation business came in, I had to make a choice and decided to open a private investigation business.

***How did you become a pastor?***

I had been raised in the Bible Presbyterian Church and when we moved to Huntsville, we found a church that had been in that church but left and became Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES). The developer that I worked for was on the board of Covenant College and Seminary, and he was instrumental in finding the property in Chattanooga that allowed the college to move. I became quite interested in theology and began to read a good deal in that area. I believe I told you of my habit of waking up in the middle of the night and not being able to go right back to sleep. I had been reading *Biblical Theology* by Geerhardus Vos and would fall asleep in

the evening reading the book. My wife had me keep the book on a bedside table so I could read it when I woke up. This has become a life-time habit.

I began to feel a call to the ministry and began to do some preaching. We talked of going to seminary and started to examine my call and continuing education. My mother's family was from South Carolina and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP). We made a trip to South Carolina and I preached at Unity ARP. An uncle wanted me to look at Erskine Seminary and indicated that he would help me if I went there. My wife and I decided to stop and see the seminary on our way back home. We did this and liked the atmosphere at Due West.

Shortly after we returned my wife was killed in an automobile accident and I was left with three children, five, six, and eight years of age. I could not cook or work the dishwasher or laundry machinery. My children told me I should find them a mother.

My wife died in April and in June I decided the children were right. In addition to my domestic inability, I worked many nights until 7 or 7:30, so day care was not an option. My quest for a wife is a story in itself, but I realized that I was still dealing with memories. I mentioned this to a wife of another officer in my reserve unit and told her that I needed to find a widow. She put Joyce and me together – we dated for a week and decided to get married a month later. We had a blended family with children five, six, seven, eight, and nine years of age. Three years later we had a daughter of our own.



*Charles, Joyce and their family – many years later!*

I went to Presbytery and told them that I was preaching and would like to go to seminary, but the opportunity did not seem likely in the situation I was in. Several of the Presbytery members were faculty members at Covenant College and decided that they would train me under the exceptions clause. I was given about a four-hour oral exam and a reading list. They were concerned about the language requirement and were going to ask for Synod to make an exception when I learned that an historically black, Seventh Day Adventist School in Huntsville, Oakwood University, offered Greek and Hebrew on an undergraduate level and this was accepted. I did this for about four years and wondered what I would do next.

At about the time I finished my languages, I was invited to fill the pulpit at Prosperity ARP Church about twenty-eight miles north of Huntsville in Tennessee. I did this a couple of times and then received a call that the elders wanted to talk to me. The pastor at the church wanted to retire and had some health problems. They wanted me to work with him and fit into the preaching schedule. I was to start preaching once a month and then work into more pulpit time. I was to start the first Sunday in August, 1975. On the Tuesday prior to this first Sunday, the pastor had a stroke and never recovered. I began filling the pulpit every Sunday.

The following spring I was issued a call to be their Stated Supply. The RPCES Presbytery proceeded to ordain me based on a call to labour out of bounds. I was ordained and installed at Prosperity by a joint meeting of both Presbyteries.



*Prosperity Church 2012*

***Tell us what ministry opportunities arose out of such bi-vocational ministry.***

We discussed one specific situation in a phone call this morning. It was about a Christian man I met through the business who wanted a divorce. In general, I believe the non-ministry contacts made it much easier to have a “real” conversation. By this I mean that often when you are introduced as clergy, people think you live in a cloistered world that is not like their work-a-day world. My daily work was carried on almost thirty miles from the church, so we never saw a direct result at the church. However, I have helped people in their own church situation. I have been working closely with a church we started here in Huntsville, Alabama and have helped people in that work.

***Tell us how you managed all your sermon work.***

I have a love for theology and biblical studies so I pursued that in times apart from my daily work. I do not play golf, hunt, fish, or do work around the house. That gave me time to pursue pastoral and sermon activity. I feel certain that learning to preach from an outline is critical. I try to find my three points early and dwell on them in thought process as I drive and whenever I have time to think. I have heard of the formula “an hour’s study for every moment of preaching”. I probably do that, but not behind a desk in the study.

Bi-vocational pastors tend to be in smaller pastorates and may think they are insignificant. Scripture reminds us not to despise small things. Our smaller churches may be more akin to the book of Acts than many of the larger churches and certainly mega churches. Time management is critical to any ministry and dependence on the Lord for help is critical. I am always amazed that when I have been under pressure and feel unprepared, I often get the most compliments. (Not an argument for careless preparation! – more in the shall we sin more that grace may abound camp.)

Bi-vocational ministry requires giving up many things, especially in the hobby and entertainment area, but the Kingdom rewards are so wonderful.

***Tell us the stresses and strains of your ministry with being split “two ways”.***

I have certainly felt that pressure, but in talking with others who are in “full time” ministry, a term I don’t care for, I feel certain that they have many daily tasks that create the same tensions. There must be a true reliance on the Lord and a recognition that you always fall short, and you are always dependent on Him.

I visited a lady in a nursing home whose physical limitations caused her to be bed ridden but who was mentally sharp at age ninety-two, even seeming to have the mind of a twenty year old. I picked up her Bible and began to read Psalm 136, a litany best used in worship with a response after every statement “His mercy endureth forever”. I realized as I read that it was not very appropriate for a personal devotion. I began to feel self critical and the more I thought about it on the thirty-five minute drive home, the more I was angry at myself, feeling that I was trying to do too many things and was not doing anything right.

Several weeks later I re-visited her and after our initial greetings, she told me that she wanted to thank me for something. She told me that it was difficult to be in such a place with a good mind and seeing some pitiful situations, but she said that in the days after my visit when she was confronted with those situations, she was comforted because “His mercy endureth forever”.

This made me realize that the Lord is not depending upon our imperfect “perfection”, but that He uses our weakness for His advantage.

***What advice do you have for those considering bi-vocational Christian parish work?***

It would be much the same as to any minister. This is not a job as such – it is the privilege of being able to be a conveyer of the Word. So many enter it looking for many of the “perks” or benefits of being in employment. It is hard and very time consuming but so much better than doing many of the so called “fun” things of life. I hear of ministerial “burn out” and similar terms, but this is the opportunity to serve the KING in using the valuable points of the word. I’d really rather do this than golf.

I do have certain gifts for business and this has allowed me to use the other talents the Lord has given me to facilitate Kingdom work.

When I was preparing for the ministry, I took a course in counseling. The instructor wanted volunteers for a new test of interests. At the time I did not have a ministerial call and was selling real estate and doing some investigation work. I saw this as an opportunity to see where my real gifts were centred. I took the test, and then went to have the evaluation done. I was told by the instructor that he had a problem in that I had too many areas of interest and no one area was dominant. I suppose that meant that I was a “jack of all trades” and master of none. I hope that isn’t the real requirement. Bottom line: Don’t take yourself too seriously and depend on the Lord enjoying His work.

***Charles, while preparing for this interview, I did a quick web search to see if anyone has written a book on bi-vocational ministry. I was shocked to see that there is a field of literature on this subject and I had never known about it! This makes me think that this subject, and reading on it, needs to be included in seminary courses and in special seminar topics. Do you have any wisdom to offer seminaries about this?***

First, as I believe you are attempting to do, the problem must be recognized. I’m not sure most seminaries give it much of a thought. It should be recognized as a part of the whole seminary experience. Even if bi-vocational ministry is not the end result, I’m afraid many seminary students matriculate viewing themselves as budding theologians who should spend hours in study. We must study and read constantly in theology and trends. Very few realize what is happening in the world with the flaming spread of Christianity in the 40-40 world, and see only the hardness of heart and unconcern of Europe and North America. The changing world requires being prepared to meet changing circumstances on every hand, not merely preparing for the world of three-hundred member churches in small town North America.

Second, to move on from above, we should be students of the Word, but primarily prepared for the battle. I believe General Booth had a great metaphor in a “salvation army”. Not just his model, but the concept. We need to desire an hour of preparation for each minute of the sermon, but not just sitting in the study. I like to have my outline early and then spend thought time arguing these points in my head as I have already said.

Third, we need to grasp how much time we really have, and truthfully, waste. We have 168 hours a week, 56 in sleep, maybe 10 in eating, and about 40 in a job. That leaves over 60 hours. Plenty of time for the battle.

Mark Noll, noted present-day church historian, had a wonderful comment on the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910, a conference to strategize ecumenically the missionary work ahead. Noll explains that something like 1,400 were in attendance and only six of colour. He then proceeds to tell how today more Presbyterians are in worship in Nigeria on a given Sunday than in Scotland and all North America. He adds that, likewise, there are many more Anglicans in Kenya and other countries in Africa than in England and U.S. All that to say that we must be like the Army General with a strategy but also the flexibility to change with the situation. We need to be prepared for bi-vocational or other unknown ministries that may lie ahead.

I will close my comments with a situation that I was in a year or two ago. A pastor from the Presbyterian Church in America in Illinois called me to see if we had a vacant church in our presbytery. He was a newspaper reporter and pastored a small town church. We had nothing open and ended the conversation. I then called him back and told him what a great service he was performing. The little church would probably close if he left but was alive now. He was in a vocation that allowed him to stay abreast of what the culture was really like. So many pastors get fenced in by their flock that they fail to see what the real world is. It is quite possible to believe that your congregation is made up of “Sunday School literature saints” rather than saints like those recorded in the Bible that God had to, and still has to, continually deal with.



*Charles and Joyce Edgar*

<sup>1</sup> After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. <sup>2</sup> And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, <sup>3</sup> and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. <sup>4</sup> And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.

(Acts 18:1-4, ESV)

“Bivocational ministry is becoming more common in North American Protestant churches. Regardless of how pastors and/or church attendees may feel about bivocational ministry, it is a growing practice in North American church life. ‘The majority of congregations in the United States are small, with fewer than 100 regular members, and cannot typically afford their own pastor.’ This results in a growing need for more bivocational pastors every year.”

– Terry W. Dorsett

“The other job is not the pastor’s career, but a means to support his ministry. It is a way to ensure that his family is provided for and financially secure. It is not a distraction, but an opportunity to have other means of honest employment and also engage the culture in a way he wouldn’t be able to from a church office. . . . He just wants an income that will be able to provide for his family.

“Pastors cannot help but preach! It is what God has called them to do whether they get pay and benefits or nothing at all. It is a ‘stewardship’, a mandate given to them by God to fulfill at church and the secular workplace.”

– Joshua Simpson

**“Bivocational ministry is really less about ‘money’ than it is about missional strategy.”**

**– Terry W. Dorsett**

**Some works to stimulate further reflection on bi-vocational ministry:**

Bickers, Dennis. *The Bi-Vocational Pastor: Two Jobs, One Ministry*. Kansas City, KS: Beacon Hill Press, 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Coaching Bivocational Ministers for Greater Ministry Effectiveness". Unpublished D. Min. thesis, Liberty Theological Seminary, Virginia, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Tentmaking Pastor: The Joy of Bivocational Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Work of the Bivocational Minister*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2007.

Door, Luther M. *The Bivocational Pastor*. Nashville, TN: B and H, 1988.

Dorsett, Terry W. *Developing Leadership Teams in the Bivocational Church*. Bloomington, IN: Cross Books, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_. "8 Benefits to Bivocational Ministry". May 15, 2011. <http://www.crosswalk.com/church/pastors-or-leadership/8-benefits-to-bivocational-ministry.html>. Accessed December 10, 2012.

Simpson, Joshua. "The Modern Tentmaker: The Challenge of a Bi-Vocational Pastor". <http://www.edstetzer.com/2010/11/thursday-is-for-thinkers-joshu.html>. Accessed July 20, 2012.



## New City Catechism: An Introduction

On October 15, 2012 a new catechism was launched in New York City – *New City Catechism*. Like many catechisms before it, it contains echoes of previous catechisms. The compilers, Tim Keller and Sam Shammas, tell us that they have used the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (1648) and *Calvin's Geneva Catechism* (1541). The *New City Catechism* is arranged into fifty-two questions and answers, thus one question per week for a year. One unique feature of this catechism is that it is a joint adult and children's catechism.

The *New City Catechism* is divided into three parts:

- Part 1: God, creation and fall, law (twenty questions)
- Part 2: Christ, redemption, grace (fifteen questions)
- Part 3: Spirit, restoration, growing in grace (seventeen questions)

Several wonderful resources to accompany the *New City Catechism* can be found on the website – <http://www.newcitycatechism.com/home.php>. There is a brief video teaching presentation, a short commentary and a short prayer for each question.

Keller states that historically there were at least three purposes to catechisms:

The first was to set forth a comprehensive exposition of the gospel – not only in order to explain clearly what the gospel is, but also to lay out the building blocks on which the gospel is based, such as the biblical doctrine of God, of human nature, of sin, and so forth. The second purpose was to do this exposition in such a way that the heresies, errors, and false beliefs of the time and culture were addressed and counteracted. The third and more pastoral purpose was to form a distinct people, a counter-culture that reflected the likeness of Christ not only in individual character but also in the church's communal life.

When looked at together, these three purposes explain why new catechisms must be written. While our exposition of gospel doctrine must be in line with older catechisms that are true to the Word, culture changes and so do the errors, temptations, and challenges to the unchanging gospel that people must be equipped to face and answer.

Packer and Parrett's 2010 book, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way*, is a helpful book to consult as one starts out

on a study of the *New City Catechism*. This book was reviewed by Howard McPhee in last year's *Haddington House Journal* (pp. 81-82).

We hope by placing the *New City Catechism* in this year's journal many students and teachers around the world will become aware of this valuable resource and use it and/or the website with the accompanying resources.

Some of the speakers on the web video presentations are Tim Keller, Kevin DeYoung, Thabiti Anyabwile, Ligon Duncan and John Piper, all council members of The Gospel Coalition. The writers of the commentaries and prayers include names like Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther, Jonathan Edwards, John Stott and Francis Schaeffer.

May the people of God be blessed through this recent undertaking.

*J. C. Whytock*

# New City Catechism<sup>1</sup>

## **PART 1: God, creation and fall, law.**

### **Q1**

#### **What is our only hope in life and death?**

*That we are not our own but belong, body and soul, both in life and death, to God and to our Savior Jesus Christ.*

### **Q2**

#### **What is God?**

*God is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything. He is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable in his power and perfection, goodness and glory, wisdom, justice, and truth. Nothing happens except through him and by his will.*

### **Q3**

#### **How many persons are there in God?**

*There are three persons in the one true and living God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are the same in substance, equal in power and glory.*

### **Q4**

#### **How and why did God create us?**

*God created us male and female in his own image to know him, love him, live with him, and glorify him. And it is right that we who were created by God should live to his glory.*

### **Q5**

#### **What else did God create?**

*God created all things by his powerful Word, and all his creation was very good; everything flourished under his loving rule.*

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted by Timothy Keller and Sam Shammas from the Reformation catechisms. Copyright © 2012 by Redeemer Presbyterian Church. We encourage you to use and share this material freely – but please don't charge money for it, change the wording, or remove the copyright information. *Children's answers are in italics.*

**Q6****How can we glorify God?**

We glorify God *by enjoying him, loving him, trusting him, and by obeying his will, commands, and law.*

**Q7****What does the law of God require?**

Personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience; *that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves.* What God forbids should never be done and what God commands should always be done.

**Q8****What is the law of God stated in the Ten Commandments?**

*You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below—you shall not bow down to them or worship them. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Honor your father and your mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. You shall not covet.*

**Q9****What does God require in the first, second, and third commandments?**

*First, that we know and trust God as the only true and living God. Second, that we avoid all idolatry and do not worship God improperly. Third, that we treat God's name with fear and reverence, honoring also his Word and works.*

**Q10****What does God require in the fourth and fifth commandments?**

*Fourth, that on the Sabbath day we spend time in public and private worship of God, rest from routine employment, serve the Lord and others, and so anticipate the eternal Sabbath. Fifth, that we love and honor our father and our mother, submitting to their godly discipline and direction.*

**Q11****What does God require in the sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments?**

*Sixth, that we do not hurt, or hate, or be hostile to our neighbor, but be patient and peaceful, pursuing even our enemies with love. Seventh, that we abstain from sexual immorality and live purely and faithfully, whether in marriage or in single life, avoiding all impure actions, looks, words, thoughts, or desires, and whatever might lead to them. Eighth, that we do not*

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*take without permission that which belongs to someone else, nor withhold any good from someone we might benefit.*

**Q12**

**What does God require in the ninth and tenth commandments?**

*Ninth, that we do not lie or deceive, but speak the truth in love. Tenth, that we are content, not envying anyone or resenting what God has given them or us.*

**Q13**

**Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly?**

*Since the fall, no mere human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly, but consistently breaks it in thought, word, and deed.*

**Q14**

**Did God create us unable to keep his law?**

*No, but because of the disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, all of creation is fallen; we are all born in sin and guilt, corrupt in our nature and unable to keep God's law.*

**Q15**

**Since no one can keep the law, what is its purpose?**

*That we may know the holy nature and will of God, and the sinful nature and disobedience of our hearts; and thus our need of a Savior. The law also teaches and exhorts us to live a life worthy of our Savior.*

**Q16**

**What is sin?**

*Sin is rejecting or ignoring God in the world he created, rebelling against him by living without reference to him, not being or doing what he requires in his law—resulting in our death and the disintegration of all creation.*

**Q17**

**What is idolatry?**

*Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator for our hope and happiness, significance and security.*

**Q18**

**Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished?**

*No, every sin is against the sovereignty, holiness, and goodness of God, and against his righteous law, and God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them in his just judgment both in this life, and in the life to come.*

**Q19**

**Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's favor?**

*Yes, to satisfy his justice, God himself, out of mere mercy, reconciles us to himself and delivers us from sin and from the punishment for sin, by a Redeemer.*

**Q20**

**Who is the Redeemer?**

*The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, in whom God became man and bore the penalty for sin himself.*

**PART 2: Christ, redemption, grace.****Q21**

**What sort of Redeemer is needed to bring us back to God?**

*One who is truly human and also truly God.*

**Q22**

**Why must the Redeemer be truly human?**

*That in human nature he might on our behalf perfectly obey the whole law and suffer the punishment for human sin; and also that he might sympathize with our weaknesses.*

**Q23**

**Why must the Redeemer be truly God?**

*That because of his divine nature his obedience and suffering would be perfect and effective; and also that he would be able to bear the righteous anger of God against sin and yet overcome death.*

**Q24**

**Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die?**

*Since death is the punishment for sin, Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. By his substitutionary atoning death, he alone redeems us from hell and gains for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life.*

**Q25****Does Christ's death mean all our sins can be forgiven?**

*Yes, because Christ's death on the cross fully paid the penalty for our sin, God graciously imputes Christ's righteousness to us as if it were our own and will remember our sins no more.*

**Q26****What else does Christ's death redeem?**

Christ's death is the beginning of the redemption and renewal of *every part of fallen creation*, as he powerfully directs all things for his own glory and creation's good.

**Q27****Are all people, just as they were lost through Adam, saved through Christ?**

*No, only those who are elected by God and united to Christ by faith. Nevertheless God in his mercy demonstrates common grace even to those who are not elect, by restraining the effects of sin and enabling works of culture for human well-being.*

**Q28****What happens after death to those not united to Christ by faith?**

At the day of judgment they will receive the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them. *They will be cast out from the favorable presence of God, into hell, to be justly and grievously punished, forever.*

**Q29****How can we be saved?**

*Only by faith in Jesus Christ and in his substitutionary atoning death on the cross; so even though we are guilty of having disobeyed God and are still inclined to all evil, nevertheless, God, without any merit of our own but only by pure grace, imputes to us the perfect righteousness of Christ when we repent and believe in him.*

**Q30****What is faith in Jesus Christ?**

Faith in Jesus Christ is acknowledging the truth of everything that God has revealed in his Word, trusting in him, and also *receiving and resting on him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel.*

**Q31****What do we believe by true faith?**

Everything taught to us in the gospel. The Apostles' Creed expresses what we believe in these words: *We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.*

**Q32****What do justification and sanctification mean?**

*Justification means our declared righteousness before God, made possible by Christ's death and resurrection for us. Sanctification means our gradual, growing righteousness, made possible by the Spirit's work in us.*

**Q33****Should those who have faith in Christ seek their salvation through their own works, or anywhere else?**

*No, they should not, as everything necessary to salvation is found in Christ. To seek salvation through good works is a denial that Christ is the only Redeemer and Savior.*

**Q34****Since we are redeemed by grace alone, through Christ alone, must we still do good works and obey God's Word?**

*Yes, because Christ, having redeemed us by his blood, also renews us by his Spirit; so that our lives may show love and gratitude to God; so that we may be assured of our faith by the fruits; and so that by our godly behavior others may be won to Christ.*

**Q35****Since we are redeemed by grace alone, through faith alone, where does this faith come from?**

All the gifts we receive from Christ we receive through the Holy Spirit, including faith itself.

**PART 3: Spirit, restoration, growing in grace.****Q36****What do we believe about the Holy Spirit?**

*That he is God, coeternal with the Father and the Son, and that God grants him irrevocably to all who believe.*

**Q37****How does the Holy Spirit help us?**

*The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, comforts us, guides us, gives us spiritual gifts and the desire to obey God; and he enables us to pray and to understand God's Word.*

**Q38****What is prayer?**

*Prayer is pouring out our hearts to God in praise, petition, confession of sin, and thanksgiving.*

**Q39****With what attitude should we pray?**

*With love, perseverance, and gratefulness; in humble submission to God's will, knowing that, for the sake of Christ, he always hears our prayers.*

**Q40****What should we pray?**

*The whole Word of God directs and inspires us in what we should pray, including the prayer Jesus himself taught us.*

**Q41****What is the Lord's Prayer?**

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

**Q42****How is the Word of God to be read and heard?**

*With diligence, preparation, and prayer; so that we may accept it with faith, store it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.*

**Q43****What are the sacraments or ordinances?**

The sacraments or ordinances given by God and instituted by Christ, namely *baptism and the Lord's Supper*, are visible signs and seals that we are bound together as a community of faith by his death and resurrection. By our use of them the Holy Spirit more fully declares and seals the promises of the gospel to us.

**Q44****What is baptism?**

*Baptism is the washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; it signifies and seals our adoption into Christ, our cleansing from sin, and our commitment to belong to the Lord and to his church.*

**Q45****Is baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?**

*No, only the blood of Christ and the renewal of the Holy Spirit can cleanse us from sin.*

**Q46****What is the Lord's Supper?**

*Christ commanded all Christians to eat bread and to drink from the cup in thankful remembrance of him and his death. The Lord's Supper is a celebration of the presence of God in our midst; bringing us into communion with God and with one another; feeding and nourishing our souls. It also anticipates the day when we will eat and drink with Christ in his Father's kingdom.*

**Q47****Does the Lord's Supper add anything to Christ's atoning work?**

*No, Christ died once for all. The Lord's Supper is a covenant meal celebrating Christ's atoning work; as it is also a means of strengthening our faith as we look to him, and a foretaste of the future feast. But those who take part with unrepentant hearts eat and drink judgment on themselves.*

**Q48****What is the church?**

God chooses and preserves for himself *a community elected for eternal life and united by faith, who love, follow, learn from, and worship God together.* God sends out this community to proclaim the gospel and prefigure Christ's kingdom by the quality of their life together and their love for one another.

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**Q49****Where is Christ now?**

*Christ rose bodily from the grave on the third day after his death and is seated at the right hand of the Father, ruling his kingdom and interceding for us, until he returns to judge and renew the whole world.*

**Q50****What does Christ's resurrection mean for us?**

*Christ triumphed over sin and death by being physically resurrected, so that all who trust in him are raised to new life in this world and to everlasting life in the world to come. Just as we will one day be resurrected, so this world will one day be restored. But those who do not trust in Christ will be raised to everlasting death.*

**Q51****Of what advantage to us is Christ's ascension?**

*Christ physically ascended on our behalf, just as he came down to earth physically on our account, and he is now advocating for us in the presence of his Father, preparing a place for us, and also sends us his Spirit.*

**Q52****What hope does everlasting life hold for us?**

*It reminds us that this present fallen world is not all there is; soon we will live with and enjoy God forever in the new city, in the new heaven and the new earth, where we will be fully and forever freed from all sin and will inhabit renewed, resurrection bodies in a renewed, restored creation.*



**Book Reviews**  
**and**  
**Book Briefs**

The need of the church to be *semper reformanda* should be interpreted as a call to creative thinking. This is often misunderstood. The creativity to which we are called is not the spinning of ‘theologies’ out of thin air, or change for change’s sake. We are called, first, to advance in our understanding of the Bible, both through coming to know more about the biblical background, and by careful and exact exegesis; second, we are called to apply afresh the known teaching of scripture to our day. If our interest in the Reformers and Reformed theology is an expression of our desire to think in terms of biblical principle at every point, then this is good. But if it is an excuse for not thinking freshly and boldly, for judging our inherited traditions by scripture, then our claim to be ‘Reformed’ is a travesty, for we shall be following the Reformers for reasons that they would not have recognised as valid. Only time will tell which way we are going.

Paul Helm

*Banner of Truth, “Semper Reformanda”*

## Book Reviews

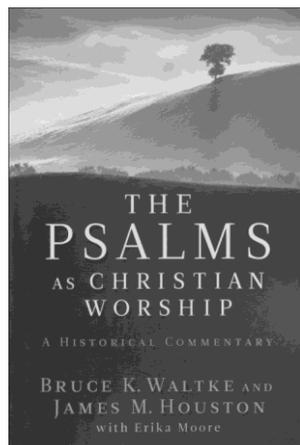
The *Journal* uses the standard abbreviation ‘hc’ to denote hard cover. The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) has been included with all books when available. We begin this section with “**Book Reviews**”, organized according to the four divisions of theology.

### Biblical Theology

***The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary.***  
**Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston with Erika Moore.**  
**Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, 626 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8028-6374-4**

*The Psalms as Christian Worship* is described as an “historical-devotional commentary”. It is in a category all its own. The two authors, Bruce Waltke and James Houston, are senior scholars of the evangelical community. Bruce Waltke has spent fifty years teaching Psalms and is a noted Old Testament commentator. James Houston is a historical and cultural geographer and an authority on spiritual theology. Both men have been associated with Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, and there is no doubt this joint work represents the maturity of their lives as academics and Christian writers. They have been assisted by Erika Moore of Trinity School for Ministry, who wrote one chapter plus prepared the glossary and indices.

The objectives of this unique commentary are “to enrich the daily life of the contemporary Christian and to deepen the church’s community worship in hearing God’s voice both through an accredited exegesis of the Psalms and through the believing response of the church” (p. 2). The authors see the Scriptures as our source of authority – *sola scriptura* – but also want us to be edified by the selected great writers of Christian history. The vast majority of



these voices are from the ancient period, but certain medieval voices are also included as are voices from the Reformational period and also many in the modern period. In a cursory survey of the “Index of Authors”, the most referenced up to the end of the sixteenth century are: Alcuin of York, Thomas Aquinas, Augustine of Hippo, Bernard of Clairvaux, John Calvin, Cassiodorus, John Chrysostom, Denys the Carthusian, Erasmus, Gerhoch of Reichersburg, Jerome, Martin Luther, Nicholas of Lyra, Origen, Theodore of Cyrhus and Theodore of Mopsuestia. One will be hard-pressed to find many of these names appearing in contemporary commentaries on the Psalms. Then again, Calvin’s references in much of his writing would rarely be used today by modern Christian writers. So there is a healthy respect for listening to the voices of the Church. This is coupled with a spiritual commitment to the Lord (p. 4) and, as they write, “Ours is a sacred hermeneutic because the Author is spirit and known in the human spirit through the medium of the Holy Spirit” (p. 4).

The authors tell us that they have selected the Psalms for their “interdisciplinary commentary” or “historic-exegetical study” (pp. 11, 10) for three reasons: to restore the unique role of the Psalms in worship, to restore the role of the Psalms in spiritual formation, and to restore the holistic use of the Psalms. These three reasons are highly commendable and need to be fully applauded.

And for whom was this commentary written? The authors state that they think it will benefit “thoughtful lay readers, as well as preachers and teachers”, and the footnotes in the exegetical portions are “intended mostly for more advanced students” (p. 11). Personally, I think few laymen and few preachers will wade their way through the text. A few may, but I do not think it is pitched at quite as popular a level as may be implied or hoped.

Following the prologue comes section 1, “Survey of History of Interpretation of the Book of Psalms”. This is divided into three chapters: “Survey of Second Temple Period Interpretation of the ‘Psalms’”, “Historical Introduction to the Interpretation of the Psalms in Church Orthodoxy”, and “History of Interpretation Since the Reformation: ‘Accredited Exegesis’”. I suspect much in the chapters in this one hundred page section will be bypassed and readers will go directly to the commentary section. Now, this hermeneutical history section would be an excellent resource for a seminary-level Psalms course.

Then follows the historical-exegetical commentary on thirteen Psalms: Psalms 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 51, 110 and 139 – for almost five hundred pages. A quick look at this select list immediately shows that the authors have attempted to show much variety of genre and content: wisdom, penitential, Messianic and hymnic. Some will be disappointed that the authors concentrate heavily upon the first book within the Psalter, yet their purposes overall are achieved with their selection, so I think they have selected reasonably well. This portion of the commentary will definitely have the

widest appeal. It will serve the classroom, the preacher and the informed laity.

Here is the content for Psalm 1 with the divisions – Part I: Voice of the Church; I. Seeking the Presence of *I AM*, II. Psalms as the Microcosm of the Bible, III. Divisions of the Psalter, IV. Psalm 1 as the Preface to the Psalter, V. A Wisdom Psalm, VI. Hilary of Poitiers' Commentary on Psalm 1, VII. Later Latin Fathers, VIII. Renaissance and Reformation Commentators, and IX. John Calvin's Commentary on Psalm 1. Then comes Part II: Voice of the Psalmist: Translation (I assume by Bruce Waltke). Then Part III: Commentary (with two subdivisions), and Part IV: Conclusion. This is nothing like reading Kidner's commentary in the Tyndale series! This is a very different, new work, and it will take time for serious readers to work through this material. Does one benefit from such close reading? Yes. I came away with a whole new appreciation for those who have gone before us. We moderns have not said everything! *The Psalms as Christian Worship* takes one deeply into these thirteen psalms and does it well.

One criticism is that I thought the glossary needed expansion. Many terms from the three introductory chapters on the history of interpretation should have been included in the glossary. For example, it was new to me to read of "accredited exegesis". Also, I did wonder why there was no bibliography included. The footnotes are quite extensive, but a bibliography would help to bring more order to the work overall.

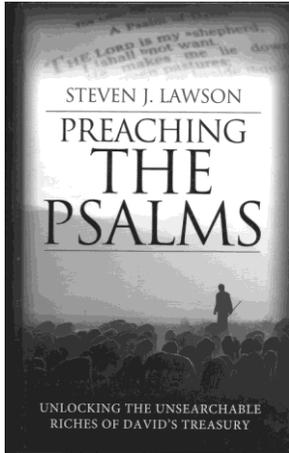
*The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* will be a fine text for a senior level Psalms course. Some preachers will find great delight in using it as well as some laity. For a paperback book of 626 pages, it holds together very well with multiple usage, unlike many paperbacks of this size.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***Preaching the Psalms: Unlocking the Unsearchable Riches of David's Treasury.* Steven J. Lawson. Darlington, England/Carlisle, PA: EP Books, 2012, 383 pp., hc. ISBN 978-085234-783-6**

Steven J. Lawson, senior pastor of Christ Fellowship Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama and visiting professor at Ligonier Academy, has already published a two-volume commentary on the Psalms and so is coming to this work having spent much time there already. That comes through as one senses, in going through this work, that Lawson is someone who is comfortable moving among the great themes of the Psalms.

The author begins by blending his love for history with the Word of God. In the preface he shows the effect that the Psalms had on, for example, Martin Luther in the formative years of the Reformation. It is widely known that his great hymn “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” is based loosely on Psalm 46. Lawson calls for nothing less here than a new Reformation; just as the Psalms had been central in the reformation of Luther and the church in the sixteenth century, so they must be now as well.



Coming from a denomination that has sought to give a preeminent place to the Psalms over the years, I delight to see a book that seeks to bring the riches of the Psalter to more pulpits.

The Psalms are the most quoted book in the New Testament. They shaped the self-identity of our Lord and His suffering. They also gave a context to the disciples of the Lord for what they suffered and the way the Lord was showing them through it how He was moving His kingdom forward. The importance of the Psalms in the diet of Christian worship cannot be over-stated!

Lawson does not begin with the Psalms themselves but with the preacher and shows that he himself must be a man of God. From there, the man of God must be fully convinced in his mind that his calling to preach is from God. He must be engaged in developing personal godliness. He is to be one not only prepared to preach but to model the message of the Psalms in terms of his joy and willingness to suffer for the truth it contains. The preacher must be fully convinced of the infallibility, inerrancy and authority of the Word of God if he is to be effective.

In particular, Lawson asserts that a commitment to an expositional preaching of the Psalms will yield for the preacher and his people a mine of riches of the manifold glory of God. In fact, he gives a long list from pages 47-54 of all the different characteristics of God contained in the Psalms. Along with this is the multifaceted range of human experience, the eschatological themes and, of course, and perhaps more importantly, the treasures of Christ’s person and work. Here too, Lawson gives a helpful chart on the Christological passages of the Psalms and their New Testament fulfillment (pp. 55-56). The book’s sheer size, says Lawson, will make it difficult for the preacher to know where to start. But preaching these passages in series would be a perfect place for the preacher to begin in introducing a congregation to the Psalms. In fact, says Lawson, “It is with this Christ-centered realization in mind that the expositor must approach the Psalms if he is to expound the Word accurately”(p. 57).

Preaching the Psalms in this way, says Lawson, will effect evangelization, ignite worship, cleanse lives and fortify the soul (pp. 61-62). He stresses that

one should have a good grasp as to how the Psalms are used by the New Testament writers in order to properly exposit the Psalms themselves (p. 179).

In chapter 14, Lawson gives an extended discussion on looking at all the historical events that have shaped the Psalms – creation, fall, flood, Abrahamic covenant, Davidic covenant and Babylonian exile, just to name a few – in order to properly expose what the writer was getting at. This in turn opens up for us the spiritual implications as these themes of creation, fall and redemption are applied to the souls of the congregation. “All human history is the unfolding of God’s eternal purpose and sovereign plan. The one who would rightly expound the Psalms must be keenly aware of these various stages of redemptive history . . .” (p. 240).

In chapter 15 the author underscores that just as we must master the history that surrounds the Psalms we also must master the geography that fills the Psalms. The geographical identity of the places contained in the Psalms strikes at the very heart of their meaning and again opens up riches for the listener. “Geography adds color and increases the emotional impact of the Psalms” (p. 242). Lawson himself is an excellent resource on outlining for the preacher the significance of these places as he looks into the historical significance of Jerusalem, Mt. Zion, Israel, Canaan, Judah, Shechem and many other places significant to the psalmists.

The expositor must give equal time to an investigation of the cultural world of the Psalmist and the surrounding nations to bring deeper colour to his preaching. Lawson quotes John Stott, who wisely said, “A true sermon bridges the gulf between the biblical and the modern worlds, and must be equally earthed in both” (p. 257).

In chapter 3 Lawson shows that having the right tools is essential. He gives about ten pages of study Bibles, Old Testament surveys, grammars, lexicons and commentaries which he has found particularly helpful. Just this resource alone makes this a volume to keep at hand!

In unit 2 he again begins to narrow in on the Psalms more specifically by looking at the general overview of the Psalms, understanding the different types, taking into consideration the various titles and determining their overall importance. What are some of the things that the Psalms have in common; what differences are there and why? He writes, “. . . the expositor must see the larger picture of the Psalms as a whole before he can skillfully preach any one psalm” (p. 91).

After looking into these aspects of the Psalms, Lawson says that each psalm must then be seen in the context of the rest of the Psalter, wisdom literature and the rest of the Bible. Scripture speaks with one voice (p. 283).

The points in his last chapter on “Deliver the Message” include denying self, preaching with the authority of God, being clear, being intensely passionate, and preaching with urgency in the light of eternity. One cannot help but feel the gravity of preaching in these reminders. Lawson tries to leave no stone unturned in impressing that on us. He concludes,

Are you willing to pay the price for excellence in the pulpit? Are you ready to make whatever sacrifice is necessary to be properly prepared to preach? God's Word deserves the best we have to give. . . . Let us study, practice, and preach as if lives depend upon it. The fact is, they do. (p. 310)

Though the title of the book is *Preaching the Psalms*, it could just as easily be called simply Lessons in Expository Preaching (with examples from the Psalms). It is a book with somewhat of an identity crisis. Is it a book about preaching the Psalms or is it a manual on preaching period? Well, it is both! What we find in this volume is a very passionate case for why but also how to preach the book of Psalms from one who is himself a gifted experiential and expository preacher of the Word of God.

As far as helping us to investigate the technical elements of the Psalms, there is much here that can be found in other commentaries on the Psalms. Yet the value of this book is great nonetheless. Its simplicity of language and style make it very accessible to a wider audience other than scholars. Furthermore, Lawson speaks with a prophetic voice and not simply an academic one. The book of Psalms is full of passion, agony, joy. Lawson shows that it cannot be approached with a cold, indifferent heart. If it is as Calvin said "an anatomy of all the parts of the soul", then with soul it must be delivered. I heartily commend this to all students of the Psalms.

The book's foreword was written by Hughes Oliphant Old, the noted historian of liturgics.

*Reviewed by Kent I. Compton, the minister of the Western Charge of the Free Church of Scotland, PEI. Rev. Compton is a graduate of the University of Prince Edward Island and the Free Church College, Edinburgh.*



***A Commentary on the Psalms: Volume 1 (1-41). Allen P. Ross. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011, 887 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8254-2562-2***

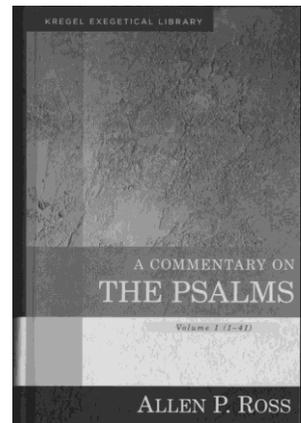
Allan P. Ross is professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School and has authored other commentaries on the Old Testament including *Creation and Blessing: A Study and Exposition of Genesis*. I have used these commentaries with much profit over the years, and so was very much looking forward to reading through this new volume on the Psalms. He doesn't disappoint!

In the preface, Ross gives a detailed apologetic for writing the commentary. Regarding the important place of the Psalms in the life of the church, he says among other things, ". . . so many people have come to love the psalms, having learned to live by them in times of trouble and distress, as well as to celebrate with them in times of victory and blessing" (p. 12). Concerning his purpose he states, "My commentary is designed to move from the exegesis of

the text to the formation of the exposition, that is, not simply commenting on lines and verses but putting the material together in an expository format” (p. 13). He says that his desire was not only to see the Psalms in the light of the immediate context but to write knowing that the Psalms are contained in the full canon of Scripture, and therefore strong connections are made with the New Testament’s use of the Psalms both explicitly and implicitly.

Correlation with later Scripture will, of course, focus on messianic elements in the psalms, whether prophetic or typological, but this has to be done carefully: the exposition must first develop the theological message of the psalm as it was written and then show how it came to fulfillment in the New Testament. . . . I have attempted to follow this procedure in the messianic and eschatological passages. (p. 17)

In the introductory chapters Ross gives a series of short essays on various aspects of the Psalms. He looks at the value of the Psalms as viewed through the lenses of various churchmen down through the years. The introductory chapters also include a look at the title headings and their historical value. Ross makes a strong case for Davidic authorship where the headings ascribe them to David and where David is specifically mentioned by Jesus and the New Testament authors (p. 43). Ross says,



I am not bound simply to say a psalm is David’s because a traditional note credited him with the psalm; but neither am I ready to dismiss the tradition without good reason. Each psalm must be studied individually, and then the traditional notes and the modern theories may be equally evaluated critically. (pp. 46-47)

I profited greatly by his article on the Imprecatory Psalms. He confesses that the tone found in them has troubled many over the years, but he concludes, “. . . the psalms were hymns to be sung in public worship; they are not simply records of personal vendetta” (p. 115). In fact he gives one of the best defenses I have read anywhere on the place of these psalms. To highlight a few remarks, he says that they are written in a hyperbolic style; that they are expressions of the longing of the believer for the vindication of God’s righteousness, of zeal for God and His kingdom and for His hatred for sin. Finally, and perhaps most compellingly, they are a part of the “prophetic teachings about God’s future dealings with sin and impenitent and persistent sinners” (pp. 116-117). Should not these remarks cause the church to re-evaluate her approach to these concepts in the Bible’s book of praise rather

than looking at them as sub-Christian and beneath the character of God?

Ross categorises the psalms under the following headings: the enthronement psalms, royal psalms, psalms of thanksgiving, hymns, wisdom and Torah psalms, and psalms of lament. Over all the introductory articles are very profitable and give the student a very comprehensive introduction to the Psalms.

As for the main body of the commentary, he has divided each chapter under section headings; the first section is called “Text and Textual Variants”. Here he supplies his own translation of the text, explores other possible translations and examines the textual variants that have also been a part of the history of the Psalm’s interpretation.

His next section is entitled “Composition and Context”. This is a very helpful section. Here Ross draws our attention to the possible authors and tries – based on the evidence of the heading, internal evidence or how the psalm is quoted elsewhere – to determine the historical context of the psalm. This, of course, is not always possible; however, where he does find it, it makes it very helpful in setting the psalm in some sort of context. For example, in Psalm 2 Ross observes,

Psalm 2 is a royal psalm focusing on the coronation of the Davidic king in the holy city on Mount Zion. It was included in the collection to be sung by the choirs at any appropriate time – certainly at the coronation of kings, but also in times of national crises when the people needed to be reminded that God had installed their king and the threats from the nations would fail. . . . Thus at the outset of the book we have one psalm focusing on the way of the righteous, and another psalm focusing on the victory of the LORD’s anointed king over the nations. (pp. 199-200)

These connections and observations serve the student of the passage well!

Ross then moves on to “Exegetical Analysis”. Here he structures the psalms into main heading and sub-headings, as he sees them emerge, to give the preacher a better framework for delivering the Psalm. His next section is called Commentary in Expository Form. In it he engages the text of the Psalm, drawing on connections to the revelation that has preceded it and especially what comes after it in the New Testament. It is here as well that he draws attention to words or phrases that enable us to bring out the meaning of the passage more clearly.

The author concludes with the “Message and Application”, where he draws the reader’s attention to the main point of the Psalm, how it applies in the life of the believer, and any Christological applications that can draw those that believe to put their trust in the One to whom all Scripture points. Thus in concluding Psalm 22 he says, “. . . the Spirit of God inspired the psalmist in the writing of this psalm so that he used many vivid and at times hyperbolic expressions to describe his own suffering that would ultimately be

true in a greater way of David's greater son, the Messiah" (p. 548). He goes on to say,

One of the amazing things about the excessive language of the psalm is that it fits a death by crucifixion very well . . . the suffering psalmist never curses his enemies for their attacks and he never confesses sin as the reason for his suffering. There is not a word of remorse or penitent sorrow. (p. 549)

One unique feature that Ross has in the section "Message and Application" is a one-sentence summary of the psalm, a very helpful feature in preaching and something in which every preacher ought to be competent. It is often said that if one is not able to summarize the sermon in one sentence, he has not fully grasped the message he wants to deliver. So his commentary on Psalm 30 is summarized in the words, "God heals and restores his people whom he has chastened so that they might declare to the congregation that the lifetime in his favor overshadows the time of suffering" (p. 678).

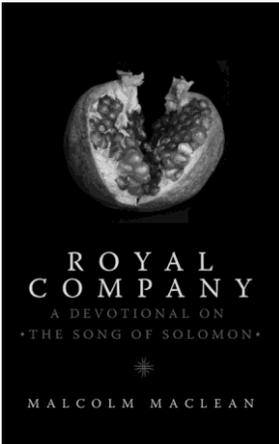
Ross has done a lot of spade work for the preacher in covering the Psalms from a variety of angles. This commentary is just technical enough without being overwhelming. He has heavily footnoted his work, which is a further witness to his competency and years of working with this book of the Bible.

One can tell that Ross is writing with the preacher in mind and has given him an ideal tool for preaching Psalms. The close to 900 pages on just the first forty-one psalms is a testimony to his desire to deliver a comprehensive commentary on Psalms – a book on which there is a short supply of good commentaries!

This volume retails for \$60 but no doubt could be obtained online for significantly less. It is nonetheless one of, if not the best commentary that I have used on Psalms. Early on in my reading, I felt compelled to have this commentary as part of my library despite the price. In my opinion it is a valuable, and no doubt an enduring, contribution to the literature on Psalms. Highly recommended.

*Reviewed by Kent I. Compton*

**Royal Company: A Devotional on the Song of Solomon.** Malcolm Maclean. Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2012, 236 pp., paper. ISBN 978-184550718-3



Full disclosure: I had a hand in editing this book and shared my reservations with the author prior to publication. My basic concern is that while this is in many ways a fine devotional commentary, its value is limited by the author's insistence on interpreting the Song exclusively as an allegory of Christ's love for the Church (i.e. the traditional interpretation). I agree that too much modern interpretation goes to the other extreme of making it only a marriage manual for Christians. But are the two perspectives mutually exclusive? Could the song not be understood as a picture of marital intimacy that finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ and the Church?

When no less careful a biblical scholar than the late Professor John Murray considered, "I cannot now endorse the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Solomon", such an approach should give us pause. Murray found that:

. . . the vagaries of interpretation given in terms of the allegorical principle indicate that there are no well-defined hermeneutical canons to guide us in determining the precise meaning and application if we adopt the allegorical view. However, I also think that in terms of the biblical analogy the Song can be used to *illustrate* the relation of Christ to His church. The marriage bond is used in Scripture as a pattern of Christ and the church. . . .<sup>1</sup>

That said, Malcolm Maclean makes a commendable case for following the tradition interpretation followed by such leading lights from the past as Robert Murray McCheyne, C. H. Spurgeon, Hudson Taylor, Jonathan Edwards, John Owen and others. Indeed, "From the time of the early church fathers down to the beginning of the twentieth century, the almost universal opinion among devout commentators was that this book was an allegory depicting the relationship between Christ and his people (either individually or corporately)" (p. 13).

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland* (March, 1983): 52. Interestingly, the author of the present work under review is now the editor of this magazine – now simply *The Record* – as well as Minister of Greyfriars Free Church in Inverness and Editor of the Mentor imprint of Christian Focus Publications.

Maclean makes an interesting observation:

Sometimes one's interpretation of the Song is connected to one's Christian interests. Some believers are more active than contemplative. . . . But activity, even Christian activity, cannot feed our souls. And I suspect today that there has been a subtle shift from contemplative religion to a form of Christian activism that is commendable in several ways; yet instead of maintaining a balance between a healthy heart religion and a healthy walk, the heart has been largely jettisoned and we have produced a kind of Christianity that is not as warm as the spiritual life of our forefathers. (p. 13)

This is well put and I entirely agree!

What I disagree with is the author's assertion that if the Song "is taken to describe an ideal human marriage, then it ceases to be descriptive of the love between Christ and his people" (p. 14). Why? Maclean goes on to speak of it being spiritually unwise "to remove Jesus from a book of the Bible" (p. 14). Granted, but why does it have to be a case of either/or, especially given the fact that all of Scripture points to Christ (Luke 24:27)?

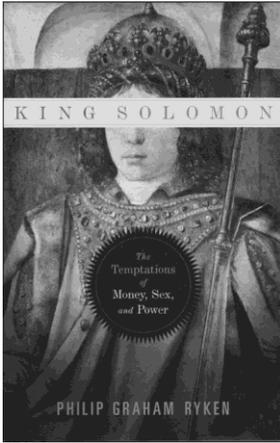
The book comes highly recommended by several noted church leaders. Curiously, more than one of them appear to advocate the both/and approach to the Song which Maclean not so much rejects as ignores. Yet, we can agree with Alec Moyter that while Maclean "will not carry every reader with him all the time . . . everything he writes is true to the full biblical revelation of God in Christ, of the marvel of his love for us, and of our often faltering walk with him".

*Royal Company* is divided into eight poems. Maclean draws on the wealth of older traditional interpretations but does not always follow them in the details. There are several spiritually enriching quotations from authors and preachers of the past. The book originated as a sermon series. As is appropriate for such a genre, the author does not concern himself much with technical issues of authorship, date and such like. There is, as indicated above, much edifying material to meditate on, but perhaps a devotional commentary that pays sufficient attention to the biblical author's original intent and the Song's redemptive historical fulfillment in Christ has yet to be written.

*Reviewed by J. Cameron Fraser, pastor of First Christian Reformed Church in Lethbridge, Alberta. He is a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.*



***King Solomon: The Temptations of Money, Sex, and Power.***  
**Philip Graham Ryken. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 254 pp.,**  
**paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2154-6**



It is not a struggle to read *King Solomon-Temptations of Money, Sex, and Power*, but the title of the book does not accurately reflect the contents. No doubt the title grabs attention, but the book is about much more – the temple, the priestly work, the Ark of the Covenant, contemporaries of Solomon, etc.

Ryken’s style is contemporary and engaging with such memorable quotes and theological tid-bits as: “Our hearts are directly tied to our bank accounts,” (p. 112) and “[God’s] wrath is not a character flaw.” But he has a noticeably wandering style of writing. Example 1: Ryken at one time makes reference to the atoning sacrifices of Solomon

and neatly applies it to Christ’s atoning sacrifice. But then he goes into a call for singing and praise in response to the atonement of Christ and then speaks of how a Christian must be willing to face persecution (pp. 121-122). Every statement he says is true, but it is hard to relate them to *King Solomon: The Temptations of Money, Sex, and Power*. Example 2: Ryken deals with the Ark of the Covenant and the Temple, explaining the spiritual implications of different aspects of the temple and then applying them well to the Christian life today. However, Solomon had nothing to do with the details of the Ark – how it was made, what was inside, and the meaning of what was inside. The wanderings are interesting and useful, but they can be distracting.

Determining the target audience of this book is a little more difficult. The book is not technical enough to quite engage a serious seminary student or a pastor, yet it might help a pastor with some contemporary applications and valuable and quaint illustrations. It is more likely to appeal to the reading laity and serious young people.

Ryken chronicles the life of Solomon, his good and bad, in a semi-orderly way. He deals with some eye-opening issues in the book. For instance, Ryken highlights Solomon’s decision early in his rule to eliminate his enemies. Ryken considers Solomon’s action in contrast to the present day tolerance of those who no longer see treason as treason and who may excuse treason as freedom of speech. He points out that Solomon’s reaction to Adonijah (and Joab and Shimei), for instance, was not self-serving but was showing his love for the kingdom of God (p. 30). Ryken also highlights some helpful ways to avoid falling into Solomon’s sins and how to get out if one has fallen into these sins. He warns that one can fall into these serious sins even through little compromises.

Chapters 9, 11 and 12 are particularly good in explanations and applications. The writer deals at length with Solomon's sinful marriage with the Egyptian Pharaoh's daughter and how and why that affected Solomon and Israel for years to come. Maybe if Ryken had followed Solomon's Ecclesiastes it might have helped him to point out many of Solomon's autobiographical failures in detail and provide a little more focus.

The work of Christ to save and sanctify sinners and the promise of redemption comes out well, though sometimes Christ comes out more as a moral example than a Redeemer.

Negatively for me, Ryken uses broad interpretations to get to the meaning of some texts. Example 1: Ryken argues that Adonijah's request for Abishag as a wife was partly to satisfy his sexual impulse (and to get a consolation prize after the kingdom was taken from him). But Ryken does not prove this. Many scholars indicate that intimate contact with the king's wife or concubine in Eastern countries was a power play, just as Absalom did to King David by publicly being with his wives. The author does admit later that this was a power play as well (p. 33). Example 2: Ryken argues that Solomon departed from God toward the end of his life (hence a "tragedy" and not a "comedy"), but many scholars believe that he returned to God toward the end of his life, hence Ecclesiastes, and that it was in his middle years that he departed from God and went after many strange women and their strange gods. Ryken is reluctant to say if Solomon repented or was a believer at death (pp. 185-186). The book somewhat falls apart for me here. Ecclesiastes and other accounts in the Bible convince me otherwise.

Ryken makes what could be perceived as overextended applications of the text on some occasions. But then again, not all Reformed expositors have had uniformity in applying a text. I could say this of Matthew Henry and others whose applications I may question or disagree with, calling them excessive typological or forced application. Thus, it is true that most writers do take some literary liberties, but these were notable issues which took away from the effectiveness of a much needed book. I will use three examples. Example 1: Ryken argues that the Queen of Sheba came from a far distance to learn of Solomon's wisdom. He goes on to use that fact to challenge the reader to see how far he is willing to come to learn of Christ. That application would be more appropriate if the Queen of Sheba had truly come to learn of Christ (pp. 145-146). We have no evidence to prove that that was her reason for her trip – the evidence is that she sought wisdom. This type of broad application can easily come from reading a history book. Example 2: Ryken describes in detail the great and multiple gifts the Queen of Sheba brought to Solomon, but he uses this fact to rebuke those who ask if serving the Lord costs too much (p. 155). It is true that in some ways Solomon was a type of Christ, but can we confirm that the Queen of Sheba was a type of Christian and a godly example to follow? She came to gain wisdom. She did not come to seek Christ. Typologically, Ryken and others see wisdom as Christ. Example 3: After

explaining the beauty of the temple and that God is a beautiful God, one of Ryken's applications is that Christians must love beautiful things – beautiful music, beautiful art, etc. (pp. 90-91). But that is not a proper application, in my opinion, especially when one considers that the tabernacle was not attractive on the outside with all those rustic animal skins covering it. Jesus Himself was not known for His beauty, a point the writer concedes later. Yes, the temple was beautiful. Yes, Christians must love beautiful things and harmonic music. But the temple is not the reason we must love beautiful architecture. To compare Divine and spiritual beauty with physical beauty is not really a proper comparison. He writes: "When Christians settle for poor aesthetic standards, we compromise the character of our God. So notice the auburn leaf, hear the call of the wild eagle . . ." (p. 91, par. 3). Could it be that some hear the wild eagle's call and think of it as menacing and not beautiful? Could it be that some things have been affected by the fall and are not as beautiful? Must we treat the crocodile as a thing of rapt beauty? Some may love Bach but some cannot process that kind of music. Some don't love auburn leaves, which picture death, but only love rich green leaves. To a degree beauty is subjective. Surely loving green instead of auburn will not compromise the character of God. And I am sure the author would not say that, but he unnecessarily stretches the application and distracts from the main point of his book.

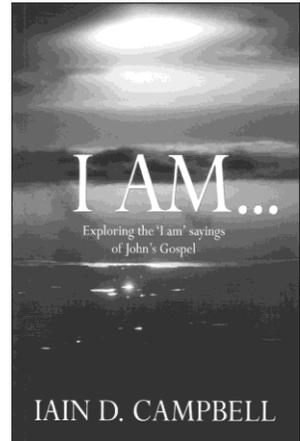
There is much to learn in this book. It is theologically sound, and there are some great stories and powerful warnings to guard against falling into Solomon's sins, but I was a little disappointed as well. I expected it to be a stronger systematic exposition of Solomon's personal failures and how Christians may prevent them through Christ. Because it sometimes meanders, at times I was lost. And without the author being convinced of Solomon's restoration at the end of his life, the book lost some of its effectiveness. Because I am convinced that Solomon was restored and died a believer, I reveal my bias, and I have been wrong before.

*Reviewed by Mitchell Persaud. Mitchell was born in Guyana, South America and now is a church planter at New Horizon United Reformed Church in Scarborough, Ontario, working mainly with Chinese peoples. Mitchell is from a Hindu background and his wife, Shabeeda, comes from a Muslim background.*



***I AM . . . Exploring the 'I am' Sayings of John's Gospel.* Iain D. Campbell. Darlington, England/Carlisle, PA: EP Books, 2011, 121 pp., paper. ISBN 978-085234-774-4**

Interpreting and applying the text of the Bible can be a daunting task. There is a plethora of guides and aids, yet reliable guides are too often unavailable. Such is not the case with this little gem treating the “I am” statements of our Lord in the Gospel according to John. Campbell presents Jesus as the bread (6:35), the light (8:12), the door (10:9), the shepherd (10:11), the resurrection (11:25), the way (14:6) and the vine (15:5). With great skill, Campbell weaves together a number of critical elements that set forth the meaning of John’s Gospel for the original reader and thus for today’s believer.



The premise of Campbell’s book is that Jesus’ use of “I am” statements conforms to the self-disclosure formula of the Old Testament. Campbell states, “So in the context of the grand Christ of John’s Gospel, John picks up these seven distinct sayings of Jesus, all of which expand on the name of Jehovah, the name I AM, the name that belongs to Jesus because he is the God of the Old Testament” (p. 12-13).

In particular, Campbell accomplishes his task by doing three things. First, he roots every “I am” saying in its Old Testament context. This is crucial as each statement is considered in light of Old Testament revelation. For instance, the bread of life statement is connected to the feeding of God’s people in the wilderness and their subsequent rejection of the God who redeemed them from Egypt. Another example is Jesus’ declaration to be the light of the world and its identification with the Feast of Tabernacles (p. 28-29). This approach is critical because it guards the interpreter from fanciful and baseless interpretations. The New Testament revelation regarding Christ is nothing less than the unveiling of the Christ revealed in the Old Testament.

Second, Campbell draws out the theological implications of each statement. As glorious as was the provision for the wilderness wanderers and hungry crowd, the greater provision is found in Jesus Christ, the bread of life. Again, Campbell draws out the theme of “light” in John’s Gospel as well as the wider context of Scripture. He develops the theological truth of the exclusivity of Christ in salvation in the Good Shepherd statement (pp. 64-66). This is great fodder for spiritual growth and faithful preaching.

Finally, Campbell does not hesitate to appeal to the affections in order to bring the truth of God’s word to bear on his reader. In the third “I am” saying, Jesus is declared to be the “door.” Campbell suggests the door is a sym-

bol of identity, access, security, and division. These are thoughtful and faithful applications that help to imbed the truth spoken by Christ into the conscience and will.

The benefits of securing and reading this book are many. First, Campbell provides an excellent example of intertextual interpretation and how it ought to impact preaching. Campbell's interpretations carefully incorporate Old Testament themes and events into New Testament texts. He demonstrates, as all good preaching ought to do, the interdependence of the Old and New Testaments in the unfolding of God's glorious plan of redemption.

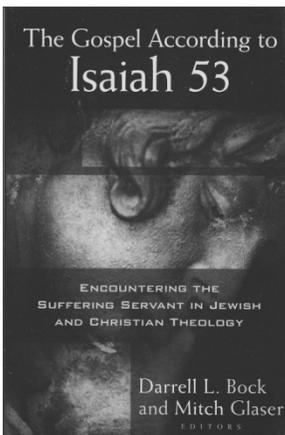
Second, Campbell provides an excellent example of great doctrinal preaching. He does not stray from the text under consideration but presses its meaning until it releases its God-inspired truth. This process always results in good and faithful doctrinal truth for the believer and the church.

Third, Campbell provides an excellent example of how "devotional literature" ought to be written. Beginning with the text of Scripture is essential, but it cannot end there. Devotional literature can tend to resort to proof-texts. The reader will find no such penchant here. The hard-won truths extracted via faithful exegesis redound to the glory of God as God's people are changed into the image of the great "I AM", the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Reviewed by William Emberley, who is the pastor at Grace Baptist Church in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Bill was born in Newfoundland.*



***The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology.* Eds., Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012, 334 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8254-2593-6**



*The Gospel According to Isaiah 53* is a series of essays on the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah from a solidly evangelical perspective. The editors are Darrell Bock, a research professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, and Mitch Glaser, president of Chosen People Ministries. Their aim in publishing these essays is to highlight just how powerfully the gospel is presented here in the heart of the Old Testament Scriptures and why Christians from the very beginning of the church have seen this chapter in particular as the high point of Old Testament Messianic revelation.

The authors are hoping that the book will have many uses, but chief among them is to produce a

useful tool in Jewish evangelism. That itself is a concept that is charged with much controversy and emotion. Jewish evangelism is seen by many as nothing short of cultural genocide. So a very strong case has to be made for why Jews are bound to believe Jesus to be the Messianic-Servant described here. Moreover, in studies done by Chosen People Ministries among six hundred Jewish families in New York City, an astounding seventy-two percent of respondents had little familiarity with the passage. As the authors say, "Isaiah 53 is unquestionably our most powerful biblical tool for Jewish evangelism, as it answers many of the fundamental issues Jewish people might have regarding the possibility that Jesus might be the promised Messiah" (p. 27).

This volume fulfills its remit and more. It is not exclusively for Jews, but the editors hope that it will be a powerful tool in the hands of pastors as they minister to their congregations, helping them unfold the glorious riches of the gospel found in Isaiah 53.

Richard Averbeck begins the book with an overview of the many competing views regarding the identity of the "Servant" in Isaiah as a whole and then as it relates to specifically chapter 53. He highlights the three more popular theories. The identity of the servants has been either 1) the nation of Israel as a whole, 2) the elect remnant within Israel, or 3) a single servant who suffers vicariously for the nation. His conclusions are simple. Despite the fact that Israel is sometimes identified as "My Servant", in this chapter he suffers for "his people", "my people". In fact the prophets include themselves in the "we, us, our" of Isaiah 53 as those who have sinned and whose sins have been laid on the servant. ". . . They too were in desperate need of the sacrificial substitutionary atonement and reparation made by the servant." So, argues Averbeck, there is no way that the Servant could be identified with the nation when the prophet himself includes himself in such company as one in needs of this redemption!

Michael Brown pursues this argument further in chapter 2 as he traces the history of Jewish interpretation on the passage. He takes us verse-by-verse and gives the popular Jewish interpretations on the verse. One of the most popular interpretations is that the "we, us" passages in the chapter are spoken by the Gentiles who are saved through the suffering of the nation of Israel and that in some way Israel, through its suffering, provides an atonement of sorts for the Gentiles. Brown responds by saying, ". . . It is somewhat ludicrous to put the loftiest theological statements in the Bible into the mouths of pagan idol-worshipping kings. This is not only illogical; it is without biblical precedent" (p. 76).

In chapter 3, renowned Old Testament scholar Walter Kaiser looks at the fact that the designation "Servant of the Lord", though applied to many prominent figures in the Bible, took on a distinctly messianic flavour. Kaiser states that the Servant of Isaiah 49:5-6, rather than being the nation of Israel, is sent to "raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore Israel" (p. 89). He states further that the prophet makes a point of saying that the Servant was "cut off

for my people” and that He was “made a covenant for the people” (p. 90).

Isaiah explained that this Servant had “done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth” (53:9c-d). Israel is not depicted by the prophets as being an innocent sufferer; rather, the prophet Isaiah, for example, describes Israel as a “sinful nation, a people . . . given to corruption!” (Isaiah 1:4). (p. 91)

Kaiser makes a very significant point as related to the suffering of Jesus and those with whom the Servant suffers. He says,

Didn’t anyone notice in that day that the word for “wicked” was plural? Or did no one notice that the word for “rich” was in the singular form? This is only to note how utterly precise the text is in its prediction of the Messiah . . .” (p. 103).

This chapter alone is worth the price of the book!

Moving into the gospels, Michael Wilkins explores the self-identity of Jesus with regards to Isaiah 53. Citing over fifty examples, he leaves no doubt that Jesus and the gospel writers saw these passages fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, he argues that Matthew’s gospel can be structured along the lines of Isaiah 53 very closely. He is the “Divine Nazarene, Righteous Son, Healing Servant, Blood Ransom and Transforming Master” (p. 115). He opens each of these up to show how the pattern found in Isaiah 53 is very consciously transferred to Mathew.

New Testament scholar Craig Evans moves us further into the New Testament epistles to show how the chapter has been used by Peter, Paul, and John. He shows how it informed Peter in Acts 3 and 10 along with his first epistle. Paul, too, argues not only for the doctrines of the substitutionary atonement and justification from Isaiah 53 but also the reason for why it was that ethnic Israel was rejecting the message in the first place (p. 160). All this and more from these twelve verses in Isaiah!

Robert Chisholm shows the need for the substitutionary atonement strictly from the Old Testament scriptures themselves. This no doubt is for the benefit of a Jewish audience. He shows how the nation, being guilty of breaking covenant with God and desecrating His law, is in need of atonement by something or someone completely outside itself as a nation. The Servant in Isaiah is described as doing just that. He writes,

First, the Servant removes, by his own suffering, the persistent consequences of past sins. Second, he “makes the many righteous,” meaning at the very least that the Servant, as God’s representative, declares the offenders no longer legally accountable for their past transgressions. (p. 202-203)

John Feinberg even gives us arguments as to why this chapter is applicable to post-moderns. He draws out attention to the fact that the chapter deals with things post-moderns make much of, namely narrative, community and social justice. All of these are covered in the chapter in some form. He says,

It is the story of a seemingly ordinary man with extraordinary love for those who hated and abused him. His is a love which even to this day is largely unrequited and rebuffed. It is the story of the worst case of mistaken identity ever. . . . It is also the story of a God who wants so desperately to have a relationship with his people that he sent his servant to tell them and show them how much he cares for them. (p. 214)

And yet he shows how, though all these are desirable, they are only made possible through the substitutionary death of the Servant. He is alone the door to enjoying these ideas as God meant them to be enjoyed. "God is a God of justice, so he cannot ignore the debt that sin has accrued. . . . As a gracious God, he generously pays the debt himself . . . . In so doing, he serves both justice *and* mercy" (p. 222).

Certainly for the preacher, it is a fresh approach to a very familiar passage. This is an approach that would appeal not only to post-moderns, but a creative way of impressing the passage upon the mind of a child.

Mitch Glaser relates in chapter 10 the painful experiences of having grown up in a Jewish home and ending up estranged from his family, who in no way embraced his new-found Christian faith. Having a firsthand experience of becoming a Christian in a Jewish home, he is able to equip the reader with what he needs to be sensitive to in Jewish evangelism. He says relationship evangelism is so important in just getting a hearing. His caution not to preach but to dialogue is I think wise.

Sometimes the issue is not whether or not Isaiah 53 can be demonstrated to prove that Jesus is the Messiah but whether or not a person is ready to hear it. Before we can proclaim Isaiah 53, we must become Isaiah 53. Jewish people need to see Isaiah 53 in action before we can win a hearing for the gospel . . . . (p. 245).

In many ways, this chapter distills the best of the others. If a person is pressed for time, Glaser wonderfully pulls together the more popular objections and answers regarding Isaiah 53.

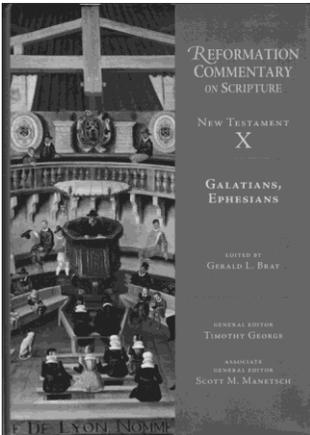
A sample expositional sermon by Donald Sunukjian concludes this fine work, illustrating how the chapter can be structured for preaching and delivered.

There is far too much to say about this book in a short review. It is a gold mine for those approaching this cornerstone Old Testament passage. Isaiah 53 is a passage that ought to be mastered, especially by the preacher. I can't

think of a better resource to help one do that. Suffice it to say that the authors leave no stone unturned, and if the student of Isaiah gives himself to the arguments and conclusions of this book, he certainly will be far more capable in using Isaiah 53 to unfold the Messianic treasures in much the same way the writers of the New Testament did.

*Reviewed by Kent I. Compton*

**Galatians, Ephesians. Ed., Gerald L. Bray. Reformation Commentary on Scripture, New Testament Vol. 10, gen. ed. Timothy F. George. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011, lvii + 446 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8308-2973-6**



In recent years there has been a growing appreciation of the value of so-called ‘pre-critical’ biblical interpretation in providing ‘theological interpretation of Scripture’ (TIS) which is done for the good of the church as a believing community. One of the distinct benefits of this trend towards theological interpretation of Scripture has been the desire to see the writings of Christian commentators from the centuries prior to the Enlightenment made more widely available. This led first to IVP publishing the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, which gathered selections from the writings of the Early Church Fathers into a commentary format.

Now IVP is following up their earlier valuable series with the Reformation Commentary on Scripture, under the general editorship of Timothy George of Beeson Divinity School, and the first volume to be published is this substantial and handsome volume edited by Gerald Bray, who himself taught at Beeson for many years.

The commentary opens with a twenty-five page General Introduction by Timothy George. This identifies the four goals of the series as: ‘the enrichment of contemporary biblical interpretation through exposure to Reformation-era biblical exegesis; the renewal of contemporary preaching through exposure to the biblical insights of the Reformation writers; a deeper understanding of the Reformation itself and the breadth of perspectives represented within it; and the recovery of the robust spiritual theology and devotional treasures of the Reformation’s engagement with the Bible’ (xiii). There then follows a significant discussion of the historical context of the Reformation era and of the various exegetical schools which can be identified, such as the Humanism of Erasmus, Luther and the Wittenburg School, the Strasbourg-Basel tradition, the Zurich group and the Genevan Reformers.

There follows a further seventeen-page introduction to this specific volume by Gerald Bray. This briefly discusses the way in which the Pauline Epistles were treated in the Reformation era, before considering significant interpreters first of Galatians and then of Ephesians. In a short section on the principles of the commentary, Bray acknowledges that the work has been necessarily selective and explains that, since reliable editions and translations of the writings of Luther and Calvin are freely available, he has given preference to writers and works which will be less familiar to most readers. Even where the work of Luther on Galatians has been included, Bray explains that he has drawn more on Luther's 1519 lectures rather than his 1535 commentary 'partly because of their brevity but also because of their relative unfamiliarity to most modern readers' (lv). Bray further explains that he has selected passages which he believes would be of particular interest to modern readers, either because they illustrate distinctive characteristics of Reformation-era interpretation or because they are particularly useful for modern preaching and pastoral care. Bray's considerable linguistic skills are well-employed as he has 'rendered many of the selections prepared for this volume directly from the original works only available in Latin, French, German, Dutch or Italian' (lvi) and many of these had not been available in English previously. In this regard, this commentary makes a distinct contribution to Reformation studies.

One of the criticisms made by some reviewers of the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* was that the excerpts were sometimes so brief as to leave the reader of the commentary unaware of the context of the excerpt and therefore liable to misrepresent the thinking of the author in question. While this is almost inevitable in a work of this nature, and this commentary too includes numerous brief quotations, the editor does seem to have addressed this issue to some extent as many of the citations are considerably longer than was typical in the earlier series. For example, one section of comment on Galatians 1:1-5 by Wolfgang Musculus extends to almost four columns of text in the commentary (9-11) and a further comment by the same writer of the same passage extends to approximately two and a half columns (14-15).

This type of commentary cannot replace a good, recent exegetical commentary, and any preacher should ensure that he has at least one such volume available for sermon preparation. However, each section of text in this commentary does begin with a brief comment which helps the reader to read the comments in their proper relation to the exegetical task and not as purely of historical interest or as spiritual reflections.

It may be useful for potential readers to have some indication of the nature of the comments, so I include a selection of brief comments on various significant verses: On Galatians 1:6 (Paul's astonishment that the Galatians are deserting God who called them): 'Paul wants to impress on the Galatians that they had been called by the immense mercy of God to be the compan-

ions of his Son. Nothing in this world could ever be greater or more salutary than that. What good are wealth, high office and fame if you are not called by God to belong to Christ's church?" (Johannes Wigand, *Notes on Galatians*). On Galatians 4:6 (God sends his Spirit who cries 'Abba, Father'): 'Paul translates a Hebrew word into Greek thereby showing that the Holy Spirit does not only cry in Hebrew, nor is it necessary to call on him in that language alone. The name "Greek" applies to all the nations except the Jews, as is often the case in Romans: "To the Jews first and then to the Greek." If the Holy Spirit cries to the Father in the language of the Gentiles as well, that means that the Spirit of adoption has also been given to them, as appears from Acts 15, where it says, "God bore them witness that the Holy Spirit was given to them as well as to us.'" (Robert Rollock, *Analysis of Galatians*). On Ephesians 1:6 ('to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the Beloved'): 'In our own strength, we could not possibly be anything other than enemies of God ... but he has reconciled us to himself in Christ, whom he loves more than any words can express, and so has made us who were once damnable wretches his own dear children. As long as we belonged to the devil, we could neither love God nor be loved by God. But because his dear Son has redeemed us from the bondage of sin with the price of his most holy blood and has incorporated us into himself as members of Christ's body, the Father cannot possibly choose not to love those he has been pleased to unite with his Son.' (Desiderius Erasmus, *Paraphrases*). These quotations are clearly only a tiny selection from a rich collection, but perhaps they give some indication of the care for the text, the theological depth and the pastoral warmth which the reader of this commentary will find in the citations which it contains.

Gerald Bray has done the church a great service in preparing this commentary, as have IVP, Timothy George and all those associated with the RCS project. I hope that this volume will be widely used and that readers will be enthused by the short selections to read more widely and deeply in the biblical interpretation of the Reformation. We look forward eagerly to further volumes in this series.

*Reviewed by Alistair I. Wilson. Dr. Wilson serves as principal of Dumisani Theological Institute, King William's Town, South Africa and holds an extraordinary professorship of New Testament in the School of Biblical Studies and Ancient Languages at North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa.*



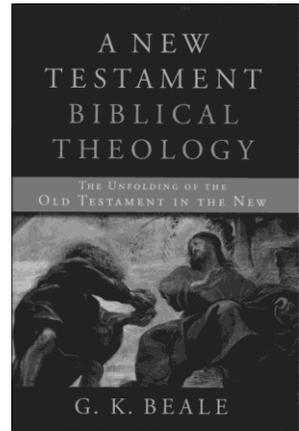
***A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New.* G. K. Beale. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011, 1047 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8010-2697-3**

As with many published works, the recent offering of G. K. Beale can be traced to its beginnings in a New Testament theology class. In 2007, Beale summarized this theology course that he began teaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary over twenty years ago, giving it essay form and the title, “The Eschatological Conception of New Testament Theology”. Beale had continued to develop his thinking in this area as he taught and published related articles. The accumulated result is this volume on New Testament biblical theology.

The volume contains an extensive 1,047 pages covering a substantial amount of material; hence Beale suggests that his study may also function for some as a reference source. The size of the work is a result not only of the wealth of material collated, but it is unfortunately also a reflection of Beale’s tendency toward pleonasm. This unavoidably does put unnecessary demands on the attention of the reader. The study has ten parts, which together contain a sequence of twenty-eight chapters. Included are a bibliography and author, scripture, ancient sources and subject indices.

Beale provides an introduction to the legitimacy of his study by pointing out the need to validate the work of P. Stuhlmacher and C. H. Dodd on the use of the wider theological framework of the Old Testament (OT) in the New Testament (NT) (pp. 11, 13). Beale affirms with Stuhlmacher that it is important to assess each testament independently on its own terms before any interrelation can be made (pp. 12-13). Though in-line with both Stuhlmacher and Dodd, Beale approaches the relationship of the testaments not on the basis of central concerns but by summarizing the main storyline of the Old Testament and then relating it to the New Testament (pp. 10, 12, 14). To accomplish this Beale utilizes an eclectic mix of canonical, “genetic-progressive”, exegetical and intertextual methodology (p. 15). A mere paragraph only briefly notes these approaches.

The resultant, distilled NT storyline is, Beale states, “Christ’s establishment of an eschatological new-creational kingdom and its expansion” for the glory of God (p. 16). Thus, Beale identifies eschatology, the end-times, as governing the biblical storyline. He defines his conception of eschatology in greater detail only later in chapter 6. In addition, it is unusual that the reader must wait until chapter 6 to better understand how Beale constructs a biblical



storyline since he has already distilled the OT redemptive historical and eschatological storyline in chapter 3. For the sake of clarity, all definitions, assumptions and methodologies should have been treated in the introduction rather than as further observations in chapter 6.

Part 1, entitled “The Biblical-Theological Storyline of Scripture”, is comprised of chapters 2 to 6 and provides a foundation upon which following chapters are built. Indeed, Beale’s entire argument developed in its various aspects stands or falls on the assertions made in this first part. Genesis 1-3 is “the” text for Beale in that the entire biblical theological system balances on it. Beale argues that Adam as image bearer “represents God’s sovereign presence and rule on earth” (p. 32). Adam thus enabled was to fill the earth with God’s glory (p. 38), in effect to begin the “Great Commission” (pp. 57-58), and as priest-king was commissioned to subdue the earth, beginning with the defeat of the serpent. He was also to maintain and protect the physical and spiritual welfare of the Garden of Eden, that is the first temple (pp. 30, 32). If obedient, he would have achieved an irreversible state of eternal life for himself and for humanity, with whom he would have been reflecting God’s glory in all the earth (pp. 36, 38-39). This translates into an eschatological rest (pp. 39-41). In Beale’s words, “In light of Gen. 2:16-17 and 3:22, Adam would receive irreversible blessings of eternal life on the condition of perfect faith and obedience, and he would receive the decisive curse of death if he was unfaithful and disobedient” (p. 42). Adam, however, failed in his task and did not guard the Garden and defiled the image of God (p. 45). Had Adam not fallen, the promise of eschatological rest would have become a reality (p. 39). Importantly, Beale makes this point the end goal of the biblical storyline, such that, as Beale contends, “the movement toward new creation and kingdom is the main thrust of the NT storyline” (p. 23).

In the OT, Beale argues, other Adam-like figures to whom the initial commission is passed on appear, yet because of sin and idolatry they fail consecutively. Thus Israel fails to fulfill the Adamic commission (p. 85), until a last-Adam fulfills the commission on behalf of humanity (p. 46). Within the storyline are cycles of cosmic judgments and new creation episodes culminating at the final new creation in Revelation (pp. 58-85, 182-184). Beale states that Adam as priest-king in a pristine creation and the pure state of the garden (as well as the other related concepts) are eschatological by nature, for “Adam’s goal as a priest-king was to rule in a consummated eschatological creation in which the blessings of Eden would reach a final escalation” (p. 88).

Beale goes on to show that the eschatological concept, inaugurated renewed creation concept (pp. 178-179), is a major thematic part of the OT’s storyline (pp. 88-116). He observes that in the OT story God “progressively reestablishes his eschatological new-creational kingdom out of chaos over a sinful people...” (p. 116). Beale also argues in a thin chapter for the prevalence of the eschatological latter days concept in early Judaic literature as further support for the eschatological OT-NT storyline he proposes (pp. 117-

128). He assumes that the evidence refers to the completion of God's plan, with respect to the patriarchal promises, for all of history (p. 128) yet does not indicate clearly that there existed a heterogeneity of eschatological expectations, one could say, a general tension between restorative vs. utopian interpretations (G. Scholem, 1971; M. Smith, 1959). This acknowledgement would somewhat complicate the issue. Even so, Beale pushes forward. Chapter 5, which identifies the relation of the OT storyline to the NT, was perspective changing for Beale, a defining transition for himself (p. 130). In the chapter he argues the NT is characterized best by the "inaugurated eschatology" concept, the latter days already began in the first century with the entrance of Jesus (p. 130). Parts 2 and 3 continue in particulars to illustrate how the NT understands eschatology, how end-time new creation and kingdom began with Jesus' first coming (pp. 187-354). Firstly, Beale presents the time of Jesus and the Church as following the OT cycles of cosmic judgments and new creation episodes in that the church age is a recapitulation of the trial by Satan of Adam and Eve and sinful behaviour (pp. 187-221). Secondly, Beale sees Jesus' resurrection as the sign of the latter days, effecting the new creational order, and as linked to Jesus' kingship (pp. 227-248). Furthermore, Jesus' resurrection is generative for NT biblical theology and fundamental for understanding regeneration, justification, reconciliation, sanctification, anthropology, ecclesiology, etc. (pp. 296-297). Beale states that the comprehension of it is "crucial for understanding the remainder" of his book (p. 354).

Part 4 deals with the restoration of God's image by Jesus, the last-Adam, in the inaugurated end-time new creation (pp. 357-465). Adam became an idolater and lost God's image taking on the image of his idol. As in most cases in the book, selective texts show how Jesus as humanity's representative restores God's image – a theology of anthropology (pp. 438-465) – and inaugurates the kingship of God (pp. 381-437).

Parts 5 to 9 deal with the expected chief theological categories and related subcategories within the context of the salvation process. The first chapter of the fifth part presents justification; however, Beale also examines reconciliation in terms of new creation and restoration from exile (pp. 469-555). Beale shows how Jesus fulfills the Adamic commission (p. 480) and how the nature of justification is eschatological in that the cross begins the eschatological judgment (pp. 480-492) and the resurrection inaugurates eschatological vindication (pp. 492-562). Complete justification is grounded in the believer's faith union with Jesus.

Part 6 introduces the pneumatological category and describes the role of the Spirit effecting new-creation by giving resurrection life (pp. 559-648). The Spirit effects not only individual renewal but also the transformation of believers into the eschatological Temple. Beale argues that Acts 2 depicts the "descent of the heavenly end-time temple of God's presence upon his people on earth" (p. 606). The Spirit effects the reestablishment of the Garden of

Eden's sanctuary and Israel's Tabernacle with the Church (pp. 626-648). As such, in part 7, Beale states that there is a transferral of stewardship of the Kingdom from Israel to the end-time new people of God, substantiating this claim by examining the fulfillment of restoration prophecies (pp. 680-694).

Part 8 is entitled the "Church's New-Creational Transformation of Israel's Distinguishing Marks". In this part Beale discusses the distinguishing ecclesiastical marks of the Church as transformations of those of Israel. The very first he identifies is the Sabbath observance (pp. 775-801). The resurrection of Jesus and His rest at God's right hand fulfilled the creational seventh day rest and is witnessed to by the observance of believers on Sunday (p. 801). Other new-creational marks include baptism, the Lord's Supper, the church office of elder and the NT canon (pp. 802-832). Part 9 deals with the life of the believer as a new creation in Jesus (pp. 835-884). The conclusion, part 10, reviews principles described throughout the volume and attempts to highlight the implications of discontinuity and continuity with a view to ultimate consummation.

In short, I believe Beale's volume may accurately be characterized as over ambitious. This evaluation is in no way meant to denigrate his scholarship or results; it only points out that the breadth of material he has taken on cannot be treated adequately in the amount of space devoted. Secondly, it would seem the greatest strength of Beale's argument, which is a basis for his storyline, is perhaps the presentation of the image of God as defiled by idolatry and recovered by the work of Jesus' resurrection. Beale is right to identify resurrection as fundamental for it was central to the gospel of the early Christian community.

In terms of particulars, one major concern is Beale's methodology – it is never clearly laid out. Instead he refers the reader to a previous book (p. 3). An outline of his approach should at least have been provided in the footnotes. Reading the analysis of paralleled texts, it becomes clear that Beale's intertextuality is very loose and maximal. The result may be his tendency toward a sermonic style within the manuscript.

Another major concern is the theological implication of Beale's fundamental understanding of Genesis 1-3. It may very well strengthen the case against theodicy, specifically by suggesting the very real possibility of an alternate outcome for Adam, humankind and the world if he remained obedient. Beale does not seem to be concerned with how the possibility of an alternate world history reflects on God as an omniscience and infallible being.

Beale suggests that eschatology tends to be a far more overarching concept useful for organizing a theological system (pp. 171-175). The biblical evidence suggests differently. The covenant concept does not seem to be governed by the eschatological idea. In fact it contains in it the eschatological dimension, as it is able to transcend the historical and speak of an inviolable relationship between God and His people. In this regard it is better suited to define the parameters of salvation history and mark its progress. Beale sees the covenant primarily as static and elemental (pp. 42-43).

Positively though, Beale's work is commendable simply for the attempt at a comprehensive harmonization of biblical themes within the framework of an OT/NT storyline. In this regard it should be very clear that the work presents a basis for NT biblical theology. Hence, it is a work that lends itself readily as a reference for preachers and expositors of Scripture. As per the above limitations and advantages, I submit that Beale's work will find the most usefulness in the hands of pastors; however, it may also prove to be a stimulating resource for students of the Bible in all capacities.

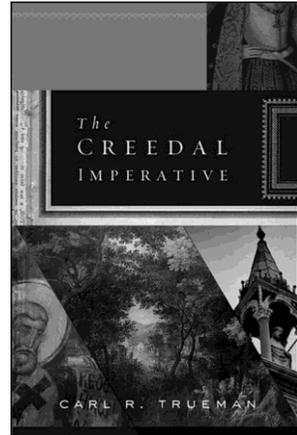
*Reviewed by Rev. Dr. Frank Z. Kovács, Ontario, a trustee of Haddington House and Ph.D. graduate from North-West University in South Africa. Dr. Kovács tutors undergraduate and postgraduate students for Greenwich School of Theology and is an Extraordinary Senior Lecturer in Research at North-West University.*



## Systematic Theology

***The Creedal Imperative.* Carl R. Trueman. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 208 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2190-4**

One would assume that everyone has heard someone use the phrase, “we have no creed but the Bible”. The instinct behind a statement like this is usually good; it seeks to uphold the ultimate authority and teaching of Scripture over and against any man-made document, interpretation or tradition. One would hope all Protestants – Baptists, Pentecostals, Lutherans, Presbyterians, etc. – would uphold the notion that Scripture is the ultimate authority. Yet the statement “we have no creed but the Bible” with all of its good intentions is often misleading; as Carl Trueman argues in his new book, *The Creedal Imperative*, it actually fails to preserve the authority and teaching of Scripture.



Trueman takes his years of experience as a church historian and develops what can seem like a backwards argument to many modern-day evangelicals: Scripture’s authority is best preserved not by churches who claim to have “no creed but the Bible” but rather by churches who subscribe to the historic creeds and confessions. Well argued, charitable, and accessible to a wide audience, in just under two hundred pages Trueman manages to demonstrate not only the biblical and historical rationale for the use of creeds/confessions but also powerfully refutes many evangelical objections regarding the authority of Scripture and the necessity of creeds and confessions.

Divided into five main parts, *The Creedal Imperative* addresses the sources of modern suspicion of creeds/confessions, the foundation of creeds in the ancient church, the confessions of the Reformation, how confessions are confessing Christ and worshipping God, and the overall usefulness of creeds/confessions. Written primarily for a broader evangelical church that does not subscribe to any historic confession (39 Articles, The Book of Concord, The Three Forms of Unity, Westminster Confession, 1689 Baptist Confession, or otherwise), Trueman challenges the cultural presuppositions that often make confessions and creeds seem improbable. In his words, the church can be “as a goldfish swimming in a bowl is unaware of the tempera-

ture of the water in which he swims, so often the most powerfully formative forces of our societies and cultures are those with which we are so familiar as to be functionally unaware of how they shape our thinking about what exactly it means to say that Scripture has supreme and unique authority” (p. 21).

In diagnosing the modern church’s hesitancy with confessionalism, Trueman reasons from Scripture that despite many assumptions to the contrary, confessionalism is not only plausible but necessary for the modern church to preserve Scriptures’ teaching. To defend this, he traces the historical development of creeds and confessions through the ancient church and Reformation periods documenting how and why they arose as necessary summaries preserving scriptural authority. From this he concludes that creeds and confessions have historically and biblically provided churches and their elders with the binding documents necessary to both preserve and defend the clear teaching of Scripture as defined in particular confessional content.

Drawing primarily from Paul’s use of “tradition” and “form of sound words”, Trueman demonstrates how creeds and confessions operate as subordinate signposts of scriptural teaching intended not to supplant Scriptures’ authority but rather to preserve it. Thus in arguing from 2 Thessalonians 2:15 and 2 Timothy 1:13, he shows the question for modern evangelicalism is not tradition vs. Scripture but rather has always been scriptural tradition vs. unscriptural tradition.

An important contribution, *The Creedal Imperative* proves the position of “no creed but the Bible” is fundamentally untenable. Tradition is inescapable, not only because of a variety of biblical texts commanding as much but also because of tradition’s latency within every church wishing to remain “orthodox”. Even a non-confessional church will still display dependence on traditional language of confessions and creeds if it wants to remain within the bounds of historical orthodoxy. Any church that uses the terms “Trinity” or “two natures of Christ” is no longer operating within a biblical framework alone. While Trueman argues the Bible most certainly teaches God is Trinity and Christ has two natures, the fact remains that neither of those terms is found explicitly in the Bible; rather they develop within a particular context and tradition. Thus for Trueman, the Reformation doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* or Scripture alone was never Scripture in a vacuum. He notes,

Christians are not divided between those who have creeds and confessions and those who do not; rather, they are divided between those who have public creeds and confessions which are written down and exist as public documents, subject to public scrutiny, evaluation, and critique; and those who have private creeds and confessions which are often improvised, unwritten, and thus not open to public scrutiny, not susceptible to evaluation and, crucially and ironically, not subject to testing by scripture to see whether they are true or not. (p. 15)

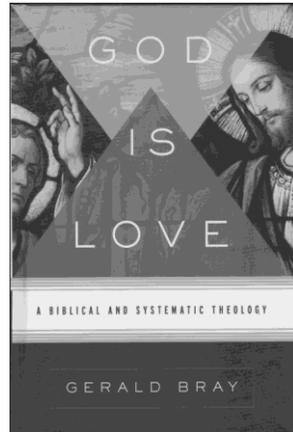
In *The Creedal Imperative*, Trueman has provided the evangelical church with a clear imperative for confessionalism. Intentionally not advancing his own particular confessional polity, he convincingly demonstrates the biblical requirement for the establishment of creeds and confessions. A must read for minister and laypersons alike, Baptist, Brethren, Presbyterian, Lutheran, or Pentecostal, *The Creedal Imperative* will challenge all readers to re-examine the role of creeds and confessions in the life of the church.



Reviewed by Ryan Mark Barnhart, associate pastor at Faith Bible Church, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island and a graduate of Moody Bible Institute. His interests include J. G. Hamann, Hans Urs von Balthasar, 17<sup>th</sup> century history and Reformed theology.

***God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology.* Gerald Bray. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 768 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4335-2269-7**

There has been a recent proliferation of major works published as one-volume systematic theology texts. Gerald Bray's *God Is Love* is perhaps the latest. Given the current published tomes in this field, Bray has attempted a rather unique approach. First, the book's subtitle is most revealing: *A Biblical and Systematic Theology*. Clearly the author and/or publisher's intent cannot be mistaken – this work proposes to be clearly rooted in Scripture as the seedbed for good systematic theology. The reader will then be forced to evaluate this intent and determine if it is indeed rooted in solid biblical study. In a recent interview, Bray said that the book “is very different from any other systematic theology on the market today because it takes the Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura* seriously. It is not just a question of backing up everything from the Bible but of trying to convey God's self-revelation in the Bible in a biblical way.” (See also p. 11.) I have concluded that Bray is unique on this point for a full systematic theology text.



Another feature which does not take long to discover when reading the book is the absence of footnotes or endnotes. Ninety-five percent of the footnotes are Scripture references and the others contain some basic definitions but no references. This is in stark contrast to Michael Horton's *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (2011). In part this must be Bray's goal: “to reach the kind of people who cannot or will not read systematic theology, because to them it is too technical and confusing.” He

further states, “I have written for ordinary, educated non-specialists. I have also aimed to reach people in developing countries and to deal with issues like demon possession, astrology, and polygamy that most people in the West tend to ignore, even though they are issues for us too.” (See also p. 12.) Regrettably, many systematic theology texts lack universal and contemporary appeal. The new abridgement of Bavinck’s *Reformed Dogmatics* is a wonderful work but unfortunately dated in its approach regarding theological concerns of the global church.

Regarding Bray’s approach to try to be as close to Scripture as possible rather than to have the text full of reams of historical theological commentary, he tells us in the preface that there will be a companion volume issued (p. 11). I do wonder what the size of this next volume may be.

Bray has divided the book into six major divisions, and each in some way speaks of God’s love – the overall unifying theme of the book. The divisions are as follows: part 1, “The Language of Love”; part 2, “God’s Love in Himself”; part 3, “God’s Love for His Creation”; part 4, “The Rejection of God’s Love”; part 5, “God So Love the World”; and part 6, “The Consummation of God’s Love”. The author certainly is endeavouring to communicate theology in a very creative and imaginative manner. There is something very refreshing about seeing a theologian crafting his work and inviting all manner of people to come with him on this very rich exploration.

Some may be interested to know that Bray’s first chapter is not about Scripture; that comes in chapter 2. Rather, he begins with “The Christian Experience of God”. Some will disagree with this order, but Bray has many classical theological works which take the same approach. It is also interesting that chapter 3, “The Christian Worldview”, is included in a systematic text. This was perhaps a first to see. (The word “worldview” does not appear in Horton or Grudem’s chapter titles nor in the subject index in their respective systematic theologies.) Bray speaks here of “the coherence of the universe” (p. 67). Personally, I concluded that the section needed a better introduction to lead the reader into the whole idea of worldview. So perhaps this is where the proposed second volume takes over. Another idea is that somehow the use of terminology cannot be avoided and maybe a short glossary would have made this work more reader-friendly. This could be a downfall of this work as a textbook.

In part 4, “The Rejection of God’s Love”, there are four most interesting chapters which would rarely be found in a systematic theology text. The very fact that they are here speaks volumes concerning Bray’s commitment to a full-orbed perspective on systematic theology. One chapter is on the religions of the world, followed by “Christianity and Religious Syncretism”. Here Bray’s sub points include “The Uniqueness of Christianity”, “Christianity as an Expression of Western Culture” and “The ‘Religion(s) of Abraham’ and Baha’i”. These sub points will help many theology students prepare for an integrated theological education and ministry. Since they do not have reams

of footnotes, it will be much easier to engage students and laity in these chapters. I did appreciate very much Bray's list in chapter 22, "Deviations from Christianity", and discussion on heresy as a way of introducing such things as Unitarianism, Christian Science and the Kimbanguists. However, I personally then found it confusing when he concluded the chapter with "The Nature of Christian Sectarianism". I was expecting something totally different, and yet it was about cults *and sects* basically as one, without clarity of definition. This ambiguity ends an otherwise excellent chapter with a note of confusion.

In reading Bray's section on baptism (pp. 625-637), one senses certain strong affinities to what Bray had written in his earlier work *The Faith We Confess*. (See review, pp. 75.) This is not surprising and is acceptable. He expands his discussion here in *God Is Love*.

Bray is not afraid to express himself in discussing today's controversial issues in marriage and church leadership. He raises some very helpful points on Christian marriage and really tries to make sure we return to Scripture. He is a complementarian, and this comes through both under marriage and gender and in his sub point on "The Ministry of the Church" (pp. 701-708).

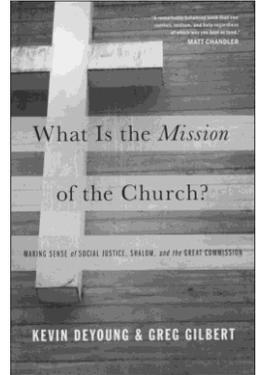
If there is any reservation I have about the book, it would be about the inconsistency on occasion of the amount of space given per sub point. It appears that sometimes a point takes just too much space or too many words and then another point is shortchanged. I felt that more editing was needed to bring about more evenness. The result may have been to shorten the work or to have allowed more even treatment to all the various points covered, even if the total page count ended up the same.

*God Is Love* has a beautiful tone which will make it appealing to many. It has a freshness without being quirky or trendy. It has a contemporary approach which shows a theologian at work in his generation and is realistic to today's context yet still classically balanced. The book will be most helpful for theological teaching as a primary text or as an additional reading work in the right context and will be able to be used in denominational or interdenominational settings as an introductory work. Its sheer size may deter some, but it is not densely typeset so a page reads quickly. The work may also be read simply for personal use as an exploration of theology, almost as a conversation of engagement at a very serious level.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission.* Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 283 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2690-9**

Kevin DeYoung, a Reformed Church in America pastor, and Greg Gilbert, a Reformed Baptist pastor, are on a mission to clarify the church's mission. They are not satisfied with recent formulations of the church's mission by such contributors as Christopher Wright and Reggie McNeal, nor the older and influential proposal of John Stott. Their aim, however, is to make a positive contribution to the discussion that will include correcting "an overexpansive definition that understands mission to be just about every good thing a Christian could do as a partner with God in his mission to redeem the whole world" (p. 20). For the authors, Stephen Neill got it right when he quipped, "If everything is mission, nothing is mission."



They also want to make a positive contribution by providing a careful analysis of the biblical teaching on kingdom, gospel, social justice and shalom. Guided by an accurate understanding of these concepts "we will be better able to articulate a careful, biblically faithful understanding of the mission of the church" (p. 16). Such an understanding of the church's mission will keep the making of disciples of Jesus Christ front and centre in the church's life and ministry.

For the authors, "Mission . . . is not everything we do in Jesus' name, nor everything we do in obedience to Christ" (p. 29). In short, they want to limit the church's mission to the Great Commission, which they define as follows:

The mission of the church is to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and gathering these disciples into churches, that they might worship the Lord and obey his commands now and in eternity to the glory of God the Father. (p. 18)<sup>1</sup>

They support their case by arguing the biblical story of creation, fall and redemption presses forward to the Great Commission and the church finding its mission there. They go on to make three further supportive arguments. They argue that whether the gospel is understood in a narrow or a broad sense, the gospel's focus on the cross focuses the church's mission on the

<sup>1</sup> The authors state that this quotation has been taken from Keith Ferdinando, "Mission: A Problem of Definition." *Themelios* 33, no. 1; <http://thegospelcoalition.org/publications/33-1/mission-a-problem-of-definition>.

Great Commission. They argue that the kingdom as something proclaimed and its blessings received in a faith response to the King narrows the church's mission to the Great Commission. They argue that a clear understanding of social justice texts along with grasping the reality that the shalom that is eternal is obtained only in Christ leads to the Great Commission as the church's mission.

The authors fear being misunderstood. They do not want readers to conclude that mercy, justice and cultural engagement are unimportant. Rather, they strongly support churches undertaking such ministries. Good works are necessary, and we do them for a number of reasons including to function as salt and light in the world and "to win a hearing for the gospel" (p. 227). However, good works are not a component of the church's mission; they "are simply doing things that redeemed human beings do" (p. 229).

Better and more faithful to Jesus' commission "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (Jn. 20:21 ESV) is to understand the church's mission involving both Word and deed. Word and deed ministry are both necessary and exist in a relationship of interdependence with making disciples of Christ the overarching goal of both Word and deed ministry. Word ministry, however, is foundational and thus central because the gospel message is God's solution to man's fundamental problem, namely, the guilt and power of sin.

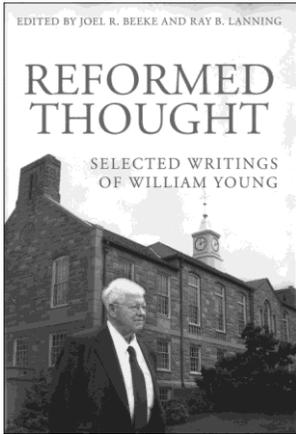
DeYoung and Gilbert's formulation of the church's mission and good works creates an awkward dualism for the follower of Christ. Sometimes he is participating in the church's mission, sometimes he is doing what believers do. Better to understand the believer as participating in the church's mission in whatever he does. The believer driven by the gospel orients his whole life to fulfilling the Great Commission. He sees bringing all aspects of his life under the lordship of Christ as demonstrating the power of the gospel, dramatizing the kingdom's presence, and along with other believers, providing a preview of life in the consummation kingdom. In so doing, all aspects of his life make a necessary contribution to the church's mission to make disciples of Christ.

There is much in this book to praise God. It dramatizes the urgency of making disciples of Christ, encourages ministries of mercy and justice, reminds us that the ballast that keeps us on course as we seek to love our neighbour in gospel words and deeds is the awesome reality "there is something worse than death and there is something better than human flourishing" (pp. 23, 242-246). It is clearly and engagingly written and irenic in tone. Nevertheless, as far as defining the church's mission, DeYoung and Gilbert fall short.

*Reviewed by Howard M. McPhee, the former pastor of the Springdale Christian Reformed Church, Bradford, Ontario, where he served for seventeen years.*



***Reformed Thought: Selected Writings of William Young.* Eds., Joel Beeke and Ray B. Lanning. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011, 430 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-60178-159-8**



This book is a collection of writings of lectures, essays, sermons and book reviews. The volume is warmly commended by Paul Helm who supplied the introduction (pp. 1-7).

Widely read in philosophy and theology, both ancient and modern, Dr. Young's theological sympathies lie much with the Puritans and the old Dutch writers. In the sense in which Lloyd-Jones referred to himself as an eighteenth-century man, Young can be fairly called a seventeenth-century man.

A major section of the book contains entries under the general heading "Theology and Doctrine". Several of these were originally addresses delivered at Christian family gatherings. One is impressed by the theological level of hearers who could appreciate such discourses. Pastors should consider that their congregations need instruction in sound theology.

Young is a thoroughgoing Calvinist of the old school. One of his central concerns is with regard to experimental religion. He regards this term as appropriate because a Christian's profession should be tested. Believers are to examine themselves with regard to their experience of faith and repentance.

In a chapter entitled "Historic Calvinism and Neo-Calvinism", first published in the *Westminster Theological Journal*, the author voices strong opposition to teaching which regards all children of professing believers as regenerate. The author traces this view to the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper. Although he acknowledges that Kuyper was very appreciative of the practical theology of the older Dutch writers and of the English Puritans, he contends that in this point of presumptive regeneration he differed from them.

Young says that the successors of Kuyper have gone further than their mentor and that they are responsible for what he has coined "Hyper-Covenantism". He presents seven theses of this teaching. Among these he lists the following: Thesis 1, "The covenant is not to be viewed primarily as soteriological but as cultural, Genesis 1:28 being construed as containing a 'cultural mandate' for the human race." Dr Young says, "Talk of a cultural mandate should be banned from the language of Canaan and recognized as a shibboleth of Hyper-Covenantism" (p. 36).

Thesis 5, "Doctrinal knowledge, and ethical conduct according to the Word of God, are sufficient for the Christian life without any specific reli-

gious experience of conviction and conversion, or any need for self examination as to the possession of distinguishing marks of saving grace” (p. 51).

Herman Dooyeweerd is the central figure in the development of “Hyper-Covenantism”. Young has known him personally, and he collaborated with David Freeman in translating the first volume of *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*.

There is an interesting chapter on antinomianism, originally published in the *Encyclopedia of Christianity*. The author indicates that there has been a good deal of misunderstanding regarding the view of law and grace as held by some prominent writers usually classed as antinomians. Here again he shows himself familiar with a wide range of literature going back to the earliest period of the church. The Libertines who presented a serious problem in Calvin’s Geneva were antinomians. But the English Hyper-Calvinists held the law to be a rule of life for the Christian and did not regard themselves as antinomians. Young accepts this. But as they did not urge the claims of the gospel upon all, it would appear that, in their view, inability is inconsistent with obligation.

Dr. Young mentions the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* in passing, only observing that some Scottish theologians were opposed to it because of what they felt were its antinomian tendencies. The “Marrow”, we feel, deserves a more positive notice. Its opponents were influenced by neonomianism or newlawism. This obscured the freeness of the gospel offer. James Walker in *Theology and Theologians of Scotland 1560-1750* asserts the thorough orthodoxy of the supporters of the “Marrow”.

In a chapter on conversion, Young gives much emphasis to a preparatory work of the Spirit. He speaks of a habit of faith. By this is meant regeneration and the seed of faith, which may precede “closing in” with Christ in actual faith. This suggests a temporal lapse between regeneration and conversion. The reviewer thinks that the careful words of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms are adequate to cover the spiritual experience of God’s people. Dr. Young is rightly concerned about easy-believism. But it is well to be reminded that the parable of the sower teaches that superficial professions are not a new phenomenon. It is good to read of the author’s emphasis on the convicting and enabling work of the Holy Spirit in connection with conversion. At the same time, too much emphasis on the preparatory work of the Spirit may hinder the preacher from extending the gospel invitation freely to all without exception or qualification.

There is a chapter on “The Puritan Principle of Worship”. It is an important subject and one that deserves to be pondered. The author includes a section on the Regulative Principle applied to song. He is an earnest promoter of the exclusive use of the biblical psalms in public worship. Other material in this section include the Westminster Confession on Church and State and another essay discussing a counter view of Abraham Kuyper.

The book contains a number of Dr. Young’s sermons. In these we are provided with examples of competent exegesis and a good experimental em-

phasis. In a sermon on the controversial passage Romans 7:14-25, he presents the view that when Paul spoke of his wretchedness he was referring to his experience as a Christian believer. In contrast to much modern preaching and writing, the author takes a serious view of sin in its different manifestations.

The section on “Christian Philosophy” contains a number of essays or lectures on various subjects. An excellent chapter entitled “Theory and Theology” consists of a lecture delivered at Westminster Seminary. Here Young includes advice that ministers should have some instruction in traditional formal logic and also in modern symbolic logic. Also in this section the reader is treated to several papers on Wittgenstein, originally published in proceedings of the *International Wittgenstein Symposium*. Dr. Young has an international reputation as an authority on this noted philosopher.

A final section contains a number of book reviews. Included is an appraisal of R.T. Kendall’s book *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*. Young is very critical of Kendall’s attempt to show the Puritan theology to be a departure from Calvin.

“Rabbi” Duncan, the Scottish philosopher, theologian and brilliant linguist, is mentioned several times in the volume, and in this last section there is a warm review of his *Colloquia Peripatetica*, a collection of his reflections on various subjects.

In *Reformed Thought* the author provides much food for meditation.

*Reviewed by William R. Underhay, a retired minister of the Free Church of Scotland, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. He now makes his home in Montague, PEI. Rev. Underhay has been a regular reviewer for the Haddington House Journal.*



***The Faith We Confess: An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles.*  
Gerald Bray. London: The Latimer Trust, 2009, 229 pp., paper.  
ISBN 978-0-946307-84-5**

This is the first commentary or exposition that I have ever read on the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England. It was a delight and a most stimulating read. Even though one is customarily to reserve their applause to the end of the review, this book, given its unique contribution and its readability, allows one to break from convention. It is welcomed and helpful.

The author, Gerald Bray, has made a considerable contribution to the scholarly work of historical Christianity. He holds many positions: director of research for the Latimer Trust, research professor at Beeson Divinity School, Alabama and Oak Hill Theological College, and distinguished pro-

fessor of historical theology for Knox Theological Seminary, Florida.

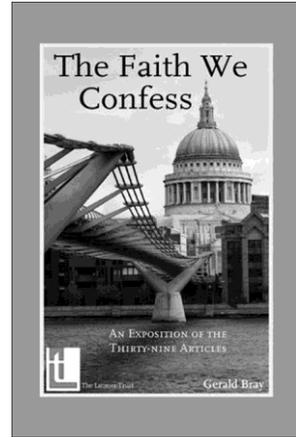
The outline of the book is very straightforward. The first eighteen pages are all introductory points on the articles; that is, their origin, revision and structure along with a bibliography. The focus of the book for the next two hundred pages is the exposition of each of the thirty-nine articles, followed by two appendices and an index of Scripture references. The expositions average about five to six pages each.

The style is to “exposit” the article without footnote apparatus in an engaging and yet highly informed manner. Behind each exposition there is richness of knowledge, yet the author is able to communicate this so well. He then concludes with three or four questions for discussion, a list of key Bible passages and a “For further reading” list. These are qualified as not “definitive” but simply to enable “those who want to pursue the matter further for themselves”. Bray recognizes that not all texts share the Evangelical faith of Latimer Trust, but they are important works on the particular subject.

Evangelical Anglican theological colleges should use this in their courses but so could others with great value. Presbyterians would find it valuable as would other evangelicals. My favourite exposition by Bray is Article 27 “Of Baptism”. This chapter should be used with students in any number of evangelical theological colleges. The author raises many questions here and answers them very judiciously. It would be a most helpful essay for teaching a confessions of faith course or an introduction to theology course.

Bray recognizes the contextual setting for the Articles and particularizes this when necessary, such as on “Of Sin after Baptism”, “Of Works of Supererogation”, “Of the Marriage of Priests” and “Of excommunicate Persons, how they are to be avoided”. The last mentioned was good on historical context but not as good on modern applications and discussion in the local church situation (pp. 183-188). The same comment could be made on Article 23 “Of speaking in the Congregation . . .”, excellent on historical discussion with much comment but very brief on application. Perhaps the book should expand its subtitle to read “An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles with Historical Context” or something to that effect. Bray is an historical theologian so naturally this work is chiefly an historical exposition.

*The Faith We Confess* is perhaps the most significant commentary on the Thirty-Nine Articles since the classic work by W. H. Griffith Thomas appeared posthumously in 1930 as *The Principles of Theology*. Such works are not regular systematic theology texts but, like J. I. Packer’s *Concise Theology*, provide generally an introductory text on theology. Bray’s *The Faith We Confess*, though an “exposition” on the Thirty-Nine Articles, is like reading



an introductory theology text, only organized along the lines of a classical confession of faith.

*The Faith We Confess* is clearly a welcome addition to the study of the great evangelical and Reformed Confessions. It is readable, judicious and historically lively and opens up good discussion; its weakness is inconsistent treatment of application.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***How Jesus Runs the Church.* Guy Prentiss Waters. Philipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2011, 178 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-59638-252-7**



Guy Waters is Associate Professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi and a minister in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). In this book, he sets himself two goals: the first is to present a scriptural case for Presbyterianism which might be of use inside and outside the PCA; the second is to make such a case as accessible as possible.

Waters more than achieves his second goal. This book is a model of how to convey doctrine in the twenty-first century. The look, feel, and pitch of the book are reminiscent of the IVP *Contours of Christian Theology* series. The chapters and sections are well organized and clearly labeled. Here

is a slim volume of Presbyterian ecclesiology which gives more than the basics and should whet the appetite for the further study encouraged by the annotated bibliography at its conclusion.

Chapter 1 answers the question: What is the Church? Here Waters uses the Westminster definitions of the visible and invisible church to define church membership and to reflect upon the meaning of baptism. Chapter 2 establishes that the church has a government distinct from the civil government and that Christ, as King and Head, is the source and definer of that government. Chapter 3 describes the nature and extent of church power. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with by whom and how the church power is administered: office-bearers and courts.

To answer the usual questions, Waters holds a two office view (elders and deacons) with the office of elder divided into two orders (teaching and ruling); and he argues against both women elders and deaconesses.

Given the general high standard of this book, it is disappointing that there is one rather glaring omission and two places where differences between the positions adopted by Waters and those of classical Presbyterianism are not

noted. While Waters discusses whether Christ rules over nations as the Second Person of the Trinity or as Mediator (he argues for the former) and hints at further discussion, there is not a developed section on the relationship between the church and the state. He adopts a position of a separation of offices rather than the classical Presbyterian view that the functions of a lesser office are contained in a higher. More significantly, he does not argue that presbytery is the radical court of the church but that all church courts have inherently the same rights and powers.

Regarding his first goal, the author has written a book which describes Presbyterianism from a decidedly Southern and PCA perspective. His positions rely greatly on the work of Thomas Peck, who was a colleague of R. L. Dabney at Union Theological Seminary, Virginia. They are supported and illustrated from the PCA's Book of Common Order (BCO) to such an extent that in some sections of this book the BCO is inextricable from its warp and weft. Waters cannot be faulted for this. Every author on this subject will write out of his own tradition and reflect his denomination's distinctives. Alas, having done so to the degree that he has, he has limited the usefulness of his book to those outside of the PCA and, thus, not achieved part of his first goal.

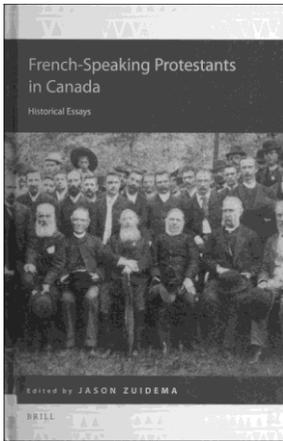
This book, then, is an accessible conservative ecclesiology text for those in the PCA. For others, it will help them to understand their Southern trained neighbour; and, it is a pattern for how they might write a really useful ecclesiology text reflecting their own tradition and denominational distinctives.

*Reviewed by D. Douglas Gebbie. Rev. Gebbie is a regular reviewer for this journal. He is a native of Scotland and was educated at Glasgow College of Technology and the Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh. He serves the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Chesley, Ontario.*



## Historical Theology

***French-Speaking Protestants in Canada. Historical Essays.* Ed., Jason Zuidema. Religion in the Americas Series. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011, 318 pp., hc. ISBN 978-90-04-21176-6**



Thirty-three years ago when I was taking a course in French at Glendon College, York University, Toronto on the history of Quebec, I chose as my research project an essay on Father Chiniquy. My instructor, very much a product of the new Quebec, had never encountered this unique individual, a Roman Catholic priest who turned to Presbyterianism, was subsequently immersed, and caused a riot in Montréal with his best-selling (and lurid) exposés of his former religious affiliation. With titles such as *Fifty Years in The Church of Rome* and *The Priest, The Woman and The Confessional* and claims he knew Abraham Lincoln personally and that the American Civil War was a Vatican conspiracy, who could take the man and the movement he identified himself with seriously? She marked down the paper and stated Chiniquy was a curiosity who had little relevance to modern Francophone identity or history, a best forgotten development in nineteenth-century Quebec.

How attitudes among academics have changed in the meantime. Not that, aside from various abstruse papers read at academic gatherings, there have been many further contributions to the study of French Canadian Protestantism. Now, at last, we have such a volume, featuring thirteen contributions from knowledgeable scholars on the subject, tracing Protestantism in Francophone Quebec from earliest French colonizers to the second sovereignty referendum of 1995. Editor Jason Zuidema, presently of Farel Faculté de Théologie Réformée (Farel Reformed Theological Seminary), Montréal and at the time of publication teaching at Concordia University, is to be commended on his success in enlisting fifteen other contributors and collaborators, assembling all the material in a single volume, and doing the organizing and proofing as a labour of love. For anyone who is interested in the extension of the kingdom of God in Canada, this is essential reading.

The story starts with an essay, translated by Zuidema, on the early Huguenot immigration to New France. Robert Larin in this chapter provides solid evidence of such activity. I have always found earlier treatments of the subject as unconvincing. The story moves to the nineteenth century and the unique figure of Henriette Feller, told by well-known chronicler of fundamentalism Randall Balmer and his wife, Catharine, interspersed with quotes from Feller which I found made the chapter a bit disjointed. Feller is the reason why nineteenth-century Québécois converts to Protestantism were dismissed as “les suisses” and their faith regarded as an affront to French Canadian identity.

John Vaudry of King’s College Edmonton brings an Anglican perspective with the conversion in 1846 of another significant figure in outreach to the Québécois under the Colonial Church and School Society. Glen Scorgie, whose departure to southern California was such a loss to Canadian evangelicalism, includes an update of an earlier article on the French-Canadian Missionary Society, which he describes as “one of the most extensive Protestant efforts ever made to evangelize the French-speaking inhabitants of North America” (p. 79). It gives a welcome correction to some erroneous impressions widely disseminated. Richard Lougheed analyses three stages in the progress of nineteenth-century French-Canadian outreach and concludes that the virtual disappearance of earlier commitment to evangelistic witness (and its absorption into less challenging educational activity, which was happening at the time all over the world in denominational Protestant missions) was due to the rise of liberal theology at the turn of the twentieth century. A second factor explaining the eclipse of earlier progress was the assimilation of Francophone Protestants into Anglophone society, faced as these converts were with obstruction and opposition of every kind. Roderick MacLeod and Mary Anne Poutanen chronicle the educational dilemmas of converts.

Other little-known names surface: Joly de Lotbinière is introduced as a part of a wider study by the eminent scholar J. I. Little of Simon Fraser University. Zuidema unravels the Chiniquy mythology. Jean-Louis Lalonde, secretary of la Société d’histoire du protestantisme franco-québécois, provides an overview of a century of missionary activity in Quebec, translated by Richard Lougheed, who contributes a fascinating analysis of the brief 1960s and 1970s evangelical revival as La Révolution Tranquille was transforming Quebec society. Further denominational perspectives from Denis Fortin on Adventism in Quebec and Sébastien Fortin on Baptist ministry over two centuries round out the studies, along with a concluding demographic analysis of French speaking Protestants given by the well-known Glen Smith of Christian Direction Montréal.

*French-Speaking Protestants in Canada* is a substantial and thorough analysis of Protestant advance, decline, revival and retrenchment among Québécois evangelicals. As national director of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in the heady days of the seventies in Quebec, our Francophone ministry, now known as Groupes Bibliques Universitaires et Collégiaux du Can-

ada, was an integral part of our Canadian student and camping ministry. A few years after I left in 1980, the movements separated to the loss of both. It is hoped that this volume will alert English-speaking Canadians to their responsibility for the evangelization of the whole country and our solidarity with Francophone brothers and sisters in their long and often discouraging attempt to reach Quebec with the gospel.

*Reviewed by A. Donald MacLeod. Don MacLeod is research professor of Church History at Tyndale Seminary. He serves as the president of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History and is very active in other societies. He is a widely published writer and biographer.*

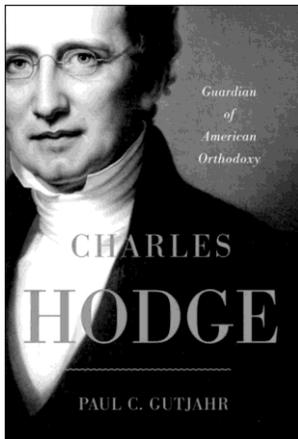


***Charles Hodge: Guardian of American Orthodoxy.* Paul C. Gutjahr. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, 518 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0199895526**

***Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton.* W. Andrew Hoffecker. American Reformed Biographies. Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011, 460 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-87552-658-4**

It must have been slightly disconcerting for Andy Hoffecker, retired professor of church history at Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, to discover that his biography of Charles Hodge, on which he had been working for ten years, was not going to be the only one published in 2011. But now that both volumes have appeared, they helpfully supplement and complement each other and both make a substantial contribution to our knowledge of this great Reformed theologian. Hoffecker provides the theological ballast that Gutjahr lacks, while Gutjahr gives a thoughtful and well-written analysis as an historian of Charles Hodge in a volume that is beautifully produced.

The interest in Charles Hodge has been comparatively recent. For almost a hundred years, and certainly after the death of the so-called “old Princeton” in 1929, Hodge has been caricatured as a dour and priggish Calvinist. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth: his grandson, the paleontologist William Berryman Scott, stated that “never, in any part of the world, have I met such a sunny, genial, kindly and tolerant people as my Grandfather and his children.” Only on the bicentenary of his birth, 22-24 October 1997, was due recognition given Charles Hodge with a colloquium at Princeton University featuring some outstanding historians, all celebrating his seminal contribution to American Christianity and the brilliance of his mind and writing.



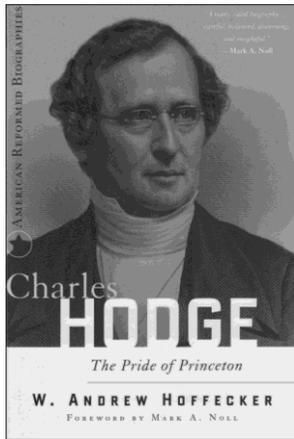
Paul Gutjahr's volume is a delight. It features a whole gallery of rough sketches of the persona of Charles Hodge's circle and contemporaries. The pictures, portraits, and lithographs reproduced in the body of the book are stunning. Gutjahr was helped by the fact that Bill Harris, who headed the Luce Research Library at Princeton Seminary and was an inspiration to many of us, not only suggested the writing of this book but in retirement moved to Indiana, near where Gutjahr teaches. The book involves an impressive amount of research and, as one would expect from a Professor of English, is beautifully written. As one of my faculty friends at Westminster Seminary remarked, "It's a real page-turner."

As the story of Hodge's life unfolds one is caught up in the grandeur of his faith, the tragedies that he weathered with a supreme confidence in divine providence, and his breadth of intellect and scholarship.

That said, and to take nothing away from the achievement of this biography, there are definite *lacunae*. The twenty-second chapter on "The Imputation Controversy" which on occasion dominated Hodge's theological conversation and formed a disproportionate amount of treatment in his commentary on Romans, in chapter 5, shows a lack of insight characterized by the phrase (citing Taylor) of "Adam's choice to eat the apple". Likewise the forty-third chapter, "The Inspiration of Scripture", falters in its comparison between Hodge's view of the Bible as "infallible" (as in the Westminster Confession) and that of his son and Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, to whom is attributed the concept of inerrancy. As David Kelsey of Yale said at the 1997 colloquium, "Hodge's actual practice of biblical interpretation was deeply informed by and consistent with his theology of the Bible as God's inerrant word, plenary and verbally inspired" (*Charles Hodge Revisited*, p. 218).

The other concern that I would have is the way in which Gutjahr speaks of the dependence of Hodge on Scottish Common Sense Realism. A familiar and often repeated assumption about the old Princeton maintained that the theology of the Seminary was shaped by Scottish Common Sense Realism and thus diluted its Calvinism. Gutjahr appears to agree: "Scottish Realism put a tremendous emphasis on humanity's moral intuition and its ability to detect and be moved by truth. Calvinism, with its doctrine of total depravity, held a much lower view of human moral ability" (p. 203). He then constructs an unfortunate dichotomy between *The Way of Life* and his later *Systematic Theology*. He claims that the one deals with sin in the traditional Reformed way while the other has a more positive view of the human ability to discover truth. This latter emphasis, Gutjahr claims, was increasingly evident as Hodge aged.

My father, a product of the “Old Princeton”, translated into Chinese Hodge’s *The Way of Life* to do for the Chinese church what Hodge intended for it: a basic primer for entry into the Christian faith. Hodge’s magisterial *Systematic Theology*, which shaped theological education for more than half a century across the spectrum of denominations and was the text originally favoured by the Presbyterian Church in Canada in its theological colleges, assumes on the part of the student an already existing faith that seeks to be further instructed. You cannot say that one is pessimistic, the other optimistic: they are both of a piece.



It is at this point that Hoffecker’s insights are so essential in supplementing Gutjahr. My heavily high-lighted copy of his 1981 *Piety and the Princeton Theologians* helped me thirty years ago to strike the balance between piety and theology and impacted my own teaching ministry to its great advantage. His *Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton* takes the argument one step further, balancing Hodge’s Old School orthodoxy with a warm and passionate faith too often identified solely with Finney and the New School. Hodge was initially ambivalent about the division of 1837, as Gutjahr helpfully points out and Hoffecker amplifies with an analysis of the ecclesiastical issues involved. He did not have a concern about slavery, being a slave-owner himself for some years before the Civil War (a strange anomaly here), and was sympathetic to the southern majority in the Old School. At the same time he spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing life to the church, a view that made him suspect to some who were denigrating the place of emotion in the Christian life.

It is in this context that Hodge’s *Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* must be placed. To Hodge, who admitted he was not a church historian, all theological studies were ultimately historical. “Hodge believed,” Hoffecker asserted, “historical study was essential to defending Reformed dogmas and correctly understanding current controversies” (p. 191). The chapter about Hodge as “Revisionist Historian” is particularly relevant to an understanding of the price we pay today for our neglect of church history both in congregations and seminaries.

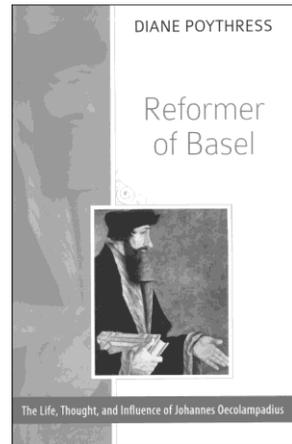
Charles Hodge was a man for our times. In his closing chapter Hoffecker applies the lessons that Hodge can bring us: “He enabled a church not only to maintain its spiritual footing doctrinally as others sought an innovative Calvinism but also to retain its essential spiritual mission when parties diverted it into a political agenda contrary to the church’s calling” (p. 359). We are indebted to both men, Paul Gutjahr and Andrew Hoffecker, for their holding up to us the life and teaching of Charles Hodge as a guide for a church that

often, especially in Canada, seems in retreat if not in a rout. Orthodoxy, Hodge would say, need not be reactionary and defensive: with him we can indeed engage the culture and challenge its presuppositions in the name of a sovereign Lord.

*Reviewed by A. Donald MacLeod*

***Reformer of Basel: The Life, Thought, and Influence of Johannes Oecolampadius.* Diane Poythress. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011, 230 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-60178-150-5**

Diane Poythress has provided us with the first monograph in English that focuses on a significant but forgotten Reformer, John Oecolampadius (1482-1531). *Reformer of Basel* is a biographical and thematic study, which Poythress describes as a “survey of the life and thought of this saintly man” (p. 2). Her expressed goals are to inspire Christians today from the life of Oecolampadius and to demonstrate that Oecolampadius was arguably the spiritual father of John Calvin and the entire Reformed church (pp. 1, 127-128). The book is divided into five chapters and includes an English translation of Oecolampadius’s exegetical comments on Isaiah 36-37 as an appendix.



The first chapter provides a biographical summary of Oecolampadius’s life. Poythress divides Oecolampadius’s life into five time periods: his early schooling and priesthood (1482-1514); his first work in Basel, theological training, and time in a monastery (1515-1521); his return to Basel and the beginning of the Eucharist controversies (1522-1525); the introduction of reform measures (1526-1528) and the acceptance of the Reformation in Basel to his death (1529-1531). This sketch highlights the work of Oecolampadius in collaborating with Erasmus on the first edition of the Greek New Testament, translating patristic texts, reforming liturgical activity, introducing the role of lay elders, establishing church discipline practices, engaging in the Eucharist controversy, and regularly preaching, teaching, and writing biblical commentaries. A brief timeline of the significant events in Oecolampadius’s life and ministry concludes the chapter (pp. 35-36). Poythress indicates that she utilized previous German biographies and studies, such as those by Karl Hammer, Ernst Staehelin, Olaf Kuhr, and Rudolf Wackernagel. For English readers, this chapter offers an update to the biographical section on Oecolampadius in Gordon Rupp’s *Patterns of Reformation*.

The next three chapters survey the thought and contribution of Oecolampadius. Poythress devotes the second chapter to Oecolampadius’s associations with other reformers to show that, “By God’s grace he had become a

funnel for collecting past faithful doctrine, pouring it into his generation and beyond” (p. 37). She compares the teachings of Oecolampadius with Capito, Bucer, Zwingli, Luther, Melancthon, Erasmus and Calvin on topics including the covenant, election, church discipline, church and state, the Lord’s Supper, baptism, justification and the law. She shows how Oecolampadius anticipated and influenced many of the reform ideas and actions by later reformers. She notes the influence of Oecolampadius on reformations that happened elsewhere in Europe but particularly draws attention to Geneva’s implementation of church practices taught by Oecolampadius and Oecolampadius’s influence on Calvin’s theology and exegesis. She establishes that the teaching of Oecolampadius has unknowingly reached many preachers today through Calvin (pp. 54, 71). Poythress insists that “although Calvin is perceived as the father of the Reformed Church, he is actually the son of Oecolampadius” (p. 55).

The third chapter then focuses on Oecolampadius’s study of Scripture. Poythress identifies some of the sources Oecolampadius used but emphasizes that Augustine and Chrysostom were the primary influences on his exegesis. She specifically denotes Chrysostom as a tutor for Oecolampadius because they both interpreted Scripture grammatically and historically, with “sober typological exegesis” that minimized allegory and speculations (p. 58). Poythress describes Oecolampadius’s “Christocentric” methodology that began at the heart; utilized the resources of grammar, language, history, genre, and parallel scriptures; and ultimately led the interpreter “to see Christ with the eyes of faith” as the goal of all Scripture (pp. 76-77, 82-84, 121). The fourth chapter endeavors to derive his “doctrine as it might have appeared in a systematic theology” (p. 85). Poythress summarizes Oecolampadius’s views on scripture, theology, the church, original sin, free will, election, icons, relics, worship of saints and angels, the sacraments and other important topics at the time of the Reformation. Among other things, she contends that Oecolampadius “might be considered the father of covenant theology, after Paul and Augustine” (pp. 49, 97). The final chapter of the book is a catalog of Oecolampadius’s publications with the titles and some bibliographic information translated into English (pp. 135-170).

Poythress has undertaken the difficult task of introducing a historical figure who made very significant contributions but has been unjustly overlooked for a long time. She has been diligent to revise her dissertation to make this a well-organized, readable and concise presentation. Poythress writes in an engaging style that draws in the reader. Though there are certainly more significant two-chapter excerpts from Oecolampadius’s commentaries, the publication of the first English translation of a major portion of one of his commentaries is a tremendous contribution (pp. 171-201). The appendix effectively demonstrates his exegetical practices, the style of his commenting and the way he approached the biblical text to draw out theological implications. I echo her desire that this book will “encourage others to

translate remaining buried treasures from his commentaries” (pp. 2, 171).

While I do not want to undercut the importance of the contribution Poythress has made, there are a few aspects of this book that are problematic. It is daunting to criticize a book that includes sixteen very positive reviews on its inside cover from well-known historical scholars, but there are some features that regrettably limit its value. The frequency with which Poythress explicitly identifies God at work in the life and ministry of Oecolampadius will unfortunately make it difficult for this book to be received well by historians or used in history classes. While I definitely appreciate Poythress’s devotion to Reformation theology and acknowledgement that God is the primary cause of all things, this approach implicitly claims the authority to determine where God was active and where he was not. Only what was eventually favorable for Oecolampadius or the Reformed tradition is portrayed as God’s work. In contrast, Poythress begins the book by attributing the limited amount of research done on Oecolampadius to Satan without any acknowledgment of God’s providence.

Similarly, in her quest to show the significance of Oecolampadius, Poythress portrays him as a “saint” that is closer to a modern-day Presbyterian than a theologian emerging from the late medieval context. Her accounts of how Oecolampadius’s contemporaries viewed him are nearly all favorable, with no indication of the negative views which Luther and others held toward him. She diligently defends his integrity for not technically breaking his vow when he left the monastery and for not revising or tampering with patristic texts he gathered and translated. She refers to Oecolampadius “ushering in modern hermeneutics” (p. 62) and contends his exegesis “continues rivaling many moderns of today” (p. 84). Her selective portrayal of Oecolampadius’s thought gives the impression that he had entirely abandoned medieval approaches and interpretations in favor of an exclusive use of the grammatical-historical method and adherence to Reformed doctrines. In many respects Oecolampadius was a “father” to Calvin and the Reformed church but in others he would be unrecognizable. A broader study of Oecolampadius’s writings beyond the Isaiah and Romans commentaries, however, would demonstrate that much of what she critiques about Calvin and medieval interpretation is also present in the writings of Oecolampadius. Perhaps most unconvincing is her conjecture that Oecolampadius was particularly interested in evangelizing the Jews. She asserts that his attention to Hebrew and use of rabbinical sources was “just to better communicate with contemporary Jews” and his use of Israelite traditions “aided his solidarity with Jewish adherents” (pp. 126-127). While Oecolampadius may not have expressed the kind of contempt toward Jews that others at the time did, he most often included Jewish exposition in his commentaries to refute it, not to make his theology more accessible to Jewish readers. I find it completely unnecessary for Poythress to overstate what can be said about Oecolampadius. The life and contributions of Oecolampadius are important enough that he warrants dedicated attention without needing to be depicted as “unique in his

ability as a scholar and in his depth as a biblical expositor” (p. 126) or to claim that “the theological correctness of his scholarship, and the breadth and depth of his understanding, remain unsurpassed to this day” (p. 128).

A final criticism has to be made about chapter 5. The purpose of this chapter is unclear and its contents are unreliable. If the purpose was to demonstrate the breadth of Oecolampadius’s writing, then all the detail is unnecessary and distracting. If the purpose was to provide an English bibliography comparable to Staehelin’s *Oekolampad-Bibliographie*, then the arrangement, the haphazard format of data and the inaccuracies are not helpful for the interested student. When the contents are compared with bibliographical information in Staehelin and online sources such as *WorldCat* or the *Post-Reformation Digital Library*, it is evident that there are several incorrect entries. She attributes a commentary on Psalms to Oecolampadius (pp. 133, 168, 208) that is actually one of the commentaries edited by Augustin Marlorat in 1562, which only included excerpts from sermons by Oecolampadius on a few of the Psalms. Her catalog also includes a commentary on Daniel and Job, supposedly published in 1530 even though Oecolampadius had not yet lectured on Job. It also includes misdated information for a translation of Chrysostom’s homilies and the commentary that included the Minor Prophets and Job. The obvious reason for these mistakes is that she gave preference to Salomon Hess’s work published in 1793 rather than more recent and more reliable sources (p. 134). Any use of the information in this chapter would require verification from other sources, and with more than 120 writings by Oecolampadius now available digitally, its usefulness is uncertain anyway.

Despite these shortcomings, I would recommend *Reformer of Basel* to pastors, professors and students interested in the Reformation era and Reformed theology as a way to get a sense of the life, thought and significance of John Oecolampadius. The historical sources may not be able to substantiate all of Poythress’s presentation of Oecolampadius as an inspiring figure and the father of Calvin and the Reformed church, but hopefully this book will serve as a useful introduction for English-speaking readers to Oecolampadius and will inspire further studies on the contributions of Oecolampadius and the connection between Basel and Geneva.

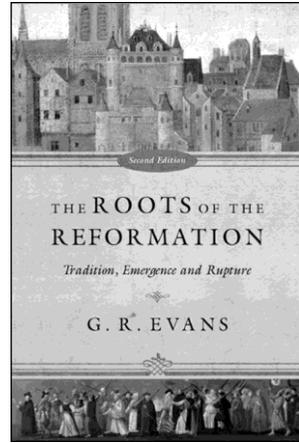
*Reviewed by Jeff Fisher, a Ph.D. candidate at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL and adjunct professor of theology at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, IL. He is also an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.*



***The Roots of the Reformation: Tradition, Emergence and Rupture, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*** G. R. Evans. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012,

**480 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-3996-4**

Many people understand the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century as a movement in the Western church that arose in reaction to certain social and ecclesiastical developments in the preceding century or two. While there certainly were developments in European society, and in the theology and practice of the church, in the latter Middle Ages that were factors in shaping the Reformation, its roots are much deeper. The Reformation dealt with issues with which the church had wrestled right from its birth. (In fact, these issues are still being dealt with by Western Christians today.) It is the concern of G. R. Evans in this fine work to give the reader a broad historical perspective on the causes, concerns and results of this movement for church reform.



The book is divided into three parts. Part 1, “The Bible and the Church” deals with the eight foundational issues which arose early in the church and which resulted in disagreements between the Reformers and the Church of Rome in the sixteenth century.

- 1) “The Idea of Church”: What constitutes the true Church of Christ – an unbroken line of apostolic succession or one whose teaching is in line with that of the apostles? Related issues are the nature of proper church polity (bishops or elders, patriarch or pope) and the grounds for the validity of the preaching and sacraments of a particular church.
- 2) “The Idea of Faith”: Building on the Apostles’ Creed and the Niceo-Constantinopolitan Creed, what were the essentials of the faith and what were merely indifferent matters?
- 3) “Where Was the Bible?”: What books are to be included in the Bible to reflect the conclusion that they were produced by divine inspiration? What was the proper way to interpret the Bible? Were there multiple interpretations for each passage in the Bible (Pope Gregory the Great taught fourfold interpretations), or was there only one way to interpret each one?
- 4) “Becoming and Remaining a Member of the Church”: The issue of the true members of the church arose as a result of the need to catechize children baptized as infants but also to evaluate those who lapsed from the faith under persecution or immorality and wished to be restored to the church.
- 5) “Penance and the Recurring Problem of Sin”: What provided assurance of forgiveness of sins in the Christian life? Was it necessary to confess one’s sins to the priest to receive absolution, confirmed

through penance in this life and in purgatory after death? Or did this undermine the sufficiency of the work of Christ, and did it assume that human works (of penance) had merit?

- 6) “The Eucharist and the Idea of Sacraments”: Were there seven sacraments as the church in the latter Middle Ages came to teach? And what exactly happens at the Lord’s Supper in the words of institution by the minister? What does the congregation eat and drink in communion?
- 7) “Organization, Making Decisions and Keeping Together”: How binding are the decisions of church councils, especially those after the Council of Chalcedon (451)? This question became more pronounced with the great schism of the church between east and west in 1054. What is the relationship between the authority of the pope and of church councils?
- 8) “The Church and the State”: Who wields ultimate authority in spiritual and temporal matters – the church or the state? And which weapons could be used to enforce those authorities?

In Part 2, “Continuity and Change in the Middle Ages”, Evans unfolds five developments in the thought and practices of the church in European society during the centuries preceding the Reformation. These provide the proximate context for its concerns. First, the monasteries grew in prestige and influence, especially as centres of education, though they often fell into corruption due to their growing wealth. Periodic movements of reform attempted to return these communities to their original disciplined ascetic principles. Second, the rise of the universities in the twelfth century was a response to the desire for education for a career in church and society at large. This resulted in a more academic study of theology and of the Bible shaped by the categories of logic and by the desire to study the original sources (*ad fontes*). Third, the period also saw the rise of “evangelical movements”, such as the Waldensians and Albigensians, motivated by the desire to live the simple life of the early Christians and to be guided by the preaching of Scripture. There was a growing interest in preaching evident both in the academic study of rhetoric but also in the founding of the preaching orders of the Dominicans and Franciscans. Fourth, there arose a number of religious movements to heighten people’s spirituality; some of these were focused on the individual life and some involved group associations committed to common causes. Fifth, during these centuries there arose pre-Reformation movements of church reform, such as the Lollards (influenced by Jon Wyclif) and the heirs of John Hus. Although they were suppressed by the church, they had lasting effects.

Part 3, “Continuity and Change from the Reformation”, presents the various streams of the Reformation through the framework of the eight foundational issues of concern which Evans unfolds in Part 1. Evans devotes a chapter to each of the following: The Renaissance, Luther and his heirs, Hen-

ry VIII and the English Reformation, the Anabaptists, and Calvin and his Reformed disciples. The author does an able job of expounding the key concerns of the Reformers: studying Scripture directly in the original languages, recovering the biblical teaching of justification by faith alone, providing lay people with the tools to appropriate the faith for themselves via translations of the Bible and instruction via catechisms, abolishing unbiblical teachings and practices of the late medieval church, clarifying the true church of Christ, and formulating systematic theology, liturgical practice and church polity that conforms to Scripture.

Evans presents an accurate portrait of the twists and turns in the various leaders and movements of church reform. She is generally fair to the various streams of the Reformation and their key leaders. Anabaptists will not be happy that Evans only devotes eight pages to the Anabaptist stream. The lengthy chapter on Calvin and his disciples has some puzzling features: it deals with his doctrine of predestination as if it were his key doctrine; it concludes with considerable material on the Puritans in the New World; and it has eight pages on the Quakers, Amish and Mennonites in the New World (which would be better situated in the chapter on Anabaptists). It seems out of place to have historical material that takes the reader into the eighteenth century.

In Part 3 Evans includes a chapter on the Counter-Reformation, focusing on the Council of Trent. Here again, it is puzzling why she includes a section on the church and Galileo since this takes us into the seventeenth century. There is also a chapter on church and state, reflecting the fact that the formation of new (Protestant) churches required a new understanding of this relationship.

Since the Reformation raised key questions about Scripture, Part 3 concludes with a lengthy chapter on continuing questions about the Bible: What is the relationship between the Divine and human authors? What is the correct way to interpret it? What is the role of tradition and the institutional church in interpretation? How does one determine when interpretations become unacceptable? Evans does two things here that are unfortunate. First, she attributes views on the Bible to the Reformers that they did not hold (for example, that Scripture contradicts itself and that textual variants make it difficult to arrive at the true text of Scripture). Second, she again presents questions about Scripture raised after the sixteenth century, some of which are posed by early Enlightenment figures. This is out of place in a work on the Reformation.

The “Conclusion” ties together the points raised in Part 1 so as to enable the reader to see the continuities and discontinuities of the Reformation with the medieval church. The book ends with a chapter entitled “Handlist of Reformation Concerns and Their History”. This is a very valuable guide for the reader to see how the perennial themes (in Part 1) forming the background to the Reformation played themselves out in the actual events of the sixteenth century. Evans presents a helpful overview of the conclusions of

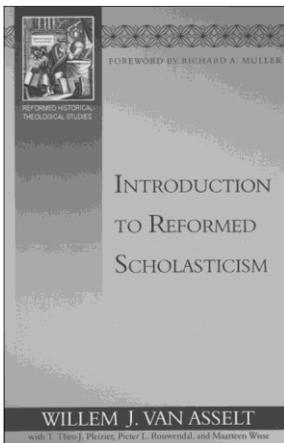
the Reformers concerning these issues and questions. She includes sidebar references to chapters and sections within chapters where the book deals with these topics.

In conclusion, Evans' book is a good presentation of the Reformation through the perspective of the long-standing questions with which the church has wrestled from its beginnings. The concerns I note above are minor and do not detract from the general value of this work. I recommend it for those desiring a deeper and broader understanding of the Reformation.

*Reviewed by Guenther ("Gene") H. Haas. Professor of Religion and Theology, Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario. Dr. Haas is a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America.*



***Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism.* Ed., Willem J. Van Asselt. Reformed Historical-Theological Studies. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011, 247 pp., paper. ISBN 976-160178-121-5**



The present volume of essays provides a remedy for a condition – which though widespread among thoughtful Protestants interested in Christian theology in the Reformed tradition – goes largely unacknowledged, and because unacknowledged, unresolved. This condition sometimes shows itself in those who suppose that any detectable divergence from the views of John Calvin in subsequent centuries is a sign of definite decline. Alternately, the condition appears among those who suppose that Reformed theology eventually suffered a hardening of the arteries in the two hundred years after Calvin. On either understanding, only hewing close to Calvin would have staved off trouble. Both viewpoints are widespread, with especially the first being popular among evangelicals in the Reformed tradition; some can recall the impact made by the volume of 1981, R.T. Kendall's *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*, which stirred up that pot. Kendall blamed the Puritans for departing from Calvin in one particular respect, the Christian's assurance of standing in grace.

But I have said that this book of essays is a remedy for a condition. And that condition is the under-developed appreciation that the Reformed theology – which had its beginnings in the careers and writings of Hulderich Zwingli (1484-1531), Martin Bucer (1491-1551) and John Calvin (1509-

1564) –was steadily thereafter an international and regional movement which had many major representatives and took on many distinctive hues. Of course, not all of these hues were deemed legitimate; Arminianism and Amyraldianism were developments of a subversive type. The volume under review traces such regional and chronological developments in Reformed theology from Calvin’s time into the second half of the eighteenth century.

Central to its purpose is the clarifying of the important difference between the terms “scholasticism” and “orthodoxy”. The first has come to have a negative connotation while the second has a generally positive association. The authors of our volume are at pains to impress on us that while “orthodoxy” entailed the formal elaboration of Reformation theology in textbooks and creedal statements in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (a good and necessary elaboration), “scholasticism” refers not to the content of orthodox theology but to the form of argument used in stating and defending orthodox belief. After Calvin, Reformed theology increasingly employed terminology and categories (but not convictions) borrowed from Aristotle both because of their utility in making a clear argument and because theological opponents (such as the Jesuits) were themselves employing Aristotle in their polemics. The era of orthodox elaboration may be said to have lasted about a century after 1560 and to have encompassed the Reformed creeds and confessions of the seventeenth century. Meanwhile, the use of scholastic method in elaborating orthodoxy endured into the eighteenth century. After that time, new theological methods stressing the right interpretation of ancient texts and the weighing of historical evidence (approaches popular in the Enlightenment) began to prevail among the Reformed.

Now, such distinctions will at first seem dry and pointless to many readers of this review. But what this volume offers us is a virtual “roadmap” indicating the course taken by Reformed theology in Switzerland, Germany, Holland, France and Britain well into the heyday of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Why do we need such a roadmap?

Because, if we prefer (and many do) to read Calvin’s writings above those of all other human authors, we need to have a sense of what happened when Calvin departed from the scene in 1564. In short, whatever primary role he may have filled while among the living was rapidly ceded to other writers such as Bullinger, Beza and Perkins who outlived him. Or, if we prefer to read the Puritan writers of the age of the Westminster Assembly (1643-49) or their Nonconformist successors in the Restoration period (post-1660), we need to be able to “place” such writers in the flow of developing Reformed theology, considered as an international current. The still-revered John Owen (1616-1683) can in this way be viewed as the intellectual contemporary of his Geneva counterpart Francis Turretin (1623-1687) – whose writings played such an important role in Reformed theology in both Britain and North America well into the nineteenth century. The still-consulted commentator Matthew Henry (1662-1714) stood at approximately the same stage of

Reformed theology as did Benedict Pictet (1655-1724), the moderating – but still orthodox – successor of Turretin of Geneva.

In recent times, there have not been such aids available to the one who wanted to grasp the flow of the history of Reformed theology. Some may have consulted the 1965 volume of J. W. Beardslee, *Reformed Dogmatics* (which provided excerpts from major Reformed theologians in the age after Calvin); yet it provided no adequate account of the “flow” of things. Others will have seen the nineteenth-century volume of Herman Heppel, *Reformed Dogmatics Set Out from the Sources* (E.T. 1950); this provided illustrations of the ways in which formulations of different Reformed doctrines were enhanced over time. But neither of these volumes provided an account, a roadmap to explain the change of terrain from the death of Calvin to 1750 – and this has been a very great need.

To accomplish a useful interpretation covering two hundred years in brief compass is a very tall order, and so it is not surprising that this volume has its thin patches. All of the contributors to the volume are Dutch academics interested in the history of Reformed theology; they certainly understand the unfolding of this story in their own country and its immediately neighboring territories. But one cannot say this regarding their attempts at description of the history of Reformed theology in England (John Gill is the only eighteenth-century figure mentioned, excluding such writers as John Edwards, Thomas Ridgley – and especially Phillip Doddridge). And eighteenth-century Scotland hardly fares better, for in addition to Thomas Boston and the Erskine brothers (Ralph and Ebenezer), attention might have been given to John Brown and John Erskine. The University of St. Andrews is twice mislocated in Edinburgh. As for America, there are no more than passing references made to Jonathan Edwards and his successors.

But having noted this shortcoming, I also state the wish that this volume had been available decades ago. It would have saved many from the too-narrowly focused understanding of Calvin or the Puritans so prevalent today, which is more or less the equivalent of being interested in one tree yet not the forest in which it stands. Thank you, Willem Van Asselt and contributors for a fine foundational volume which ought to be digested by all Presbyterian and Reformed theological students and ministers concerned for maintaining a thoughtful Reformed theology today!

*Reviewed by Dr. Kenneth J. Stewart, professor of Theological Studies at Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia. He is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in America and the author Ten Myths About Calvinism (IVP, 2011)*

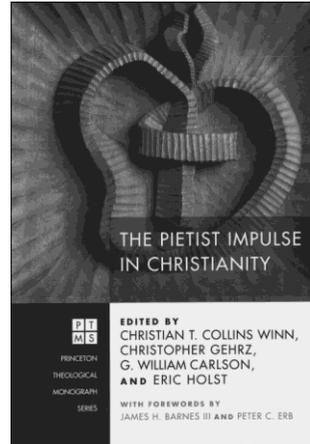


***The Pietist Impulse in Christianity.* Eds., Christian T. Collins Winn, Christopher Gehrz, G. William Carlson, and Eric Holst. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011, 340 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-60608-327-7**

Evangelicals in the Reformed theological tradition are torn in two directions by the subject of Pietism, the European post-Reformation movement beginning within the Lutheran and Reformed families of churches.

On the one hand, there is the recollection that this movement which emphasized personal Bible study and prayer, devotional meetings with like-minded believers, a readiness to distinguish between pastors who were “in earnest” and those who were not, and the advance of world missions through voluntary agencies (earlier than their denominations) was very often a thorn in the side of the churches of the Reformation. Especially in Europe, there were periods when devotional meetings in homes (labeled “conventicles”) were banned by the public authorities, as tending to subvert the structures of state Protestantism. In addition, there has always been the lingering suspicion that the Pietists, who stressed the absolute necessity of inward religious feeling (in distinction from formal ritual), contributed over time to the weakening of doctrinal commitments. Was not Friederich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the German theologian reckoned to be the father of modern religious liberalism, raised in a pietistic Reformed home? These are the reasons for wariness.

On the other hand, as Pietism has been, in effect, the European term of choice for movements of those same centuries which in the English-speaking world have been called “Puritan” and “Evangelical”, which have emphasized the need for earnest pastors, personal devotion through Scripture and prayer, the necessity of spiritual re-birth, the importance of foreign mission and the need for national spiritual awakening – how can we look askance at those European movements which are, on closer inspection, our own Evangelicalism by another name? If Pietism had on its fringes persons not sufficiently anchored in the Scriptures and too trusting of their own private judgment, has not Evangelicalism faced the same quandary? It has indeed. Therefore, for thoughtful evangelicals in the Reformed tradition, there can be no dismissing of Pietism out of hand. The two movements stood in conscious solidarity; English Puritan authors were devoured in Dutch and German translation. In the eighteenth century, John Wesley personally consulted with German Pietists in Georgia and in Saxony.



Christian T. Collins Winn and his three collaborating editors have done us a great service in editing the proceedings of a kind of “congress” on Pietism held at Bethel University, St. Paul, Minnesota in March 2009. The gathering drew one hundred eager participants and the fruit of it is this volume of twenty-five essays. It is the judgment of this reviewer that this stimulating volume accomplishes four things through these essays, grouped into seven categories.

First, two excellent essays by Roger Olson and Peter Yoder go a considerable distance in showing the extent to which Pietism has been misjudged, both in its original European setting and within North America. In its origin, Pietism was a strand within the churches of the Reformation seeking the advance of holy living, biblical knowledge and a curb on excessive doctrinal wrangling (as if that by itself assured Christian vitality). Olson – himself a somewhat controversial Baptist theologian now at Baylor University, Texas – convincingly shows that the Pietist tradition has been misrepresented on this continent. Yoder, an Iowa graduate student at the time of the congress, rendered the same service regarding Pietism in Europe.

Deserving also of comment is a second grouping of essays (encompassing two of the seven categories), also historical in character, indicating the trajectory of Pietism in the period to 1900. It is here that we begin to see the diversity of views encompassed within the Pietist movement and to grasp how, over time, there would be elements of this evangelical tradition which would serve to call into question the integrity of the movement as a whole. Seventeenth-century Pietist leaders such as Gottfried Arnold and Johann Heinrich Reitz dabbled in alchemy and Rosicrucianism. In the next century, a Pietist such as Johann Salomo Semler, in becoming one of the pioneers of biblical criticism, helped to sow seeds which are still yielding bitter fruit. Pioneering liberal Protestant theologian Schleiermacher (see above) and Christian philosopher Søren Kierkegaard were influential figures, drawn from Pietist stock in the nineteenth century; no one can claim that their Pietist roots set them in an unwaveringly steady course. Their Pietist devotion did not unerringly keep them on an even keel.

A third grouping of essays (sections 5 and 6) explore the ways in which the European Pietist movement, already transplanted to young America in the colonial period through Dutch Reformed and German Lutheran immigration, grew in North America due to waves of immigration from newly-emergent expressions of Pietism within Europe. From Switzerland came evangelical believers who had been awakened in the “Réveil” movement which followed Napoleon’s defeat. From German and Scandinavian regions came evangelical believers who had only very recently begun to stand apart from their state churches. By mid-century, these newer Pietists had begun to make common cause with North American revivalism and the emergent holiness movement. Here we can observe that Pietism had moved well beyond the “church within a church” model practiced by European believers who were solicitous for the

quickenings of their state churches; by mid-nineteenth century, transplanted Pietism had become the seed-bed of the founding of new denominations, which over time had tilted more and more in the direction of Anabaptism – a quite distinctive trajectory of Protestantism.

Fourth, we are treated to a final grouping of essays which have as their theme the contribution of Pietism to the growth of world mission since 1700. In the English-speaking world, we go on speaking of William Carey (1761-1834) as the “father of modern missions”. But on closer inspection, it turns out that Carey was quite fully apprised of the earlier eighteenth-century German Pietist missionaries sent to South India with the backing of the King of Denmark and the German Moravian (Pietist) missionaries sent to the plantations of the Caribbean and the Eskimo peoples of Greenland and Labrador. It is past time for us to pay proper tribute to this movement which was the actual Protestant missionary pace-setter for three quarters of a century before Carey was prompted to attempt a mission to India.

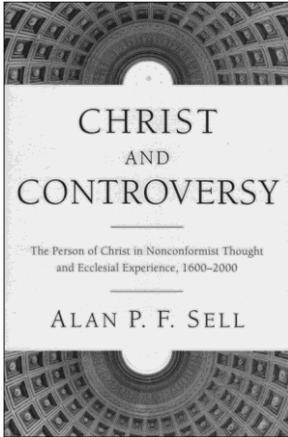
The volume leaves us with a mixture of gratitude (for the great, though under-recognized, contribution that Pietism has made to world Christianity) and concern. Concern is appropriate because Pietism has done its best work when associated with major strands of Reformation Christianity and aiming to bring to fruition seeds of the Reformation (such as the universal priesthood of believers) not fully worked out in the decades following Luther. It was on its surest footing when the doctrinal legacy of the Reformation provided it with its own framework of Christian convictions. The volume begs the question of what is to become of a Pietist stream in Christianity which, when severed by controversy or immigration from European Pietist roots, becomes a virtual stream of world Christianity in and of itself with no clear doctrinal heritage to call its own.

*Reviewed by Kenneth J. Stewart*

***Christ and Controversy: The Person of Christ in Nonconformist Thought and Ecclesial Experience, 1600-2000.* Alan P. F. Sell. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011, 217 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-61097-669-5**

Besides the late Geoffrey Nuttall, Alan P. F. Sell would be one of the most informed scholars on English and Welsh Nonconformity. This book deals with the question, “Who do you say Christ is?” and provides the answer from what the book cover calls “Old Dissent: the Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians and their Unitarian heirs; and the Calvinistic and Arminian Methodist bodies that owe their origin to the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century”. Thus this book, though only two hundred seventeen pages, is encyclopedic in scope. How did the author manage to press it all in and yet survey from 1600 to 2000? He tells us in his preface that one way he

did it was by omitting bibliographical and biographical references, since much of this is “readily available [in] dictionaries, yearbooks, and online resources” (p. ix). This has certainly helped to pare down the book’s size. Likewise he does not include the Muggletonians and Sandemanians or any Dissenting groups such as Plymouth Brethren, Pentecostal or Black Churches which have formed since 1800 (p. 1).



Sell asserts, and I believe correctly on the whole, that it was Christological topics which played a very significant place in Nonconformist experience, secession and discussion. This is a fact which is all too often overlooked today in contemporary studies of the Nonconformists historically.

One particular matter which really was a delight to see was that Sell indicates where the Nonconformist leaders (divines) were educated. This is an extremely interesting detail and a very complex one. To try to sort out the various dissenting academies is no small task. Thus I was glad to see that a separate index was given as “Index of Academies, Colleges, and Universities” (pp. 211-213).

The author has arranged his study under nine chapters, the first being introductory. Chapter 2 is “Classical Affirmations and Alternative Stances in the Seventeenth Century”, and then the remainder follow chronologically and also on occasion regionally (England and/or Wales).

One will find some interesting details as one ploughs through the chapters. Page 73 gives the complex details of what happened at Matthew Henry’s Chester Chapel and the Christological and ecclesial partitions there. It can make some contemporary realignments pale in comparison!

The book will serve as a helpful reference more than anything. It clearly highlights the complexity and confusion of Nonconformist thought concerning Christology and the changing ecclesial scene which resulted. Surely Christology should ever concern us. It is a most helpful antidote to the flip-pant polity discussions that one sometimes hears. It will help advance discussions with more care of historical nuance. Likewise, it will also acquaint a new generation with authors, such as P. T. Forsyth, who have been virtually forgotten.

Alan Sell knows his way around his subject. He writes well – but sometimes with opinionated comment not always germane to the subject, although maybe entertaining; see, for example, his comments on hymns (p. 3). For its size and price, this volume will be a helpful reference beside the larger dictionaries in the field. One detraction is that some Nonconformist names do not appear; that may be in part because their role in the Christological controversies was negligible, but even this needs stating. Perhaps the volume

needed another fifty pages.

The author taught at the United Theological College in Aberystwyth until it closed and is now a visiting professor at several posts as well as a prolific writer.

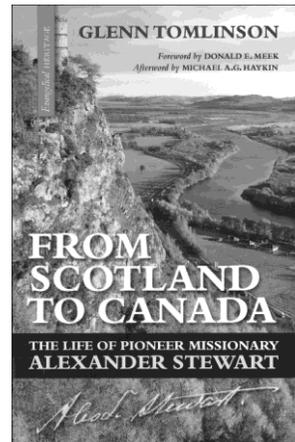
*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***From Scotland to Canada: The Life of Pioneer Missionary Alexander Stewart.* Glenn Tomlinson. Guelph, ON: Joshua Press, 2008, 331 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-894400-29-9**

There have been very few recent biographies written about early Baptist ministers to Canada, so Glenn Tomlinson's book is certainly a noted and welcomed work. It is much more than the story of Alexander Stewart (1774-1840), the Baptist minister who came from Perthshire, Scotland to Toronto (York) and ministered in the early days of what would become the noted Jarvis Street Baptist Church. All good biography sets the historical context for the person, and Tomlinson has done this.

The book's foreword is by Professor Donald Meek, and this clearly is a statement that the study helps connect this work with the wider Scottish evangelical and Highland community and its export. Tomlinson sets the context for the first chapter in the revival in Moulin, Perthshire and the influence of Charles Simeon and James Haldane. The Alexander Stewart who came to Canada was converted under the instrumentality of the Rev. Alexander Stewart, the Church of Scotland parish minister in Moulin, Perthshire. This is followed by a chapter on "Alexander Stewart's call to the ministry". He did not prepare for the Church of Scotland ministry but trained for two years in Robert Haldane's theological school. Following this course of studies, Stewart went to mission stations in Kingussie, Avoch, and Elgin, ministering in basically "congregational" chapels. The years 1807-1808 were critical times for the Haldanes and the "Congregationalists" so this biography takes us through a period of very significant history, particularly in Highland Scotland and hence with Highland immigrants. Robert Haldane was immersed in 1808 and three months later so was Alexander Stewart. The result was that "Congregational" and "Baptist" churches more clearly emerged in Scotland.

Alexander Stewart now turned to Perth as a Baptist elder to minister there and did so from 1808 to 1818. While there, he was also involved in itinerant work, chiefly in the Highlands but not exclusively (p. 81) as he preached many times in the Lowlands. Tomlinson sees this itinerant work of Stewart



as paving the way in part for the Stewart family going to Lower Canada in 1818, then latterly to Upper Canada. It is with the arrival of Alexander Stewart here that the beginnings of the first Baptist church in York can be traced. (Previously it appears to have been thought that the first Baptist church was founded by runaway slaves in 1826 [p. 17].) Unfortunately this new Baptist church was short-lived and “closed” in 1820. Church history is always good to read for all church-planters in any time period. Finance of course was an issue, as was division over baptism – was the baptism done in Scotland valid even if by immersion if the person was not regenerate? Should they be “re-baptized”? Discerning readers will no doubt stop here and reflect.

Stewart’s family together with others went to the woods in the new territory of the township of Esquesing and the new village of Norval. Stewart sought and did obtain a land grant so that he could support his family and at the same time preach. He started preaching in Norval and then other itinerant work followed in adjacent townships. (Many Canadians today think more of Norval, Ontario and Lucy Maud Montgomery’s ten-year residence there than of early colonial Baptist history!) In 1826 the Stewarts returned to York and re-established the Baptist work there. Things did go well for a time – the congregation grew, a building was constructed, Rev. Stewart worked with the Bible Society – but then division struck once again. The author does his best to give a rational answer as to why the division occurred. In part division of Scotch Baptists with Campbellism, personality issues and demographic changes all combined to bring about this disunity.

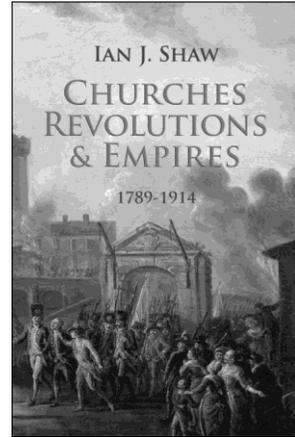
The author has combed many primary sources. He has subsequently furnished several fascinating appendices: “Roll of members, Perth [Scotland] Baptist church, 1812-1815”, “Roll of members, York Baptist church, 1818-1820”, Petition for land grants, “A sermon on baptism, by Alexander Stewart”, “Hymns written by Alexander Stewart”, “Roll of members, York Baptist church, 1827-1840”, “The York Auxiliary Bible Society”, and “Marriage Register”. An interesting biographical glossary has been included before the bibliography.

The book has an attractive cover, good maps and a few suitable illustrations. It is a most fascinating read and makes a valuable contribution to Scottish and Canadian evangelical history studies. The chapters are chronological and not too long, nor are they too encumbered with footnotes to discourage the reader who may want to read a more popular work; the work is both academically sound and popular. A fine contribution to an insufficiently mined area of biography and church history by a sympathetic pastor in Sarnia, Ontario.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***Churches, Revolutions, and Empires: 1789-1914.* Ian J. Shaw. Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2012, 576 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-84550-774-9**

Ian Shaw, Ph.D., is currently the director of the Langham Scholarship programme in the UK and previously served as a lecturer in church history at International Christian College, Glasgow. His most recent work, *Churches, Revolutions, and Empires: 1789-1914*, has received recommendations from such well known church historians as Carl Trueman and Mark Noll. As a professor of church history, I am always looking for new resources for my classes. I whole heartedly agree with their summations, which commend Shaw's work for its clear, concise and informative account of the changes and influences found within Christianity during the early modern period.



All too often, church history books focus on the names, dates of people, and events from the past. Shaw's work is refreshing, providing keen insights and answers to pertinent questions—questions like: why did the American concept of democracy and personal freedom harmonize with free-will theology, signaling a departure from its Calvinistic roots? In what ways did France's Revolution contribute to its national atheistic ethos? How did Britain's religious moderatism insulate the nation from political upheaval yet foster the social gospel? In addition to these questions, the book explores changes in the mission field during the nineteenth century—changes based on efforts to harmonize the gospel with colonialism and Western political ideals. His chapter on theological revolutions in Germany tracks the steps of philosophical impacts on growing doctrinal liberalism. In the wake of the American Revolution, the author reveals how the religious sentiments of the pioneers became increasingly attracted to emotionalism. Even today's continuing creation debate is illuminated in Shaw's work as he documents how many in the church embraced religious emotionalism or existentialism, retreating from developing reasoned apologetic responses to Darwinian evolution.

What makes Shaw's work even more valuable is that each chapter is independent, presenting clear dossiers of some of the most dramatic periods of change in Western Christianity. This feature fosters flexibility, allowing the reader to identify and investigate a single subject. Even though the chapters stand alone, the work can still be read cover to cover because of its logical flow. From the perspective of Christian education, Shaw's book would work best in a focused study of nineteenth-century Western Christianity, as one might find at seminary. But this is not to say that the work is overly tech-

nical; one should not consider this to be a purely academic endeavor. Shaw's writing is readable, and the subject matter is relevant – so relevant that teachers, students, pastors and laity who have an interest in studying this period of church history will find his work edifying.

Shaw's goal is to inform the reader of the unintended consequences of secular, political and scientific influences on the church in general and the Reformed faith in particular. His work serves as a compendium to the broader subject of church history during the nineteenth century, focusing on what the author says are "some of the most profound challenges since the time of the apostles" (p. ix).

Those who read this book will have a better understanding of history's influences on their religious presuppositions, an awareness that will enable them to sift out that which is not biblical. Ian Shaw has provided the church with an important resource to assist in combating theological liberalism and secular intrusion, both of which have contributed to a departure from the tenants of the Reformed faith. These are serious issues for today, not just historical truisms. As has been said by many a historian, people should know their history, else they are doomed to repeat its mistakes. The origins of the issues Shaw presents in his book should be understood by Christians as they will help to strengthen the church for tomorrow.

*Steven C. Adamson is Ligonier Academy's dean of distance learning and adjunct professor at Reformation Bible College. He is on the core faculty of Sangre de Cristo Seminary and is completing a Ph.D. in historical apologetics at Highland Theological College, Scotland.*



***Presbyterian and Reformed Churches: A Global History.* James E. McGoldrick. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2012, 566 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-60178-162-8**

The stated objective of this comprehensive history of Presbyterian and Reformed churches is to revise and update a standard textbook on the subject, *History of the Presbyterian Churches of the World* by Richard Clark Reed published in 1905. Each chapter focuses on one or more countries, starting with Geneva and ending with the Cook Islands; the account also progresses chronologically from the Reformation to the end of the twentieth century. In between is a fascinating story of gospel advance. While it is not easy reading, being dense with facts, dates and mini biographies, it is immensely informative. The record is occasionally distressing, more often inspiring as it portrays the progress of Reformed teaching and the origins of the many strands that make up a complete picture of the Presbyterian and Reformed scene worldwide today.

The untangling of the complex history of post Reformation schism and secession – whether in Scotland, Ireland, the USA or more recently, Korea – is one of the chief merits of the book. Anomalies are also elucidated, such as why a few Unitarian churches in Northern Ireland call themselves Presbyterian. In general, relevant background historical knowledge is provided in simplified form, though a surprising omission is any discussion of the troubles in Northern Ireland. Offence is more likely to be caused, however, by calling Eire, Erie (pp. 164 and 169).

The book, as one might expect, reflects an American approach, particularly in its allocation of space. Canadians will be disappointed that less than six pages are allotted to Presbyterian and Reformed churches north of the border, in contrast to eight chapters on the churches in the USA. While in general showing a good understanding of Canadian church history, it should also be noted that it is not accurate to say that Presbyterians going into the United Church in 1925 “kept control of all the denomination’s colleges” (p. 274).

Among the most interesting sections of the book are the chapters detailing missionary work during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Here, as throughout, distinction is made between those adhering to strict Calvinist theology and those affected by liberalism and ecumenical tendencies.

Though this book has immense value, the reader should be aware that not all factual material included in it has been properly verified. It raises some questions as to whether the volume was properly peer reviewed for accuracy. It could serve as a helpful reference work but not as a last authority. This appears especially to be the case with many of the missions histories. For example, in Kenya the Reformed Church of East Africa is stated as being a member of “the fundamentalist International Council of Christian Churches. Its candidates for the ministry study at Faith College of the Bible and Mwingi Bible School” (p. 417). The work’s scope is immense and with that comes a real challenge for accuracy.

A book of this length and complexity is a remarkable achievement. As stated at the beginning, it cannot cover everything, but each chapter is followed by a helpful list of books for further reading. While a survey of this kind will be of most value to students in conservative and Reformed seminaries particularly in the USA, it will also be a useful addition to any church library. The general reader will gain an overall understanding of the history of Reformed and Presbyterian churches and will find many questions answered and some issues clarified.

*Reviewed by Judy A. MacLeod, a retired secondary school history teacher who lives in Brighton, Ontario. Judy also taught at Tyndale University College and was involved in Lausanne III, which met in Cape Town in 2010.*



## Applied Theology

***The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context.* David Powlison. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010, 331 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-935273-13-4**

David Powlison has emerged as a leader (perhaps the leader) of the “second generation” of biblical counselors (see review of *The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams*, pp. 107). His history of the movement originated as a 1996 Ph.D. dissertation with the title “Competent to Counsel?: The History of a Conservative Protestant Anti-Psychiatry Movement”. In the preface to this revised edition, the author explains the change of title:

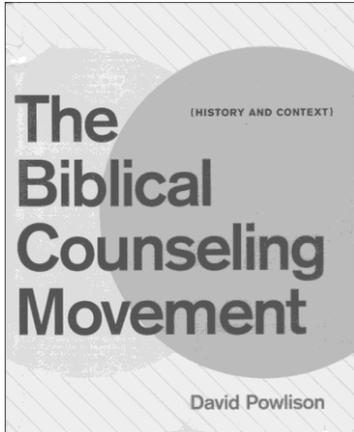
What communicated well to professional historians too easily miscommunicates to counseling practitioners trying to sort out the history of a movement in which they are actively engaged or about which they are curious. “Anti-psychiatry” tends to be read as a defining characteristic of the biblical counseling movement, as if negative rhetoric of attack is the leading edge. But as both the dissertation and a reading of relevant literature make clear, the biblical counseling movement has never been “anti-psychiatry” in the way the adjective tends to be heard by non-historians. Negative rhetoric appears on occasion (see chap. 7), but the movement essentially voiced a positive and practical intention: to enrich the practical theology and ministry of the church of Jesus Christ (for example, see chaps. 4-6). Regarding psychiatry, it has tried to define how a properly reconfigured psychiatric profession would go about the medical business, without trespassing in the work of theology and the church. Chapters 1 and 6 of the dissertation (and the citations therein) orient the reader to this question. (pp. xi-xii)

The present edition also contains some helpful appendices not present in the original.

Powlison traces the history of the movement until almost the close of the twentieth century. He provides some useful background on the influences of Adams’ early life leading up to his development of nouthetic counseling (from the Greek *noutheteo*, to admonish, based on the idea that the role of the counselor is to confront the counselee with his or her sin as the starting point

of healing through repentance and obedience to Scripture). Born on January 30, 1929 into a non-religious family, Adams was converted as a teenager when a neighborhood friend initiated a street-corner discussion on the truthfulness of the Bible. This led Adams to read the New Testament for himself and over a period of two months he came to “understand and believe the gospel”. His conversion, comments Powli-

son, was “apparently unmediated by social or emotional inducements; the Word of God had spoken and the human creature had believed. The unadorned biblicism of this conversion established a characteristic theme; the way Adams himself had changed would reappear in the emphases he would bring to the tasks of counseling twenty years later” (p. 29).



Adams began attending a conservative Presbyterian church and through the pastor’s influence decided to attend Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Philadelphia. There he came under the influence of Robert Rudolph, the head of the systematic theology department. Rudolph was “noted for his zeal for conservative Protestant orthodoxy, the adversarial atmosphere of his classroom, and

his passionate conviction that true believers needed to separate from error rather than engage in cool discussion” (p. 29).

Powlison further develops Adams’ personal history, noting particularly the influence of O. Hobart Mowrer, a psychologist who in the early 1960s “had begun to challenge Freudian theory, to describe people as morally responsible, and to call troubled and troublesome behaviour ‘sin’” (p. 35). Attendance at one of Mowrer’s lectures led to Adams’ interning with him for a six week period which “proved to be a dramatic turning point” (p. 35). (An example of Adams’ later adaptation of Mowrer’s concepts into biblical ones was the way in which he would often speak and write of the process of “putting off” sin and “putting on” obedience (cf. Ephes. 4:22-24), using Mowrer’s language of “dehabitation and “rehabitation”).

Another influence, not fully developed here by Powlison, was Cornelius Van Til’s presuppositional apologetic method. Nouthetic counseling can be understood as an attempt to apply Van Til’s methodology to counseling theory and practice (cf. John Frame. *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1995, p. 394.) Powlison does note (p. 171) that Adam’s critics accused him of minimizing Van Til’s emphasis on common grace. Certainly, Adams has stressed the “antithetical” side of Van Til’s teaching more than he has the more positive doctrine of common grace.

At the time of Adams’ 1966 full-time appointment at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, he and his family attended a church pastored by John Bettler, who became the first pastor to train under Adams and later became a

colleague “second only to Adams in influence upon the nouthetic counseling ministry” (p. 39). There were, however, significant differences between the two men.

Bettler’s interest in and respect for scholarship and higher education was as habitual as Adams’s interest and respect for local church pastors. Bettler worked to open doors for women to train and to counsel; Adams worked to establish a male-dominated model of counseling training and practice. Bettler had been raised fundamentalist and reacted against it, coming to embrace a version of Reformed theology with a broad vision for social and intellectual engagement; he enjoyed the stimulus of dialogue with intellectuals to his “left” who differed from him. Adams reacted strongly against those to his left theologically and ecclesiastically and was comfortable with pastors from separatist traditions. (p. 40)

Adams was by far the more dominant influence in the early days of nouthetic counseling, but Bettler’s influence can be seen more clearly in the “second generation” of biblical counselors, who prefer the more general term “biblical” to “nouthetic” with its confrontational connotations.

Powlison notes of the early days that:

The movement was a hybrid, combining intellectual and practical features of both the Reformed tradition and the fundamentalist tradition. It hatched within Reformed circles, but found its widest reception in fundamentalist audiences. Adams himself combined Reformed commitments with certain fundamentalist tendencies that made him acceptable to some moderate fundamentalists. (p. 12)

Nouthetic counseling also found a home in, among others, “the milder sorts of charismatics and Assembly of God Pentecostals” (p. 12). The movement spread rapidly throughout the seventies, mainly due to the popularity of *Competent to Counsel* (1970). A major development, among others, was the spread of nouthetic principles initially through the armed forces and then in the National Association of Evangelicals due to the influence of John Broger, who at the time was Director of Information for the Armed Forces. Broger, an evangelical layman of Brethren background, adapted Adams’ material into a self-confrontation manual, originally self-published and later picked up by Thomas Nelson (1994). Broger also founded the Biblical Counseling Foundation in 1977, following his retirement from government service. Broger’s interest in lay-counseling picked up on a secondary theme in Adams but also led to some tension with Adams’ dominant theme that pastors should be the counselors.

The movement stagnated in the eighties as the evangelical psychotherapeutic “counterinsurgency” responded and claimed the position of authority among evangelicals. This included the popular Minrith-Meier clinics, books

and radio shows, the New Life Treatment Centers (owned by Steve Arterburn) and Rapha, founded by Southern Baptist psychotherapist Robert McGee. Meanwhile, books by theoreticians and practitioners like Larry Crabb, Gary Collins, David Benner, Stanton Jones, and publications like the *Journal of Psychology and Psychiatry* criticized Adams with varying degrees of hostility. The popular pastors' journal *Leadership* eclipsed Adams' *Journal of Pastoral Practice* and sided with the psychotherapists. James Dobson's Focus on the Family organization mushroomed in popularity and the Recovery Movement, adapting the 12-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous to every conceivable disorder, found its way into evangelical churches in a Christianized version. Meanwhile attendance at the conferences of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (NANC, founded in 1976) stagnated and subscriptions to Adams' journal dropped.

The early nineties saw the development of another Christian alternative when Gary Collins was invited to "remake a tiny, languishing association, the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC)" (p. 204), and he began publishing *The Christian Counselor* in 1992. By 1995 "the AACC had rocketed past 17,000 members" (p. 205). Meanwhile, however, leading evangelicals like Os Guinness and David Wells were expressing serious reservations about the direction of evangelical psychotherapy. Larry Crabb in a 1995 *Christianity Today* interview repudiated the "three-sided model that therapists are qualified to treat psychological problems, pastors spiritual problems, and doctors physical ones." He "called instead for 'shepherding' and 'eldering' relationships in local church communities to replace the anti-septic world of a private-practice therapist" (p. 222). (It should, however, be pointed out that Crabb, in a subsequent "letter to the editor," clarified that he had not intended to debunk the role of Christian psychotherapy and that portraying him as anti-psychology badly misrepresented his position, placing him in company where he did not belong.)

Attendance at the NANC conferences began to climb again; the renamed *Journal of Biblical Counseling* grew from 450 to 2500 subscriptions between 1992 and 1995. Well-known preacher and author John MacArthur became committed to nouthetic counseling after his Grace Community Church in California had been "radicalized" by a court case in which the church was sued for failing to refer to a psychiatrist a young man who committed suicide while being counseled at the church. MacArthur developed a program at The Master's College and Seminary organized by Adams' associate Bob Smith and then headed by another associate, Wayne Mack. MacArthur's *Our Sufficiency in Christ* (1991) included an argument for the sufficiency of Scripture in counseling. Trinity Theological Seminary in Newburgh, Indiana, a rapidly growing institution offering programs by extension, hired NANC's former director, Howard Eyrich, to head up its counseling program. Another significant development has been the Institute of Christian Conciliation by Ken Sande, a lawyer and author of *The Peacemaker* (1991). All in all, nouthet-

ic/biblical counseling appears to have experienced a renaissance at the close of the twentieth century.

A persistent criticism of Adams is that his “approach to counseling is more a reflection of his personality than anything else. He tends to be a somewhat confrontational type guy, and he’s a confrontational counselor” (Gary Collins quoted on p. 186; cf. “Door Interview: Dr Gary Collins.” *The Wittenberg Door* 47. February-March, 1979, p. 13. 1979, 13.) The implication that Adams lacks psychological training and expertise is one which several other critics have made. Powlison makes reference to several of them. He then observes that (according to the critics) Adams’ alleged “ignorance and unfairness” relative to the major theorists “arose from an identifiable source. He was indebted to Mowrer far more profoundly than he acknowledged.” Adams might “disclaim Mowrer’s influence as nothing more than clearing the ground of Freudian influences”. Yet, “to critics who read Mowrer and Adams side-by-side, it was evident that the entire structure of (his) theory was Mowrerian” (p. 185). Although Adams has repeatedly and vehemently denied being a disciple of Mowrer, some critics see this as evidence that he is in fact a crypto-disciple; he “brings secular principles through the back door” (p. 185; cf. “Door Interview: Dr. Gary Collins,” p. 13).

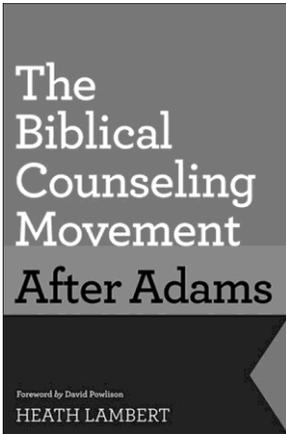
Powlison documents these and other criticisms of Adams, while in some cases offering Adams’ rebuttals and evidencing throughout his appreciation of Adams’ pioneering work in the development of biblical counseling. Although Adams continues to write and speak of “nouthetic” counseling, Powlison’s balanced and thoughtful approach, more reminiscent of Bettler than Adams, indicates the direction that he and others are taking at least one significant part of what is now better known as the biblical counseling movement.

*Reviewed by J. Cameron Fraser*

***The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams.* Heath Lambert. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 220 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2813-2**

Heath Lambert is assistant professor of biblical counseling and associate dean of applied studies at Boyce College of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also serves as pastor of biblical living at Crossing Church in Louisville, Kentucky. His book originated as a Ph.D. dissertation, with David Powlison as supervisor of the doctoral committee. Not surprisingly, Lambert evidences considerable dependence on Powlison, whom he recognizes as leader of the “second generation” of biblical counselors. Powlison provides a lengthy foreword.

The book is dedicated in part to Jay Adams, “who reawakened generations to the sufficiency of Scripture”. Lambert states that his goal is “to honor Dr. Adams by carefully considering his work and the context in which he built it and by highlighting the efforts of men labouring in the tradition he began, to improve on the good work he started” (p. 47). In the first chapter, after providing personal background on his own interest in counseling as a means of doing ministry well, Lambert notes the example of the Puritans and those who followed in their tradition. The last work before Adams’ 1970 book, *Competent to Counsel*, to offer uniquely biblical insights into helping



people with their problems was *A Pastor's Sketches*, published in the 1850s by Ichabod Spenser. For more than a century between these two, Christians “neglected a robustly biblical approach to counseling” (p. 26). Lambert offers nine reasons for this, including the rise of revivalism in the 1700s and the Fundamentalist Controversy of the early twentieth century. These movements had other priorities than biblical and pastoral counseling. The psychological revolution pioneered by Wilhelm Wundt (the father of experimental psychology) and Sigmund Freud (the father of psychoanalysis) are also mentioned briefly. These and other factors contributed to a theological neglect of the counseling

endeavour which Jay Adams sought to address in his landmark book *Competent to Counsel* and in the numerous other volumes that followed.

Adams “argues against the existence of inorganic mental illness and against psychiatrists as ‘separate practitioners’”. While he has also had strong disagreements with those practicing psychotherapy,

. . . it would be going too far to say that Adams believed psychological science had no role to play. . . . When psychology stayed on its own turf and dealt with organic issues, Adams believed it could be helpful and beneficial. What Adams ferociously objected to, however, was the atheistic worldview of psychology as well as his perception that psychologists were meddling in the domain of the Christian ministry. (pp. 38-39)

In Adams’ system,

God is the fundamental reality, sin is the fundamental problem, and redemption in Christ is the fundamental solution. Therefore, the Christian minister operating in the context of the local church is called to the task of helping people with their problems, of mediating God’s truth to people, and of walking alongside them in the struggle to put off sin and put on obedience. (p. 43)

This laid the groundwork for what Adams continues to call “nouthetic counseling” and the “second generation” mainly speaks of simply as “biblical counseling”. Lambert notes:

Biblical counselors have advanced the theological reflection of Adams about how to do ministry in two important ways. (1) They have brought about great development in an understanding of how to do ministry to people who are suffering as well as to people who are sinning. . . . (2) More contemporary biblical counselors have developed the movement with regard to motivational issues . . . the issue of why people do the things they do. (p. 45)

While Adams has vehemently denied that he is a “biblical behaviourist”, it is undeniable that he has dealt primarily with observable behaviour rather than the underlying motivational issues of the heart.

The main part of Lambert’s book is largely taken up with discussion of the two major developments noted above. The one area where there has been no significant development has been in the commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture. Interacting with a book by Eric Johnson that argues for a contrary understanding, Lambert notes:

Of course, there may be differences of emphasis, tone, and application, but all the people Johnson cites in his book, upon more careful examination, hold the same basic position on Scripture and the relevance of outside information for the counseling task. (p. 136)

One major development in terms of understanding motivational issues has been the concept of “idols of the heart” utilized by Powlison and others. In her book of that name, *Idols of the Heart*, Elyse Fitzpatrick says,

Idols aren’t just stone statues. No, idols are the thoughts, desires, longings, and expectations that we worship in place of the true God. Idols cause us to ignore the true God in search of what we think we need.<sup>1</sup>

This is one area where Lambert sees a need for further development and he devotes a chapter to this. Following a brief survey of idolatry in the Old and New Testaments, Lambert argues:

The main problem sinful people have is not idols of the heart per se. The main problem certainly involves idols and is rooted in the heart, but the idols are manifestations of the deeper problem. The heart-problem is self-exaltation, and idols are two or three steps removed. . . . Even though idols change from culture to culture and

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<sup>1</sup> Lambert, 78; cf. Elyse Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001), 23.

from individual to individual within a culture, the fundamental problem of humanity has not changed since Genesis 3: sinful people want – more than anything in the world – to be like God. (p. 148)

Citing Powlison’s article “Idols of the Heart and ‘Vanity Fair’”, Lambert observes that Powlison seems to recognize a need for development along the lines he (Lambert) offers. Lambert continues,

No movement has “arrived” and therefore should always be mindful of the need to be ever reforming. . . . The motivational distinction being made here between specific idols and the sinful self-exalting heart is in many ways subtle, but the distinction has great practical relevance for counseling, which is seen in at least seven ways. (p. 150)

These seven ways are: a better understanding of pride, people, sin, and repentance; compassionate counseling; protection against “idol hunts” and against introspection.

Following a final chapter, “Conclusion: Increasingly Competent to Counsel”, the book includes an appendix by Jay Adams in which he responds to criticisms of his view of “flesh” made by Edward Welch in an article “How Theology Shapes Ministry: Jay Adams View of the Flesh and an Alternative”.<sup>2</sup>

Besides Powlison, those Lambert cites as representatives of the “second generation” of biblical counseling include Edward Welch, George M. Schwab, Tedd Tripp, Paul David Tripp and Elyse Fitzpatrick. Wayne Mack (a contemporary of Adams) is a “first generation” nouthetic counselor, yet several of his emphases also fit with the “second generation”. Lambert gives insufficient recognition (with two references) to John Bettler, co-founder with Adams of the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation and its Executive Director for over thirty years. Bettler was from the start more nuanced about counseling methodology and the value of psychological insights. As Lambert does recognize (p. 104), Bettler sought to be a bridge builder between Adams and his critics in the growing (non-nouthetic) Christian counseling movement, which has generally been more sympathetic to the integration of Scripture and psychology in counseling methodology. Bettler’s influence on the “second generation” of biblical counselors should not be overlooked.

Overall, this book is a perceptive introduction to developments in the biblical counseling movement as well as a helpful contribution to the further development of biblically based counseling concepts.

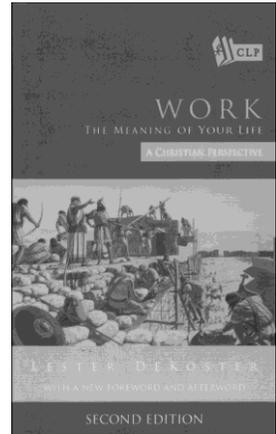
*Reviewed by J. Cameron Fraser*

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<sup>2</sup> *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 20, no. 3 [2002]: 16-25.

***Work: The Meaning of Your Life, A Christian Perspective, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* Lester DeKoster. Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 2010, 75 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-880595-72-5**

Work – we spend a large portion of our lives engaged in it. It was part of God's design for man from before the fall, but do we have a well thought out, biblically based, God glorifying theology of work? One need only look historically back to the Reformation to see that a rediscovery of the doctrines of grace, the supremacy of the Word of God and of the Gospel itself left its mark on almost every aspect of life, including how people thought of work. Even paintings of the time moved from almost exclusively religious themes to one that celebrated the God-glorifying calling of ordinary occupations.



Lester DeKoster (1916-2009), who was director of the Calvin College and Seminary Library, gives us a brief (seventy-one pages) but compelling look at how we ought to approach work, not as a result of the Fall but something ordained for us to reflect who we are as those created in the image of the One Who Himself works and creates. Stephen Grabill, in the forward, outlines the main arguments DeKoster gives as to why work is meaningful. First, it is useful to others. Secondly, it is something that God has appointed to weave civilizations together. And thirdly, it “sculpts the kind of self we are becoming through the choices we make in the handling of our talents on the job” (p. x).

DeKoster's main argument is drawn from the words of Paul in Colossians 3:23, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” This means that all of life and principally our work is an arena where we can bring glory to God and serve our fellow man. He calls us to think broadly about life and to recover a creational view of living before the face of God.

These ideas DeKoster expands upon throughout the book. He asks in the first chapter “Why does work give meaning to life?” He answers:

First, God himself chooses to be served through the work that serves others and therefore molds working into a culture to provide workers with even better means of service. Second, God has so made us that through working we actually sculpt the kind of selves we are becoming, in time and for eternity. (p. 9)

DeKoster shows that work has nobility because we not only reflect our

Maker but serve our Maker. He emphasizes this through the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46, where among other things Jesus says, “Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” In other words, God is served as we serve the needs of others through what we ourselves have produced through work.

The author points out that we are also sculpting our own selves at work through the choices we make. He says, “Indeed, that self is in fact by far the most important product we produce in the life and time granted us by divine grace” (p. 22).

But like all things we do for the glory of God there are challenges, and indeed, crosses that have to be born. He writes,

What are those wounds suffered on the job, and often carried home besides, but crosses laid upon our shoulders! Indifference? Being taken for granted? No bouquets, ever? . . . An endless round of drudgery? A cruel and demanding public? . . . How well workers know what surrendering life’s glitter to the gloom of the workplace means! (pp. 36-37)

He says further, “Work can be cross bearing, self-denying, and life-sacrificing; because work is following the Lord in ways of service, be that in ways hidden to all but God alone or at an envied occupation demanding sacrifices only the doer can know” (p. 37).

In fact DeKoster devotes several chapters to this idea of work as not only bringing glory to God and service to others but work as cross bearing in a world still heavily influenced by the Fall. This is an appropriate emphasis given how we so often struggle in this regard in finding work meaningful when it can be such a burden.

Though originally written in 1982, some of the items are still very fresh, including how we as workers are to respond to the advent of technologies that threaten to make workers redundant. Are we to reject them? Insightfully, DeKoster challenges us here asserting technology ought not to be viewed as an enemy. He says,

Well, what would your life, and that of the civilized world, be like if technology and its marvelous creations were abandoned? Work would slip from its civilized to its primitive forms, and we all would fall back into barbarism. . . . Technology has revolutionized civilization, and it promises untold achievements ahead. The work that serves it weaves the fabric of culture. (pp. 43-44)

He goes on to say, “. . . the cotton mills did once destroy the home-knitting industries – and then proceeded to clothe the world! Home industries would never have done that!” (p. 45).

So, technologies then are to be embraced as the provisions of God's common grace, while at the same time man has to know how to harness them responsibly to fit within the framework of the principles he has outlined.

In summary DeKoster says, "Our individual discipleship, our church communities, and our witness to society at large must recover a holistic theology of stewardship and calling. We must integrate our model of discipleship with the call to cultivate the world" (p. 64).

I have two words of caution about this book. First, throughout the author maintains that work is the meaning of our lives. My questions are: "What if, like many, one is unable to work and contribute in a concrete way to culture? Is one's life still meaningful? Is God 'glorified and enjoyed' without work and productivity?" This is an area that he never qualifies at all, and I felt that he should have.

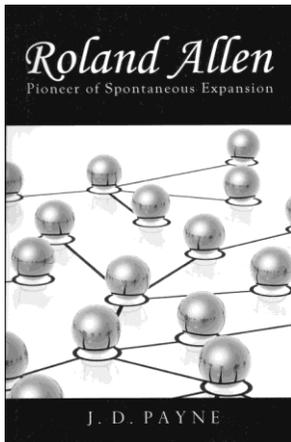
Second, DeKoster only very briefly qualifies his definition of having a meaningful life before God through work. He notes that work doesn't justify us before God but only the finished work of Christ does, and then from our faith in Christ we build our lives around work. However, he does this in all of fourteen lines. I think, given the inclination of man toward works righteousness, this topic needs to be given more attention.

Over all, this is a very satisfying and rewarding read; it is good to see this new second edition that will prolong the life of a worthy book. To be "reformatory" in our theology and life, we do need a robust theology of work, and to allow people to see that their vocations are where they are to live out God's calling in the world, despite all its attendant problems, is commendable and encouraging. Even in work, as DeKoster says, there are crosses we bear in trying to live for the glory of God.

*Reviewed by Kent Compton*

***Roland Allen: Pioneer of Spontaneous Expansion.* J. D. Payne. J.D. Payne, 2012, 131 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1475123890**

The year 2012 marked the one-hundredth anniversary of the publication of Roland Allen's classic work, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* Throughout the century-long existence of this book, countless Christians have been challenged and influenced by the missiological principles it contains. In light of this profound influence and in honor of the anniversary, J. D. Payne, associate professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, published a book *Roland Allen: Pioneer of Spontaneous Expansion*. Payne's 2001 Ph.D. dissertation on Allen makes him eminently qualified to write on the subject. This anniversary book is an attempt to provide a brief account of Allen's life followed by a summary of his teachings, from all of his writings, concerning missionary methods.



In order to first establish a definition of the term “spontaneous expansion” (as found in the title of Payne’s book), a brief introduction is provided that explains the biblical and theological underpinnings that support this term: the way of Christ, the apostolic approach, ecclesiology and pneumatology. However, Payne notes with caution that Allen did not leave behind a concise theology of missions and clarifies, “Though I have attempted to compartmentalize what I believe to be the four foundations on which Allen’s theology resided, the reader must understand that these four components permeated all of Allen’s thought” (p. 8). These four strands are then considered as four

different chapters later in the book.

After laying this introductory groundwork, Payne then provides an overview of Roland Allen’s life in chapter 1. This biographical sketch is important as it allows the reader to understand the providential opportunities Allen had to view the church in various parts of the globe. From England to China to Canada to Kenya, Allen was privileged to witness the progress of the gospel and analyze the methods that may have been either aiding or hindering spontaneous expansion.

Following this brief biographical sketch, Payne then attempts to organize Allen’s major teachings by devoting one chapter each to the following ten topics: the way of Christ, the apostolic approach, ecclesiology, pneumatology, the place of the missionary, devolution, missionary faith, leadership development, voluntary clergy and non-professional missionaries. There are ample quotes provided from Allen’s writings which give the reader a sense that Payne has digested the material well and has organized Allen’s teachings in such a way that readers can easily get an overview of his missiology. Furthermore, Payne provides diagrams of some of Allen’s key concepts; these are useful for comprehension but could also be used for teaching and discussion.

Payne includes a caution to any who would take up the writings of Roland Allen: “Once a person decides to walk the path with Roland Allen, he or she will likely experience a growing restlessness against the status quo. Gone will be the days when ministry and missions are approached with a lackadaisical attitude. The hunger for gospel advancement may take the place of business-as-usual” (p. 1). How true. Yet the author, far from trying to discourage the reading of Allen, provides a bibliography of Allen’s writings and a second bibliography of works written about Allen. The inclusion of these resources makes the book all the more valuable.

Through his book, *Roland Allen: Pioneer of Spontaneous Expansion*, J. D. Payne has given the present generation a challenge to consider the profound thoughts of Roland Allen concerning missionary methods. It is unfor-

tunate that the book was self-published as more editing would have made for a cleaner text. However, those who would take up the challenge will find this book a solid introduction to Allen and a fitting tribute to this brother who clearly laboured much in thought and prayer over the spontaneous expansion of the church.

*Reviewed by Nancy J. Whytock*

***Family Vocation: God's Calling in Marriage, Parenting, and Childhood.* Gene Edward Veith Jr. and Mary J. Moerbe. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 253 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2406-6**

Lutheran author Gene Edward Veith Jr. has already written a book on the Reformation doctrine of vocation entitled *God at Work*.<sup>1</sup> In *Family Vocation*, he teams up with his daughter Mary J. Moerbe to continue the theme and apply it more deeply to marriage and family life. This book is refreshingly different than the usual exhortation on scriptural headship and submission, rules for success in marriage, or practical advice on parenting. Instead, the authors create a vision of a family where each member is transformed by the love of Christ and in turn lovingly serves the other members of the family, recognizing that it is God who has called us to serve Him in whatever “state of life” we are in.<sup>2</sup>



Following a brief introduction to the doctrine of vocation, *Family Vocation* is divided into three parts: “The Vocations of Marriage”, “The Vocations of Parenthood”, and “The Vocations of Childhood”. In each section, the authors draw out implications from the fact that our family relationships are to be reflections of the truth about God. For example, husbands are called to be “little Christs”<sup>3</sup> to their wives, loving them “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph. 5:25). Fathers are called to reflect what God

<sup>1</sup> Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *God at Work* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther, *The Table-Talk of Martin Luther*, trans. William Hazlitt (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society). Online at: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/luther/tabletalk.i.html>, statement VII. “The right, practical divinity is this: Believe in Christ, and do thy duty in that state of life to which God has called thee.”

<sup>3</sup> Veith and Moerbe, 47. The term is quoted from Luther in his “The Freedom of the Christian”.

does as our Father as He tenderly loves us (Ps. 103:13, Matt. 7:11), provides for us physically and spiritually (Eph. 3:14-19), and disciplines us in love (Eph. 6:4, Heb. 12:5-11). Each section also expounds on the biblical responsibilities and privileges of marriage, parenting, and childhood and closes with a chapter on the crosses of each vocation, as it is in the context of vocation that we take up our cross and follow Jesus (Matt. 16:24). Along the way, the authors touch on many practical issues, including divorce, adoption, birth control, reproductive technology, and the growing fatherlessness of Western culture.

People in all stages of life and positions in their families will draw encouragement and blessing from this book. I was particularly inspired to think more deeply about my work as a mother. First, God is working through me, flawed as I am, using me as an instrument to accomplish His purposes in my family. It's His work, and the outcome is His as well. My faults and failures are not the determining factor in how my children turn out. Second, it is Christ I'm serving as I serve my family. My fulfillment and my happiness are not of primary importance, but whether or not I am serving the Lord faithfully in the place where He has called me. The daily, mundane little sacrifices of self I make are not in vain but have purpose and meaning as I do them "as to the Lord" (Col. 3:23-24, KJV). What a blessing to be reminded that waking while it is still dark to feed and change a crying baby can be as much a spiritual act of worship<sup>4</sup> as sitting down in peace for half an hour of Bible reading (p. 145).

*Family Vocation's* unique perspective from Luther's doctrine of vocation makes it well worth reading. Whatever your callings may be in your particular family, you will be blessed by reading this book and thinking through its implications for your life.

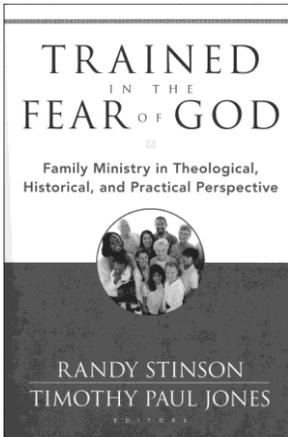
*Reviewed by Nelleke Plouffe. Nelleke and her husband, Stephen, are the parents of three young sons, Seth, Josiah, and Moses. They live in Donagh, Prince Edward Island.*




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<sup>4</sup> Romans 12:1, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship."

***Trained In The Fear Of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective.* Eds., Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011, 290 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8254-3907-0**



*Trained in the Fear of God* is a potpourri of essays by various writers which have been arranged to produce together a common theme – family ministry. Although at times it seems that a chapter/writer is veering off on an irrelevant tangent (chapter 5 on homosexuality, chapter 8 on the African American family and chapter 15 on feminism) and seems to be connected to the message only by a very weak thread, this book does rank high as a resource on how to equip families and churches for successful family ministry practices and approaches. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones, the publishing editors, do an extraordinary job of orchestrating many different authors to

write about a common idea and make it flow smoothly from writer to writer – not an easy task. There is some difficulty in keeping interest throughout the first third of the book as the reader may not understand what plan of action the editors are trying to accomplish. At times, the reading is like trying to pick up maple syrup with your hands; but the sooner the book’s significance materializes, the plainer is the understanding of how this book can be a very valuable resource, one that will live on my office shelf for immediate use. The book is broken into three units: an historical biblical framework, an historical Christian analysis and finally, a practical strategy and application to be utilized within the church.

Unless one likes history and its impact on the present, the first two units can seem burdensome, almost like hiking through sand. These units document historical shifts in how children have been educated in respect to religion. They simplify and condense years of historical background in very small and short passages. As the book progresses into practical strategies and applications in the third unit, it pinpoints several specific pockets of sensitive issues and how to wrestle with these areas (e.g. feminism, singleness, submission, etc.). These are real issues that each church needs to address, but I’m not sure it flows accurately alongside this literary matter. However, I am challenged with the overall question of, “Do you want to be known as a disciple-equipping church OR a church full of disciples?” And, although I’m not certain this question is actually stated in the book, it is the answer to this question that needs to be wrestled with; to turn around and face into the torpedo of a perishing world (much like that decision made in the movie “The

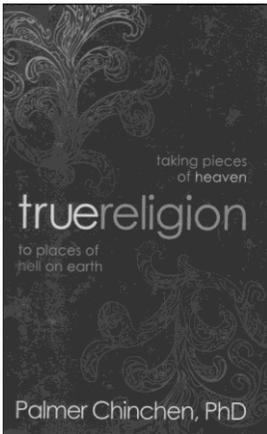
Hunt For Red October”, when the insane seems catastrophic but is actually their salvation) that by faithfully implementing practical family equipping strategies within your church, there will be the redemption of a new and stronger breed of Christian soldiers.

The entire book is anchored in the firm belief of the importance of family relationships. I especially like the thorough footnotes, which give an added splash of illumination or spur the reader on to further research these supplemental notes at greater length, if one has the time to do so. The pages are peppered with sidebar questions and helpful, highlighted information. It is unequivocally a book that grows on you, especially if you have a direct interest in youth ministry.

*Reviewed by Albert Huizing IV. Albert grew up in New Jersey and is a graduate of Calvin College. He has been involved in youth and singles ministries and Christian schools in the United States and Canada for the past thirty years. Currently he serves as Director of Youth ministries at the Charlottetown Christian Reformed Church, PEI.*



***True Religion: Taking Pieces of Heaven to Places of Hell on Earth.* Palmer Chinchen. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010, 208 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-7814-0343-6**



*True Religion* reads like a series of blogs that are all connected by one theme – the mandate that God commands us to reach out to others in need. The two worst parts of the book are the back cover’s tiny text (consequently, I didn’t know he was from Biola, my daughters alma mater, until page 75) and its ragged theme structure. Those faults certainly do not take away from the excitement that oozes out of this book. It is continually challenging the stagnant Christian to re-evaluate the way he or she thinks about reaching out to others in need. It is an excellent book to inspire those who want to have reasons for going on mission trips and is certainly one I am going to have on my shelf and am going to use of-

ten.

Palmer Chinchen’s examples are personal and heartfelt, and he ends each chapter with relevant examples for becoming an expatriate – people who leave their country to make a home in a far and away place. His point is that he is bothered by the abuse, injustice, poverty and oppression of the world. Chinchen succeeds in inspiring us to offer those blessings that we have been endowed with – knowledge, skills, talents, food, and yes, even money – those

“pieces of heaven” – and give them to those “places of hell on earth”. He reminds us of how we live in such a self-indulgent culture but that *true religion* is really about others and not self.

Palmer challenges us to notice those who fall through the cracks of society, to be aware of them and then to respond by living differently. Because of those examples of “hell-ish places on earth”, this book will tug at your heart-strings, put pressure on your conscience and provoke you to reach out and grab hold of the much bigger plan that God has for you. Knowing what needs to be done is not enough! Chinchen explains how missions will change you. Especially when you step out in faith, missions will cultivate a heart that “lives love”.

Once you are infected with that desire, you will see all kinds of resistance around you. He challenges us with the questions of, “What will be our legacy?”, “What is God calling each of us to do?”, “Where will we leave our mark?” But the true heart of his conclusion, which we wait the entire book for, comes in the next to last chapter when he gives the answer to the question of how we can accomplish this: be vulnerable to people. “Open yourself to that possibility. Give yourself to relationships. Allow them to mold your heart. Allow them to transform your soul” (p. 181). Building relationships, getting to really “know” people and partnering together with others are all significant factors for accomplishing the furtherance of *true religion*.

With so much pain expressed in this book, it’s encouraging that Chinchen ends it on a note of grace, of peace, of shalom. He reminds readers that someday there will be a new heaven and a new earth and God will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” When that happens, we will know that we have arrived in heaven.

Palmer Chinchen (son of Jack and Nell Chinchen) grew up in Liberia and has served in Malawi, Cuba and Haiti. Today he leads The Grove in Chandler, Arizona.

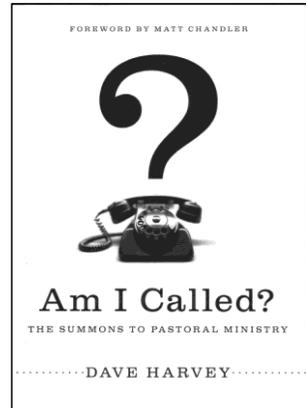
*Reviewed by Albert Huizing, IV*

***Am I Called? The Summons to Pastoral Ministry.* Dave Harvey. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 221 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2748-7**

*Am I Called?* is not a book for pastors, although I found it stimulating; it is not a book for women, but women who may become pastor’s wives should read it. It is not a book with church members in mind, but members concerned for the future of their church should read it. It is a book designed to instruct and guide men who sense a summons to pastoral ministry – a weighty and solemn matter, vital not only for the man wrestling with the issue but also for the well-being of the church.

Harvey aims to help men diagnose their sense of call, but before diagnosis there are two foundational concerns. His first concern is the man seeking help to understand that the call to ministry is grounded in the effectual call to Christ. Dealing with a summons to ministry demands a firm grip on the gospel for it is the gospel which must supply our identity, provide our adequacy, set our personal priorities and be our aim in pastoral ministry. His second concern is the context of the call to pastoral ministry, namely, the local church. Pastors and church planters are called to love and serve “the flock of God” (1 Pet. 5:2).

Harvey seeks to help a man diagnose and confirm his inward call by working through the biblical qualifications for God’s shepherds as they are found primarily in Timothy and Titus. He applies these qualifications by way of the following questions: Are you godly? How’s your home? Can you preach? Can you shepherd? Do you love the lost? He takes up the external call, i.e. “the process of evaluation whereby the church affirms God’s call to the man” (p. 167), by way of the question, “Who agrees?” “External confirmation gives a man confidence that he isn’t deceiving himself about his qualifications for ministry” (p.174) and protects the gospel and the church.



In Harvey’s approach, there is not only the inward call and the external call but also a third element, namely, preparation. These three strands are not consecutive steps but work together in God’s providence to confirm and bind a man to his call to pastoral ministry. Preparation concerns “what to do during those months or years when you carry an internal call but wait for confirmation” (p. 167). In his discussion of preparation, he outlines practical things to do while you wait, shares some helpful insight into the purposes and value of waiting, and pastors those who while waiting discover their desire is not God’s call to “see it as God’s kind redirection” (p.195) not His opposition.

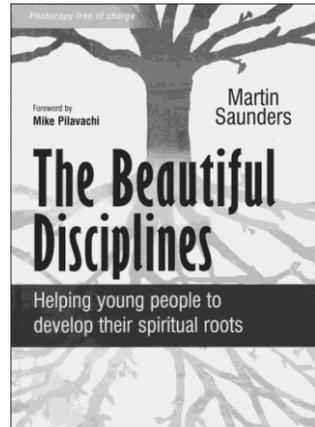
Included throughout the book are profiles of pastors who dramatize the author’s concerns. The eight men profiled are: Thomas Scott, Charles Simeon, Lemuel Haynes, Martin Luther, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, James Boice, Charles Spurgeon, and John Bunyan.

Dave Harvey writes out of a Reformed perspective and is well equipped to write this book from his experience as a pastor of twenty-six years and his work with Sovereign Grace Ministries identifying and equipping church planters. *Am I Called?* is rich in insight and practical guidance. Highly recommended.

*Reviewed by Howard M. McPhee*

***The Beautiful Disciplines: Helping young people to develop their spiritual roots.* Martin Saunders. Grand Rapids: Monarch/Kregel, 2011, 224 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-85721-055-5**

Looking at twenty-first-century youth ministry, one has to wonder – are the spiritual disciplines that had for so long marked the life of the church dead? Have simplicity, meditation, and solitude been lost in the endless menagerie of instant, superficial pop-Christianity? In a culture marked by celebrities, entertainment and quick fixes, how does a youth leader help teenagers develop these classic disciplines? For any minister who has thought along these lines, Martin Saunders' *The Beautiful Disciplines* is a great resource. Former editor at *Youth Work Magazine* and seasoned youth leader, Saunders takes his years of experience and offers youth ministers a fresh interpretation of contemplative Christianity. Modeled largely after Richard Foster's classic *The Spiritual Disciplines*, Saunders' *The Beautiful Disciplines* develops a basic and easy-to-read, small-group curriculum for cultivating ancient spiritual disciples in the twenty-first century.



It is true that the classic spiritual disciplines can seem cold and distant for young people; yet *The Beautiful Disciplines* helps such disciplines to come alive with a passion and intimacy that even older practitioners can appreciate. Saunders, who trial-ran the curriculum with his own youth group, does an outstanding job of providing leaders with a highly adaptable guide on how to integrate spiritual disciplines into their groups. Traditionally organized, the book contains the ten classic spiritual disciplines under three main headings:

- Inward disciplines (prayer, study, meditation, fasting)
- Outward disciplines (simplicity, solitude, submission, service)
- Corporate disciplines (worship, celebration)

Comprised of multiple resources, *The Beautiful Disciplines* is ideal for customization and application. Each topic contains background information, discussion starters, adaptable meeting guides containing games, discussion questions, personal stories and Bible studies as well as resources and activities for deeper investigation and practice. Saunders has made each section fully adaptable for older and younger audiences as well as for churched and un-churched teens.

A great introduction to leading others in developing the spiritual disciplines, the book is intended for those who have a prior knowledge of the dis-

ciplines which are grounded in a developed theological rationale. While the book provides an adequate introduction, its theological framework remains basic and causes some concern. As with any book addressing the topic of contemplative Christianity, *The Beautiful Disciplines* has the potential to lead the reader to an understanding of spiritual growth more in line with the works-oriented “infusion” of grace found in Roman Catholic mysticism. All leaders must be aware that while this book is a helpful contribution in guiding teenagers in the spiritual disciplines, anyone who abandons the grace-motivated, joy-inspired practices of spiritual disciples in favor of duty-bound disciplines meant to purchase joy will find neither joy or the much sought after prize of spiritual growth in the end.

*Reviewed by Ryan Mark Barnhart*

***Sex, Dating, and Relationships: A Fresh Approach.* Gerald Hiestand and Jay Thomas. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 154 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2711-1**

In *Sex, Dating, and Relationships: A Fresh Approach*, pastors Gerald Hiestand and Jay Thomas attempt to bring biblical clarity to the area of sexual purity and relationships.

The most valuable aspect of this book is how the authors bring out the “why” of sexuality. God created it to be a picture of the intimate oneness that exists between Christ and the church (p. 18). The implication is that sex must always be in the context of marriage – one man, one woman, faithful and loving (p. 28). The authors tell singles: “...sexuality...was made first for the Lord as a divine illustration of his nature and purposes. To bypass this reality and use it prematurely for our own gratification is to rob it of its significance and meaning and thus of its true pleasure in our lives” (p. 46).

A more mixed benefit of this book was the point that a “dating relationship” is not an intermediate relationship between the “neighbour” relationship (in which sexual relations are forbidden) and marriage (in which sexual relations are commanded), in which people are free to experiment sexually. Rather, a dating relationship, like any other type of relationship other than marriage, falls under the category of the neighbour relationship. The authors’ main point here is that sexual relations of any kind are forbidden in the neighbour relationship, but I would really have liked to see them open up this point a bit more. How are neighbours (or better yet, brothers and sisters in Christ) to treat each other? I think young singles could really benefit from



being reminded of the “one another” passages in the New Testament, such as Philippians 2 and Romans 12.<sup>1</sup> This would be a good antidote to the selfishness that is at the root of so much sexual sin. The authors begin well with this point, but the book would have been much better if its authors had continued to explore the positive responsibilities of love and honour in what they call the “neighbour” relationship.

A third good point about this book is that it recognizes that lust must be dealt with at a heart level. Victory over lust can only come through union with Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And yet, despite all this good, I will not be indiscriminately handing out this book to all my young single friends.

Early in the book, one of the authors speaks critically of a pastor’s counsel in his youth:

...he had no objective standard of purity with which to advise us. Instead he encouraged us each to prayerfully come to our own convictions about what was physically appropriate in a dating relationship and to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately we were left to seek our own wisdom. (p. 34)

In contrast, these authors claim to have found an objective, biblical answer to the question “How far is too far?” (If you’re curious, their answer is: any action that would not be appropriate with your brother or sister. For example, outside of marriage, even kissing is sexually immoral.) The problem is, the authors do not seem to realize that the interpretation and application of Scripture, wise though it may be, must not be placed on the same level with Scripture itself.<sup>2</sup> They begin with a legitimate biblical principle: The Bible prohibits sexual relations in any relationship other than marriage. They then define “sexual relations” very narrowly and give their conclusions the weight of the objective Word of God.<sup>3</sup> It can seem very attractive and safe to have every-

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to “Darcy”, a blogger at “Recovering Grace”, for this insight. <http://www.recoveringgrace.org/2011/08/emotional-purity-and-courtship-a-conclusion/>. I can’t whole-heartedly recommend her whole series on the subject, but her conclusion is excellent.

<sup>2</sup> Joshua Harris makes this point in “Commands from God’s Word are different than suggestions for the wise application of Biblical principles”. [http://www.covlife.org/resources/2671712-Romance\\_Revisited\\_The\\_Necessity\\_of\\_Biblical\\_Conviction](http://www.covlife.org/resources/2671712-Romance_Revisited_The_Necessity_of_Biblical_Conviction).

This clarity is a key difference between Harris’ books (*I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, *Boy Meets Girl*, and *Sex Isn’t the Problem, Lust Is*) and the book under review.

<sup>3</sup> See page 32, “Contrary to popular opinion, the Bible does speak with clarity – objective clarity – about what is physically appropriate between an unmarried man and woman in a pre-marriage relationship.” And p. 54, “According to God’s Word, we are to do nothing with a member of the opposite sex that we wouldn’t do with a blood relative. This clarifies things pretty dramatically and gives an objective answer to the question, How far is too far?”

thing spelled out, but it is very spiritually dangerous, as we can see from the Pharisees of Jesus' day. By contrast, the pastor's counsel these authors are so critical of seems very wise. It is not "leaving people to seek their own wisdom" to teach them biblical principles and encourage them to come to their own conviction following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Another point that concerns me is the burden the authors will place on some of their readers by their interpretation of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5: "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." They argue against the view that it is the intent of the heart that makes looking at a woman with desire<sup>4</sup> a sin. What makes desire sinful, they argue, is whether its object is legitimate. The text's reference to the heart is not so much about the disposition or intentions of the heart but that sexual desire is not only physical but also emotional. Therefore, the authors conclude, even spontaneous (inadvertent) desire when a man sees an attractive woman is sin, even when his heart's desire is to be pure and he does not dwell upon it in his mind or act on it physically. The implication seems to be that sexual attraction is always sin when it has no legitimate object (i.e. a husband or a wife). I am concerned that young people who are sincerely seeking to do God's will in this area of their lives will be thrown into confusion and guilt when they experience sexual attraction toward someone who is not (or not yet) their spouse. I realize that the authors are aiming their book at singles who (up till now) have been dating casually and using their relationship as an excuse to experiment sexually. But I can't help but think that there will be at least some readers who, like myself as a young single, do not treat sexuality or dating lightly. They may read this and gain an unhealthy view of the God-given sexual attraction that leads many (most?) of us to get married in the first place.

My third concern is how formulaic the authors are in describing "*dating friendships*",<sup>5</sup> their wisdom on how to get to know someone before marriage. To be fair, they do acknowledge that "Scripture allows for a great deal of flexibility when it comes to pre-engagement relationships" (p. 93). However, the authors are very specific as to how their dating friendship system works, and their new terminology of "*dating friendships*" also seems to encourage the perception that their system is better than "dating" or "courtship".<sup>6</sup> This

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<sup>4</sup> The authors point out that the word translated "lust" is actually the word "desire", which is a neutral rather than a negative word.

<sup>5</sup> Page 92, "two friends getting to know each other with a view towards marriage". These friends just consider themselves friends, not boyfriend and girlfriend. There is no commitment, no sexual involvement, and no romance or trying to woo the other. Once the "*dating friendship*" has run its course, they either go back to a normal friendship or become engaged. Once engaged, romance and "wooing" are permitted, and the wedding is organized as soon as possible. There are currently many new terms being coined. Another new one by some Christian bloggers is "*dateship*".

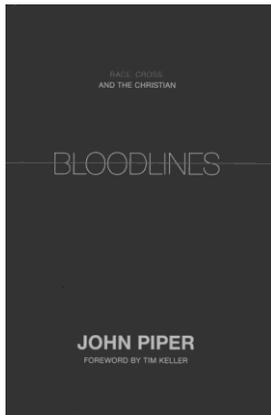
<sup>6</sup> Their views are essentially quite similar to Joshua Harris' *Boy Meets Girl*. There is one key difference, though. Harris is very clear where these authors are a bit fuzzy:

narrowness fails to recognize the differences across cultures in how people get to know and marry each other. Dating, courtship, even arranged marriage can all be done to the glory of God. What really matters when you walk through these things is whether you are honouring the Lord and treating the person you are interested in with the kind of love and honour Scripture calls for in all our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ. My concern is simply that young people will latch on to “dating friendships” as a formula for staying pure and safe from heartbreak, and no formula can do this for you.

In conclusion, this book does not bring the clarity its authors intended to the discussion of sexuality and dating. It fills a gap with its scriptural teaching on the “why” of sexuality. On the other hand, it has several flaws, and the authors’ failure to recognize that “Commands from God’s Word are different than suggestions for the wise application of Biblical principles”<sup>7</sup> is potentially spiritually dangerous. Contextually, this is very much a North American book. I will not be recommending this book.

*Reviewed by Nelleke Plouffe*

***Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian.* John Piper. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 295 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4335-2852-1**



This is an engaging book for many reasons, not simply because of its rigorous biblical scholarship and ruthless application of the gospel to one of societies more enduring problems – racism – but also because the author himself has given us perhaps one of his most intensely personal books to date. John Piper, until recently pastor for preaching and vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, writes about this matter as of a journey that has left him deeply scarred. Growing up in racially charged Greenville, South Carolina, Piper confesses to having been a full-blooded racist. He goes so far as to say that his mother would have cleaned out his

dating is not the issue, and it doesn’t matter what you want to call it, whether “dating” or “courtship” or anything else. The issue is love of God and love of neighbour, and there is tremendous freedom and diversity in following biblical principles in this area. (Summarized from “Romance Revisited”, a talk he gave at Covenant Life Church. [http://www.covlife.org/resources/2671712-Romance\\_Revisited\\_The\\_Necessity\\_of\\_Biblical\\_Conviction.](http://www.covlife.org/resources/2671712-Romance_Revisited_The_Necessity_of_Biblical_Conviction.))

<sup>7</sup> Harris, “Commands from God’s Word”.

mouth with soap if she'd heard him saying some of the things he did (p. 34). Speaking of enforced segregation during his time in Greenville, Piper says:

It was not respectful, it was not just, it was not loving, and therefore it was not Christian. It was ugly and demeaning. And, as we will see, because of my complicity I have much to be sorry about.

Which is one reason this book focuses so heavily on the gospel of Jesus Christ. I owe my life and hope to the gospel. Without it I would still be strutting with racist pride. . . . (p. 32)

Piper chronicles his journey to racial acceptance through the influence of his mother: "She was, under God, the seed of my salvation in more ways than one. . . . I knew deep down that my attitudes were an offense to my mother and to her God" (p. 34). He credits seminary professors Paul Jewett and Lewis Smedes with bringing this difficult issue out into the open and into the classroom.

It was important for Piper that this is where he had planted within him the seeds of change since so much of evangelical history on this matter is shameful. He writes,

There is no mystery in it as to why a young black man growing up there . . . would get his theological education at a liberal institution (such as Chicago Theological Seminary or Crozer Theological Seminary). Our fundamental and evangelical schools – and almost every other institution – especially in the South, were committed to segregation. (p. 33)

Having studied in Germany, Piper was able to relate the matter not just to America but as it unfolded in Nazi Germany. Here his thinking continued to be deepened. "Living in the literal and figurative shadow of such horrific effects of racism solidified the merciful reorientation of my mind" (p. 37).

Piper's journey later included pastoring a church in a racially mixed neighbourhood and culminated in adopting a black child. So the reader can see that the book is deeply personal for Piper and that he, given his background, is imminently qualified to write. "Nothing binds a pastor's heart to diversity more than having it in his home" (p. 39).

Moving on from the personal perspective, Piper traces the history of the race relations debate, principally over the course of the Civil Rights Movement. A pivotal point he recalls was the Supreme Court's decision on May 17, 1954. "That was the day that the Supreme Court decided the case called *Brown v. Board of Education*. It declared that state-imposed segregation in the public schools was a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment" (p. 24).

Although the race problem is an intensely complex one, Piper has chosen to look at two theories that have been offered as to why there has been such systemic racism in the United States.

Piper's vision for the book can be summed up in three remarks he makes early on in the book. "I believe that the gospel – the good news of Christ cru-

cified in our place to remove the wrath of God and provide forgiveness of sins and power for sanctification – is our only hope for the kind of racial diversity and harmony that ultimately matters” (p. 40). He goes on to say, “Therefore, I long to see the followers of Christ, especially myself, living the kind of lives that advance the cause of Christ-exalting racial diversity and Spirit-enabled racial harmony. I pray this book serves that end” (p. 43).

Of course for Piper the answers as to the origin of racism lie in the Word of God but so too do the solutions.

What is needed is a miracle. I mean that literally. A supernatural in-breaking of God through the gospel of Christ. It is not even possible to describe the hope-filled relational dynamics that may happen when the gospel explodes in two hearts that bring such radically different experiences of sin and suffering to the relationship. “What is impossible with men is possible with God.” (Luke 18:27). (p. 94)

With wonderful clarity Piper, magnifying gospel power, asserts: “Only the gospel can do two seemingly contradictory things: destroy pride and increase courage. Destroy self-exaltation and increase confidence. Destroy the pushiness of self-assertion and deliver from the paralysis of self-doubt” (p. 95).

Piper is able to weave historical precedent and scriptural truth. One of the best historical illustrations of the way the gospel of Christ transforms is the life of William Wilberforce (1759–1833) and the Clapham Sect. “One of the most important and least known facts about the battle to abolish the slave trade in Britain two hundred years ago is that it was sustained by a passion for the doctrine of justification by faith alone . . .” (p. 104).

Wilberforce believed that the nation was in particular need of recovering the truth that Christianity was a scheme “for making the fruits of holiness the effects, not the cause, of our being justified and reconciled” (p. 105). “In other words, Wilberforce’s unwavering, lifelong commitment to justice for the African slaves was built on the deep foundations of biblical doctrine” (p.112). Piper boldly asserts,

My point is that the truths themselves, when rightly understood and embraced and cherished with a good heart, cut the legs out from under racist attitudes. That I am chosen for salvation in spite of all my ugly and deadening sinfulness, that the infinitely precious Son of God secured my eternal life through his own infinite suffering, that my rebellious and resistant heart was conquered by sovereign grace, and that I am kept by the power of God forever – if these truths do not make me a humble servant of racial diversity and harmony, then I have not seen them or loved them as I ought. (p. 130)

As with many of the problems Piper addresses in other books, it is not just a mild expression of the Christian faith that will do but the glory and power of a full-orbed biblical faith. He is arguing for nothing less. In fact, he argues that “racial harmony is to the praise of his GRACE. Diversity is more glorious than the unity of sameness” (p. 195). This is the line of argument Piper has used elsewhere. In *Spectacular Sins*, for example, he concluded that God revealed His glory in the Tower of Babel in making His Son the saviour not of one monolithic culture but of a multitude of people from numerous cultures.

In his second-to-last chapter, Piper continues to challenge the church regarding our ideas about interracial marriage along several lines. He says, “My aim in this chapter is to argue from Scripture and experience that interracial marriage is not only permitted by God but is a positive good in our day. It is not just to be tolerated, but celebrated” (p. 203).

He makes a very strong point in saying,

I cannot bring myself to believe that the mingling of racial traits in the children of interracial marriages is a “diluting” of the diversity God wills. The “races” have never been pure or well defined. The human lines that flowed from the sons of Noah (Shem, Ham, and Japheth) have flowed into far more diversity than three ethnic types of human beings. There is no reason to think that diversification has stopped. (p. 208)

He further says that while the Bible forbids marriage between unbelievers and believers, that doesn’t hold true across racial lines for the following reasons: in Christ our oneness transcends racial lines; criticizing one interracial marriage was severely disciplined by God; Moses, a Jew, apparently married a black African and was approved by God, while Miriam and Aaron’s criticism of it was judged by God in her turning leprous (p. 212).

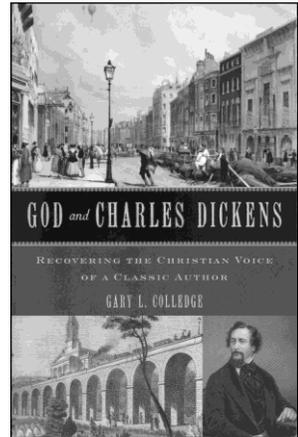
Certainly this book has an American context. However, I believe it needs universal readership. I heartily commend it for all theological training colleges to order for their libraries. We must be clear on what the Bible says about race as this is relevant for every culture and nation. Appendix 4, “What are the implications of Noah’s curse?” (pp. 263-267) will be a valuable read across many countries.

Personally speaking, this is a timely book. Where I live on Prince Edward Island, the cultural landscape is evolving daily. Non-traditional people groups are coming into the province and country at unprecedented rates. How will we as Christians respond? Will we respond with suspicion and segregation, or will we rise to the challenge that Piper gives in this very searching and challenging book to face these changes with the power of the gospel. Piper leaves us with no alternative but rather leaves us excited about racial diversity. His arguments are compelling and conclusive. The gospel must win the day!

*Reviewed by Kent I. Compton*

***God and Charles Dickens: Rediscovering the Christian Voice of a Classic Author.* Gary L. Colledge. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2012, 224 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-58743-320-7**

From *The Christmas Carol* to *The Tale of Two Cities* and *Oliver Twist*, the Anglo-American social conscience has been challenged by the prolific nineteenth-century journalist Charles Dickens. While Dickens' social morality is immediately evident, Gary Colledge also argues that Dickens wrote out of the centre of a deeply Christian worldview. Often missed in scholarship and overlooked in Dickens' own anti-ecclesiastical writings, Colledge aims to restore the Christian voice of Dickens for both appreciative readers and critical scholars in this reworking of his Ph.D. dissertation.



After a helpful introduction and first chapter laying out the project and Dickens' Christian perspective, *God and Charles Dickens* falls into five topical chapters. Each of these treatments covers an aspect of Dickens' Christian belief and peculiar social critique. In Colledge's presentation, we see a Dickens that is essentially Jesus-centred, relying upon the New Testament, and working his faith out in love and tangible "goodness" in the world.

While Dickens may look like he has some unorthodox critiques of theology and church, Colledge argues that they largely fall in line with nineteenth-century, popular lay Anglicanism. Dickens certainly understood the depravity of humanity – his tales tell that dark story most evidently – and he had hope for humanity when he was at his most optimistic. Weaving together Dickens' letters, essays, sermons, and novels, we see that Dickens' God is the providential Creator and Jesus is the Deliverer of humanity. Dickens launched satirical and open challenges to many aspects of his religious world not because he rejected faith but because he desperately wanted what he called "real Christianity". His critique of dissenters and Evangelicals comes out of a cultural dislike of the problematic Christianity he saw played out in the pulpits and streets of England rather than a sophisticated theological critique.

Intentionally, this book is a restrained guide where Colledge chooses to get out of the way and allow Dickens to speak. In this project, he is following Dickens' own advice to Christian preachers who so often draw people to themselves instead of Christ. It is probably a relevant critique for today – a relevance the author capitalizes upon as each chapter ends with a note to the church.

While letting Dickens speak is Colledge's goal, we must remember that

Colledge is still shaping the reader's perspective. In the project of recovering Dickens' Christian voice, we see a Dickens emerge that sits not uncomfortably with contemporary evangelicalism. One might be concerned that Colledge is in danger of washing Dickens as some have done with C.S. Lewis, lover of ale and tobacco, or as may be the case in Eric Mataxas' recent biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who now reads like an American evangelical. We are in nearest danger of this kind of treatment as Colledge shares Dickens' faith commitments to charity and social reform in his chapter on "Real Christianity".

However, I do not think that Colledge falls into this trap. He allows the ambiguity of Dickens' beliefs to hang in the air and occasionally critiques them. While I think a fuller treatment of Dickens' marriage breakup and his early flirtation with Unitarianism are warranted, Colledge doesn't run from other difficult moments. For example, due to his disgust with a popular rigid Calvinism, Dickens seemingly rejects substitutionary atonement through the vicarious suffering of Christ. Colledge sets this particular departure from Anglicanism in context but allows it to sit in all its complexity.

In his reading, I'm not sure that Colledge saw the lack of the cross in Dickens' thought – a lack of a Cruci-centric vision that stands in strange contrast to his Christo-centric spirituality. However, I think Colledge drew out Dickens' genuine faith and demonstrates superbly the Christian influence throughout all of Dickens work. In short, Charles Dickens' novels are soaked through with the Christian worldview and work to call people back to a heartfelt, Jesus-centred, New Testament-based faith. The result is a helpful, accessible book that comes out of Dr. Colledge's larger academic project to challenge mainstream thinking in Dickens study and at the same time augments our resources on Christianity and literature. A worthy contribution for 2012, celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dicken's birth.

*Review by Brenton D. G. Dickieson. Brenton teaches in the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture at the University of Prince Edward Island, is an Adjunct Professor at Maritime Christian College, Charlottetown, and is an online instructor for Regent College (Vancouver, BC).*



## Book Briefs

In this section we acknowledge new books we have received over the last year for which we have not provided full book reviews. We have organized these into topical categories to help readers become aware of new books in specific areas. Unless otherwise stated, all book briefs are by the editor.

### Church History

***The Kregel Pictorial Guide to Church History, Volume 6 – The Church and Postmodernity, A.D. 1900-Present.* John D. Hannah. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010, 32 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8254-2787-9**

“Amazing” is a great way to summarize how John Hannah managed to pack in all he did in these thirty-two pages, including illustrations and maps. This little church history reference guide would be a wonderful overview for introductory modern history classes at the junior college or Christian high school level or for homeschoolers. The text does not define “neatly” many terms used, so the guide would need to be used with lectures and an additional textbook. Also, it is very Western in its orientation and weak on the work of missionary consolidation in the twentieth century. Yet despite these drawbacks, given the right teaching context, this is definitely a helpful guide to have students read through to gain several insights into the twentieth century. The section on “The Charismatic Movements” (pp. 19-22) serves as a good starting point for someone to gain a brief overview. This series of “Guides” is exactly that – brief guides – and should not be taken as anything more. They have a real place in the right context. Attractively illustrated, part of a series of six booklets, all authored by John Hannah.

***The Faithful Preacher: Recapturing the Vision of Three Pioneering African-American Pastors.* Thabiti M. Anyabwile. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007, 191 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-58134-827-9**

A wonderful corrective and resource to use in American church history. Anyabwile introduces us to three virtually forgotten African-American preachers – Lemuel Haynes, Daniel Payne and Francis Grimké. The book combines biographical study with primary source writings from the three preachers. This is truly a rich work and has been edited to make for a fine collection. It will certainly be valued for all who teach American church his-

tory. Also, readers of Christian biography in general will be blessed and find this a helpful work. There are two pages of notes at the back referring to sources consulted. The foreword is by John Piper. It is unfortunate to see a typing error for a date on a photo of Francis Grimké. A pleasure to recommend this book to a wide readership.

## Missiology

***Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012, 107 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-3997-3**

This new, expanded second edition of Walter Kaiser's *Mission in the Old Testament* is most welcome. Three new chapters have been added, making for a total of eight chapters, plus study and discussion questions have been added for all chapters including the preface and introduction. *Mission in the Old Testament* has earned a special place in the study of the biblical foundations of missions; this new edition will ensure that it will continue to occupy a special place as a college text. The glossary is most helpful. Some have demurred that Kaiser presses his case too far, yet some new works have completely supported his conclusions. Each time I have used this book with students, I have seen the same results – new discoveries and excitement.

***The Local Church, Agent of Transformation: an Ecclesiology for Integral Mission*. Eds., Tetsunao Yamamori and C. René Padilla. Trans., Brian Cordingly. Buenos Aires: Kairos, 2004, 322 pp., paper. ISBN 987-9403-67-3**

I am ashamed to say, this is only the second time we have reviewed a book from South America in our journal. We need to become more proactive in our awareness of what is being published globally. Here is a most fascinating collection of essays which will be helpful to missiologists, pastors and systematic theologians across the world. There are twelve contributors for a total of thirteen chapters and most have a South American connection, with the majority an Argentinean connection. Lest some dismiss the work and quickly think it is just “liberation theology”, closer reflection will cause serious study. The title and sub-title are well-worded in the English translation from the Spanish *La iglesia local como agente de transformación: Una ecclesiología para la misión integral*. This work helps us to see the interdisciplinary and integrative role that missiology, praxis and systematic theology may have. It is about neglected areas in evangelical ecclesiology yet is intertwined with missiology and praxis. C. René Padilla's opening essay, “Introduction: An Ecclesiology for Integral Mission”, is worth the price of the

book. In this book “integral mission” means what is now usually described as “holistic/wholistic mission”. I strongly encourage missiologists and theologians to read this work. Yes, you may not agree with every viewpoint in the collection, I did not, but guaranteed it will stimulate you to think creatively about biblical life in the church.

## Systematic Theology

***Why Do We Have Creeds?* Burk Parsons. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2012, 39 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-59638-202-2**

A stimulating, contemporary discussion in small booklet form dealing with the title’s subject, “Why do we have creeds?” The author, who is on the staff at Saint Andrew’s Chapel in Sanford, Florida, brings in a host of quotations and references in writing this booklet. Those familiar with the subject will expect to see a reference at some point to Samuel Miller’s *The Utility and Importance of Creeds and Confessions* (1839), and it is there but so are references to Augustine, Lewis, Bavinck, Dever, Warfield, Berkhof, McGrath, Pelikan, etc. For some readers this may start to become too heavy, whereas others will relish in it. Perhaps more emphasis on biblical exposition could balance this out. Parsons raises the practical question to those who say they have no creed and later you find out they have a very long creed, either written or unwritten. A helpful booklet for college or seminary classes on the value of creeds/confessions and an inexpensive text to supplement such a course.

***The Church’s Book of Comfort.* Ed., Willem van ‘t Spijker. Trans., Gerrit Bilkes. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2009, 291 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-60178-056-0**

Here is a top-rate book about the Heidelberg Catechism authored by six very capable writers from the Netherlands under the editorship of Willem van ‘t Spijker. The book provides an opening chapter on the Reformation in Germany followed by two helpful essays (chapters) by Wim Verboom and Christa Boerke on the completion of the Heidelberg Catechism and the people behind it. Most helpful. Chapter 4 by van ‘t Spijker is on “The Theology of the Heidelberg Catechism” and again is an excellent chapter. The two longest chapters are chapters 5 and 6, “The Heidelberg Catechism in the Netherlands” and “The Heidelberg Catechism in Preaching and Teaching” (at 57 and 63 pages respectively). Curiously, chapters 5 and 6 have footnotes but virtually all in Dutch (not sure why they were not translated into English). The book ends with a discussion on the continued relevance of the Heidelberg Catechism. *The Church’s Book of Comfort* is well-illustrated and

certainly an edifying and intriguing work. It could have roamed more inclusively to explore the wider influence and relevance of the Heidelberg Catechism. Highly recommended.

## Denominational

***Our Anglican Heritage: Can an Ancient Church Be a Church of the Future?* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. John W. Howe and Sam C. Pascoe. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010, 237 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-60899-489-2**

This is a major revision of a book written in the 1970s by John Howe, commissioned then by David C. Cook Publishing. This second edition has been updated by Sam Pascoe, now of the Anglican Church in North America. *Our Anglican Heritage* is an easy-to-read overview of the historic Anglican tradition. It is divided into fifteen chapters, six appendices, a full glossary and a bibliography. The chapters range from “An Ancient Church: The Historic Roots of the Church in England” to “A Confessing Church: *The Articles of Religion*” and “An Evangelical Church: The Great Missionary Expansion” to matters very contemporary, “A Church on the Fault Lines: The Episcopal Church in America”. Anglicanism is “the third largest branch of Christendom”, so if you are not an Anglican and know very little about Anglicanism, here is the book to begin with. The writing style is accessible and engaging.

## Pastoral

***Building Healthy Churches – Church Membership: How the World Knows Who Represents Jesus.* Jonathan Leeman. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 142 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4335-3237-5**

“Distilled to the basics” is how I describe this book of 142 pages by Jonathan Leeman, the editorial director of 9Marks Ministries. The eight chapters are each fairly short and can be read quickly. The language is at a good level that could be used in many adult study groups. What I really appreciated came out very clearly in chapter 8, “Must Membership Look the Same Everywhere?” You got it – the answer is yes and no. The yes is “The Biblical Baseline” and the no follows under “A Very Different Model?”, where “procedures, etc.” can differ. In essence, there is a catholicity or universality but not every “procedure” is identical. The work will be helpful not just for Baptists but also for Presbyterian theological institutions or training centres, and I think it would generate good discussion. This book is a companion to other larger volumes under the 9Marks series label. Will it convince folks to “join” local churches? It will certainly help, but some, sadly, will still try to wiggle

away from the clear mandate of Scripture. But I think many will benefit from Leeman's book.

***Facing Death with Jesus.* Christopher W. Bogosh. Yulee, FL: Good Samaritan Books, 2011, 18 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1466497023**

***Facing a Terminal Illness with Jesus.* Christopher W. Bogosh. Yulee, FL: Good Samaritan Books, 2011, 60 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1460976784**

***The Puritans on How to Care for the Sick and Dying: A Contemporary Guide for Pastors and Counselors.* Christopher W. Bogosh. Yulee, FL: Good Samaritan Books, 2011, 102 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1466455955**

Over the years I have given out many copies of the small Banner booklet, *Christians Grieve Too*. The first two mentioned above are similar resources which could stand alongside this older resource. They are all written by the same author, Christopher Bogosh of Florida, a pastor and a registered nurse and founder of Good Samaritan Books. *Facing Death with Jesus* is a booklet which could be bought by pastors to always have on hand in their studies. The print is very large and will be easy for all to read. *Facing a Terminal Illness with Jesus* is a slightly larger work and has an introduction plus seven days of meditations. These two works used appropriately could aid communications about difficult issues. The titles state their theses quite obviously. The last work, *The Puritans on How to Care for the Sick and Dying*, is specifically a work to be used by pastors and counselors as a "guide". It could also be included in a seminary-level, pastoral-care course. The three chapters are "Giving Advice, Information, and Reminders", "Exhorting the Sick or Dying" and "Comforting the Sick or Dying Believer", taken from "Concerning Visitation of the Sick" in the 1645 Directory for Public Worship of God. Helpful appendices are given, which could be very useful for training purposes. All three works are attractively bound and clearly evangelical and biblical.

***You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith.* David Kinnaman with Aly Hawkins. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011, 254 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8010-1314-0**

The author of this book is both the president of the Barna Group ([www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org)) and the co-author of the bestselling book *unChristian*. The purpose of *You Lost Me* is to give voice to North American young people who were raised in the church but have left it. It is a collection of blunt, sometimes painful and even irreverent stories of young people who are disillusioned with the church and are hurting. The book is divided into three

mains parts: a description of the dropouts based on their own testimony; a summary of their feelings of disconnection with the church; and recommendations and advice from the author and others on what will make reconnection possible for this generation of drop outs. While the tone of the material may sound negative, the book's intent is very positive: ". . . we need to help the next generation of Christ-followers deal well with cultural accommodation; we need to help them live *in-but-not-of* lives. And in the process, we will all be better prepared to serve Christ in a shifting cultural landscape" (p. 15). The church around the world can read this book and benefit from the insights it gives concerning the tension between truth and culture by examining North America as a case study.

Nancy J. Whytock

## Exegetical

**Proverbs & Ecclesiastes. Daniel J. Treier. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2011, 256 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-58743-148-7**

If asked, "What should I buy on the book of Proverbs?", I would say buy Daniel Treier and Bruce Waltke<sup>1</sup>. The first helps one see the grand theological themes and the second is the finest exegetical commentary on Proverbs in recent generations. Treier devotes approximately one hundred pages each to Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Treier serves as associate professor of theology at Wheaton College, Illinois – note, not "associate professor of New Testament". This in itself is significant in today's specialized world. I believe it helps redress some imbalances and helps bring integration. Reading Treier and comparing it with Waltke's introductory material in his two volume exegetical work is not like reading all the same ground. Treier is very fresh and brings fresh insights and organization to his material. I agree with Peter Davids that the Brazos Theological Commentary series "reveals major themes that are often unwittingly obscured in the detail of the major exegetical commentaries". In essence, we benefit from both types of work. The pages are not overly cluttered with countless footnotes. The author knows his subject. One paragraph on genre in Proverbs 10-29 was right to the point – "Proverbs do not offer ironclad guarantees . . ." (p. 62). Reflective reading of this work will deepen one's time spent in reading Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, 2 vols. NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004-2005).

## Guidance

***God's Will: Finding Guidance for Everyday Decisions.* J. I Packer and Carolyn Nystrom. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008, 270 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-1441-3**

This is a well-written and well-grounded book on living the Christian life as a believer faces making daily decisions. Sometimes believers are crippled by decision-making while some believers are all too cavalier about making decisions. This book is a balanced centre-course and heartily to be recommended. It begins with the broader picture in the first three chapters and then moves to chapter 4, which is foundational – “Guided by the Word of God”. This is followed by chapter 5, “The Way of Wisdom”, my favourite chapter in the book. I found myself highlighting several sentences in that chapter and am weaving them into my preaching and teaching. I will only give one here: “The life of wisdom is a life of constant learning: constant evaluating, constant discerning, constant extension of one’s understanding” (p. 125). The remaining chapters are solid meat on getting help from others, modelling or imitation, guidance concerning vocation, a true understanding of our situation and the last chapter, “Guarded and Guided by the Holy Spirit”. The book has an epilogue, a helpful appendix and an excellent section of discussion and questions for reflection, making this a fine book for private or group usage. Christian college libraries, make sure this book is on your shelves!

***God told me – who to marry, where to work, which car to buy . . . and I'm pretty sure I'm not crazy: learning to listen for guidance from God.* Jim Samra. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012, 204 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-1411-6**

This book also needs to be considered next to the Packer and Nystrom work. It probes matters which are either ignored or just discounted as “strange”. First, the author is not a charismatic, so the book cannot be said to represent classic Pentecostal or charismatic thought. But rather, it addresses questions addressed by virtually all evangelical Christians, so it should receive a fair hearing (read) by all. I am drawn instinctively to the Packer and Nystrom book, but I cannot ignore this book either. Samra has a D.Phil. in New Testament from Oxford, has written two other books and is an active pastor. His writing style is engaging and easy to read. The author draws upon familiar names in church history and provides many contemporary illustrations both from his own life and the lives of others. The book’s subtitle and the bi-line on the front cover really says it all: “learning to listen for guidance from God”. In case you are put off, Samra anticipates many questions; such as, “Isn’t the notion of guidance from God ripe for abuse?” (pp. 187-188). The book deserves our honest consideration.

## Preaching

***Why Johnny Can't Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers.*** T. David Gordon. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009, 108 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-59638-116-2

Underlying this book is the thesis that western education and culture have greatly changed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Thus young theologues today arrive at theological colleges/seminaries with a very different educational and cultural perspective than former generations. Hence, the book's title is a "knock-off" of the 1966 book *Why Johnny Can't Read* and the 1990 book *Why Johnny Can't Write*. The author is surely onto something, but his sub-title may have narrowed a full analysis of the situation to one dimension only – *The Media Have Shaped the Messengers*. It is true that our sound-bite culture has influenced oral communication and writing skills radically. I agree to a large extent with the thesis of the book, but I would want to also address other matters such as the spiritual. That said, this book with about one hundred pages of text is passionate, easy-to-read, provocative and worthy of inclusion in a homiletics course as a seminar topic. The book is worth purchasing simply for Gordon's summary of Dabney's seven requisites for every sermon (pp. 23-28), but this entire small book will be stimulating for all who teach homiletics.

## Devotional

***A Woman's Wisdom: how the book of Proverbs speaks to everything.*** Lydia Brownback. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 223 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2827-9

This well-written book by Lydia Brownback is a wonderful example of extracting the timeless principles of the Scriptures, in this case Proverbs, and applying them to North American culture in the twenty-first century. It is remarkable how she is able to address single and married women without favouring either and with sensitivity to the unique responsibilities and challenges of both. The book is divided into three main sections: what is wisdom and why does it matter; six things wise women know; and a portrait of wisdom. In each case the book of Proverbs is expounded and applied in a refreshing and practical manner. There is a study guide included at the back of the book and the publisher, Crossway, has also made the guide available on their website as a free download (see the bottom of the page at this link – <http://www.crossway.org/books/a-womans-wisdom-tpb/>). This book would be great for use in a women's Bible study. Even for women living outside of North America, the well organized biblical principles could be taken and then applied to other cultural contexts. Highly recommended.

Nancy J. Whytock

***Zeal for Godliness: Devotional Meditations on Calvin's Institutes.* Eds., Derek W. H. Thomas and R. Carlton Wynne. Darlington, England/Carlisle, PA: EP Books, 2011, 270 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-85234-758-4**

Here is a bite-size way to work through John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The book's title, *Zeal for Godliness*, is a wonderful complement to Calvin's goal and full title of his *Institutes*. *Zeal for Godliness* is made up of one-page readings, recast from the Alliance of Confessing Evangelical's online magazine at reformation21.org. It represents thirteen contributors, many whose names will be well-known; for example, Sinclair Ferguson, Paul Helm, Justin Taylor, Philip Ryken, etc. The book's cover says it is "Devotional Meditations on Calvin's *Institutes*". I was thus surprised to see that a scripture text or chief reference was not printed across the top of each page. The layout is as follows: each page has a reference to the section in the *Institutes* (e.g. 1.1.1-1.2.1), then the contributor's comments and his name. Sometimes scriptures are mentioned, sometimes not. The preface says that this may be used "as a travelling companion as you journey through the *Institutes* yourself or as a self-contained in-flight manual for those preferring a bird's eye view of Calvin's theological landscape". I believe that sums it up well. Not a general "family devotional" book, so read the word "devotional" with much latitude of definition.

## Worship

***Psalms for All Seasons: A Complete Psalter for Worship.* Eds., Martin Tel, John D. Witvliet and Joyce Berger. Grand Rapids: Calvin Institute of Christian Worship/Faith Alive/Brazos Press, 2012, 1128 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-58743-316-0**

This anthology of psalms is thought to be the largest collection of psalms for Christian worship that has ever been published. It contains settings for all 150 psalms, in some cases multiple settings. The book is much more than a collection of traditional metrical psalms as it also includes contemporary settings, chants, responsive readings, hymns combined with psalms, refrains, and ideas for incorporating psalms into various worship settings. The indices at the back are extensive: authors, composers, and sources; genre and musical styles; subjects and seasons; metrical index of tunes; tune names; first line and common titles. This attention to organization and accessibility makes the book very user-friendly. There are also several psalms that include versions in other languages such as Portuguese, Greek, Spanish, Latin and Thai. This international flavour adds to the appeal of the book as a global resource.

Though it is doubtful that such a book will be purchased for general congregational use, there is no doubt that it is an excellent resource for any individual or congregation that desires to enhance and improve their use of the psalms in public or private worship. There are also teaching CD's available that music leaders can use to teach new psalms. The book and CDs can be ordered from the website – [psalmsforallseasons.org](http://psalmsforallseasons.org).

*Nancy J. Whytock*

## Biography

***Matthew Henry (1662-1714): His Life and Influence.* Allan Harman. Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2012, 207 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-84550-783-1**

This book is ordered by the author's preface followed by two contextual chapters: "The Puritan Environment" and "The Family Background". These contextual chapters are followed by ten chapters chronologically developing the life of Matthew Henry from his birth in 1662 to his death in 1714. The final four chapters are thematic, looking at Henry as a preacher and a commentator, his other writings, and his impact. The author then ends with a short conclusion and a general index. All of this in a paperback of about 200 pages and all, I might add, highly readable so that many will do well to select this as a *must read* biographical study on the esteemed commentator. The author is very familiar with his subject, this being his second published book related to Henry. A few illustrations are included. A map would have been of benefit for many readers. It was surprising not to find mention of Manser's new edited edition of Henry's commentary (recently published by Zondervan) with perhaps some evaluation.

There are some absolutely profound quotations sprinkled throughout the book. One I will end with:

Schism is an uncharitable distance, division, or alienation of affection among those who are called Christians, and agree in the fundamentals of religion, occasioned by their different apprehension about little things. . . .

And yet I am afraid even saints will be men; there will be remainders even of those corruptions which are the seed of schism, in the best, till we all come to the perfect man. (pp. 172-173)

Take up and read!

# **Academic Articles**



# **‘This One Went Down Justified’: An Account of Justification in Luke’s Gospel**

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## **Introduction**

This is an exegetical study of Luke 18:9-14, commonly known as the ‘Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector’. I make no claim to great originality or novelty. Instead, I have written this study with the intention of providing a brief but careful analysis of this significant text which will be accessible to students and pastors, will be useful in the context of a preaching and teaching ministry and may, to some extent at least, provide a pattern for exegesis which others may find useful in their own study of the biblical text.

## **A Tale of Two Men**

The account of the Pharisee and the tax collector is unique to Luke’s gospel and is located within Luke’s distinctive ‘travel narrative’ which began in 9:51 and which has, up to this point in the narrative, repeatedly emphasised Jesus’ determination to go to Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Fitzmyer regards this parable as ‘a fitting finale for the specifically Lucan travel account (9:51-18:14), ending on an important Lucan theme’.<sup>2</sup> Most scholars, however, would ex-

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 9:51 reads ‘when the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem’ (ESV). Cf. 9:57; 10:38; 13:22; 17:11 and the apparent conclusion marked by 19:28. It is not necessary to assume that Luke is giving details of a single journey, which view would be virtually impossible to harmonise with Johannine chronology. Craig Blomberg (*Jesus and the Gospels* [Leicester: Apollos, 1997] 288) notes that ‘there are fewer indications of chronology or geography in the subsequent nine chapters than in any other section of comparable length in any Gospel’.

<sup>2</sup> J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV* (New York: Doubleday, 1985) 1183.

tend the travel narrative into chapter 19, usually to 19:27. It may be better to recognise 18:14 as the point at which a distinctive section composed of material either unique to Luke or common to Matthew and Luke – otherwise known as his ‘central section’ – concludes.<sup>3</sup> Following, as it does, the parable of the widow and the unjust judge, it appears that prayer may have been the common bond which brought these two accounts together in the narrative (cf. 18:1). Yet there is more to this parable than is highlighted by the general heading ‘on prayer’ and perhaps the note of ‘mercy’ (*hilasthēti*, verse 13) is more dominant.<sup>4</sup> Or perhaps ‘vindication’ is the point of contact between this parable and its predecessor.<sup>5</sup> The brief contextual remarks provided by Luke in verse 9 explicitly identify what follows as a ‘parable’ and it is therefore important to read the text in the light of that fact. The parable has a clear structure: two men are introduced who ‘go up’ to the same location (the temple) with the same purpose (to pray). The difference between them is found in their descriptions (‘Pharisee’ and ‘tax collector’) and in the content of their prayers. A concluding description of the respective experiences of these two men is then developed into a general principal.

In attempting to understand the purpose of this parable, as well as its theological significance, it is important to pay particular attention to the significant terms ‘righteous’ and ‘justified’, which share the same root (*dik-*) in the Greek text. The setting indicates that Jesus spoke this parable to ‘some who trusted in themselves, that they were righteous’ (9), while the concluding words of Jesus indicate that ‘this one [the tax collector] went down to his house justified rather than that one’ (14).<sup>6</sup>

The full text of the passage in the ESV reads as follows:

Luke 18:9-15 <sup>9</sup> *He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:* <sup>10</sup> *“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ <sup>13</sup> But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ <sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.*

<sup>3</sup> So D. Wenham and S. Walton, *Exploring the New Testament 1: Introducing the Gospels and Acts* (London: SPCK, 2001) 232; C. A. Evans, *Luke* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1990) 160, and the majority of commentators. See D. L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996) 957, who provides a useful survey of the various proposals for the ending of this section and who himself favours 19:44.

<sup>4</sup> See Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1184.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1458.

<sup>6</sup> See K. E. Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 144.

*For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."*

Luke clearly identifies the intended targets of Jesus' parable (cf. 18:1; 19:11). They are those who mistakenly have confidence in themselves (ESV: 'trusted in themselves'), their confidence being that 'they were righteous' (cf. Ezek. 33:13) and who therefore treat others with contempt. While these anonymous figures may well have been Pharisees themselves (thus determining Jesus' choice of character for his story),<sup>7</sup> the parable is applicable to those of any classification who exhibit the attitude of this particular man.<sup>8</sup> We should not infer that Luke considers the description 'righteous' to be inappropriate for a human being. In fact, a number of figures in Luke's narrative are described as 'righteous' (*dikaios*): Zechariah and Elizabeth (1:6); Simeon (2:25); Jesus (23:47); Joseph of Aramathea (23:50). In these instances, the term is 'an expression describing a moral righteousness that conforms to God's standards',<sup>9</sup> rather than the more developed sense of the term found in Paul's letters (cf. Rom. 1:17; 5:19).

On the other hand, there are a number of occasions where 'the righteous' is probably not to be regarded in a positive sense: Jesus did not come to call the righteous (5:32); 10:29; 16:15. A few other references are somewhat unclear in their significance: 15:7; 20:20.

The two men 'go up' to the temple partly because it was physically set on a hill but also because it was spiritually the dwelling of Israel's God (cf. Psa. 122:1). That they are said to go 'to pray' does not demand that this is an act of solitary piety. Luke has already used 'praying' to refer to a corporate act of worship by God's people (1:10) and he will later cite Jesus' affirmation (based in Isaiah 56:7) that the temple is 'a house of prayer' (19:46).<sup>10</sup>

The reference to the Pharisee in the context of this parable should not be understood as a blanket condemnation of all Pharisees. In fact, Luke occasionally presents Pharisees in a positive light (13:31). Recent research has suggested that not all Pharisees would have prayed in the manner of this particular man.<sup>11</sup> R. Hillel is cited as saying 'Do not walk out on the community. And do not have confidence in yourself until the day you die. And do not judge your companion until you are in his place.'<sup>12</sup> Here it is important to remember that we are dealing with a parable which is a literary construct for the purpose of dramatically presenting a point. Liefeld correctly states that

<sup>7</sup> So J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1972) 139.

<sup>8</sup> Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1185-6.

<sup>9</sup> Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 77.

<sup>10</sup> Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 145-6.

<sup>11</sup> From later Rabbinic writings, m.Abod 2:4-5; from contemporary non-Pharisaic Judaism, IQS 11:1-2.

<sup>12</sup> M.Abod 2:4. See J. Neusner, *The Classics of Judaism* (Louisville: WJKP, 1995) 78.

‘We need not assume that Jesus’ intention was to criticize Pharisees and commend tax collectors, but to contrast two attitudes.’<sup>13</sup> Thus, these two characters represent ‘polar opposites in the first-century religious culture. The Pharisees belonged to the most pious movement, while the tax collector was part of the most hated profession’.<sup>14</sup> Josephus describes the Pharisees as ‘a body of Jews known for surpassing the others in the observances of piety and exact interpretation of the laws’.<sup>15</sup> The references to location of these men with respect to others suggests that they have come to the temple at the times for public prayer: 9:00 am (cf. Acts 2:15) or 3:00 pm (cf. Acts 3:1). K. Bailey argues that, since no day is specified, they would thus have been going to either the morning or evening atonement sacrifice, ‘since this was the only *daily* service of public worship in the temple’.<sup>16</sup> He comments further that any worshipper, ‘knew that it was possible for him to address God with his private needs *only* because the atonement sacrifice had taken place’.<sup>17</sup>

The Pharisee stands to pray (vs. 11), but this was simply an appropriate posture for prayer and should not be interpreted as an indication of a proud attitude in itself (cf. Hannah in 1 Sam. 1:26). The tax collector also stands (vs. 13) and nothing is said in the text which would indicate that he knelt or adopted any other posture. We are simply told that he did not raise his eyes to heaven.

The Greek phrase *pros heauton* could be translated as ‘to himself’ and then related to the prayer of this Pharisee. This clearly leads to an unflattering statement that he ‘prayed to himself’. In fact, even if we accept this basic meaning, we may understand these words simply to refer to speech that was not clearly audible to other human beings, such as is found in the preceding parable (cf. 18:4, where *en heautō* is used). This might be compared to the praying of Hannah which led to such misunderstanding. However, it is perhaps better to read these words with reference to the act of standing (as does the ESV): ‘the Pharisee standing by himself, prayed these things.’ This reading gives more natural balance to the contrast between the physical locations of the two men as we shall see. Jeremias loosely translates the phrase as, ‘he stood in a prominent position.’<sup>18</sup> Fitzmyer suggests that ‘he moved far to the front of the Court of Israel within the Temple precincts.’<sup>19</sup>

The Pharisee’s prayer to ‘God’ (*ho theos*) is a prayer of thanksgiving. Yet it bears none of the characteristics of a truly thankful heart (cf. 1QH 2:20, 31;

<sup>13</sup> W. Liefeld, ‘Parables on Prayer’ in R. Longenecker (ed.), *The Challenge of Jesus Parables* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 240-62, here 260. See also Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1186.

<sup>14</sup> Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1461.

<sup>15</sup> Jewish War 1.5.2 sec. 110, cited by Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1186.

<sup>16</sup> Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 146.

<sup>17</sup> Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 147.

<sup>18</sup> Jeremias, *Parables*, 140.

<sup>19</sup> Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1186.

3:19, 37; 4:5).<sup>20</sup> The list of categories to which the Pharisee is confident he does not belong begins with the Greek term *harpax*, that is, a 'thief' or 'extortionist'. The next term used is *adikos*, 'unrighteous' which connects with the 'righteous'/'justified' terms which precede and follow. He then dissociates himself from the *moichos*, the adulterer. The final dismissive and contemptuous reference to 'this tax collector' forms the lowest point in this catalogue of the lowest of the low (cf. the similar use of the demonstrative pronoun *houtos*, 'this one', in 23:35 by those who taunt Jesus), but it also establishes the vital connection between the parable and Luke's explanation of the point of the parable. Here is one who truly 'despises others' (cf. 23:11).

Not only is the Pharisee able to make negative statements in his favour but he also has several positive statements to make. There is, of course, nothing blameworthy in the actions of the Pharisee; they are either mandated by Torah or are not contrary to it. Fasting on the Day of Atonement was required by the Torah (e.g., Lev. 16:29-31; Num. 29:7), but fasting twice per week goes beyond what Torah required.<sup>21</sup> The normal Jewish pattern was to fast on Mondays and Thursdays.<sup>22</sup> Tithing is demanded by the Torah (e.g., Lev. 27:30-32; Num. 18:21-24; Deut. 14:22-27). Some Pharisees seem to have taken the principle to an extreme, however, even tithing herbs (cf. 11:42 and Matt. 23:23).<sup>23</sup>

The tax collector also takes up a notable stance; he stands 'afar off', 'probably on the outer edges of the Court of the Gentiles'.<sup>24</sup> We might wish to suggest that he was within sight of the Pharisee (cf. verse 11) but this need not be pressed given that the parable is a fictitious story and not a record of actual events. In this case, the reason for physical withdrawal is not a fear of contracting impurity but a piercing awareness of personal impurity.<sup>25</sup> The tax collector indicates his distress by means of two physical expressions: he beats his breast and he will not raise his eyes to heaven. Beating one's breast

<sup>20</sup> 1QH 10:20-21 (according to M. Wise, M. Abegg and E. Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* [London: Harper Collins, 1996]; 2:20-21 in most commentaries and English translations) reads, 'I give thanks to You, O Lord, for You have placed me in the bundle of the living and You protect me from all the snares of the pit.' 10:31 (2:31) reads, 'I give thanks to You, O Lord, for Your eye sta[nds] over my soul, and You have delivered me from the jealousy of the mediators of lies.' 11:19 (3:19) reads, 'I give thanks to You, O Lord, for You have redeemed my soul from the pit.'

<sup>21</sup> Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1463.

<sup>22</sup> Dating probably from early in the second century AD, Didache 7:4-8:1 reads, 'You must instruct the one who is to be baptized to fast for one or two days beforehand. But do not let your fasts coincide with those of the hypocrites. They fast on Monday and Thursday, so you must fast on Wednesday and Friday.'

<sup>23</sup> So Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1463. See also Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1187-88.

<sup>24</sup> Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1464.

<sup>25</sup> The Greek particle *de* ('but') identifies the contrast being made.

is a mark of ‘the deepest contrition’<sup>26</sup> (cf. 23:48). That he will not raise his eyes indicates awareness of a ruptured relationship (cf. Ps. 123:1). In addition to these physical acts, the tax collector expresses a brief verbal prayer which is striking in its dissimilarity to the expansive prayer of the Pharisee. The cry of the tax collector is composed of three elements: an address, a request, and a self-evaluation. The address is the same as that of the Pharisee: *ho theos*, ‘God’. It is striking that there is no reference (in either prayer) to the covenant name of God, but this should not be pressed given that Luke wrote his narrative in Greek. The tax collector’s request, often translated ‘have mercy upon me’, might be better translated ‘let me be atoned’<sup>27</sup> (*hilasthēti moi*, using the imperative of the verb *hilasthētai*<sup>28</sup> which means ‘to propitiate’).<sup>29</sup> This request is notable in the context of the parable because it has no counterpart in the prayer of the Pharisee. The self-evaluation is far removed from the self-praise of the Pharisee. In fact, it appears to simply confirm the verdict of the Pharisee: this man is ‘a sinner’. While both men have made a self-evaluation, the tax collector’s is accurate and the Pharisee’s is not. The tax collector is all too aware of his standing before God but does not withdraw himself from God. Instead he approaches God in humility yet requesting the very thing which the vast temple structure and the smoke rising from the altar declare to be available – atonement for sin.

The story now complete, Jesus wields this carefully crafted literary weapon so as to unveil a staggering reversal of expectations; a feature not uncommon in Luke’s gospel (cf. 14:11). The introductory formula (*legō humin*, ‘I say to you’) prepares the reader for a statement of significance.<sup>30</sup> The use of demonstrative pronouns with reference to the men is striking. The man who stood ‘afar off’ is identified by the pronoun of proximity (‘this [one]’) while the apparent insider is distanced by ‘that [one]’.<sup>31</sup> The term of abuse on the lips of the Pharisee has ironically become a marker of acceptance. That they ‘went down’ is the appropriate counterpart of ‘they went up’ (10). It is also a mark of completion of the activity in the temple. However, completion of the activity has not brought the same result for both men. ‘This man’ (the tax collector) went down ‘having been justified’ or ‘having found favour’.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> So Jeremias, *Parables*, 141.

<sup>27</sup> C. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990) 258. See the discussion in Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 154.

<sup>28</sup> The only occurrence of the verb in Luke-Acts and one of only two occurrences in the NT (cf. Heb. 2:17) although the cognate terms *hilastērion* and *hilasmos* are found elsewhere. See especially L. L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955) 144-213.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. the natural phrase for ‘have mercy upon me’ in 18:38, *eleēson me*.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. 3:8 and the numerous references cited there.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1465: ‘Position in the temple means nothing; the position of the heart means everything.’

<sup>32</sup> See Jeremias, *Parables*, 141. 4 Ezra [2 Esdras] 12:7 (translated from a Latin text) reads, ‘And I said, “O sovereign Lord, if I have found favour in thy sight and if I

The passive voice of the Greek subtly indicates that the God of Israel, who makes himself known in the temple, is the one who has acted in mercy towards this man.<sup>33</sup> It is interesting that the language which Luke employs here bears a strong similarity to Pauline discussions of justification. Jeremias comments, 'Our passage is the only one in the Gospels in which the verb *dikaion* is used in a sense similar to that in which Paul generally uses it.'<sup>34</sup> While we should be wary of reading the fully developed Pauline concept of justification into Luke's narrative here, we may nonetheless say with Jeremias that this passage shows 'that the Pauline doctrine of justification has its roots in the teaching of Jesus.'<sup>35</sup>

The Pharisee, however, has not received mercy, which should hardly be surprising since he did not request it! No doubt he left the temple with a great sense of satisfaction in his meticulous religious observance. Jesus says nothing to suggest any disruption to the Pharisee's perception of himself. He simply declares that he did not find God's favour.

The reason for the different outcomes is identified with a memorable, chistic saying. God seeks humility. There is nothing new in this (Ezek 21:26; Psalm 107:40-41; Psalm 113:7-9).

### Application

Self-justification is not a trait unique to ancient Pharisees. In fact, modern readers who expect the Pharisees to be the 'bad guys' should not overlook that this is the exact opposite of the natural expectation of a first-century reader who was familiar with the structures of Jewish society. Those who have known and continue to know the blessing of life among the people of God must nonetheless recognise that, whatever privileges are theirs, the self-evaluation of the tax collector must be theirs no less. To preen our feathers in God's sight is an awesome misjudgement. Yet, we must beware of an equal error which is to be in the very presence of mercy and not to seek it. This is as foolish in the case of someone conscious of sin as it is in the case of someone denying it. Let us learn from the tax collector to seek what is made freely available in Christ.

With respect to despising others, those who are empowered by the Spirit of God should not be found wanting in holiness while still reflecting the Lord's own love for those who are on the margins.

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have been accounted righteous before many others, and if my prayer has indeed come up before thy face..."

<sup>33</sup> So Jeremias, *Parables*, 141.

<sup>34</sup> Jeremias, *Parables*, 141.

<sup>35</sup> Jeremias, *Parables*, 141.



# Whose Interpretation Is It Anyway? Building Consensus on What the Bible Is Saying<sup>1</sup>

Fergus MacDonald\*

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My title is a word play on the name of a popular TV game shown in the USA (on ABC) and in the UK (on Channel 4) during the nineties and the early noughties (2000s) called *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* (sometimes abbreviated to *Whose Line?*). Repeats still feature on cable channels. In the show a panel of four performers improvise to create characters, scenes and songs on the spot. Topics are based either on suggestions from the audience or on pre-determined prompts from the host. The games are designed to test the performer's improvisational skill. The host randomly awards points and arbitrarily chooses a winner at the end of the show.

One is reminded of this TV show when considering the way the Bible is sometimes interpreted. So many differing and competing understandings of biblical texts are in circulation that one wonders whether interpreting the Bible has become a theological game that tests the ingenuity of the interpreter! The root reason for this hermeneutical *potpourri* in the churches is that culture seems to have become the ultimate arbiter of the Bible. Culture monitors the Bible rather than the Bible critiquing culture. Scripture is thus deprived of its supreme authority as the Word of God. But culture cannot be ignored. Christians are called to contextualise the Bible's message in today's cultures and in so doing to demonstrate its ongoing relevance to our generation. As we attempt to do this we discover that there are elements in our culture that the Bible affirms and others that it condemns. The Bible's message is both pro-cultural and counter-cultural.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is the revised text of a lecture given on April 1, 2011, at Taylor University, IN.

A complicating factor is that within the wider culture of any society churches have their own sub-cultures. A casual analysis of church sub-cultures in the West suggests that a spectrum exists ranging from traditional to *avant garde*. At the traditional end, respect for precedence prevails in biblical interpretation. At the opposite extremity, 'felt needs' consumerism plays a key role in the process of engaging with the Scriptures.

Moving out of church sub-cultures to the wider culture of the West, we find that both academia and the secular media tend to hold the Bible hostage to the competing claims of modernity and postmodernity. The influence of modernity is evident in the high visibility given to doubt in historical-critical approaches to the Bible. On the other hand, pressures from postmodernity are evident in the growing popularity of approaching the Bible with suspicion.

This broad-brush analysis of Christian sub-cultures and the dominant culture identifies four arbiters of Scripture: traditional precedence, contemporary consumerism, rationalistic doubt and radical suspicion. All of these influence the way the Bible is being understood and applied today. An over-privileging of tradition may be evident in churches that, for example, impose severe restrictions on the role women may play in church life. The priority of meeting emotional felt needs justifies doing church in the style of contemporary popular culture. The modernist tendency to doubt the factualness of the biblical narrative raises questions in the popular mind regarding the reliability of the Gospel. In a somewhat similar way, postmodern suspicion is construing the biblical polemic against sexual immorality as oppressive and manipulative.

The technical title given to the science of biblical interpretation is 'hermeneutics.' 'Hermeneutics' differs from 'exegesis.' Exegeting a text enables us to determine what it meant in its original context. Hermeneutics enables us to determine the significance of that meaning for today. But as we have seen, there is currently little consensus on what this significance entails. This article is an attempt to formulate some steps that hopefully might encourage us all to find our way through the current hermeneutical mist and to renew our determination to arrive at a common mind on how to discover the message of the Bible for contemporary Christian belief and practice.

The four arbiters of Scripture noted above – which we might call 'popular hermeneutics' – are all inadequate because they all detract from the Word of God as the focus of faith. If we allow traditional precedence or contemporary consumerism or rationalistic doubt or radical suspicion – or a mix of some or all of these – to arbitrate our engaging with the Bible, we will find it difficult and often impossible to exercise the hermeneutic of trust that is so beautifully articulated in the hymn of the psalmist: 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path' (Ps 119.105).<sup>2</sup> The Bible underlines faith as

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<sup>2</sup> Cf A. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading*, Grand Rapids, 1992. Page 143. 'On the basis of belief in God *trust* [in pre-modern interpretation] assumes the kind of methodological role which *doubt* assumes for modernism as exemplified in Cartesian rationalism,

vital in any and every Christian activity. ‘No one can please God without faith’ says the writer to the Hebrews (11.6, GNB). Paul tells us that the message he preached and expounded in his Letter to the Romans both demands and generates faith. He asks: ‘For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness”’ (Rom. 4.3, ESV). And later in the epistle he tells us that the faith that puts us right with God ‘comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through preaching Christ’ (Rom 10.17, GNB).

What Paul in effect is saying is that faith must have the Word of God as its basis. Indeed, faith is correlative to the Word.<sup>3</sup> It is believing what God says to *us* just like Abraham believed what God said to *him*. A living faith correlates with what God says to us in Scripture and becomes operational through a hermeneutic of trust and obedience. John Calvin regarded the Scriptures as the ‘sceptre of Christ’ – i.e. the instrument through which He mediates His Lordship over us and the means through which we discern His will for our lives.<sup>4</sup> But 2 Peter 3.16 makes clear that there is a danger of distorting (‘explain falsely,’ GNB) to our own destruction some parts of Scripture which are hard to understand.<sup>5</sup> This warning highlights the importance of Paul’s advice to Timothy working in a context where some Christian teachers had ‘departed from the truth’ so that they ‘destroy the faith of some’ (1 Timothy 2.17-18). The apostle urges his mentee to devote himself ‘to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching’ (1 Timothy 4.13). In his second letter Paul reminds his co-worker that he will win God’s full approval in this vital task by becoming ‘one who correctly handles (‘rightly explaining,’ NRSV) the word of truth’ (2 Tim. 2.15). I suggest that we need to be aware of the very real danger that the popular hermeneutics already noted – viz. giving precedence to religious tradition, or to consumerism, or to doubt, or to suspicion – can lead us to distort God’s Word. For this reason it is important that we find alternative approaches to Scripture that will facilitate the appropriate handling of the Word of Truth.

### Presuppositions

Before seeking such alternatives, I wish to explore some presuppositions to be taken into account in formulating principles of Bible interpretation. The following five basic presuppositions flow from the unique nature of the Holy Scriptures.

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and which *suspicion* assumes for post-modernism in socio-critical hermeneutics and in deconstructionism.’

<sup>3</sup> N. Needham, ‘Westminster and Worship: Psalms, Hymns? and Musical Instruments?’ in *The Westminster Confession into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, vol. 2. J.L. Duncan, ed., Fearn, 2004. Page 241.

<sup>4</sup> J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 4.2.1.

<sup>5</sup> Cf Jesus’ assertion in Mark 7.13 that the Pharisees and scribes ‘nullify’ (TNIV; ‘cancel out,’ GNB) the Word of God through their tradition.

The first is that *the Bible serves a unique purpose*. In 2 Timothy 3.15, Paul spells out for his young co-worker God's intention in giving us the Scriptures. The purpose of the Holy Scriptures, he writes, is to impart 'the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.' All Scripture is useful, the apostle goes on to say, 'for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults and giving instructions for right living.' Thus Holy Scripture is able to qualify and equip God's servants to do every kind of good deed (2 Tim. 3.15-17, GNB). We learn from this job description of the Bible that its purpose is specific and limited. The Bible is not an encyclopaedia containing and imparting all kinds of knowledge. Rather, it is a handbook of salvation. Its function is to effect life-transformation and change eternal destinies.

The second presupposition is that *the Bible is culturally embedded*. For this reason we do well to have some appreciation of its own life-setting if we are to interpret the Bible authentically. Today many find this difficult due to the temporal and cultural distance between the Bible and us. A recent survey of Bible reading in nine countries revealed that more than half the respondents had difficulty understanding the Bible.<sup>6</sup> This is not surprising given that the contents of the Bible are set in a variety of ancient cultures – Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Canaanite, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman – all of which to a greater or lesser extent seem alien to our western 21<sup>st</sup> century culture. So, to interpret the Bible meaningfully we need to find ways of bridging the culture gap. Some hermeneutical scholars employ the metaphor of the horizon as an aid to building linkage between the Bible and us. Antony Thiselton entitles one of his books *The Two Horizons* and another *New Horizons*.<sup>7</sup> The cultural world of the Bible and the cultural world of today's interpreter constitute two separate horizons. The task of the interpreter is to find the points where the two horizons intersect.<sup>8</sup>

A third presupposition is that *the Bible displays multiple literary genres*. Although the *genus* of the Bible is historical narrative, its sixty-six books exhibit a range of different types of literary *genre*. In the Old Testament there is prophecy, psalmody, wisdom literature (like the Book of Proverbs), and the apocalyptic in parts of both Ezekiel and Daniel. In the New Testament, in

<sup>6</sup> C. Wooden, *Not an Easy Read: Survey Indicates Bible Hard to Read*, *Vatican Letter*, May 2, 2008, Catholic News Service. In the USA 56% acknowledged that they struggle to understand; in Germany it was as high as 70%. Although 7 in 10 respondents had Bibles in their homes, relatively few, apart from those in the United States, had read them in the previous twelve months.

<sup>7</sup> A.C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein*, Exeter, 1980; *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Bible Reading*, Grand Rapids, 1992.

<sup>8</sup> Larry Caldwell speaks of *three* horizons, in that the Christian interpreter is called upon to interpret Scripture not only for his own church world, but also for outsiders who live and move and have their being in a non-Christian or even an anti-Christian world. Referenced in W.C. Kaiser and M. Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*, Grand Rapids, 1994. Page 179.

addition to the four Gospels and Acts, there are twenty-one epistles plus the Book of Revelation. In the Gospels there are many parables and in at least one epistle allegories are found. All of these different literary *genres* have their own rules of interpretation which must be respected in our engagement with biblical texts.

A fourth presupposition is that *the Bible grew* over its thousand-year plus literary history. Its message became fuller and clearer as the centuries passed. God's special revelation in Scripture records a long series of events and case studies – of peoples and of personalities – culminating in the coming of Christ and the establishment of the apostolic church. The revelatory meaning of these events is built into the narratives that witness to them as well as being expressed in prophetic and apostolic commentary. Thus God's plan of redemption was unveiled progressively in deed and word, event and theme, over the centuries of biblical history. James Packer reminds us that this progress 'was not (as has sometimes been thought) from fuzzy and sometimes false (OT) to totally true and clear (NT), but from partial to full and complete.'<sup>9</sup> A key to following the storyline of the Bible as the story progresses is to explore how biblical events relate to biblical themes.<sup>10</sup>

The fifth and final presupposition is that *the Bible is a metanarrative* or 'big story.' The big story of Scripture ranges from creation in Genesis 1 and 2 to the consummation of all things in the Book of Revelation. Between these two canonical book-ends, there is the crisis of the Fall and God's astoundingly gracious redemptive response manifested in the call of Abraham, the exodus from Egypt, the conquest, the kingdom, the exile and the return, leading up to the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of a multi-ethnic church spreading into the wider world. These critical events in the Bible's big story form the backcloth against which we are to interpret every incident and every statement in the Bible. If we lose this grand perspective, we will find ourselves examining trees with a microscope and losing the prospect of gaining a panoramic view of the forest as a whole.

Affirming these five basic presuppositions is key to interpreting Scripture. They help us to engage the Bible in ways that are appropriate to its own unique nature as Holy Scripture. As we wrestle with the message of the Bible, it is critical to keep in the forefront of our thinking and praying the Bible's unique purpose, its distinct cultural environment, its range of literary forms, its internal narrative-thematic development, and its central storyline consisting of Creation – Fall – Redemption – Consummation. Having identi-

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<sup>9</sup> J. I. Packer, 'Reading the Bible Theologically' in *ESV Study Bible*, Wheaton, 2008. Page 1568.

<sup>10</sup> One model for doing this is the crossword puzzle in which every square fulfils two functions, one in relation to the clues across and the other to the clues down. One can think of the great events of the Bible as the clues down and the themes as clues across. See G. Grogan, *The Faith Once Entrusted to the Saints? Engaging with issues and trends in evangelical theology*, Nottingham, 2010. Page 244.

fied appropriate presuppositions that will shape our approach to the Bible, the next step is to formulate some key principles of interpretation that will guide our engagement with specific passages.

### Principles

Some Christians might be tempted to think that formulating any principles of biblical interpretation is unnecessary. After all, theologians speak of the *perspicuity* (i.e. clarity) of Scripture. However, by asserting that Scripture is perspicuous, theologians are not declaring that every passage in the Bible is clear. Rather, they are claiming that the Bible's overall message is clear, comprising 'those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation.'<sup>11</sup> They acknowledge that every text of Scripture is not clear. Indeed, it is precisely because there are texts that are ambiguous and, indeed, some that are mysterious, that theologians have developed an extensive science of hermeneutics.

At the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther asserted that 'the Holy Scripture is its own interpreter,' and today evangelical theologians worldwide continue to affirm this as the fundamental principle governing all appropriate interpretation of the Bible. Richard Foster expresses this axiom simply as reading the Bible in conversation with itself.<sup>12</sup> Mid-twentieth-century Old Testament scholar John Bright noted that most biblical texts express some aspect of theology that causes these texts to reflect the fabric of the Bible as a whole. This is so because each biblical author built on the backdrop of Scripture that already existed and was known to him.<sup>13</sup> This is why we find common themes running through the biblical books. This unity of biblical thought, underlying the considerable diversity found in the Bible, flows from the apostolic statement that 'all Scripture is inspired by God' (2 Timothy 3.16, GNB). Alvin Plantinga claims that if God is the principal author of Scripture, the Bible is constituted as 'divine discourse' and is to be approached 'more like a unified communication rather than a miscellany of books.'<sup>14</sup> James Packer asserts that 'Scripture is no ragbag of religious bits and pieces, unrelated to each other; rather, it is a tapestry in which all the complexities of the weave display a single pattern of justice and mercy, promise and fulfillment.'<sup>15</sup> These writers do not mean that the Bible is unnuanced, lacking tension within its plot development, or that it is without ambiguities in its historical details. They do mean that there is an overall coherence in the Bible's message that overarches its diversity, a coherence un-

<sup>11</sup> *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1647: 1.7.

<sup>12</sup> R. Foster with K. A. Helmers, *Life with God: A life-transforming new approach to Bible reading*, Consumer Sampler Pack, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> J. Bright, *The Authority of the Old Testament*, Nashville, 1967. Pages 143, 170.

<sup>14</sup> A. Plantinga, 'Two (or More) Kinds of Scripture Scholarship,' in C. Bartholomew, C. S. Evans, M. Healy, and M. Rae, *Behind the Test: History and Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 4 in the Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Grand Rapids, 2003. Page 25.

<sup>15</sup> J. I. Packer, op. cit. Page 2567.

dergirding the fundamental hermeneutic of the Reformation that ‘Scripture interprets Scripture.’ And it is precisely when grappling with those biblical passages where the meaning is unclear and the significance appears to be ambiguous that this principle is most useful.

‘Scripture is its own interpreter’ is the fundamental hermeneutical axiom. This axiom is perhaps most appropriately applied by breaking it down into a series of subsidiary principles or rules of engagement that will help us to grasp the clear overall message of the Bible and at the same time to grapple with biblical precepts and practices where certain ambiguities make it difficult to decide whether such precepts and practices are timeless or transient. Hopefully the subsidiary principles or rules of engagement about to be articulated will enable us both to escape from the mayhem in which everyone interprets Scripture according to personal taste and also will give us hope that a more common mind can be achieved concerning what the Bible is saying to 21<sup>st</sup> century people.

What are these subsidiary principles or rules of engagement that can help us distinguish the authority level of specific biblical texts? I suggest that there are four key rules of engagement flowing from the fundamental principle that Scripture is self-interpreting. I will argue that following these rules of engagement will help us to capture the essence of the Bible’s message and in particular to distinguish those texts that have a normative status transcending context and time from other texts whose authority is restricted to the religious and cultural situation of the original audience.

### **1. The clear interprets the obscure**

Although the overall message of Scripture is clear and the meaning of the text is apparent in the great majority of passages in Scripture, some texts are obscure and difficult to understand. In his correspondence with the Christians in Corinth, Paul refers to their custom of baptising the dead (1 Cor. 15.29). Why the Corinthians did this is unclear. Nor is it obvious why Paul appears to be indifferent to the practice. For these reasons most Christians interpret this reference in the light of the wider baptismal practice of the early church as portrayed in Acts and in teaching on Christian baptism found in Romans 6 and Colossians 2. The Mormon practice of performing baptisms vicariously on behalf of dead relatives is an example of giving an obscure text an interpretation which is difficult to defend in the light of the wider evidence of the New Testament.

Another obscure text which has been misinterpreted for similar reasons is Revelation 14.4: ‘It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins; these follow the Lamb wherever he goes.’ This verse has been utilised to support clerical celibacy in the church and to assert that the celibate state grants one a higher status in the sight of God than does marriage. But while God may indeed call some Christians to serve him by re-

maining single, no clear passage of Scripture hints that thereby they are given a higher status before God.

Similarly, attempts to construe Jesus' obscure reference to those who are eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of God as a basis for justifying homosexual practice are surely grasping at hermeneutical straws (Matt. 19.12). In the creation accounts, God creates Adam and Eve, not – as some wag has said – Adam and Steve. And the construction put on Jesus' words by some proponents of 'queer theology' is surely negated by the strong polemic against same sex intercourse in Romans 1 and elsewhere. All of these biblical references – to baptisms for the dead, to the 144,000 in the Book of Revelation, to eunuchs for the kingdom of God – do, indeed, present a challenge. But it is a challenge to be faced in the light of other clearer passages. From the clear interpreting the obscure, we move to the New interpreting the Old.

## **2. The New interprets the Old**

The level of divine revelation rose over the centuries of biblical history culminating in the Christ event. Revelation becomes fuller as the narrative proceeds, so it makes good sense to interpret earlier Scriptures through the lens of those that came later. Because the New Testament witnesses to the climax of divine revelation in Christ, it is the 'economy of fulfilment' in contrast to the 'economy of preparation' obtained in the Old Testament. For this reason the later testament provides the key to interpreting the nature of the continuing relevance of the Scriptures contained in the earlier testament.

From the time of Jesus and the apostles the church has always regarded the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. Although Christ fulfilled the typology of the temple ritual, and the command to go to all nations has rendered redundant the civic arrangements of ancient Israel, other elements of Old Testament teaching and practice, such as the Sabbath principle, which have not been abrogated, explicitly or implicitly, by the New Testament, continue to be authoritative in the Christian church.<sup>16</sup>

Unless we interpret the Old Testament from the Christian perspective of the New, we may find ourselves being naively misled into some bizarre activities. In March 2011, BBC TV screened a programme focusing on two religious families belonging to a church in the USA that was described as 'evangelical.' It was portrayed as a church that takes the Bible very seriously. One of the scenes contained shots of a church member tearing down his home and reducing it to matchwood with a mechanical excavator. The church member then transported the debris to be burned in what he described as 'an unclean place' outside the city. What was the reason for this act of domestic demolition? The homeowner told viewers it was the persistence of

<sup>16</sup> In the New Testament the Sabbath mutates into the Lord's Day, but it is not thereby abrogated. I argue elsewhere that the Sabbath is a creation ordinance and that, as such, it remains in force until the consummation of all things (cf Heb. 4.9). F.A.J. Macdonald 'The Lord's Day' in D. Macleod, ed., *Hold Fast Your Confession: Studies in Church Principles*, Edinburgh, 1978.

mildew on the walls of the house. He had read in Leviticus 14.45 that if a defiling mould persistently tarnishes the structure of a house then the whole edifice ‘must be torn down – its stones, timbers and all the plaster – and taken out of the town to an unclean place’ (NIV).

The Christian concerned performed this act of demolition believing he was obeying the Bible. But surely his action is a sad consequence of a failure to interpret the Old Testament by the New. Jesus has fulfilled the ceremonial laws and customs of the Old Covenant. The ritual laws of Leviticus in which the command to demolish a persistently mouldy house is found include instructions about clean and unclean foods which Jesus in effect abrogated when he declared all foods to be clean (Mark 7.19). Old Testament ceremonies, like the sacrifices of the Jerusalem temple, were pointers to the reality of full salvation which the coming Messiah would accomplish. Now that Jesus has come and the new reality is here, these ‘types’ have become obsolete. Similarly the civic laws of ancient Israel do not necessarily apply to us today because the New Testament no longer identifies the people of God as a national political entity but as an international network of local churches. On the other hand, we ought not too readily to dismiss Israel’s civic laws as irrelevant today. The rationale of some of these laws is universal, and in such cases they find transposition into cultures which aspire to enshrine Judaeo-Christian values. For example, in the wind-swept Scottish Hebrides the command in Deuteronomy 22.8 to build a parapet round the roof of your house is transculturated by ensuring that the tiles and slates on roofs are securely fastened so as not to be blown off with serious consequences for passers-by. From the New Testament interpreting the Old, we move on to a third subsidiary principle.

### **3. The universal interprets the local**

The New Testament church was called to live out its message within the culture in which it was situated. Some elements of that culture the church accepted, such as greeting fellow Christians with a kiss (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14). There were others that it conceded, such as exhorting slaves to submit to their masters (Col. 3.22; Eph. 6.5-8). Are such practices mandatory for Christians living in other cultures and at later times? The church has struggled to answer this question. But it has come closest to a satisfactory response when it interprets specific local references in the light of texts that embody universal principles. In 19<sup>th</sup> century America there was an animated debate among Christians on slavery in the southern states of America. Those Christians, such as Robert Dabney, who supported an enlightened form of slavery, argued from the specific biblical instructions that slaves should submit to their masters. But the abolitionists considered such instructions to be concessionary and took their stand on the principle enunciated in Galatians 3:28: ‘There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of

you are one in Christ Jesus' (cf Col. 3.11). In the light of this principle they took the exhortations that slaves obey masters to be local, incidental and temporary.

A similar hermeneutic is employed today in the debate concerning New Testament injunctions that women should be silent in church (1 Tim. 2.11-12; 1 Cor. 14.34-35). Some scholars affirm the universal normativeness of these commands in all cultures in all times on the grounds of a perceived creation order.<sup>17</sup> Others argue that the subjugation of women to men is not a feature of creation, but rather a consequence of the Fall and has been cancelled out by Christ.<sup>18</sup> In this writer's view, attempts to determine the significance for today of such references to the church situation in Corinth and in Ephesus cannot ignore the fact that these are specific to local churches and are appropriately interpreted in light of the universal principle that in Christ discrimination between male and female has been abolished, just as it has between Jew and Greek, slave and freeman. On the other hand, churches are surely obliged to recognise that while God has created men and women equal, he has created them as complementary to one another. Therefore, while both men and women had valid ministries in the New Testament, the limited evidence suggests male and female ministries were correlative rather than identical, but with considerable overlap. This third subsidiary principle of the universal interpreting the local has some affinity with my final principle which is that the meaning and significance of Scripture may be determined by inference.

#### 4. Interpretation by inference

Jesus taught that the truth of Scripture is not always explicit. Sometimes it is implicit. Recall how he took the Sadducees to task for failing to believe in the resurrection.<sup>19</sup> He upbraided them for missing the implication of the words of the Lord to Moses at the bush (Exodus 3.1-12). They ought, Jesus told them, to have inferred the reality of the resurrection from the declaration that Yahweh introduced Himself to Moses as 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob' (v. 6), all of whom had died long before Moses' day. Similarly Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees' criticism of the disciples for plucking grains of wheat on the Sabbath is inferred from both the great principle declared by the Lord through Hosea: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' and also from the example of David and his companions in eating the holy bread of the Presence taken from the sanctuary in Nob (Matt. 12.1-8; Mark 2.23-28; Luke 6.1-5; cf Hosea 6.6; 1Sam. 21.1-7). Such biblical examples of inference prompted those who composed the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1647 to declare that 'the counsel of God ... is either expressly set

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, J. B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, Grand Rapids, 1981. Pages 195-221.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, S. McKnight, *The Blue Parakeet*, Grand Rapids, 2008. Page 166.

<sup>19</sup> Mark 12.18-27 and parallels.

down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture.’

However, both history and present experience illustrate the difficulty of finding consensus when interpreting by inference in instances where the biblical data is relatively scanty. The so called ‘worship wars’ are an example. They are waged between biblical psalms and paraphrases against songs of purely human composition and also between traditional hymns and modern choruses. The decibel strength of instrumental accompaniment is also a contentious issue, as is whether praise should be complemented with any musical instruments at all. The question of worship may be so controversial precisely because we know relatively little about the practice of the New Testament church in this regard. In 1 Corinthians 14.26 we learn that when the whole church comes together each one has a ‘hymn.’ So singing, or possibly chanting, was a component of worship in Corinth. But what precisely was the hymn (literally ‘psalm’ in the Greek original)? Was it a psalm of David? Or a song composed by the worshipper? Or some other song? Readers of both the letters to the Colossians and to the Ephesians are encouraged to sing ‘psalms, hymns and spiritual songs’ to one another. Again, the referent is unclear. Were these psalms, hymns and spiritual songs taken from the Book of Psalms where all three words appear in psalm inscriptions? Or, were they the compositions of early Christians?

Then, what about instrumental accompaniment? There is no evidence of this in the New Testament church. In fact, historians tell us that musical instruments may not have appeared in the church until the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The Eastern Orthodox Churches and some Reformed denominations still sing *a capella*. Of course, multiple musical instruments were employed in the Jerusalem temple, but apparently not in local synagogues which appear relatively late in Israel’s history, but which by the 1<sup>st</sup> century had multiplied following the immigration of Jewish communities into cities of the Roman Empire. It is widely recognised that the earliest churches were modelled on the synagogue, in whose liturgy the public reading of Scripture and its exposition were the central elements. At the Reformation many Protestants rejected the use of musical instruments in church services inferring that their close association with the temple put them into the same category as the ceremonies and sacrifices that Christ had abrogated. Today the majority of Bible believing Christians consider this inference to be mistaken. They point to the lack of any explicit negation of instruments in the New Testament and infer from this that their use in worship continues to enjoy the divine authorisation given by the Old Testament.

Difference of opinion on this issue ought not to encourage us to think that the form of church worship is a matter of indifference. The polemic against idolatry in both testaments indicates that God is deeply concerned about how we worship him. Discovering how we might most appropriately respond to this divine desire surely ought to be the objective of all our decisions con-

cerning worship. Some observers believe that today the evangelical world is losing a divine focus. According to Nick Needham, what so often prevails today is ‘a man-centered attitude or mind-set concerning worship.’ ‘The question,’ he says, ‘which most evangelicals tend to ask of worship-practices is, “Do I find this helpful? Is this meaningful to me? Does this make me feel closer to God?”’ The question, “Is this how God actually wants to be worshipped?” is rarely raised.’<sup>20</sup>

A further matter of concern is that talk about worship tends to be restricted to what and how we sing in praising the Lord. This lop-sided understanding of worship can so dominate church services as to dumb down the formal reading of Scripture for its own sake and also the preaching of the Word.<sup>21</sup> Howard Marshall makes the point that the church as portrayed in the Pastoral Epistles is primarily a listening congregation. ‘To think of a Christian meeting [only] in terms of worship,’ Marshall claims, ‘is to stifle the voice of God.’<sup>22</sup>

Differences on forms of worship exemplify the difficulty of finding a consensus in cases where the biblical evidence may be interpreted to point in more than one direction. A degree of mutual forbearance is surely appropriate where each side in the debate holds a high view of Scripture.

In summary, I have reaffirmed the great Lutheran principle that Scripture is self-interpreting and from this have identified four subsidiary principles to guide us in determining what the Bible is saying in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These subsidiary principles or rules of engagement are: we interpret obscure passages by those that are clear, the Old Testament by the New, the many local incidents recorded in the biblical text by the great universal spiritual principles affirmed in didactic passages, and, finally, the right – and, indeed, the need – to interpret by inference and thus make explicit what is implicit in the biblical text. This one fundamental principle and these four subsidiary principles are basic. But we also need to be aware that our pre-understandings and prejudices might bias the way we use them. For this reason it is wise to apply a hermeneutic of suspicion to our conclusions by addressing some critical questions to our interpretations. So before concluding I will suggest three precautions we will do well to take into account when attempting to interpret what Scripture is saying today.

### Precautions

These precautions or safeguards can be summed up in three words: Intentionality, Consistency, and Reflexivity. Let me unpack what I mean by expanding these three terms into three questions:

- Does our interpretation honour the original purpose of the text?

<sup>20</sup> N. Needham, op. cit. Page 230.

<sup>21</sup> cf 1 Tim. 4.13; 2 Tim. 4.2; Titus 1.3.

<sup>22</sup> I. H. Marshall, ‘Worshipping Biblically’ in *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*, vol. 20, no. 2, Autumn, 2002.

- Have we employed the four guidelines consistently?
- Have we reflected on the validity of the inferences made from the text?

Let us now look briefly and in turn at each question.

### **Intentionality**

Louis Berkhof identifies ‘the special scope of the author’ as an important internal help for interpretation. He explains the author’s scope as ‘the object he had in view in writing the particular portion of his work under consideration.’<sup>23</sup> When authorial intention is clear, such as in narrative texts, we ought to check whether we have ridden roughshod over it by, say, spiritualising a historical account into an allegory. When the scope of the author is not plainly expressed, the interpreter needs to read and perhaps re-read a whole section together with the preceding and following context in order to detect its purpose. Although a text may yield many layers of significance for succeeding generations of biblical interpreters, its meaning is what the original author meant it to mean and also what later biblical writers construed it to mean. Recognising the importance of authorial intention in relation to a text provides a very useful check on the validity of our interpretation of it. Moving on from intentionality we come to consistency.

### **Consistency**

In reviewing our interpretation of a text, we should ask: Have we employed our guidelines consistently. An example may help to illustrate the question. I have friends who believe with millions of Eastern Orthodox Christians that God does not wish the church to use musical instruments in its worship. They claim that the total silence of the New Testament indicates that the commands of Psalm 150 to praise the Lord with trumpet, lute, harp, tambourine, strings, pipe and cymbals is no longer valid because the church has replaced Jerusalem temple where these instruments were played. So far so good. But nearly all of my acquaintances who take this position also advocate the baptism of the infants of Christian parents despite the lack of explicit evidence for this practice in the New Testament. The basis of my friends’ position on baptism is that Old Testament commands continue to be valid unless it can be shown from the New Testament that they have been rescinded. They acknowledge that there is no incontrovertible evidence of infant baptism in the New Testament, but they justify the practice on the basis that in Colossians 2.11-12 Paul presents baptism as corresponding to circumcision. In other words, they claim that the Old Testament command to circumcise week-old male babies provides justification for the Christian baptism of infants now expanded on the basis of Galatians 3.28 to embrace fe-

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<sup>23</sup> L. Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, London, 1973. Page 103.

males as well as males. At this point my concern is not to pass judgment on either argument – that against music or that for infant baptism. My contention is that the hermeneutic underlying the interpretations against musical instruments contradicts the hermeneutic behind advocacy of infant baptism, for each interprets the silence of the New Testament in a diametrically different way. Advocates of *a capella* praise assume the silence of the New Testament invalidates the Old Testament use of instruments, while for supporters of infant baptism the silence of the New validates the Old Testament practice of granting the covenant sign to the children of believers. Surely affirming both positions reflects a hermeneutical inconsistency.

### Reflexivity

In the social sciences, the term reflexivity is used to describe engaging in critical self-scrutiny of one's findings in an attempt to minimise personal biases and cultural assumptions unduly influencing any research findings. The term reflexivity is not found in the Bible, but the idea is present. For example, Jesus took the two Emmaus road disciples to task for their lack of reflexivity regarding the way they had inferred from Scripture that the Messiah would come to triumph rather than to suffer. 'Oh, how foolish you are!' he said to them. The Greek word for 'foolish' (*anoētoi*) signifies an 'unwillingness to use one's mental faculties in order to understand.'<sup>24</sup> In other words, the two disciples had failed to scrutinise their hermeneutic. For us also it is always important to be reflexive when interpreting the Bible, especially when we are inferring from the text. Jesus' own example shows us how to infer appropriately. When Jesus inferred from David's eating the holy bread that it was permissible for the disciples to pluck grains of wheat on the Sabbath, Jesus was respecting the 'scope' of 1 Samuel. The activity of the disciples in the wheat fields paralleled David's action at Nob in at least three ways. First, the disciples – like David and his men – were hungry. Second, the freshness of the bread indicates that David ate it on the Sabbath.<sup>25</sup> Third, the Pharisees would have considered the eating of the holy bread by non-priests to be unlawful. Jesus' inference from biblical precedent to justify the disciples' conduct respected the original Old Testament context.

Asking these three questions regarding, first, authorial intentionality and then the consistency and reflexivity of our approach to Scripture will serve us well in helping to check whether we are rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, let me return to my original question: 'Whose interpretation is it?' In the last analysis this is a question we can appropriately answer

<sup>24</sup> J.P. Louw and E.A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, Vol 1, 32.50, UBS, New York, 1988.

<sup>25</sup> The supply of the bread of the Presence was replenished every Sabbath (Lev. 24.8).

only in the presence of God. For interpreting the Bible is ultimately an act of worship. Scripture engagement is a vital element in following Christ. ‘Reading and studying and memorizing and meditating upon Scripture has always been the foundation of the Christian Disciplines. All of the Disciplines are built on Scripture. Our practice of the Spiritual Disciplines is kept on course by our immersion in Scripture.’<sup>26</sup>

Scripture engagement is encounter – encounter with God the Father, with God the Son and with God the Holy Spirit. Scripture engagement is also discovery learning that enables us to discover for ourselves the unique claim the text is making upon us. That claim is the assertion of Jesus to be Lord! Scripture engagement is not mastering the text but submitting to it!

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<sup>26</sup> R. Foster with K. A. Herlmers, op. cit. Cf one of the findings of the Willow Creek research involving 200 churches and 80,000 people in the USA: ‘The Bible is the most powerful catalyst for spiritual growth. The Bible’s power to advance spiritual growth is unrivalled by anything else we’ve discovered. Reflection on Scripture is by far the most influential spiritual practice.’ (G. L. Hawkins and C. Parkinson, *Follow Me: What’s Next for You?*, Barrington IL, 2008. Pages 105-6).



## Two Philosophies, Two Christian Spirituality Paradigms

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Although there is one authoritative written Word, the Bible, and one faith in one Saviour, Jesus Christ, our Christian spirituality may be characterized by one of two perspectives. Some believers emphasize studying God's Word as an objective or external source and in quite a reasoned analytical way, while others almost one-sidedly stress the believer's subjective relationship with the Lord (compare Erickson 1993:251,252). Such a type of dualism is questioned by contemporary scholars who hold to a more holistic approach (Herholdt 1998:223).

It is however interesting to note that this decisive difference in emphasis exists among believers who hold to the same Bible and believe in the same Jesus Christ. Sometimes this difference is so important to believers that they question one another with regard to authenticity of faith or ways of practicing their faith. It appears that philosophy has had a major influence on the historic development of theology and this apparent dualism concerning Christian spirituality.

### The Roll of Idealism in the History of Western Philosophy and Theology

Before the respected Christian father Augustine became a Christian, he made an inquiry into the *idealistic* philosophy of Plato, which came to him via the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus but which was mingled with Christian thought (Walker 1992:121,198). Underlying this *idealistic* thinking, human reason or the mind was considered to be a special aspect of the human soul which modeled ideas as the highest form of existence in the *spiritual* world (De Vleeschauwer [undated] 136, 137). The *Good* (according to Plato) or the

*Ultimate One* (according to Plotinus) was considered to be the *Head* of this spiritual world. The *Ultimate One* could be known through inner experience. On the one hand, association with the *Final One* initially was considered a mere rational or intellectual exercise. On the other hand, it had mystic or intuitive undertones (Brown 1968:16).

### **Jesus My Inner Master**

Although influenced to some extent by Greek philosophy, as a Christian Augustine recognized the biblical truth that “Christ has come to dwell in me and to work through me” (compare Jn. 14:11-23). Augustine further believed that Christ communicated with him by means of what he referred to as “experiences of enlightenment” (Bourke 1976:11; Harvey D Egan 1991:57; compare John 14 to 17).

According to Bouyer (1963:479), Augustine upheld a balance between the two dimensions of spirituality, namely to learn both from God’s Word but also through inner promptings of the Holy Spirit. Apart from important biblically-founded doctrinal interpretation, which he contributed to theology (compare Van’t Spijker 1993:94), he also distinguished himself as someone who openly testified about his personal experience as a believer. He referred to Jesus Christ as his Indwelling Master, from whom he said that he expected and experienced inner guidance (compare Elder [ed.] 1976:477). Augustine emphasized the need to pursue and encounter God through an inner experience (Bouyer 1963:479). As a believer he also emphasized the importance of following Jesus Christ as his example (Reinke 1976:165). We find examples of these experiential aspects of Augustine’s spirituality in Paul (compare 2 Cor 5:20 and Phil 3). However, during the Middle Ages the Augustinian balance was derailed in two ways. Some developed the Augustinian spirituality into a one-sided form of Mysticism while others developed a rational kind of Scholasticism.

### **The Roll of Realism and Idealism in the History of Western Theology**

Like Plato, his disciple Aristotle was also an influential pagan philosopher, although he was less concerned about the abstract. He was more interested in the studied and reasoned interpretation of the things that are accessible through sense-perception and therefore was more of a realist (compare De Vleeschauwer [undated] Band 1:157, 163). Some Medieval theologians practised a form of Realism (e.g. through understanding what Scripture says) but also applied an idealistic form of rationalism through logical reasoning regarding faith. The result was the approach of Scholasticism. It appears that from the outset Protestant theology was largely formulated according to Aristotle’s logical and reasoned techniques and it gradually developed into a Reformed kind of Scholasticism (compare Walker 1992:567; Vandermolen 2010:52). As a result of following Aristotle’s approach, science later became the objective of theology, which, in turn, resulted in the study of the objective essence of things, not as they are experienced through faith but accord-

ing to their “real” existence behind their experiential phenomena and events as they appear through human reasoning (König 1982:167,168). Therefore, it may be said that in some circles the approach changed from “I believe in order to understand” to “I believe because I understand” (compare Tarnas 1993:181,187,188).

### **I Believe on the Grounds of the Promises in God’s Word**

Martin Luther lived several hundred years after Augustine but started off as an Augustinian monk and was therefore educated in the Augustinian spirituality of his time. In the Augustinian tradition, priorities included internalizing the Word, experiencing Christ, union with Christ, and following the example of the (suffering) Christ. However, at an early stage, Luther acknowledged that he did not share in much of those mystical kinds of experiences (compare Reinke 1976:163,165; Rack 1969:29,30).

Luther’s mentors in the monastery however referred him to Scripture for answers, and it was through the reading of Scripture that the truth began to dawn on him. His alleged conclusion was that he did not receive answers to his questions through an inner experience of Christ but that they came to him from the external written Word of God (compare Young 1973:26,42; König 1998:89-92). From then on, his preaching reflected a remarkable move away from the Augustinian perspective of his time. In this sense, Luther moved further away from Augustine’s idealism toward the approach of a *realist*. As already mentioned, a *realist* is directed toward learning from external sources rather than through inner impressions. Such external sources may include one’s physical environment, a human teacher or a book (compare Chu 1971:93-95;116).

For Luther the Word became primarily an external word with a clear and precise meaning, independent of the processes by which it was received and internalized (Rack 1969:30, 31). However, according to Reinke (1976:165,166), the emphasis eventually moved from the Augustinian encounter with God to an encounter with the text in the form of meaningful interpretation. The art of the monastic *meditatio* was replaced by the linguistics of the critiques’ *explicatio* and the word of the inner experience was separated from, or replaced by, the external promise (compare Reinke (1976:165,166). This is not taken to mean that Luther or some of his more scholastically oriented successors did not experience an internalizing of the Word or a relationship with Christ. It is also not meant to imply that Augustine or some of his more mystically oriented successors did not use the objective Word of God as their source. However, the difference in emphasis between the spirituality of Augustine and Luther may throw light onto the mutual differences in spirituality that Christians demonstrate or observe today.

### **Contemporary Examples of Realism and Idealism**

The following are examples of how believers seem to bring their *Realism*

or **Idealism** to the Bible. First, a comparison of three diaries based on the Heidelberg Confession and prepared by representatives of each of the three Afrikaans mainstream Reformed churches brought to light that all three of the authors described the expression “true conversion” mainly in objective **realistic** terms. At the end, however, one of the authors more clearly confronted his readers in imperative terms with an **idealistic** directed kind of challenge regarding the necessity for true inner conversion to become real in their lives (Dreyer et al 1952:210-217; Vorster 1957: 275-281; Du Toit 1963:196-200).

An important related second example is the seeming lack of inner (**idealistic**) passion among many believers to take the gospel to the unreached peoples with the expectation that the Holy Spirit will also make His dwelling in the hearts of such pagan peoples. According to Johnstone (1989:33,39, 63,79,80), mission as an imperative has been marginalized by overlooking it in scriptural interpretation and sidelining it in the history of the Church.

**Realism** seems to feature in Evangelical Reformed theology; for example, MacArthur’s interpretation (compare 1984:300, 303, 306) is that the inner work of the Holy Spirit, by means of the gifts, as practiced in New Testament times was of a temporary nature and has ceased or may at most continue in a more diluted form. Jensen (2002) is also skeptical about the genuineness or value of Christian experience or discernment. Church people may be asked to help interpret and verify a testimony about an unusual experience worked by the Holy Spirit or the possibility of a prophetic word.<sup>1</sup> However, should the church concerned hold to strong **realistic** views in a unilateral way? How reliable would such verification be? How drastic would the results be if a preacher preached a prophetic message of admonition as a true communication from God but was ignored? Compare the results of the responses of Israel to the prophet of Jeremiah, or of the Pharisees to Jesus the Messiah . . . or of those who reject the message of the Spurgeons and Grahams, or William Careys and Hudson Taylors of our time?

Examples could also be given of believers who apply **Idealism** one-sidedly. Erickson (1993:252) warns against “over excitability and ill-advised fervor”. These may relate to practices that are not scripturally justifiable but are exaggerating or even corrupting biblical examples or truths, such as expecting and publically promoting life to be an **idealistic** chain of miraculous experiences with hardly any **realistic** components. Unbiblical forms of both **Realism** and **Idealism** are to be avoided. Both may be the result of sin (e.g. lack of faith) and the deceit of the devil (e.g. believing a lie).

Brother Yun, the Chinese evangelist, represents a more balanced spirituality. He uses the Bible as his normative source and tells many biblically justifiable stories of how Chinese Christians experience and practise their rela-

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<sup>1</sup> I believe that a prophetic word may be one of admonition or encouragement and does not have to be predictive concerning the future (compare 1 Cor 14:3) or in terms of Scripture will not involve revelation of new theological truth (refer to 2 Cor 11:3,4; Gal 1:6-12, etc).

tionships with Jesus Christ. His ministry confirms the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit through miracles, prophetic visions and/or dreams and their fulfillment, etc., but he also subjects himself to God's Word and learns from many *realistic* experiences which even include severe persecution (Hattaway 2004).

It is true that we learn from the Word of God as our basic source and from *realistic* situations, but it is also true that, through the Holy Spirit, we live in a relationship with the Lord and experience His (*idealistic*) interventions. These should be accepted as two dimensions of our biblically founded Christian spirituality. When the *idealist* speaks openly about his/her relationship with the Lord and the work of the Holy Spirit, the *realist* that one-sidedly emphasizes the authority of Scripture may suspect him/her of falseness, wishful thinking or of pursuing an experience of the spectacular, etc. On the other hand the *idealist* may suspect the *realist* of lack of faith, skepticism and rationalism, or even that the *realist* may be unsaved. These extremes may also represent real deviations from what God intends in His Word or may be biased emphases thereof. It must be stated frankly that *Idealism* and *Realism* are terms foreign to the Bible. On the other hand, it is true that both of the spiritual inclinations referred to here can be substantiated biblically. There is a biblical foundation and place for both in the sense that both are actually non-negotiable in Christian living. When spirituality is built on one of these two aspects more heavily than the other, it is justifiable to ask whether there are God-given truths or realities that may be being forfeited due to bias.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this article is not to plead that one must be both an *idealist* and a *realist*. Over the centuries, however, the pagan philosophies referred to have had a profound impact on the historic development of theology, often in a one-sided way. This also applies to what has been conveyed to seminary students by their professors and to church people from pulpits. More often than not, it was the one-sided emphasis of *Realism* that reigned supreme in theology. Instead, the intention of this article is to subject to close scrutiny the possibility that one's spirituality may not be in line with God's intended balance, e.g. that one of these philosophies may have a stronger impact on one's orientation toward living as a Christian than God intends according to Scripture. We trust and are dependent on God's Word as our absolute and objective source and all human experience must be substantiated in terms of God's Word. By virtue of His Word, however, we rely on and are dependent upon a subjective personal relationship with God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through His Spirit. He usually speaks to us through Scripture. When I study the Bible, I find that I not only learn fixed truths of the faith and historic facts but through my Scripture reading, the Lord inspires and also guides me through His Spirit with respect to decisions I need to make, priorities I need to set, etc. As with the believers of Bible times, a Scripture-

based, two-way communication between God and man is possible and is non-negotiable. Although sovereignly given by God, His supernatural gifts may and should be pursued and be expected to operate (flow) through us as the body of Christ (compare end of 1 Cor 12 and beginning of 1 Cor 14). However, we cannot prescribe or restrict God with respect to the ways in which He chooses to speak to us.

If God spoke to Jacob through a dream, to Moses through a burning bush and cloud and to Gideon through an angel, to David through a prophet, to Josiah through rediscovered Scriptures and a prophetess, to Israel through Isaiah and Jeremiah with words of comfort, to Peter and Paul *inter alia* through visions, and to Daniel and John after having collapsed physically, then in His sovereignty, God may choose to speak into my situation in any of these ways or merely in a still voice which I experience internally. What I believe God says must however be substantiated in terms of the absolutes and values in God's written authoritative Word (compare Wolvaardt 2002: 36,37).

In God's Word, He has fully revealed His message to save mankind through Jesus Christ. His current communication with us does not involve new additions or amendments to the fixed truths. However, it does present us with practical guidance by the Holy Spirit with regard to our lives as believers today. A subjective question in this respect could be phrased as follows: "Where does the reader of this article stand with regard to these two facets of Christian spirituality?"

### Appendices

**Appendix A: from J. I. Packer and Carolyn Nystrom, *God's Will: Finding Guidance for Everyday Decisions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 229.**

#### **Nudged by the Spirit?**

*"What then, in positive terms should we say to those who believe, partly because of what they have been told and partly on the basis of their own past experience, that guidance by divine nudge is frequently God's way of indicating to us what we should do? Simply this, we think:*

*"First, it is not for us to make rules for God or to deny that he made his will known this way when someone testifies that he did. We recognize that God sovereignly may renew today any of the modes of communication that he used in Bible times – visions, dreams, voices, inner promptings, whatever.*

*"Second, this kind of guidance is most likely to be authentic and healthy when it comes at a time when one is not looking for it but is seeking to discern God's will by the methods described in the foregoing chapters. Then the peace of God in the heart finally confirms the rightness of the thinking.*

*"Third, if we are looking for a kind of spiritual experience that God himself, teaching us in Scripture, has not told us to look for, Satan, who is*

*very good at imitating genuine spiritual experience, may fool us again and again by giving us his version of what we are looking for and will thereby lead us astray.*

*“Fourth, while it is always important to check our conclusions as to what God wants us to do by consulting wise folk in the church, it is supremely important to do this when we believe we have received guidance by unusual means. Sin and Satan operate by deceit and the corrupting of good judgment, which makes lone rangers in this matter of direct guidance more than ordinarily vulnerable. If the wise folk agree in giving us reasons to doubt whether our experience really was God revealing his will to us, we should doubt it too.*

*“Fifth, direct guidance will never breach biblical boundaries or cut across biblical directives. Inner urgings to do either of these most certainly do not come from God.”*

**Appendix B: from Gerald Bray, *God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 64-65.**

*“How can we tell when a voice that we hear is God speaking to us? There is no infallible rule to follow here, but there are certain principles we can rely on for guidance. First, anyone who says things about God that contradict the Scriptures has been misled. God will not tell his people to murder, steal, or commit adultery, nor will he give anyone a new revelation of himself that modifies or adds to what we already know. That kind of revelation ceased at the end of the apostolic period, for the very good reason that we are in fellowship with the saints of every age and so cannot know more about God than the first generation of Christians did. Individuals today who claim to have received a message that the church has never heard before, but must now accept, are certainly wrong, and we must not listen to them. For example, from time to time someone predicts that Christ will return on a certain day, even though the New Testament explicitly says that this cannot be known by anyone (Acts 1:7). Tragedies have occurred when people have listened to such predictions instead of testing what they say by the Word of God, and we must be careful not to fall into such traps.*

*“Beyond that, it is often impossible to say for sure whether what we think is a word from the Lord is genuine, and believers must allow each other the freedom to determine what the right response to such impulses should be. For example, if I believe that God is telling me to open a bakery and there is nothing to stop me from doing so, then perhaps the only way to test this is to open one and see what happens. If the bakery prospers, I may be able to claim that God’s word to me has been fulfilled. If it fails, I may have to admit that I was mistaken, or that God wanted me to fail for reasons of his own – perhaps to make me depend more on him and less on my own efforts. Either*

way, such divine-human communication is between him and me and cannot be interpreted as his will for the wider church. God does not want everyone to open a bakery, and if I insist that my experience must become a model for others or a yardstick for measuring their spirituality, then I have certainly taken things too far.

“The key distinction here is the difference between what is private and what is public. A private communication from God to an individual believer must be received and acted upon by the person concerned, according to the wisdom given him by the Holy Spirit. It is when such things move from the private into the public sphere that we must exercise the greatest caution. The Bible has been given to us as our common guide to God’s will, and it remains the permanent, fixed standard by which all other claims to divine guidance must be judged. Anything beyond this is private speculation and cannot be imposed on the church with the authority of God’s revelation. Just as someone in secular life has to consider whether a bright idea he has is legal before he acts on it, so a Christian must ask whether what he thinks is a word from the Lord is biblical before he does anything about it. If he decides that it is, then let him test it and see, as long as we all remember that the written Word is the final arbiter given to us by God and is the only authority to which the church is called to submit without reservation.”

**Appendix C: from Charles Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 289 as quoted in Jim Samra, *God told me – who to marry, where to work, which car to buy . . . and I’m pretty sure I’m not crazy: learning to listen for guidance from God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 75.**

“There are many monitions [directions] from God’s Spirit which are not noticed by Christians when they are in a callous condition; but when the heart is right with God and living in communion with God, we feel a sacred sensitiveness, so that we do not need the Lord to shout, but His faintest whisper is heard. Nay, he need not even whisper . . . in your soul, as distinctly as the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go near and join thyself to this chariot,’ you shall hear the Lord’s will. As soon as you see an individual, the thought shall cross your mind, ‘Go and speak to that person.’”

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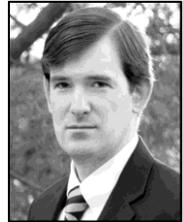
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## Athanasius: A Review Article

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Together with Irenaeus of Lyons, Athanasius was one of the most vital figures of the patristic church. While Irenaeus was responsible for distinguishing Christianity from Gnosticism, Athanasius was responsible for ensuring the permanence of the doctrine of Christ's deity in Christendom. Yet he has not been able to escape fierce criticism. In 2000 the patristic scholar David Brakke, basing himself on the work of Timothy Barnes and a newly discovered letter of a contemporary of Athanasius, wrote a chapter in which he condemned Athanasius for his tyrannical actions as patriarch of Alexandria and compared him to a modern-day ayatollah, although this phrase could have arguably been better applied to Athanasius' proximate successors Cyril and Dioscorus.<sup>1</sup> Eleven years after Brakke's chapter, interest in this "opaque but complicated figure" was by no means diminished and was seen notably in one evangelical study of him and two translations published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

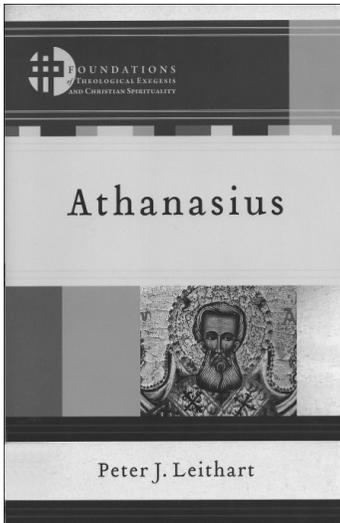
**Athanasius. Peter J. Leithart. Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality, eds. Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011, 204 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-3942-3**

Peter Leithart is a pastor and professor in Moscow, Idaho. He has written only one other book on late antiquity, a study of Constantine the Great, but his work on Athanasius has the earmarks of an expert in the field. It is more of an evaluation of Athanasius than a biography and is additionally the first installment in the series Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality which, among other objectives, strives to recover patristic exegesis for contemporary theology. Despite this admirable aspiration, the series has a major flaw which will presently be considered.

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<sup>1</sup> Philip F. Esler, ed., *The Early Christian World* (London: Routledge, 2000), 2:1102-1127.

The description in chapter 1 of the shady aspects of Athanasius' personality cannot be improved on, especially since it is applicable not only to him but to his successors in the patriarchal chair of Alexandria. For all his piety, Leithart states, Athanasius was "a tough, skillful infighter, a community organizer and rabble-rouser, willing to use intimidation or other tools in pursuit of his aims."<sup>2</sup> Edward Gibbon, despite his favorable reception of Athanasius, described him as "tainted with the contagion of fanaticism." Leithart, with



more circumspection, claims to have sometimes been put off by his violent intensity while still recognizing in him a zeal akin to that of Moses and the prophets. Athanasius had a remarkable capacity for portraying himself as the victim, but Leithart stresses the conciliatory nature of his later career. His epitaph was perhaps best spoken by Christ: "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12, with a favorable view of the subjects of the second half of the verse). Christianity was a religion of compassion, but in order for it to succeed it arguably needed well-meaning but belligerent scoundrels at the helm in its early days.

Athanasius had a thorough understanding of philosophy though not literature. He quoted Plato three times, was familiar with Middle Platonism, and resembled Plotinus in his claim that for the eye to see the sun it must become sunlike. But Leithart is correct to say that his basic convictions were shaped by Scripture rather than by Hellenism and that his image of the world as a body was not indebted to Stoic metaphysics. He gives as an example of Athanasius' dependence on Scripture his first encyclical letter, written during the second of his five exiles, in which he compared his deposition to the violation of the Levite's concubine in Judges 20. This comparison is typical of Athanasius' mind, steeped as it was in biblical imagery. Athanasius attended the First Council of Nicaea as a theological adviser to the Alexandrian bishop Alexander but did not, in Leithart's words, dominate the council. He appositely draws a connection between Bishop Alexander's Melitian opponents and the "puritanical" Donatists.

Alexander and Athanasius clearly had their hands full with the Melitians and the Arians, who impelled them, particularly Athanasius, to extreme measures. Before his first banishment, Athanasius was charged with bribery, sacrilege, imprisonments, depositions, the forced requisition of linen tunics, and conniving physical assault. He was exiled twice by Constantine's son Constantius, whom he compared to King Saul, the murderer of the priests of

<sup>2</sup> Peter J. Leithart, *Athanasius*, 8.

Nob, further allowing Leithart to illustrate Athanasius' dependence on biblical imagery.

Leithart commendably continues to use the descriptor "Arian" in a day when Arians are Homoeans, Monophysites are Miaphysites, and Gnostics are not Gnostics. His discussion of Arius' theology is fair to Arius: he took Origen's subordinationism to its logical conclusion and denied the eternal generation of the Son from the Father. He quotes James Joyce's humorous and juvenile description of Arius' death. Athanasius' words, less graphic than Joyce's, merely state that he was burst asunder like Judas. Although Arius had perhaps been poisoned (an unnecessary supposition), his end was such an embarrassment that none of his followers were henceforth comfortable with the Arian label, a fact which reveals much about late antiquity.

Leithart includes the compromise the Homoiousians reached with the normative Arian Homoeans but not the later compromise they reached with the Nicene Homoiousians. He cites the Arian desire to protect God from the mire of life by sending His less divine Son to save mankind, but he does not thoroughly investigate the Platonic agenda behind this desire. Athanasius himself disliked the idea of God suffering on the cross, a qualm his later successor Cyril, who seems to have modeled himself after him, would not share.

In chapter 3, though without explicitly mentioning Origen, Leithart shows that Athanasius followed the Ante-Nicene in distinguishing between *agennētos* (unbegotten) and *agenētos* (uncreated). The Son was for Athanasius both *gennētos* and *agenētos*, begotten but not created. Leithart translates *agenētos* "unoriginate" rather than "uncreated." He astutely compares the trinitarian views of Augustine and Athanasius. When the apostle Paul wrote that Christ was the power and wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24), Athanasius took this literally so that the Father has nothing that is not realized in the Son. For Augustine, by contrast, the Father has something that is His own and that is more intrinsic to His being than the Son is. In Augustine's mind the Father did not have to be made complete by the Son; for Athanasius He did. Athanasius still accepted the eternal derivation of the Son from the Father; in other words, there never was a moment when the Father did not have the Son.

Leithart's exegesis of Athanasius' theology is sound and reveals Athanasius' philosophical acumen. Often, however, Leithart is too garrulous. Although his book is not long, it outstays its welcome by many pages. He manages to lull his reader to sleep even in his discussion of the patristic doctrine of *theōsis* (deification). However, this is not true of Leithart's exposition of Athanasius' doctrine of the Holy Spirit, whose deity Athanasius fully embraced even though it would not be formalized until the Cappadocians.

Going against the Platonism in the air during his age, Athanasius maintained that bodily secretions are not evil, a fact which Leithart seems to over-emphasize. He helpfully rescues Athanasius from R. P. C. Hanson's charge that his Christ was God in a space suit. The patriarch has also been charged

with proto-Nestorianism; for instance, in his assertion that when Jesus healed Peter's mother He stretched forth His hand humanly but healed divinely. To accuse an Alexandrian such as Athanasius of a Nestorian tendency is somewhat ludicrous and merely discloses the essential orthodoxy behind Nestorius' confused terminology. Regardless, serious questions about Christology did not get under way until after Athanasius' time.

Leithart's introduction and epilogue are done "in the Augustinian mode," an unsettling juxtaposition of Eastern and Western Christianity. But Leithart is not afraid of unsettling juxtapositions and idiosyncrasies. In discussing Athanasius' doctrine of creation in chapter 4, he evaluates the nature versus grace debate as it stands at the present day. This leads him into a dialogue with such writers as Scheeben, de Lubac and Rahner, exponents of the ponderous philosophy of extrinsicism. His eleven-page excursus is unnecessary and amounts to a full-scale incongruity, like inserting information about technology stocks in a book of Renaissance history.

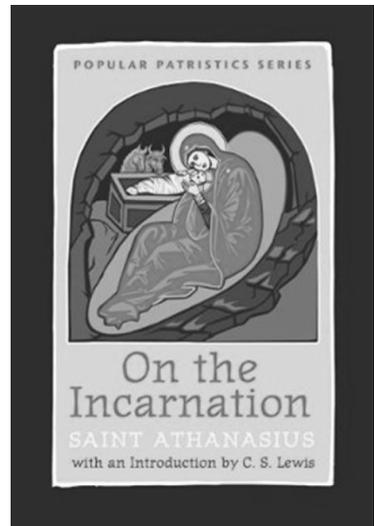
Regarding the patristic question of God's impassibility in the following chapter, the author spends five pages discussing recent philosophers like Hegel and Jürgen Moltmann. Typical of his love for the incongruous, he refers to Hegel as Alexandrian. (In a footnote he compares Hegel to Plotinus, here mentioning a thinker who might have been of service in his study of Athanasius: when the irradiations from the One in Plotinus are reabsorbed back into the One, they lose their identity, which is not the case with Hegel's God and "others.")

Leithart shares the "beginning, middle, and end" preoccupation of contemporary thought, illustrated by the line "In my end is my beginning," and duly applies this to the theology of Athanasius. All of this, it turns out, is partly the fault of the series to which he is contributing, *Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality*. As has been noted it strives to recover patristic exegesis for contemporary theology. What this unfortunately translates into is an attempt to make the patristic church relevant for contemporary readers. The insinuation is that the patristic church is not significant enough to speak to us on its own terms; it must be dressed up in modern garb in order for it to do so. Leithart gives one the impression of chronological snobbery, of turning his back on a supposedly deceptive past and embracing a worthless present. He should have taken to heart his criticism of Slusser, who ransacks the writings of Athanasius for insight on modern methodology, as anachronistic. I would aver that Hegel, Moltmann, and Rahner have no place in a book about the patristic church. Leithart fills his pages with such characters, from Bosch to Descartes, and gives one the impression that his book is not an investigation of the early church in the strictest sense. The reader who opens it wanting to learn something about Athanasius will come away with a measure of disappointment.

***On the Incarnation.* Athanasius, trans. John Behr. Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011, 173 pp., paper. ISBN 978-088141-409-7**

In Athanasius' day religious figures were also political figures, and it is noteworthy that they wrote their own speeches and treatises. Athanasius was responsible for shaping Nicene Christianity, a religion shared by Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox, Nestorians, and Monophysites, and nowhere more so than with his treatise *On the Incarnation*. This was the second of a two-part compilation, the former of which was entitled *Against the Gentiles*. The double work was probably written in his early patriarchate, in other words in his thirties. It may have been undertaken, as Khaled Anatolios suggests, in response to Eusebius of Caesarea's effusive accolades to the emperor Constantine, an attempt to give back to God what had wrongly been given to Caesar. The treatises were written for a certain Macarius, who is literally translated here by the phrase "blessed one."

The translator of this edition is John Behr, the dean of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. Behr teaches patristics at both St. Vladimir's and Fordham University and is the editor of Popular Patristics, which together with Ancient Christian Texts is one of the best recent series devoted to the Church Fathers. The preface is C. S. Lewis's introduction to an older translation of the treatise. Behr's translation is a supple one and easily sustains rereading, but "God the Word" would have been a better rendering of *ho Theos Logos* than "the God Word". The treatise begins by opposing the views of the Epicureans that



all things came into being spontaneously without a creator, of Plato that God created out of preexistent matter, and of the Gnostics who introduced a god beneath God as the creator. As against all these, God Himself created the universe out of nothing. He created man and woman in His own image and gave them, in paradise, the life of the holy ones. As is appropriate for an Eastern Christian theologian, even at this early stage of church history, Athanasius emphasizes the freedom of the will in his discussion of the Edenic economy.

Throughout the treatise, Athanasius never wavers in his subscription to Christ's deity. During His earthly existence, He was able to do what no other mortal could do: sit inside a house while moving the sun and rotating the heavens. Athanasius also exhibits the allegorical and typological tendency of the patristic church. Christ's physical body was not divided at His death, as were the bodies of Isaiah and John the Baptist, in order to foreshadow the

undivided spiritual body of the church.

The eyewitnesses to Christ's resurrection testify that it happened: "this thing was not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26). The fact that the Christian martyrs of Athanasius' childhood, men and women alike, rushed toward death without fear is another proof that Christ vanquished death. The martyrs play with death because it has been weakened, in the same way that children are able to play with a lion that has lost its power. But the fullest proof that Christ defeated death is His continuing work in the Christian. He makes the adulterer cease from his adultery, the murderer from his murders, the unjust from his greed, and the impious from his impiety.

Athanasius would amplify this thought, as Behr demonstrates, with his biography of St. Anthony, in whose good deeds, accomplished three hundred years after the Incarnation, Christ was seen as working. Even when Anthony felt he had been abandoned by Christ, Christ revealed that this was not the case: "I was here, Anthony. . . . I will be your helper forever."<sup>3</sup> Christ's presence in Anthony was vividly glimpsed when he reemerged into civilization after twenty years of complete isolation. Far from being a pitiful wreck, he evidenced stability of character and a total control over his emotions, displaying neither grief, laughter, dejection, annoyance, nor elation. Athanasius is careful not to use the pagan word *apatheia* (dispassion) in his description of Anthony. After Anthony's reemergence into society, he became an instrument of Christ, healing the sick, consoling the disconsolate, and reconciling enemies. Even his vigorous old age reflects the benefits accorded by the Resurrection. "He generally seemed brighter and of more energetic strength," Athanasius writes, "than those who make use of baths and a variety of foods and clothing."<sup>4</sup>

Another proof of the Resurrection is the decline of paganism and idolatry since Christ's day and, together with this, the wearing away of the magic of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Indians. Idolatry, the worship of the demons, was for Athanasius symbolic of the depths to which humanity sank after the Fall. He was particularly opposed to his countrymen's worship of the Nile River. Like other Christians of his day he followed the theory of the Greek historian Euhemerus that the pagan gods were idealized recreations of the earliest mortals. Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine, was actually a man who practised healing and treated bodies with herbs; as such, he was less capable than Christ the Creator and Restorer of the universe. In addition to overcoming the gods, Christ outpaces the philosophers who tried in vain to do what He does now; namely, point humanity to immortality and the virtuous life.

Though his treatise is directed more to the Greeks than the Jews, Athanasius includes an expostulation against Jewish unbelief. He answers the Jews with their own Scriptures, focusing on Old Testament prophecies about

<sup>3</sup> Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 42.

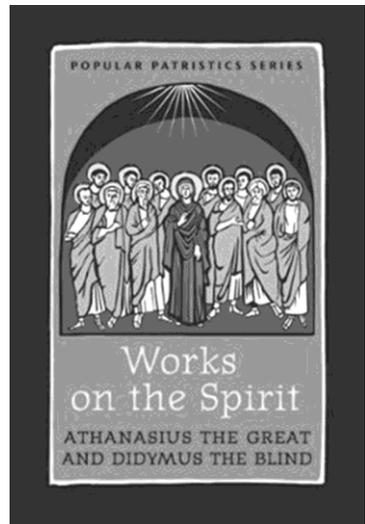
<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

Christ, especially from the book of Isaiah. This had of course been done before him, most notably by Irenaeus in his *Apostolic Preaching*, previously translated by Behr. It strikes Athanasius as preposterous that the Jews believe Jesus did not fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament and that the Messiah has not yet come. Since the advent of Christ, the Gentiles have been called, visions have ceased, idolatry has been refuted, swords have been beaten into plowshares, and death has been destroyed. To enumerate all the changes Christ has worked in the world would be like standing on the shore and trying to count all the waves one sees.

***Works on the Spirit. Athanasius and Didymus*, trans. Mark DelCogliano, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz and Lewis Ayres. Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011, 243 pp., paper. ISBN 978-088141-379-3**

*On the Incarnation* was a product of the young Athanasius. The *Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit* were written by a man who had been exiled three times and was currently hiding in the desert. The present volume pairs the letters to Serapion with Didymus the Blind's treatise on the Holy Spirit. The translators are professors at American and English universities. Mark DelCogliano should be particularly singled out as a specialist on Basil the Great and the author of an exemplary article on the influence of the Homoiousians on his theology.<sup>5</sup> In the introduction, he is more critical of Athanasius the man than are Leithart or Behr. He makes it clear that Tertullian's and Origen's anti-Monarchian writings, while necessary, led to a reluctance on the part of certain Christians to fully embrace the Holy Spirit's deity. But the fact that the Arian Homoeans and Anomoeans radically subordinated the Spirit to the Father, or denied His deity altogether, impelled the Homoiousians to emphasize His deity.

Serapion, the addressee of Athanasius' letters on the Spirit, was an Egyptian bishop and, together with Athanasius, the beneficiary of St. Anthony's two sheepskin cloaks, no small honor. He had written Athanasius about a group whom Athanasius termed the Tropikoi or Misinterpreters, predecessors of the Pneumatomachians who walked out at the First Council of Constantinople. The Tropikoi de-



<sup>5</sup> "The Influence of Athanasius and the Homoiousians on Basil of Caesarea's Decentralization of 'Unbegotten,'" *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 19 (Summer 2011): 197-223.

nied the deity of the Spirit and should be distinguished from the Arians, although Athanasius desires to show their kinship with them.

Athanasius was more pedantic in his letters to Serapion than he was in his treatise on the Incarnation. One also detects a sharper polemical intensity. In the treatise he had spoken only of the slander of the Jews and the mockery of the Greeks. In the letters he compared Serapion's opponents to the Sadducees, called the Arians Ariomaniacs, equated their religion with the Judaism of Caiaphas, and consigned them to bursting ten thousand times, a reference to Arius' death. A little confusingly he sometimes addressed his remarks to Serapion and sometimes to his opponents. He hinted that the Tropikoi's refusal to acknowledge the Spirit's deity was influenced by the Greeks who caricatured the Holy Spirit as the Father's grandson. His use of Scripture was occasionally careless. To illustrate the self-sufficiency of the Trinity, he quoted Isaiah 1:11: "I am full," cutting off the rest of the sentence, "of the burnt offerings of rams."

Although Athanasius' stance is irascible, he sometimes allows humor to penetrate his discussion. When the disciples heard Christ's command to "baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit", they did not wonder why the Holy Spirit was placed last, why there were three persons in the Trinity, whether the Son had a son, or whether the Father was actually a grandfather.

Turning from Athanasius' letters to Didymus the Blind's treatise is like experiencing a still night after a thunderstorm. Didymus was condemned for his Origenism by the irrepressible Second Council of Constantinople. As a result, much of what he wrote has been lost, but he should be regarded as only a moderate Origenist. He fully accepted the Spirit's deity, and his treatise was relied on by Ambrose. The intractable Jerome translated the treatise into Latin in order to show up Ambrose' dependence on it, but it is fortunate that he did so since the Latin version is the only one which has survived. In the prologue, Jerome refers to Ambrose as an ugly crow dressed in his better's plumes. His infrequent comments on Didymus' Greek text are included in indented paragraphs in this translation.

According to Didymus, the Holy Spirit is holy by nature while the angels are holy only by participating in Him; this would be reiterated by Basil the Great. The angels are messengers of salvation and are more honorable than humans because they participate in the Trinity with a greater affinity and completeness than humans, a point that would be hard to deny. Like the Apollinarians, Didymus calls Christ the Lordly Man, but unlike the Apollinarians, he does not envision Him as a mixture of God and man. Somewhat unusually, he states that the human soul can be filled or indwelt only by the Trinity, which allows Him to argue for the deity of the Spirit, who is said to fill Christians. He denies that Satan can fill a human, as when Peter asked Ananias, "Why has Satan filled your heart?" (Acts 5:3). This, for Didymus, is not to be taken literally. Satan can fill the heart only by suggesting sinful thoughts to it. The same is true in the case of Judas whom Satan entered by

acting on him from without rather than by joining with him substantially. The devil, and one assumes all demons, can indwell humans only through fraud, deception and malice.

There are five main similarities between Athanasius' and Didymus' writings on the Spirit: they distinguish Him from the angels, they emphasize the definite article in scriptural discussions of the Spirit, they agonize over the correct interpretation of Amos 4:13, they distinguish between the scriptural uses of the word "spirit," and they deny that the Holy Spirit can be thought of as the Father's grandson. Didymus probably wrote shortly after Athanasius. He uses the word *homoousios* (of the same substance) to describe the relationship between the members of the Trinity, while Athanasius generally reserves this for the relationship between the Father and the Son. Didymus can therefore be shown to stress the deity of the Spirit even more forcefully than Athanasius. In addition, Athanasius mentions, and Didymus highlights, the doctrine of the sanctifying role of the Spirit, which would have such a long and honorable history in the Eastern and Western churches.

The translation of DeIcogliano and his compeers is sometimes too colloquial, but it represents a great gift to patristic scholars. In their translation and introduction, they render service not only to Athanasius but to such lesser known figures as Serapion of Thmuis, Didymus the Blind, and Cyril of Jerusalem.



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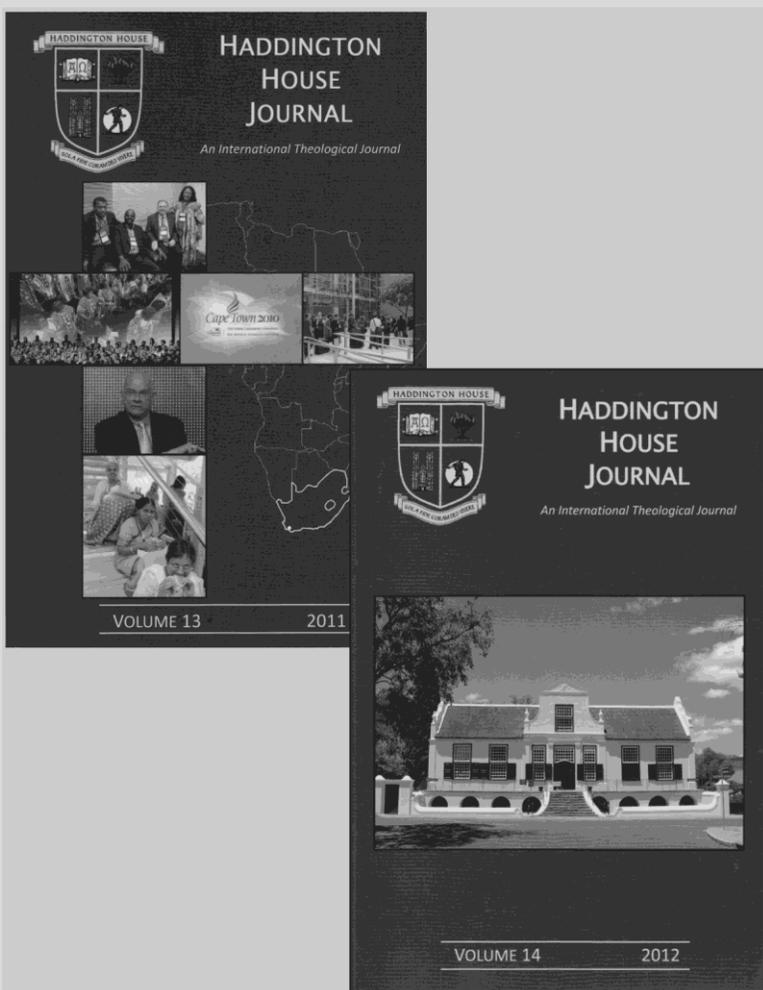
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