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Front Cover: John M. Mason, D.D. (1770–1829), Presbyterian Minister and Educator. Graphite and charcoal on bristol, Copyright © 2006 by Lori Teibel.

Back Cover: "The West End of Westminster Abbey," taken from *Supplement to the Gentleman's Magazine, for the Year 1751* ([London: E. Cave, 1751]). The addition of the towers to the abbey were completed by 1745.

EDITORIAL

As the 2005 inaugural issue has been generally well received, the publishers are happy to present a second volume of *The Confessional Presbyterian*. As with the first, we believe the reader will find some significant and important material in this 2006 issue of the journal. Last year's issue ran to 184 pages, and as God continues to bless this endeavor we trust we will be able to produce subsequent volumes of similar size. However, the reader will no doubt note that the current issue was blessed with an abundance of matter, and extends to 256 pages. This is due in large part to the lengthy survey of regulative principle literature by Dr. Frank J. Smith, part of which of necessity must be delayed to a subsequent issue. The value of this article may be seen not only in its critical interaction with the literature, but also in that it brings a large sampling of material together in one place, much of which many may be unaware existed. The survey testifies clearly to the fact that adherence to, and interest in, the regulative principle of worship has grown significantly over the last sixty years.

In addition to Dr. Smith's survey, we are pleased to present a "Reviews & Responses" section that has tripled in size. The selection this year contains an interesting mix of critical reviews, replies and responses, including a balanced assessment of Lewis Bevens Schenck's *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant* by Dr. Rowland S. Ward, and a friendly review and response between Dr. J. V. Fesko and Dr. Guy Waters over the latter's *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul*. The various departments introduced and explained in the 2005 "Editorial" continue as well. Of these, we draw special attention to the first-time translation of John Brown of Wamphray's comments on the nature of the universal visible

church. We would also note the rather lengthy "Antiquary" entry, on the New York printers T. & J. Swords, one of the most famous firms of the Federal Period. Even though they functioned to a large degree as the publishing house for the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Swords published several important American Presbyterian titles between 1795 and 1806. The first installment of this two-part series presents some interesting information regarding the Presbyterian and Reformed clergy of New York City at the time, which included Dr. Samuel Miller (a picture of whom was featured on the cover of this journal's inaugural issue) and Dr. John Mitchell Mason (whose likeness is on the cover of the present issue). Part two will treat the New York 'High Churchism' controversy which began about 1806 and brought an end to the Swords' occasional work publishing Presbyterian titles.

Of the other featured articles, many will view Dr. R. S. Clark's "Baptism and the Benefits of Christ" as the most significant. The article presented here is a refinement of the lecture given at the January 2006 Westminster Seminary California conference, "Meeting God on His Terms: Word and Sacrament as Means of Grace." Pieces that are more historical in nature include T. J. Phillips' submission on the "Reformed Practice of the Lord's Supper" at the time of the Scottish Reformation; an excellent survey of "Presbyterian Due Process" by Stuart R. Jones; and, since this year is the 300th anniversary of what is thought to be the founding of American Presbyterianism, a piece on Francis Makemie by D. G. Hart. The submission by James Cassidy takes a step back from tackling directly the New Perspectives' view of the doctrine of Justification, to look more generally at "N.T. Wright's approach to interpreting Scripture and his presuppositions with reference to the Bible." Of the remaining pieces, Dr. W. Gary Crampton writes on Open Theism, and Dr. John Delivuk on the often-misunderstood doctrine of Liberty of Conscience, particularly in how it applies to the "worship wars" of our day.

CHRIS COLDWELL ■

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Baptism and the Benefits of Christ: The Double Mode of Communion in the Covenant of Grace

By R. Scott Clark, D.Phil.

INTRODUCTION

As part of his polemic against the Judaizers of his day, the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans made a remarkable and vital distinction:¹

For one is not a Jew who is a Jew outwardly (φανερῶ) but he is a Jew who is one inwardly (κρυπτῶ) ... (Romans 2:28–29).

The Apostle did not create this distinction but rather carried on a polemic as old as Moses' exhortation to the Israelites to "circumcise the foreskin" of their hearts (Deut 10:16), and the clear distinction made in Jeremiah 9:25–26 between those who are circumcised only "in the foreskin" and those who are circumcised "in the heart."²

In Reformed theology, these passages and others like them have been understood to make a distinction between those who are members of the covenant of grace outwardly and those who are members outwardly, but who have also taken possession of the benefits of Christ by faith. This distinction appears in one way or another in virtually every major and minor systematic theology or survey of the faith from Calvin to the end of the high orthodox period as illustrated by Caspar Olevianus (1536–1587) and Herman Witsius (1636–1708).

Olevianus' covenant theology was premised on his conviction that there are those in the church with whom God has made a covenant of grace, in the narrower sense, and those in the visible church with whom he has not. That is why he titled his major work on covenant theology: *On the Substance of the Covenant of Grace Between God and the Elect*.³ For Olevian, the covenant of grace, construed narrowly or properly, is made only with the elect. Considered broadly, however, the covenant of grace can be said to include "hypocrites" and

"reprobates." They participate in "external worship," but do not enter into fellowship with Christ. Only the elect believe and only they receive Christ's benefits, i.e., the substance of the covenant.⁴ Christ is present and offered to the congregation, but Christ and his benefits are received through faith alone.⁵ One finds this very same distinction also in the theology of Olevianus' colleague Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583).⁶

These two Heidelberg theologians articulated a fundamental conviction of the Reformed Churches, that there is a distinction to be made between the church

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1. The Biblical translations in this essay are my own unless otherwise indicated. All quotations from the Greek New Testament are taken from Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001).

2. This distinction should not be confused with the so-called "Half-Way Covenant" of Colonial American Puritanism. In the Half-Way Covenant, one had to testify to a certain conversion experience. Paul's distinction is not premised on religious experience but faith in Christ which, in turn, is the fruit of election.

3. Caspar Olevianus, *De Substantia Foederis Gratuiti Inter Deum Et Electos* (Geneva: 1585) 3.418.

4. *De substantia*, 2.53, 56. See also *ibid.*, 2.103.

5. See also R. Scott Clark, *Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant: The Double Benefit of Christ*, ed. David F. Wright, *Rutherford House Studies in Historical Theology* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2005) 191–201.

6. *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History,*

considered as the communion of the saints, in all times and places, and the church considered as a visible institution. Unlike so many individualist American evangelicals, Reformed theology does not teach that it is possible to be a member of the communion of the saints and yet ignore the visible church. The *Belgic Confession* (Art. 28) virtually quotes St. Cyprian when it declares that, “outside of [the visible church], there is no salvation.”⁷ At the same time the confession (Art. 29) is clear that in the visible church there are always “hypocrites, who are mixed in the Church with the good, yet are not of the Church, though externally in it . . .” (Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.419). The notion that it is possible to be “in” but not “of” the church is obviously drawn from 1 John 2:19.

Herman Witsius’ use of this distinction at the end of the 17th century reflects its fixed position in Reformed orthodoxy:

... the participation (*communio*) of the covenant of grace is two fold. The one includes merely symbolical

and Theology, *Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought*, ed. Lyle D. Bierma (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005) 185–86.

7. Phillip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983) 3.418.

8. Modified from the translation in Herman Witsius, *Sacred Disquisitions on the Apostles’ Creed*, ed. Donald Fraser, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and Glasgow: A. Fullarton & Co. and Khull, Blackie & Co., 1823) 2.354–355. Herman Witsius, *Hermani Witsii Exercitationes Sacrae in Symbolum Quod Apostolorum Dicitur Et in Orationem Dominicam*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: 1697) 453–454. See also, Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*, trans. William Crookshank, 2 vols. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing; repr., 1990) 1.353.

9. In his essay expressing doubts about the visible/invisible distinction, Doug Wilson cites John Murray. The latter did raise questions about the utility of the adjective “invisible.” His point, however, was that what has been called the invisible church is only found in the visible church. He did not reject the distinction to the same effect or for the same purpose as Klaas Schilder, Norman Shepherd, and the Federal Vision Theologians. There is not a hint in Murray that baptism confers a temporary, conditional election and union with Christ that can be retained or lost by obedience or disobedience. See John Murray, “The Church: Its Definition in Terms of ‘Visible’ and ‘Invisible’ Invalid,” in *Collected Writings* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976–1982) 1.231–236. See also Douglas Wilson, “The Church Visible or Invisible,” in *The Federal Vision*, ed. Steve Wilkins and Duane Garner (Monroe, La.: Athanasius Press, 2004) 265–269. Hereafter *The Federal Vision*.

10. The designation “Federal Vision” is one the proponents have applied to themselves in books and conferences.

11. This is the approach of Jeffrey D. Niell, “The New Covenant, Membership, Apostasy, and Language,” in Andrew P. Sandlin, ed., *The Backbone of the Bible: Covenant in Contemporary Perspective* (Nacogdoches, Tex.: Covenant Media Press, 2004) 138–145.

12. For the purposes of this essay these elements of the *ordo salutis* shall be described as the “the benefits of Christ.”

and common benefits (*beneficia*), which have no certain connection with salvation, and to which infants are admitted by their relation to parents that are within the covenant; and adults, by the profession of faith and repentance, even though insincere.... The other participation of the covenant of grace, is the partaking of its internal, spiritual, and the saving goods (*bonorum*), as the forgiveness of sins, the writing of the law in the heart, etc. accordingly the apostle makes a distinction between the Jew outwardly and the Jew inwardly,—between circumcision in the flesh and the letter, and circumcision in the heart and Spirit; which, by analogy may be transferred to Christianity.⁸

Thus, in our confessional and classic covenant theology, we have accounted for the co-existence in the visible church of believers and hypocrites by speaking of those who are in the church “externally” only, by baptism, and those who are also in the church “internally” through faith which apprehends Christ and his benefits. Both sets of people are in the covenant of grace but they sustain different relations to it.⁹

THE STATE OF THE CONTROVERSY

Appreciating this distinction is essential to understanding the controversy in which our churches are presently involved regarding baptism and the benefits of Christ. If one denies this distinction then one’s understanding of baptism and its relations to the benefits will be altered radically. A group of writers, some of whom are ministers in confessional Reformed and Presbyterian churches, known collectively as the “Federal Vision” are, however, either denying or calling into question the distinction between the church visible and church invisible and with that they are proposing that there is no distinction between those who in the covenant of grace externally and internally.¹⁰

Though they are not very clear about this, the Federal Vision writers suggest that there is both an eternal, unconditional election and an historical, conditional, temporary and therefore uncertain election, which relates to the administration of the covenant of grace. This latter election is said to be “real” such that to fall away from it is “real apostasy.”¹¹ They propose that the biblical and truly Reformed view of baptism, the church, and the benefits of Christ is that by virtue of their baptism, every baptized person is brought into union with Christ and into temporary possession, at least, of the benefits of election and union with Christ, namely, justification, adoption, saving faith, and sanctification.¹²

THESIS

In contrast to the claims of the Federal Vision, I argue that Scripture teaches that there is a distinction to be made between those who have the substance of the covenant of grace, i.e., union with Christ, justification, and sanctification, and those who are in the covenant of grace but who participate only in its external administration. Further, I argue that baptism initiates the baptized person into the authorized, official sphere of God's saving work and recognizes one's membership in the covenant of grace. This initiation does not confer Christ's benefits *ex opere operato*. Rather, the promise of baptism is that whoever believes has what the sign signifies and seals.

CURRENT LITERATURE

Some of the views addressed in this essay can be traced to the teaching of Klaas Schilder (1890–1952), the founder of the Liberated Reformed Churches (*Gereformeerde Kerken Vrijgemaakt*) in the Netherlands in the 1940's.¹³ Schilder and his followers rejected the traditional internal/external distinction as expressed by Olevianus and Witsius. They argued that the covenant of grace is, "*Alles of niets*"—all or nothing. They argued that everyone in the covenant of grace sustains the same relations to Christ "head for head."¹⁴

As we shall see, rejecting the internal/external distinction has far reaching consequences and it set the stage for the Federal Vision doctrine of baptismal benefits. Schilder's rejection or redefinition of other elements of classical Reformed theology such as the covenant of redemption and the covenant of works also contributed to what has become the Federal Vision covenant theology.¹⁵

Since the mid 1970's Norman Shepherd has elaborated on Schilder's position.¹⁶ He argues that the "heart of covenant privilege is union and communion with God." With that privilege, however, comes responsibility. We are to be covenant keepers and pattern our covenant-keeping after Christ, "the covenant keeper par excellence (Shepherd, "Evangelism," 55).

According to Shepherd (and Schilder, and John Barach as will be noted), the decree of election must be viewed only through the lens of the covenant of grace (60). E.g., Ephesians, he says, was not written from the point of view of election, but from the point of view of "covenant." Thus Paul called everyone in the Ephesian congregation, "elect" (63–64). Some in the Ephesian congregation may fall away. If so, then they were not

elect. Implied in this argument is the existence of a type of election that is historical and conditional and not identical to eternal, unconditional election. Shepherd and his followers refer to this historical, conditional election as "covenantal election."

Explaining Jesus' discourse on the vine and the branches in John 15, he argues that the faithful and disobedient branches do not refer to two modes of visible communion in the church. He recognizes that the terms "inward" and "outward" are biblical terms (Rom 2:28–29), but they do not refer to elect and reprobate in the visible church or even to believers and unbelievers, but to "covenantally loyal Jews and disobedient transgressors."¹⁷

These conclusions lead him to a third thesis. It is not regeneration but baptism that is the transition from death to life.¹⁸ He explicitly denies that this view entails baptismal regeneration, and he is formally correct, for it actually entails much more.

One finds this system expressed even more clearly in two recent essays by John Barach in collections of essays advocating or discussing the Federal Vision theology. In

13. For an introduction to Schilder's life and work see J. Geertsma, ed., *Always Obedient: Essays on the Teachings of Dr. Klaas Schilder* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 1995).

14. See John Barach, "Covenant and Election," in *The Auburn Avenue Theology Pros & Cons: Debating the Federal Vision*, ed. E. Calvin Beisner (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.: Knox Theological Seminary, 2004) 151.

15. As a matter of rhetoric, when proponents of the Federal Vision theology speak of "Dutch Reformed theology," this seems to be code for Klaas Schilder's idiosyncratic system of covenant theology. They are not referring to the orthodox Dutch Reformed theologians of the 16th and 17th centuries. For more on this see R. Scott Clark, ed., *The Foolishness of the Gospel: Covenant and Justification* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, forthcoming).

16. Norman Shepherd, "The Covenant Context for Evangelism," in *The New Testament Student and Theology*, ed. John H. Skilton (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1976) 1.23.13.

17. Shepherd, "Evangelism," 65. In this reading, Shepherd anticipated some of the conclusions of the New Perspective.

18. Shepherd, "Evangelism," 66. In response to Sinclair Ferguson's critical review (see footnote 40 below) Shepherd conceded that it is improper to say that baptism is the "point of transition" from death to life. He revised his language to say, "Baptism marks the point of transition from death to life." It is notable that even after revising his language, he did not relate his view of baptism to the definition of faith "receiving and resting" as the sole instrument of justification. For those who believe, baptism may be said retrospectively, to have marked a transition. That is in the nature of sacramental language, but Shepherd made no such distinction in 1977 and continues to neglect it. See Norman Shepherd, "More on Covenant Evangelism," *The Banner of Truth* (November 1977) 25; idem, *The Call of Grace: How the Covenant Illumines Salvation and Evangelism* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2000) 100–101.

one essay,¹⁹ he affirms an unconditional, eternal predestination, but he reacts to that view of election which denies assurance to all but the few who have had a sort of second blessing. His response to that abuse of the doctrine of election is to so objectify the covenant of grace and baptism with the result that baptism confers election and union with Christ.²⁰

Because all baptized persons are in the covenant of grace in the same way, Barach concludes that all baptized persons are, in an historical, temporary sense, elect.²¹ He says, "Each Israelite was grafted into God's people as an act of God's electing love" ("Covenant and Election," 26). This, he says, is the clear teaching of 1 Corinthians 1 and 1 Peter 2. He says repeatedly that the good news to the visible congregation is that they are all, "as members of the Church" individually elect (27). "Christ is the Elect One ... and in Him we have been chosen" (28).

What does this mean for baptism? Those, he says, who make the internal/external distinction have reduced baptism to a mere sprinkling. Every baptized person is "in Christ" (20–22). This, he claims, was Calvin's view, and the view of the confessions (23).

The whole church is in Christ. They have been baptized into Christ. They have clothed themselves with Christ (Gal. 3:27). Paul wants them to know that all of these blessings he is praising God for are theirs in Christ.

19. John Barach, "Covenant and Election," in *The Federal Vision*; idem, "Covenant and Election," in *The Auburn Avenue Theology*.

20. Barach, "Covenant and Election," in *The Federal Vision*, 19. Barach's use of an aberrant view creates a straw man which he then uses as a ground to propose radical revisions to Reformed theology. This discussion would be advanced if Barach would interact with the views of widely received, influential, and magisterial Reformed theologians from the Reformed tradition such as those discussed in this essay.

21. Barach, "Covenant and Election," in *The Federal Vision*, 25. He argues from Deuteronomy 6, that all the Israelites were historically elect.

22. Barach, "Covenant and Election," in *The Federal Vision*, 33. One also finds these same views in essays by Rich Lusk and Steve Wilkins. See Rich Lusk, "Paedobaptism and Baptismal Efficacy: Historic Trends and Current Controversies," in *The Federal Vision*, 71–97. See also Rich Lusk, *Faith, Baptism, and Justification* (January 2, 2006 [cited]); available from http://www.hornes.org/theologia/content/rich_lusk/faith_baptism_and_justification.htm. Rich Lusk, "New Life and Apostasy: Hebrews 6:4–8 as Test Case," in *The Federal Vision*, 271–290. Steve Wilkins says, "Those who ultimately prove to be reprobate may be in covenant with God. They may enjoy for a season the blessings of the covenant, including the forgiveness of sins, adoption, possession of the kingdom, sanctification, etc., and yet apostatize and fall short of the grace of God." Steve Wilkins, "Covenant, Baptism and Salvation," in *The Federal Vision*, 62.

There is nothing missing in Christ Jesus. Everything you need is found in Him and *you* are in Him. That's the good news Paul wants the Ephesians to know (29).

The ground for his conclusion is that the Apostles called their congregations "elect." Like Shepherd, Barach rejects the traditional Reformed notion of a "judgment of charity," preferring to think of every baptized person as elect (30–31).

He says that he wants to speak to the congregation unequivocally, as the apostles did. The promises of baptism are real, which means that by baptism, every baptized person is elect, united to Christ and has the benefits of Christ. Just as the baptized are covenantally but genuinely elect, apostasy is just as real.

His distinction, however, between the historical, temporary benefits of Christ and eternal election is not absolute. In baptism, he says, the promise is that "God chose you to be in His covenant, to have that bond with him in Christ. That choice, worked in history when you were baptized, is grounded in God's eternal predestination" (36). In baptism one is not only "engrafted into the church" but also "joined to Christ, the Elect One." Those baptized who turn out to be reprobates, were "joined covenantally to Christ, the chief Cornerstone" (37). God began to work in them to will and to do, but he did not continue to work in them so they did not persevere. So, in the end, apostasy is not falling from temporary benefits, but falling from actual, eternal election.

Barach does not attempt to square these two positions but rather says that the relations between the facts of election, the baptismal, covenantal union with Christ, and apostasy are mysterious.²² As this brief survey suggests, there are areas of tension if not incoherence in the Federal Vision doctrine of baptismal benefits, and it is far from clear that their doctrine of baptismal benefits is congruent with or faithful to the confessions they subscribe.

METHOD

In the balance of this article, I will survey briefly the way the church has approached the relations between the substance of the covenant of grace and its administration. Second, I will pay close attention to four Biblical texts that are central to this discussion. Third, from those texts I will draw some theological conclusions. Fourth, I will respond to some of the claims by the Federal Vision theology regarding baptism and, fifth, I will make some observations about the practical implications of this doctrine.

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

Augustine (350–434): Sacrament and Efficacy

In his debate with the Donatist schismatics (ca. 400), Augustine remarked that “the reason why the blessed Cyprian and other eminent Christians ... decided that Christ’s baptism could not exist among heretics or schismatics was that they failed to distinguish between the sacrament and efficacy or working out of a sacrament” (*De baptismo*, 6.1).²³

He tended to speak of baptism as the laver of regeneration, which became the traditional language of the church, and he did suggest that baptism regenerates the baptized. He also taught that it is the Holy Spirit who gives us new life and that may happen apart from baptism and that it is by faith that we have the remission of sins. “[B]aptism,” he said, “is one thing” and “the conversion of the heart is another.”²⁴ Nevertheless, there were unresolved tensions in Augustine’s theology of baptism. The medieval church resolved those tensions by capitalizing and enlarging on his idea of baptismal regeneration.

The Medieval Views: Ex Opere Operato

According to Peter Lombard (c.1100–1160) baptism initiates the process of eventual, progressive justification by graciously renewing the baptized person.²⁵ For the Lombard, we are as justified as we are sanctified and we are as sanctified as we cooperate with grace.

According to Thomas Aquinas (c.1224)–1274) at baptism all sins are washed away. He appealed to Ezekiel 36:25, “I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness.”²⁶ He also argued from Romans 6:3, that:

Hence it is clear that by Baptism man dies unto the oldness of sin, and begins to live unto the newness of grace. But every sin belongs to the primitive oldness. Consequently every sin is taken away by Baptism (3a, 69.1).

In the next article he continued: “by Baptism a man is incorporated in the Passion and death of Christ, according to Rm. 6:8 ...” (3a, 69.2).

The mainline of medieval theology taught that in the act of baptism, the baptized person is forgiven all sins, dies to sin, is regenerated, and is united to Christ and thus begins the journey to justification. Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas would agree with the Federal Vision, that the Spirit works necessarily through baptism

to unite the baptized person to Christ because baptism necessarily confers what it signifies and these benefits are retained by grace and cooperation with grace. This was the doctrine of baptismal benefits promulgated in Session 7 of the Council of Trent (1547) and remains the magisterial doctrine of the Roman church.

Luther: Baptism as Gospel

For Luther, baptism is the gospel made visible and the Christian life is a baptized life.²⁷ Both the *Small Catechism* (1529) and the *Augsburg Confession* (1530) teach that baptism “gives” the “forgiveness of sins.”²⁸ Paul Althaus says that Luther’s “doctrine of baptism is basically nothing else than his doctrine of justification in concrete form” (Althaus, 356).

For our purposes here, however, it is important to realize that, for Luther, the Spirit is so embedded in the sacrament that it must accomplish in the baptized what it signifies. This view created significant tensions in Lutheran theology between Luther’s doctrine of predestination, the basic commitment to justification *sola fide* and the recognition that baptized people apostatize. To resolve this tension, confessional Lutheranism concluded that though election is unconditional, it and what is given in baptism can be lost if we resist grace.²⁹

Calvin: Baptism as Covenant Sign and Seal

John Calvin (1509–1559) was unambiguous about the

23. Henry Bettenson, ed., *The Later Christian Fathers. A Selection from the Writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) 241.

24. *De Baptismo*, 4.31, 32; Sermon 71.19 in Bettenson, *The Later Christian Fathers*, 142–143.

25. Peter Lombard, *Magistri Petri Lombardi Parisiensis Episcopi Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, 3rd edn, 2 vols, *Spicilegium Bonaventurianum* (Rome: Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1971–1981) 4 ds. 2–3, d. 4 cs. 5–7, d. 5 (esp. c. 3). I am grateful to Brannan Ellis for pointing me to these references.

26. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. Thomas Gilby, 60 vols. (London and New York: Blackfriars, 1963) 3a, 69.1.

27. Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966) 355–374.

28. Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord. The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000) 43, 183–184, 319–120, 359–60, 438.

29. E.g., Kolb and Wengert, *Book of Concord*, 579–580. There is some irony here since some of the language of the Federal Vision writers regarding baptism sounds remarkably like that of our Lutheran cousins—while they accuse Reformed confessionalists of a “Lutheran” dichotomy between law and gospel in justification. See P. Andrew Sandlin, “Lutheranized Calvinism: Gospel or Law, or Gospel and Law,” *Reformation & Revival* 11 (2002) 123–35.

benefits of baptism. In the first edition (1536) of his *Institutio* he explicitly rejected the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and he was consistent on this point until his death.³⁰ In places where he might have taught baptismal regeneration, e.g., in his lectures on John 3:5, he explicitly rejected it.³¹ Baptismal regeneration does not appear in the *Genevan Confession* or in the *Genevan Catechism* (1545).³² Calvin taught throughout his ministry that the sacraments are signs and seals which the Spirit uses to confer comfort and assurance, not election, union with Christ, or regeneration. He defined baptism this way:

Baptism is the sign of the initiation by which we are received into the society of the church, in order that, engrafted in Christ, we may be reckoned among God's children.³³

Notice that he begins with the language of signification and relations to the "*societas Christi*." For Calvin, baptism is most closely connected to our being "inserted into Christ" (*Christo insiti*), but neither baptism nor the Spirit working through baptism are said to create this union. In the first instance, Calvin considered the external effect of baptism. It has been given (*datus est*) that we might be "counted" (*censeamur*) among God's people. It serves our faith but also acts as a confession before men (OS, 5.285.14–16).

Fundamentally, baptism is to strengthen our faith, not replace it. It is more than a mere token (*tessera*) or mark (*nota*) of our Christian profession. It is also a "*symbolum*" and "*documentum*" and a "diplomatic seal" to those who believe, that what baptism promises is actually true of them (OS, 5.285.20–21).

30. G. Baum, E. Cunitz, and E. Reuss, eds., *Ioannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, 59 vols., *Corpus Reformatorum* (Brunsvigae: C. A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1863–1897) 29.110–118. Hereafter designated as CO.

31. Helmut Feld, ed., *In Evangelium Secundum Johannem Commentarius*, 2 vols., *Ioannis Calvini Opera Omnia Series II: Ioannis Calvini Opera Exegetica* (Geneva: Droz, 1997) 1.87–89.

32. CO, 12.91, 105; H. A. Niemeyer, *Collectio Confessionum in Ecclesiis Reformatis Publicatarum* (Leipzig: Julius Klinkhardt, 1840) 163–164.

33. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols., *Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960) 4.15.1. See also Ioannis Calvini, *Opera Selecta*, ed. P. Barth and G. Niesel, 5 vols. (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1962) 5.285.12–13. Hereafter designated as OS.

34. T. H. L. Parker, ed., *Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli Ad Romanos*, *Ioannis Calvini Opera Omnia, Series II: Ioannis Calvini Opera Exegetica* (Geneva: Droz, 1999) 119.24–25, 28–29. "Nam suo more Paulus, quia ad fideles est sermo, substantiam et effectum externo signo coniungit."

Calvin addressed the very point at issue here, i.e., whether baptism unites the baptized person to Christ, and with that union, justification etc. He wrote:

Lastly, our faith receives from baptism the advantage of its sure testimony to us that we are not only engrafted into the death and life of Christ, but so united to Christ himself that we become sharers in all his blessings. For he dedicated and sanctified baptism in his own body in order that he might have it in common with us as the firmest bond of the union and fellowship which he has deigned to form with us (*Institutes* 4.15.5; OS, 5.288.21–22).

Notice that, for Calvin, baptism is not said to effect union with Christ, but to serve as a testimony of our union. Baptism says that the believer *is* united to Christ, not that it effected that union. "It shows (*ostendit*) our mortification in Christ and our new life in him." Calvin goes on to say that "through baptism Christ has made (*fecerit*) us sharers (*participes*) in his death, that we may be engrafted in it" (OS, 5.288.29–30).

The question is not whether we have been baptized into Christ's death, or whether "through baptism Christ makes us sharers in his death," but what Calvin meant by that language. He elaborated by appealing to organic metaphors (twigs and roots). Those baptized persons with "right faith" (*fide vere*) ought to experience the efficacy of union with Christ's death and resurrection (OS, 2.88.31–32). Baptized persons ought to believe and thus receive what baptism signifies and seals to believers.

Calvin's doctrine of baptism must be interpreted in the light of his doctrine of justification *sola gratia, sola fide*, about which he was unambiguous. It must also be interpreted in the context of his use of the internal/external distinction. Thus, for Calvin, faith and baptism have quite distinct functions. Faith receives righteousness and union with Christ, whereas baptism signifies and seals that union. This seems clear from his lecture on Romans 6:4 where he recognized that Paul was speaking of those who believe, and in with that assumption "joins the substance and the effect with the external sign." Nevertheless, what the Lord offers in the visible symbol "is ratified" (*ratum est*) by faith. Whenever the dominical institution and faith are united, the sacrament is not "*nuda inanique*."³⁴

In contrast to Calvin's view, the Federal Vision does not locate their doctrine of baptism in an unambiguous doctrine of justification, and Calvin distinguished more clearly between the "*res*" and the "*res significata*" than the Federal Vision writers do, because he con-

sidered baptism in the light of his distinction between those who have the substance of the covenant of grace and those who only participate in the covenant of grace externally.

Calvin understood that, in this life, though we do not know who are elect, we must recognize that there are two classes of people in the congregation. For this very reason, rather than speaking of an historic, conditional, temporary set of benefits conferred by baptism, Calvin used the doctrine of election to explain why the visible church has two kinds of people within it. "Therefore the secret election and inner vocation of God is to be considered."³⁵ In the visible church there are always "many hypocrites mixed in, who have nothing of Christ except the title and appearance."³⁶ Calvin quite intentionally and clearly distinguished between the "*signum*" of the sacrament and its "*veritas*." He did so because one receives from baptism only as much as one receives in faith (OS, 5.296.9–11). Thus, he counseled the very "judgment of charity," which the Federal Vision rejects as condescending and superfluous (*Institutes*, 4.1.9).

Confessions

After Calvin's death, the Reformed Churches continued to make and elaborate on the same distinctions Calvin used. In Q. 20 the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563) asks, "Are all men, then, saved by Christ as they have perished in Adam?" The answer is, "No, only those who by true faith are ingrafted (*einverleibt*) into Him and receive all His benefits" (Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.313). Does baptism "ingraft" the baptized into Christ? Not according to the next question which defines true faith as:

"a certain knowledge and hearty trust ... which the Holy Spirit works in me by the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits (3.313).

Note well that the Heidelberg says that it is the Holy Spirit who works faith in the elect through the preached gospel, not the sacrament of baptism. Question 65 clarifies how we are united to Christ:

Since, then, we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, where does this faith come from?

The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the Holy Gospel, and confirms it by the use of the holy sacraments (3.328).

This doctrine of Spirit-wrought faith as the sole instrument of justification and union with Christ would seem to be impossible to reconcile with the Federal Vision doctrine of the baptismal benefits. According to Question 66, the function of the sacraments is not the creation of union with Christ, but the confirmation of union received through faith.

The sacraments are visible, holy signs and seals appointed by God for this end, that by their use He may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the Gospel, namely, that of free grace He grants us the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross (3.328).

The Westminster Standards teach precisely the same doctrine as the Heidelberger on baptism and union. *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647) 27.2 says:

There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified: whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.³⁷

We confess a "sacramental union" precisely to avoid conflating the sacrament with the thing signified. In sacramental speech, the sacrament can stand for the thing signified, as in Gen 17, where God calls circumcision "my covenant," but the Confession understands such speech as "sacramental" language not a literal identity. Thus WCF 28.1 calls baptism a

sacrament of the New Testament, ordained ... not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church; but also, to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.

35. OS, 5.3.14–15. "Ita et arcana electio Dei et interior vocatio spectanda est."

36. OS, 5.12.19–20. "In hac autem plurimi sunt permixti hypocritae, qui nihil Christi habent praeter titulum et speciem."

37. S. W. Carruthers, *The Westminster Confession of Faith: Being an Account of the Preparation and Printing of Its Seven Leading Editions, to Which Is Appended a Critical Text of the Confession* (Manchester: R. Aikman & Son, 1937) 145.

The *Westminster Confession* does not say that baptism effects our ingrafting into Christ, regeneration, remission of sins etc., but rather teaches that the sacrament is a sign and seal of the reality received through faith “receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness” (11.2, Carruthers, 113).

The confessional theology of baptism must be read in the context of the confessional internal/external distinction and in the context of the confessional distinction between the visible and invisible church. These distinctions are affirmed either explicitly or implicitly in all our confessional documents. For example, in *Belgic Confession*, Art. 29, we confess that there is a “company of hypocrites (*compagnie des hypocrites*), who are mixed in the Church with the good, yet are not of the Church, though externally in it (*soient présents quant au corps*) ...” (3.419).

Heidelberg Catechism questions 54 and 55 make a distinction between the Holy Catholic church, which it treats as the church invisibly considered, and the “communion of saints” which it treats as the church visible. It also speaks explicitly (Q. 81, *Creeds*, 3.336) about the presence of baptized members whom it calls hypocrites (*Heuchler*).

The *Westminster Confession* (25.1, 2) affirms explicitly and unequivocally the existence of the “catholic or universal Church which is invisible, consists of the whole

number of the elect ...” (Carruthers, 139). The answer to *Westminster Larger Catechism* Q.31 implies a distinction between those who are in the invisible church and those who are only in the visible church, when it says that the “Covenant of Grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the Elect as his seed.”³⁸

The church is also considered as the “visible church,” which is “also catholic or universal” and “consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion ... out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.” Read in their context, the Reformed confessional language concerning baptismal efficacy takes on a quite different tone and sense from that found in the *Federal Vision* writers.

Reformed Orthodoxy

One of the reasons the *Federal Vision* writers feel the liberty to reject or revise accepted Reformed terms, distinctions, and categories, is because they seem unaware of the Reformed tradition before the 20th century and unaware of modern scholarship that has reversed decades of prejudice against Reformed orthodoxy or scholasticism.³⁹ Recent scholarship, however, has shown that the older assumption of discontinuity between Calvin and the orthodox is untenable.⁴⁰

The Reformed orthodox made frequent use of the internal/external distinction found in Calvin and in the confessions. Olevianus explained that we are called “Christians ... because we believe in Christ and are baptized into his name. This faith in Christ is the anointing that we have received from Christ and that remains ours for ever.”

He knew nothing of a temporary or conditional or historical election or union with Christ and certainly knew nothing of a union with Christ wrought through baptism. For Caspar Olevianus, we are justified “through faith” and baptism is the “testimony” that, as believers, we are members of Christ.⁴¹ According to Olevianus, “... the Holy Spirit is that bond of the union by which Christ abides in us and we in him.” It is only by the work of the Spirit “who incorporates us into Christ ... that we can share in Christ and all his benefits...”⁴²

In the early 17th century, a few years before the Synod of Dort, Johannes Wollebius (1586–1629) wrote that “The purpose of baptism, besides others that it has in common with the holy supper, is the confirmation both of one’s reception, or ingrafting into the family of God, and his regeneration.”⁴³

William Ames, who was an important influence on

38. Assembly of Divines, *The Humble Advice of the Assembly of Divines, Now by the Authority of Parliament Sitting at Westminster Concerning a Larger Catechisme* (London: 1648) 9. This language would seem to be irreconcilable with the *Federal Vision* doctrine of baptismal benefits. If the covenant of grace, considered narrowly, is only with the elect then those who are not included in that covenant cannot be in union with Christ.

39. For an introduction to this scholarship see Carl R. Trueman and R. Scott Clark, eds., *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999). See also Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition*, *Oxford Studies in Historical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Willem J. Van Asselt and Eef Dekker, eds., *Reformation and Scholasticism, Text and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001); Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ca. 1520 to Ca. 1725*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003).

40. In a review published in *The Banner of Truth* (July–August [1977] 61), Sinclair Ferguson criticized Norman Shepherd for making just this historical error.

41. Caspar Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation. An Aid to Interpreting the Heidelberg Catechism*, ed. Richard A. Muller, trans. Lyle D. Bierma, *Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995) 45.

42. Olevianus, *Firm Foundation*, 92.

43. Johannes Wollebius, *Christianae Theologiae Compendium*, ed. E. Bizer (Neukirchen: Kreis Moers, 1935) 1.23.13.

the Synod of Dort, a bridge between British Puritanism and Dutch Reformed orthodoxy, and a seminal Reformed theologian in the Netherlands, said that “the special application of God’s favor and grace which arises from true faith is very much confirmed and furthered by the sacraments.” The “sacramental signs do not include the spiritual thing to which they refer in any physically inherent or adherent sense for then the signs and the things signified would be the same.”⁴⁴ He continued, “Those who partake of the signs do not necessarily partake of the spiritual thing itself...”⁴⁵

Archbishop Usher, who was a significant influence leading up to the Westminster Assembly, never spoke of union with Christ relative to baptism. Rather he called union with Christ the fruit of justification and faith alone is the instrument of justification. The Holy Spirit working through the preached Word is the agent of union, not baptism.⁴⁶

There was a consistent pattern in Reformed orthodoxy. When Reformed theology thought of “union with Christ,” it thought of the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, who regenerates, who gives faith, and who, through faith, unites the believer to Christ. Baptism is a sign and seal of this union, but it neither creates it nor does God necessarily create this union through baptism.

EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY

Genesis 17

In the history of salvation God’s covenant with Abraham was the paradigm for his saving work and word. It was to this covenant that the apostle Peter appealed in his sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2:39) and by which Stephen defended himself before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:2–8, 17). The apostle Paul appealed to this covenant in his synagogue sermon in Antioch (Acts 13:32), in his defense before Agrippa (Acts 26:6), in his epistle to the Romans, and in his argument with the Judaizers (Rom. 4; Gal. 3:13–29, 4:22–31). In the history of covenant theology the Reformed have always regarded this passage as foundational for our understanding of the covenant of grace.

In Genesis 17, Yahweh comes to Abram and enters into a covenant with him requiring that (v. 10) every male shall be circumcised. Verses 12 and 13 add that every male in the household must be circumcised. This is Yahweh’s “covenant in your flesh.”

It is clear that, as part of the administration of the covenant made with Abraham, both infant and adult

males other than Abraham were to be circumcised, including slaves. The Federal Vision writers assume correctly a close connection between baptism and circumcision as roughly equivalent sacraments. Like baptism, circumcision was a sign of initiation and every male in Abraham’s house was eligible because, for purposes of covenant administration, they were regarded as subsidiaries of the covenant head. They were recipients of the promises of the covenant of grace just as the infants were and so were included in the initiation rite.

If, however, their view, that baptism confers the benefits of Christ to every recipient, is correct, then we should conclude that every member of Abraham’s household also received Christ’s benefits by virtue of circumcision. Yet nothing in the narrative suggests that this was the case. Indeed, in v. 23, the first person, other than Abraham, mentioned as being initiated into the Abrahamic covenant was Hagar’s son Ishmael (Gen. 16:5) whom Paul uses (in Gal. 4) as the prototypical reprobate in contrast to Isaac.

Romans 4:9–11

In Romans 4:9–11 Paul explains the meaning of Abraham’s covenant initiation. Abraham’s “faith was reckoned” to him “as righteousness...” “He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.” Paul did not interpret Abraham’s circumcision as having conferred all Christ’s benefits to be retained by “faithfulness.” For Paul, Abraham’s circumcision served as the sort of guarantee described above.

Paul’s interpretation of Abraham’s circumcision, and its corollary, the inward/outward distinction served as the basis for the distinction made by Olevianus and the rest of the Reformed tradition between the *substance* of the divine promise, “I will be your God and a God to

44. William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. John Dykstra Eusden (Durham, N.C.: Labyrinth, 1983) 197.

45. Ames, 198. Ames’ doctrine of baptismal benefits was identical to that of the “conforming spiritual brotherhood” including William Perkins, Richard Sibbes, and John Preston. See E. Brooks Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England 1570–1720* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974) 38–51. Holifield also describes the 17th century controversy surrounding the “sacramentalism,” of Samuel Ward and Cornelius Burgess, which in certain respects, seems to have been resuscitated by the Federal Vision. See Holifield, 78–87. The mainline of British confessional Calvinism rejected their doctrines of baptismal benefits.

46. James Usher, *A Bodie of Divinitie or the Summe and Substance of Christian Religion* (London: 1653) 190–191.

your children” and the *administration* of that promise through circumcision and baptism.

Shepherd’s claim that the adverbs *φανερῶ* and *κρυπτῶ* refer to “covenantally loyal Jews and disobedient transgressors” assumes a false definition of faith in the act of justification.⁴⁷ Abraham the believer is the prototypical “inward” Jew. His circumcision signified and sealed what God the Spirit had already accomplished in him through the divine promise. Paul does not say that Abraham was justified because he was faithful (*πιστός*), but because he believed (*ἐπίστευσεν*) the promise.⁴⁸ The contrast here is not between “covenantally loyal” and disloyal Jews, but between belief and unbelief, behind which lies eternal election. In this passage, circumcision and baptism serve as external signs and seals of promise of the covenant made with Abraham. It does not confer Christ’s benefits, but it does promise and confirm them to those who believe.

Romans 6:1–5

The Federal Vision advocates appeal to Romans 6 as perhaps the chief proof of their doctrine that baptism unites us to Christ. There are some modern scholars who have read this passage in a way that might seem to support their view, or in ways that might lead to this understanding;⁴⁹ but, as we saw, that was not Calvin’s interpretation nor has it been the historic Reformed understanding of the passage.⁵⁰

There are compelling reasons that arise from a close consideration of the passage itself, which pushed the Reformed away from the view that the act of baptism unites the baptized to Christ, the first of which is the context of the passage. The issue in Romans 6 was the motive for and necessity of sanctity. The question before Paul was this: Is it the case that, having been justified *sola gratia, sola fide*, we may sin with impunity? Paul picks up the theme of 5:20. Given the “hyper-abundance” of grace, does it follow that we should sin so that

there might be even more grace? Paul’s answer was unequivocal: “It ought never to be.” We cannot “live in sin,” because “we died to sin” (v. 2). So, read in context, Paul’s interest in not to argue that baptism confers Christ’s benefits, but rather to appeal to it as an illustration of the union (and concomitant benefits) that already exists by faith. We who believe, who are united to Christ by the work of the Spirit, who were baptized, “were baptized into his death....” We were not only baptized into his death and burial, by baptism we are also identified with his resurrection and thus ought to live as those who have been united to Christ’s resurrection.

Several observations are in order. First, as closely as Paul relates the sign to the thing signified in this passage, he nowhere says that baptism unites the baptized to Christ. The function of Paul’s appeal to baptism is not to teach that baptism does anything per se. Rather, he appeals to baptism as an illustration, or a sign of what was already true of them. He uses sacramental language, using the *signum* for the *res significata*. On their hermeneutic, the Federal Vision interpretation does not go far enough. If baptism per se confers union with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, then these must be permanent and not provisional. For Paul, death, burial, and resurrection are not soteric events to be repeated either historically or in the life of the believer.

There is no question whether believers are united to Christ. There is no question whether those united to Christ have died with him. There is no question whether there are moral consequences of union with Christ. What is also clear is that Paul nowhere says either that baptism accomplishes or that the Spirit effects union with Christ through baptism.

Colossians 2:11–13

Here the apostle Paul speaks of our union with Christ and he connects it to both baptism and circumcision. This passage is primarily about our union with Christ. Circumcision and baptism serve as correlate illustrations of our union with Christ by faith.

In verse eleven Paul says “in him” (*ἐν ᾧ*) or “into whom also you were circumcised.” The point here is the nature and consequence of our union with Christ. That is what it means to say “in whom.” Paul was warning the Colossian congregation about the danger of any attempt to present one’s self before God on the basis of our obedience. This much is evident from Paul’s warning in v. 8 regarding “philosophy and empty deception” (*φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀγαπῆς*).

Paul’s answer to moralism is the incarnation of God

47. “Evangelism,” 65. Shepherd does not defend this interpretation or cite any of his exegetical influences. This line of interpretation, however, seems to have anticipated the reading of Paul offered by the New Perspective on Paul.

48. Paul does not use *πιστός* in Romans.

49. Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard de Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 59, 408–411.

50. E.g., see Olevianus, *De substantia*, 2.65, where he interprets Romans 6:3–6 as a “testimonium divinum adoptionis nostrae seu unionis cum Christo Dei Filio”... (*De substantia*, 2.65). See Caspar Olevianus, *In Epistolam D. Pauli Apostoli Ad Romanos Notae, Ex Concionibus G. Oleviani Excerptae*, ed. Theodore Beza (Geneva: 1579) 237–241.

the Son, whose righteousness is the ground of our standing before God, thus raising the question of the nature of our relation to Christ. The answer, in v. 10, is that “you have been filled in him” (ἐστὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πληρωμένοι). This is legal, relational (not realistic) language. In verse eleven he gives us an analogy that explains how we are filled with Christ. The “internal/external” distinction is also at work here. Again, “into whom” (ἐν ᾧ) you were circumcised (περιετμήθητε), not physically, but “with a hand-less circumcision” (περιτομή ἀχειροποιήτω). Whatever is in view, it is not the act of ritual initiation into the covenant of grace. This “hand-less” circumcision is further explained as that instrument “in the putting off of the body of the flesh” which, in Pauline theology, refers to the consequences of Spirit-wrought union with Christ. This circumcision is located, not in any sacrament administered to us, but in the act of Christ’s crucifixion, “in the circumcision of Christ.”

This argument makes perfect sense, given Paul’s “inward/outward” distinction. Without this distinction, Paul’s argument becomes incoherent. For Paul, both circumcision and baptism are a ritual death. They both point to Christ’s literal, physical death. We are said to have been crucified, buried, and raised with Christ only by virtue of our union with Christ, which for Paul, is realized by faith. This is made unmistakably clear in the last part of vs. 12 and in vs. 13 in the instrumental phrase “through faith” (διὰ τῆς πίστεως). Nowhere in this passage does the apostle Paul make either baptism or circumcision the subject of the verb “to unite” or baptism/circumcision the instrument of that union. For Paul, the Holy Spirit unites the elect to Christ through faith.

Romans 9

It is a given for the Federal Vision writers that covenant and election are, at best, only parallel categories. The Apostle Paul was not so reluctant to connect covenant and election and neither were our confessional theologians.⁵¹ Indeed, this passage would seem to be the antithesis to the Federal Vision’s doctrine of conditional, provisional, baptismal benefits.

First, in 9:6, Paul connects this discourse directly with 2:28–29 when he makes the very same distinction by saying that “not all those who are of Israel (πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι) are Israel.” Paul’s point is that in the administration of the covenant of grace, not all those who were visibly members of the covenant of grace, who were outwardly related to Abraham, were actually mem-

bers of the covenant of grace inwardly. They were outwardly Israel, but not spiritually Israel by election.

Paul’s proof of this distinction is that some believed and others did not. He is unequivocal that faith is the fruit of election and that faith is the sole instrument for taking possession of Christ’s benefits. Faith’s sole instrumental function is evident in the grammar of 9:30 where the Gentiles are said to have “appropriated” (κατέλαβεν) righteousness “through faith” (ἐκ πίστεως) not by observing the law (ἐξ ἔργων).⁵² He reinforces this point in 9:33 where he says that it is the one “believing” (πιστεύων) in Christ who shall not be put to shame.⁵³

In contrast to the Federal Vision theology, Paul’s doctrine of unconditional election is situated in and closely related to his doctrine of the administration of the covenant of grace. Throughout this passage, Paul uses election to explain the history of redemption and that to illustrate the nature of divine election. Thus, in v. 11, Paul is at pains to make clear that the divine election is unconditioned by anything except the divine will and nature. God’s purpose (πρόθεσις) regarding election (ἐκλογὴν) was not contingent upon anything foreseen in Jacob or Esau. Paul knows nothing of any sort of historically conditioned or contingent election. He views redemptive history as populated by two classes of people, those who are unconditionally elect and those who are reprobated. Verse 13 is categorical in its declaration that God hated (ἐμίσησα) Esau before the latter had opportunity to cooperate with the grace received in his circumcision. In that case, it would seem impossible to say that Esau (or anyone in his class) was ever united to Christ. Only in this case does the anticipated objection (vv.14, 19), “is there injustice with God?” and “Why does [God] blame us?” make sense. If the Federal Vision doctrine of baptismal union with Christ is true, then the apparent injustice is mitigated considerably, since in their theology, the reprobate are those who do not cooperate with the grace given in covenant initiation. Paul, however, offers no such qualification. He is so committed to unconditional, eternal election, that

51. Olevianus discussed these verses at considerable length in his commentary on Romans. He used the doctrine of election not as an abstract *à priori* but as an explanation of the *historia salutis*. He began his argument by considering the covenant promise made to Abraham. See Olevianus, *Ad Romanos*, 418–446.

52. For the same reason he says in Philippians 3:3 and 3:9 that it is those who have righteousness “through faith” (διὰ πίστεως), who are “worshiping God by the Spirit,” who are “boasting in Christ,” who are “the circumcision.”

53. This same doctrine and approach is found in Galatians 3:6–26.

in verses 15–18 he heightens the apparent injustice by appealing to the unconditioned divine will. Both Esau and Jacob were circumcised. Both were members of the covenant of grace, but only one was elect, only one had true faith, and only one was united to Christ. The difference between Jacob and Esau was not cooperation with grace, but eternal, unconditioned, divine election which manifests itself in true faith.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

As a representative of Reformed orthodoxy, Wollebius' account of the sacraments is particularly helpful in this discussion. He distinguished clearly between, on the one hand, the "internal and heavenly matter" i.e., "the thing signified (*res significata*) namely Christ with all his benefits" and on other hand, the "external form of the sacrament" which "consists of the legitimate administration and participation, according to the command of God" (Wollebius, *Compendium*, 1.22.12, 13). The relation between them is analogical (1.22.14).

The union between the sign and the thing signified, he wrote, is "not natural," and it is "not local" but relational (σχετική; or perhaps "accidental") insofar as the sign represents the thing signified, and by the sign exhibited the thing signified is given to the believer by Christ in the sign exhibited by the minister" (Wollebius, *Compendium*, 1.22.15). As Calvin had argued before him, Wollebius contended that, by distinguishing the sign and the thing signified, signs are not emptied of meaning or importance. They convey information (*significancia*), they exhibit/present grace, they are an application of grace, and they seal grace (1.22.16). The sign of the sacrament conveys the most important information, the gospel of Christ. Second, in the sacramental action, grace is exhibited. Third, to those who believe, the sacrament conveys the thing signified, that is the benefits of Christ, by the fourth the thing promised is sealed or confirmed (1.22.16).

In short, confessional Reformed theology thinks of the sacramental "sign" of baptism as something "rich,"

54. "Effecta sacramentorum non sunt iustificatio aut sanctificatio tanquam ex opere operato, sed utriusque beneficii confirmatio et obsignatio. Res manifestata est exemplo Abrahami, qui prius quam circumciscus esset iustificatus erat. Rom. 4.11. Falso igitur Pontificii asserunt sacramenta insita quasi vi ex opere operato remissionem peccatorum et similia beneficia conferre" (Wollebius, *Compendium*, 1.22.21). The very same arguments that Wollebius made contra the Pontificii could also be made against the Federal Vision doctrine that baptism confers the *beneficia Christi ex opere*.

55. "Quod verbo ordinarie fides excitetur, sacramentis confirmetur" (Wollebius, *Compendium*, 1.22.24).

not something empty or impoverished. At the same time, we have avoided confusing the sacrament with the thing signified. As Wollebius said:

The effects of the sacraments are not justification and sanctification *ex opere operato*, but the confirmation and sealing of both benefits. This was obvious from the example of Abraham who was justified before he was circumcised. The papists therefore teach falsely, that the sacraments confer remission of sin and similar benefits *ex opere operato*, by an inherent power.⁵⁴

Hence, he said, "Normally faith is aroused by the Word, confirmed by sacraments."⁵⁵

Initiation and Identification

Another aspect of signification is identification. It is particularly clear from Romans 6, Colossians 2, and 1 Corinthians 10:1–5 that, for Paul, covenant initiation is a ritual, public, identification with Christ. To be identified with him, is not, however, the same thing as being united with him. All the Israelites were "baptized" (into Moses), i.e., were identified with Christ and ate "the same Spiritual food" as we do. Nevertheless Paul goes on to say in v.5, "with most of them God was not pleased..."

For the phrase "baptized into Moses," substitute "united to Christ" and one can see how intense is the problem raised by the Federal Vision doctrine of baptismal benefits. The very point of Paul's argument in these verses is that it is possible to partake of the sacraments, to be ritually, externally identified with Christ and still fall under judgment. It is true faith that actually unites us to Christ, not the sacraments.

Ministerial Recognition

Covenant initiation is a ministerial not magisterial act. When a minister pronounces the declaration of pardon or commination, those words do not create justification or judgment; rather they recognize an existing state of affairs. In Scripture, covenant initiation never creates union with Christ, but rather recognizes that the candidate for baptism is properly the recipient of the sign and seal. Thus, the covenant child is properly the recipient of initiation because he or she is already a member of the covenant of grace and ritually sanctified (1 Cor. 7:14). The mature convert (e. g., Abraham) is baptized in recognition of his faith (Rom. 4:11). Thus, Wollebius said, "the minister's function is to

give the sign, but the function of Christ is to give the thing signified.”⁵⁶

Seal: Promise and Guarantee

In the Reformed confessions and orthodoxy, theologians have used “seal” in two senses in two different circumstances. To the baptized infant, who has not yet made a profession of faith, baptism is a promise that if and when he believes everything baptism signifies shall be true of him. When, however, in the second instance, the baptized person trusts Christ, the seal is not only a promise, but a guarantee that what baptism signifies and promises really is true of the believer.⁵⁷

It is in this latter sense that Paul uses the noun “seal” to describe circumcision in Romans 4:11. Abraham believed before he was circumcised. Circumcision did not give the benefits to Abraham, but it did guarantee to him that, by faith, he had them. It is as John Murray said, “The existence of the grace sealed is presupposed in the giving of the seal. The tenet of baptismal regeneration reverses the order inherent in the definition which scripture provides.”⁵⁸ By stipulating in this way what we mean by “seal,” whether we are speaking prospectively (promise) or retrospectively (guarantee), we keep faith in its pivotal place as the hinge of the sacraments and the instrument of union with Christ.

POLEMICS

The Internal/External Distinction

The Federal Vision approach to covenant, election, and baptism is confused about what the good news is. The gospel is not that one is historically, temporarily elect and shall remain so on the condition of sufficient faith and obedience. Rather, according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1–8, the good news is about Jesus’ obedience, death, resurrection. The good news is that whoever trusts in Christ is justified and saved (John 3:16).

The Federal Vision denial of the internal/external distinction and their doctrine of baptismal union with Christ necessarily conflate the substance of the covenant of grace with its administration.⁵⁹ The assumption that the biblical writers address the New Testament churches as “elect” because all baptized persons are elect is unnecessary. Calvin’s approach to the biblical language is superior. The Apostles’ addressed the congregations on the basis of their profession of faith, but they also distinguished those who participated only in the administration of the covenant of grace from those who received its substance.

The Federal Vision writers assume unnecessarily that unless one is united to Christ by baptism one is not actually a member of the covenant of grace. In fact, Esau, Ishmael, and Judas were all members of the covenant of grace. They were recipients of certain blessings attending such membership and subject to the curses of covenant breaking, but they were never elect, united to Christ or justified. They were external members. It is unbiblical and unconfessional to redefine membership in the covenant of grace to exclude such as members or to reject the two kinds of covenant membership.

Election, Apostasy, and the Gospel

The Federal Vision proponent, Steve Wilkins says:

To be in covenant is to have the treasures of God’s mercy and grace and the love which He has for His own Son given to you. But the covenant is not *unconditional*. It requires persevering faithfulness.... The covenant is dependent upon persevering faith.⁶⁰

This quite problematic view follows from the construal of the covenant of grace in terms of privilege wherein baptism becomes “the transition” from death to life so that the baptized now have the responsibility to be covenant keepers as Jesus was a covenant keeper, “even unto death.”⁶¹

Put plainly, their doctrine of the administration of the covenant of grace, despite their formal affirmation of eternal, unconditional election, tends to practical Arminianism. To test this claim, apply the language of the rejection of errors in the Fifth Head of Doctrine of the *Canons of Dort* to the Federal Vision doctrine of the

56. “Ibi enim non opponitur baptismus baptismis, sed comparatio instituitur inter partes ministri in baptismo administrando et Christi: illus enim est dare symbolum, huius vero dare rem signatum” (Wolleb, *Compendium*, 1.23.21).

57. E.g., see *Heidelberg Catechism* Q. 69.

58. John Murray, “Baptism,” in *Collected Writings*, 2.375.

59. It could also be argued that, by rejecting this distinction, the Federal Vision has made a Baptist mistake. Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed*, 91, notes that the Baptist John Tombes rejected this distinction in the interest of restricting baptism to the elect. Because neither of them can administer the sacrament as a purely external sign and seal, the full benefit of which is to be realized by faith alone, both the Baptist and the Federal Vision must, in different ways, make the recipients of baptism elect.

60. Wilkins, “Covenant, Baptism and Salvation,” in *The Federal Vision*, 64, 65.

61. Though Shepherd revised his language, the basic structure of “privilege” and “responsibility,” wherein “faith” is not the sole instrument of justification but primarily a responsibility entailed by baptism, remains.

temporary, conditional, benefits of Christ. In several instances, the doctrines rejected in the *Canons of Dort* are virtually identical to those proposed in the Federal Vision doctrine of baptismal benefits.

Neither Wilkins nor Shepherd makes any distinction between Jesus' obedience to the law for us and our obedience to the law out of gratitude for him. According to Shepherd, the gospel of the covenant of grace under Abraham and Christ is to "do righteousness and justice" (Shepherd, "Evangelism," 56). Here one feels the sting in the tail of their doctrine of baptismal benefits. For the Federal Vision, the Good News is not "whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life ..." or the announcement of the objective work of Christ *for us*, but rather: whoever is baptized, trusts, and obeys sufficiently to qualify his faith as "persevering faith" shall be saved.

According to Reformed theology, however, we are not the Savior but the saved, not the Christ, but Christians.⁶² Our obedience is not unto justification, but because of justification.⁶³ Christ obeyed *for us*. His obedience was vicarious. By ignoring this distinction, Shepherd and the Federal Vision writers have made the covenant of grace into a covenant works and this redefinition of the covenant of grace is at the heart of the present controversy.

The root error here is the confusion or rejection of the distinction between law and gospel.⁶⁴ By contrast, Scripture clearly contrasts the law, which demands "perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience" (*Westminster Larger Catechism*, Q. 20) and the gospel, which offers unconditional favor to sinners, and announces the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of Christ's "perfect obedience and full satisfaction" with no reference to "any thing wrought in" the sinner.⁶⁵

62. See *Heidelberg Catechism* QQ. 31 and 32 for a Reformed way of speaking about our relations to Christ.

63. Shepherd and his followers have consistently ignored the fact that the *Heidelberg Catechism* is in three parts: guilt, grace, and gratitude. The last flows from the second, but they are not the same.

64. See Clark, ed. *The Foolishness of the Gospel*, ch. 12.

65. *Westminster Larger Catechism* Q. 70.

66. E.g. Justin Martyr's *First Apology*, 61, 65. *Early Christian Fathers*, ed. Cyril C. Richardson, vol. 1, *The Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953) 283, 285. Lane, however, rejects this interpretation. See William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, vol. 47, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1991) 141.

67. This interpretation follows the trajectory of Calvin's interpretation, that God "sprinkles" (aspergat) the reprobate "with a taste of his grace" (guſtu gratiae suae). See *CO*, 33.72

68. Quite similar scenarios and analytical schemes are evident in Jude 11-12 and 1 John 2:19.

Further, Scripture abounds with examples of the "*compagnie des hypocrites*" who were in the covenant of grace, who really participated in its administration, but who were not "of" the covenant of grace. This claim is supported by the case of apostasy described in Hebrews chapters 4, 6, and 10. As Paul in 1 Corinthians 10, the writer to the Hebrews appeals to the experience of the old covenant believers. In 4:2 he says that we have been "evangelized" (εὐηγγελισμένοι) just as they were. Those who have believed (πιστεύσαντες) have already "entered into the rest." Clearly, however, there are members of the covenant who are in jeopardy of not entering into "the rest" (κατάπαυσιν).

The problem intensifies in 6:4-5. There are some (τοὺς) who have "been enlightened once" (ἀπαξ φωτισθέντες), which according to the early fathers referred to baptism,⁶⁶ and who have also "tasted the gift from heaven (γευσαμένους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἐπουρανίου), i.e., they have become participants (μετόχους) in the Holy Spirit by participating in the life of the church (and perhaps the Lord's Table). The difficulties attending to this passage are many and it is beyond the scope of this essay to address them in any detail. If, however, we read this passage in the light of the history of administration of the covenant of grace, and *analogia Scripturae*, in the light of 1 Corinthians 10, and if we read it in the light of the internal/external distinction, some of the difficulties are mitigated and the errors of the Federal Vision doctrine avoided.⁶⁷

Members of the covenant of grace are initiated, catechized, and ordinarily able to make a credible profession of faith. They participate in public worship and in the administration of the Lord's Supper. In receiving the ministry of Word (καλὸν γευσσάμενους θεοῦ ῥῆμα) and sacraments (δυνάμεις τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος), they participate in eschatological and spiritual gifts. Hebrews 10:26-29 makes it abundantly clear, however, that such participation, if not "mixed with faith" (Heb. 4:2; AV) brings great danger. If, having been initiated into the covenant of grace, one repudiates Christ (v. 29), and has "trampled underfoot the blood of the covenant" (καταπατήσας καὶ τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης) the jeopardy is immense. One can expect only "judgment and a fury of fire" (10:27; ESV). This language describes a genuine apostasy but not from election or union with Christ, but from the covenant of grace into which they had been admitted outwardly. Hence they are effectively placed under the curse due covenant breakers (10:31).⁶⁸

The traditional Reformed understanding of these passages is that they teach a distinction between

those who have Christ's benefits by faith alone and those who participate only in the administration of the covenant of grace. Those who participate only in the administration of the covenant of grace, do benefit from that participation but they do not receive the benefits of election, union, faith, and justification, etc.

Covenant and Election in the Canons of Dort

The first head of doctrine in the *Canons of Dort* (art. 17) says:

Since the will of God is to be judged from His Word to us, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but by the benefit (*beneficio*) of the covenant of grace, in which they with the parents are comprehended, godly parents ought not to doubt (*dubitare non debent*) concerning the election and salvation of their children (*de electione et salute suorum liberorum*) whom God is pleased to call out of this life in infancy.⁶⁹

John Barach has argued that, unless we are willing to say that covenant children who die in infancy become elect by virtue of their death, we must say that all baptized infants are elect by virtue of their baptism. If all infants are elect by virtue of their baptism, then all baptized persons are elect.

Neither this nor any other article in the *Canons* teaches, however, that all baptized infants are elect or that all baptized persons are elect. In effect, Barach uses this article as a lever against the internal/external distinction and as a way to create a confessional basis for the Federal Vision doctrine of provisional baptismal benefits.

It will repay us to pay close attention to the language of the article. Barach is correct to appeal to Deuteronomy 29:29 as part of the background of this article. The eternal decree is secret indeed, and we are to attend to the "revealed things." It is not revealed, however, that every baptized person, even every covenant infant, is united to Christ "head for head" in baptism nor does the article say this.

Ordinarily, churches make a judgment about whether a person is a believer on the basis of their profession of faith. In the death of a covenant infant we face an extraordinary case in that we must make a judgment about the state of a covenant child dying without a profession of faith.

We should not do, however, as Barach asks and make a judgment about those infants on the basis of their

baptism. That is not the basis on which the Synod of Dort asked us to analyze this problem. The article confesses that "the children of believers (*fidelium*) are holy ... by benefit of the covenant of grace." The background for this doctrine, of course, lies in 1 Corinthians 7:14. The children of covenant members are not holy merely because their parents are outward members of the covenant of grace, but because at least one of their parents believes. The basis for the judgment that some covenant children dying in infancy are elect is the parents' profession of faith, not the baptism of the child.

There is considerable evidence for this interpretation. The article speaks of the "benefit of the covenant of grace" (*beneficio foederis gratuiti*). The term *beneficium* was well established in Protestant theology before 1618.⁷⁰ It denotes the same elements of the *ordo salutis* discussed in this essay as "Christ's benefits." These benefits, however, are said to belong to *believing parents*. To them is extended the comfort of the covenant of grace that the promises of the covenant apply to their children as well as to them. The qualifier "believing" is essential to a right understanding of the article. The Federal Vision writers misunderstand this distinction because they conflate "profession of faith" with "believers." They are correct to insist that we deal with members on the basis of their credible profession of faith, but they are wrong to identify profession with true faith. This article does not say, "those who make a credible profession ought not doubt," but rather it says that "pious parents (*pii parentes*) ought not to doubt." Indeed, believers ought to trust the promise of God, "I will be your God and your children's God." There is no promise here, however, that the baptized children of all professing members are elect and neither is there an unequivocal promise that all covenant children dying in infancy are elect.⁷¹

Article 17 must be read in the light of Article 16, which teaches that this promise does not apply to reprobates within the covenant of grace. Article 16 defines the adjectives "believing" and "pious" used in Art. 17. Believing parents are those who have a "living faith in Christ

69. This English translation is modified from Schaff, *Creeds*, 3:585. The Latin text is found in *Creeds*, 3:556.

70. See Clark, *Caspar Olevian*; idem, "The Benefits of Christ: Double Justification in Protestant Theology Before the Westminster Assembly," Anthony T. Selvaaggio, ed., *The Faith Once Delivered: Celebrating the Legacy of Reformed Systematic Theology and the Westminster Assembly: Essays in Honor of Dr. Wayne Spear* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, forthcoming).

71. Hence there is no tension between *Westminster Confession* 10.3 when it says, "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated ..." and the *Canons of Dort* 1:17 on this point.

(*vivam in Christum fidem*) and “a sure confidence of the heart” (*certam cordis fiduciam*).⁷² This class of members is plainly distinguished from “reprobates” and it is to this class of members that the promise applies.

In his interpretation of article 17, Barach has assumed his denial of the internal/external distinction, confused profession of faith for true faith, ignored the crucial role of true faith as the sole instrument of justification and that which distinguishes those who have Christ’s benefits from those who have only the administration of the covenant, and he has read that denial into this article. By doing so, he has constructed a universal benefit to all children of all baptized members without reference to their faith. Nothing in the *Canons of Dort*, read in context, supports such a construction.

PRACTICA

The Federal Vision’s concern about the pietist inward turn is legitimate. To ask the question, “Am I elect?” and to seek to answer that question on the basis of sanctity or religious experience is a path to uncertainty and the spiritual turmoil it brings. By turning to baptism as the “transition” from death to life, to use Norman Shepherd’s language, the Federal Vision writers intend to give confidence to God’s people that they really are elect, really are united to Christ, etc.⁷³ The Federal Vision writers, however, respond to pietist subjectivism by making every baptized person “elect,” but only provisionally so. Steve Wilkins says:

To be in covenant is to have the treasures of God’s mercy and grace and the love which He has for His own Son given to you. But the covenant is not *unconditional*. It requires persevering faithfulness.... The covenant is dependent upon persevering faith (“Covenant, Baptism and Salvation,” 64, 65).

According to Wilkins, the good news is: “You are baptized and therefore elect, united to Christ, justified, etc.” The bad news is that these benefits are temporary, provisional, and conditional. What is conditional can be lost and must be kept by our obedience.

The practical problem created by the Federal Vision system is this: if every baptized person has Christ’s benefits by baptism and if any baptized person can lose

those benefits, then baptism becomes law rather than gospel. Such a system, like the medieval system, necessarily creates insecurity, uncertainty, and doubt. As the *Heidelberg Catechism* says, “the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of such obedience ...” (Schaff, *Creeds*, 3:349).

The proper response to unhealthy introspection is not to obliterate biblical, confessional, and dogmatic distinctions (e.g., internal/external membership in the covenant of grace); nor is the answer to redefine the benefits of Christ in temporal, conditional terms. The Reformed response is preach the law in its first use (e.g., *Heidelberg Catechism* questions 3–11, 13, 14) and to preach the gospel of Christ’s obedience, death, and resurrection, and to call everyone to true faith in the risen Savior. The answer to the crisis of assurance is to teach God’s people to ask the correct question: “do you have true faith as defined by *Heidelberg Catechism* Q. 21?” and to point them to the gospel promise as the source of their assurance.

It is true that every covenant has two sides. Confessional Reformed theology has always taught that the covenant of grace carries with it moral obligation, but to say the covenant must be “kept” in the way the Federal Vision writers do is to turn the covenant of grace into a covenant of works (Rom. 11:6). Our obedience to God’s law is not logically parallel to the grace of the covenant or a condition for retaining the benefits of the covenant, but rather a logically and morally necessary consequence of the unconditional grace of the covenant. Obedience to what Olevianus called “stipulations” of the covenant of grace flows naturally (Belgic Confession Art. 24) *from* justification not *to* justification (Clark, *Casper Olevian*, 190–209).

In distinction from the Federal Vision, the sacraments are to be administered with the understanding that there are two ways of being in the covenant of grace. One may be in the covenant of grace as Esau was (externally only) or the way Isaac was (externally and internally). We are to administer the covenant of grace according to divine command and promise. Both Esau and Isaac are proper recipients of covenant initiation but we understand that according to election not every baptized person will come to faith. We also know, however, that all God’s elect shall come to faith and realize the promises made to them in baptism. There is no ground in the promise of the covenant either for presumption that all baptized children are regenerate (or united to Christ) or for the presumption that covenant children are reprobates until they prove otherwise. We are to treat our children as baptized persons, to whom prom-

72. This verbiage links article 16 with *Heidelberg Catechism* Q. 21 which in the Latin text uses the expression “certa fiducia.” See Niemeyer, *Collectio Confessionum*, 434.

73. The evidence suggests that the Federal Vision writers are following the course set by Shepherd’s 1977 essay.

ises have been made. We should expect our covenant children to take up Christ's benefits for themselves, *sola fide*. We must catechize them faithfully and encourage them to make profession of faith and to come to the Lord's Table, and if they do not, they should face ecclesiastical discipline.

CONCLUSIONS

In the Reformed confessions, the Holy Spirit is said to operate through the preaching of the Gospel to regenerate the elect, to create faith in them, and to unite them to Christ. Baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace in which the benefits of union with and faith in Christ are illustrated to all and promised certainly to believers. By contrast, in the Federal vision doctrine, baptism is said to unite the baptized to Christ and bring them "head for head" into possession of Christ's benefits. The chief difference between the two views is the internal/external distinction.

The Federal Vision doctrine of baptismal benefits faces several insurmountable difficulties. First, either it teaches that there is both an eternal election and union with Christ and a temporary, conditional election and union with Christ, or it denies the former in favor of the latter. In either case, whether they propose to replace unconditional election or to supplement it with a temporary, conditional election, the Federal Vision doctrine of baptismal benefits is contrary to the Scripture as understood by the Reformed churches. Second, the Federal Vision doctrine of baptismal benefits is premised upon the elimination of the internal/external distinction. This move virtually requires them to conflate the substance of the covenant of grace with its administration.

The Apostle Paul warned the Colossian congregation about "plausible arguments" (πιθανολογία; Col. 2:4). Such arguments sound as if they could be true, but though some find them persuasive, they are actually false. This is exactly what we face in the Federal Vision doctrines of baptismal benefits. Because of this apparent plausibility and because the Federal Vision writers profess adherence to the Reformed confessions, some have argued that their views should be tolerated.⁷⁴ It is well to remember, however, that Jacob Arminius and his followers made the same assurances of confessional fidelity, and made the same pleas for toleration of their views under the confessional umbrella. Despite those assurances and pleas, the Synod of Dort found the Arminian doctrine substantially at variance with that of the *Heidelberg Catechism* and the *Belgic Confession*.

I contend that the errors we face in the Federal Vision theology require of us the same sort of ecclesiastical fortitude and will to defend the faith and the faithful evident in the Synod of Dort. Just as the Synod of Dort did not take the Arminian claims to confessional fidelity at face value, neither should confessional Reformed and Presbyterian churches today accept the promises of the Federal Vision writers that the Federal Vision is a confessional theology. Given the gravity of the issues before us (namely the doctrines of election, union with Christ, justification, and perseverance) and the abundance of evidence demonstrating contradictions between the confessional teaching and the Federal Vision doctrine, it is past time for confessional Reformed and Presbyterian churches to begin disciplining those pastors, elders, and teachers who teach the Federal Vision doctrine of baptismal benefits. ■

In Brief: Introduction to the *United States Christian Magazine* 1.1 (1796) 1–2.

When the man of sin, grown to his full stature, had notoriously usurped the seat of Jesus Christ, when the advocates of his imperious and abominable pretensions, deserting "the law and the testimony," taught "for doctrines the commandments of men," when in the church over which he presided, the glories of the gospel were obscured, most of its characteristic truths exploded, and all who were honest enough to profess, and hardy enough to assert them, persecuted with unrelenting malice, and unabating fury; when continuance in her communion was incompatible with a good conscience, and put eternal life in jeopardy; it pleased God to raise up champions of his cause, and eminently to qualify them for their arduous and honourable service. Largely endued with the spirit of faith and fortitude, they entered their solemn *protest* against the corruptions of the grand apostacy: they rescued saving truth from the unrighteous imprisonment to which, by ignorance and fraud, it had long been consigned, and wrestled Christian privilege from sacrilegious hands of ecclesiastical tyranny. Their principles concisely exhibited in the *Confessions* of the different Reformed churches, go by the name of THE DOCTRINES OF THE REFORMATION; i.e. those doctrines which are *common* to the Reformed churches. To the propagation of these doctrines many holy men of God devoted the labour of their lives, and sacrificed every earthly consideration: for these they "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods." These they attested with their expiring breath, and sealed with the blood of martyrdom. *These* doctrines the Editors of the *United States Christian Magazine* believe to be the doctrines of the Bible—"the faith of God's elect"—that "faith once delivered to the saints," for which they are commanded "earnestly to contend...." ■

74. E.g., Jeffrey Ventrella, "Sects in the City (of God)," in *The Backbone of the Bible*, 1–22, where he suggests that various cultural crises should trouble us more than intramural theological debates.

Severing the Dragon's Tail:

The Rejection of the Mass and the Adoption of the Reformed Practice of the Lord's Supper during the Scottish Reformation

By T. J. Phillips

The Protestant Reformation brought about a great many changes in the Church of Scotland. At the very least, it must be admitted that the concept of the church itself was revised in that nation. No longer was the church

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1. *The Scottish Confession of Faith*, 1560, Chapter 18 in Arthur C. Cochrane, ed., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966) 176–177. These marks of the true church were not unique to the Scottish Reformation. For example, Article 29 of the *Belgic Confession of Faith* likewise declares, “The marks by which the true Church is known are these: If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if it maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in chastening of sin.” See Cochrane, 210. In addition, at least the first two marks are affirmed in other confessions of the sixteenth century: e.g., the Tetrapolitan Confession (Chapter 15), the Geneva Confession of 1536 (Chapter 18), the 1556 Confession of the [English-speaking] Congregation at Geneva (Chapter 4), and the French Confession (Article 28). See Cochrane, 73, 125, 134–135, and 154.

2. Martin Luther, *The Schmalkald Articles*, trans. William R. Russell (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1995) 8. Citing Revelation 12:3 and 20:2, Luther writes, “Moreover, this dragon's tail, the mass, has produced many noxious pests and the excrement of numerous idolatries...”

3. George B. Burnet, *The Holy Communion in the Reformed Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1960) 1.

4. Alax C. Cheyne, “The Scots Confession of 1560,” *Theology Today* 17 (1960) 335.

5. Ted A. Campbell, *Christian Confessions* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996) 163. Campbell notes that Wycliffe and Hus “questioned the Catholic understanding of the church, arguing that the only true church is the church of God's elect, which is ‘invisible’ or hidden in this world. Both ... laid the background for the Protestant Reformers’ challenges to inherited views of the church, its ministry, and its sacraments.” Interestingly, this view seems to correspond with the Reformed understanding of the marks of the church discussed earlier. The rejection of the doctrine of transubstantiation was an integral part in shaping the understanding of the true church.

6. A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (New York: Schocken, 1964) 22.

a puppet of the papacy, receiving her marching orders from Rome. Instead, the true Head of the church was rightly viewed to be Christ Himself, and the marching orders for His saints came from His word, the Scriptures. The Scottish interpretation of the church was perhaps best defined as it appears in the Scots Confession of 1560, which states, “The notes of the true Kirk, therefore, we believe, confess, and avow to be: first, the true preaching of the Word of God...; secondly, the right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus...; and lastly, ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered, as God's word prescribes....”¹ Although all three of these marks were significant, it was perhaps the second of these that gave a clear, visual indication of the marked differences between Catholics and Protestants. In particular, the Roman Catholic Mass was determined to be so offensive that Martin Luther, using imagery from the book of Revelation, referred to it as the “dragon's tail.”² In Scotland, a major portion of the conflict surrounding the growing influence of Protestantism centered on the celebration of the Mass.³ In fact, opposition to the Mass was “one of the distinguishing marks of the Reforming attitude in Scotland.”⁴ The celebration of the Lord's Supper in the Scottish church during the sixteenth century was a reflection of the developments resulting from the rejection of Roman Catholic theology and the embrace of Reformed theology.

It would be a mistake to assume that objections to the Mass did not arise until the sixteenth century. Medieval reformers, John Wycliffe and John Hus in particular, challenged many of the errors of the Roman Catholic Church, including the doctrine of transubstantiation, the theological basis for the celebration of the Mass.⁵ Wycliffe considered transubstantiation to be “a historical novelty and ... philosophically unsound.”⁶ Brown observes that “Hus learned of Wyclif's [sic] criticism of transubstantiation; this became the basis of his own

teaching.”⁷ The doctrine of transubstantiation was formally defined at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 and rested upon Aristotelian, rather than Scriptural, foundations.⁸ The theory behind this doctrine affirmed “that the accidents [i.e., the outer appearance] of the bread and wine ... remain unchanged at the moment of consecration, while their substance [i.e., essential nature] changes from that of bread and wine to that of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.”⁹ The inevitable consequence of this interpretation of the sacrament was that Christ became a daily sacrifice upon the altar, a view that was denounced by Luther and others as idolatrous.¹⁰ In addition to the sacrificial nature of the Mass, the sacrament carried with it (in Roman Catholic theology) the notion that it actually infused grace into its recipients.¹¹ For Luther and the other Reformers, the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross was full, sufficient, and perfect, never to be repeated.¹² Thus, the rejection of the Mass became a visible representation of the rejection of Roman Catholic theology. In breaking with Rome on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, the Protestant Reformers were adopting a theology that not only led to a correct understanding of the sacraments, but one that led to a correct understanding of biblical soteriology as well.

Lutheranism found its way into Scotland primarily through the work of Patrick Hamilton.¹³ While Luther had rejected transubstantiation, he adopted a doctrine that stressed “Christ is truly, really, and especially present in his full nature in the bread and wine of the Eucharist” (Willimon, 64). For example, Luther comments that “the sacrament is the body and blood of the Lord under the bread and the wine...”¹⁴ This view is clearly expressed in the Augsburg Confession of 1530, which states, “It is taught among us that the true body and blood of Christ are *really present* in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received.”¹⁵ Luther rightly rejected the repeated sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ inherent in the Mass, but it is difficult to see any other great distinction between the Roman Catholic and Lutheran theories of the presence of Christ in the Supper. Although Luther heavily influenced Hamilton, it does not appear that Luther influenced Hamilton's view of the Lord's Supper.¹⁶ Prior to his martyrdom in 1528,

Hamilton was interrogated concerning his Lutheran beliefs, and while he vigorously denied several unbiblical Roman Catholic doctrines, this group does not appear

of transubstantiation is also rooted, to some degree, in the teachings of Paschasius Radbertus, a Frankish monk of the ninth century. In 831, Radbertus published a volume entitled *On the Body and Blood of the Lord*. Historically, the book is the first full treatment of the doctrine of the Eucharist; its distinctive is that it puts forth the idea of the corporeal presence of Christ at the Supper. See Brown, 229. Brown adds, “Where earlier Christians had stressed union with Christ by faith, and by it had meant faith *in him*, the newer view [of Radbertus] stressed a sacramental union. Faith was still required, but it was not so much the faith of the individual as the faith of the church, which presented Christ to the communicant.” Unless otherwise noted, all emphasis in quotations are in the original.

9. In response to Protestant criticism during the Reformation, the Council of Trent (1551) put forth the official position of the Roman Catholic church on this doctrine, stating that “our Lord Jesus Christ is truly, really and substantially contained in the venerable sacrament of the holy eucharist under the appearance of physical things.” See McGrath, 524. While some Roman Catholic theologians of recent times may have interpreted the doctrine behind the Mass in slightly different terms (e.g., a representation of the sacrifice of Christ rather than a repetition of His sacrifice), the decrees of Trent are still considered to be official and authoritative within Roman Catholicism. See Stewart Mechie, “The Principles of the Scottish Reformation,” *The Expository Times* 71 (1966) 357.

10. William H. Willimon, *Word, Water, Wine and Bread* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1980) 63. Cf. D.M. Murray, “Lord's Supper” in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron et al (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity, 1993) 496.

11. Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity, 1995) 275.

12. Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship That Is Reformed According to Scripture* (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1984) 127. Old writes, “Once the mass is regarded as a sacrifice the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice disappears.”

13. James Atkinson, “Reform” in *Introduction to the History of Christianity*, ed. Tim Dowley (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1995) 390. Similarly, Vos writes, “Soon after the dawn of the Reformation in Germany, the doctrines of Protestantism began to reach Scotland. Probably the first Protestant witness in Scotland was Patrick Hamilton, a youth of noble lineage who had visited Luther in Germany in 1526.” See Johannes G. Vos, *The Scottish Covenanters* (Board of Education and Publication of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, 1940; repr., Edinburgh: Blue Banner, 1998) 17.

14. Martin Luther, “Sermons on the Catechism, 1528” in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Anchor, 1962) 236. Brown comments, “In his effort to defend the real, bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament, Luther inclined dangerously to monophysitism, the doctrine that after the incarnation Christ possesses only one incarnate divine nature.” For a fuller discussion of the ramifications of Luther's view, see Brown, 317–320.

15. John H. Leith, ed., *The Augsburg Confession*, Article 10 in *Creeds of the Churches*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox Press, 1982) 71. Emphasis is added.

16. This is difficult, since it is difficult to find Hamilton's opinion on the subject. Hamilton was martyred as a young man, and his theology may not have been fully developed in this area. In fact, there is some indication that Hamilton's understanding of the doctrine of

7. Harold O.J. Brown, *Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1988) 298. According to Brown, “Hus wanted to restore the ancient eucharistic meal to its original importance and make Christians once again look on it as a wonderful privilege...” See Brown, 299.

8. Alistair E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) 524. It must be said that the doctrine

to have included the Mass.¹⁷ While it is certain that Hamilton rejected the Mass, his doctrine of the Lord's

justification may have been lacking. Torrance writes, "A developed account of the justifying activity of Christ ... is missing in Hamilton.... Hamilton ... concentrates on the 'passive obedience' of Christ only, with the result that his doctrine of justification looks like a merely forensic perpetual letting-off of sin, which his doctrine of redemption is closely reminiscent of the Roman idea of infusion of grace." See Iain R. Torrance, "Patrick Hamilton and John Knox: A Study in the Doctrine of Justification by Faith," *Archive for Reformation History* 65 (1974) 176–178. Whether this produced an "infusion of grace" view in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is unknown. In Hamilton's defense with regard to the active obedience of Christ, it should be noted that this doctrine was a distinctive of Calvin, which Torrance acknowledges (177–178, n. 10). Hamilton died in 1528, years prior to Calvin's conversion to Christianity.

17. James Edward McGoldrick, "Patrick Hamilton, Luther's Scottish Disciple," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 (Spring 1987) 86. McGoldrick writes, "During the interrogation to which he was subjected Hamilton decried the idolatrous use of images in the church, and he denied that the Virgin Mary and the saints are intercessors in heaven. He rejected the doctrine of purgatory, and he called the pope anti-Christ." Hamilton's view on the Mass is noticeably absent from this list.

18. James K. Cameron, "Aspects of the Lutheran Contribution to the Scottish Reformation 1528–1552," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 19 (May 1985) 12; McGoldrick, 87.

19. Cameron, 15. Gau's work, a translation from an anonymous Latin work attributed to Christiær Pedersen, was entitled *The Richt Vay to the Kingdom of Heuine is techit heir: in the x comandis of God, and in the creid, and Pater noster....* Johnson's work was *An Comfortable Exhortation of our mooste Holy Christen Faith and her Frutes written unto the Christen brethren in Scotland after the pure word of God*. See: *The richt vay ...* (Malmo : J. Hochstraten, 1533), formerly STC 11686; see Early English Books, 1475–1640, Reel 604:15. Facsimile Reprint: John Gau, *The richt vay* etc., ed. A.F. Mitchell (Edinburgh: Printed for the [Scottish Text] Society by W. Blackwood, 1888). John Johnson, *An Comfortable exhortation ...* (Parishe : Peter congeth, 1535). STC 14667. EEB, 55:9. According to EEB, STC records that this imprint is false and the publisher was actually also Hochstraten.

20. Cameron, 15–16. Gau's work describes the Lutheran doctrine of the church and mentions that the unity of the church is demonstrated in the sacrament, but does not go beyond this. According to Cameron, Johnson's work "has nothing to say concerning the doctrines of the Church, the ministry or the sacraments."

21. Cameron, 17. Richard Kyle maintains, however, that Scottish Protestants during this period were Lutheran in their view of the Real Presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Apparently, however, they did not hold strongly to this view, and this may be the reason that the doctrine does not seem to be significantly represented by the Scots of the era prior to George Wishart. See Richard G. Kyle, *The Mind of John Knox* (Lawrenceville, Kans.: Coronado Press, 1984) 169.

22. James S. McEwan, *The Faith of John Knox* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961) 55.

23. Alexander F. Mitchell, *The Scottish Reformation: Its Epochs, Episodes, Leaders and Distinctive Characteristics*, ed. D. Hay Fleming (Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons, 1899) 77.

24. *Zwingli's Sixty-seven Articles of 1523*, Art. 18, Cochrane, 38.

25. Keith A. Mathison, *Given for You: Reclaiming Calvin's Doctrine*

Supper, Lutheran or otherwise, does not appear to have been influential in Scotland.

The extent to which Lutheranism affected Scotland can be seen in the years following the death of Hamilton. Among other things, Hamilton's example encouraged others to embrace the "new" doctrines of the Reformation, and these men, in turn, helped to lay a Protestant foundation that would later help to shape the Reformation in Scotland.¹⁸ John Gau, for example, produced a translation of a Lutheran text in the Scottish vernacular, while John Johnson, probably an eyewitness to Hamilton's martyrdom, produced a work of Lutheran influence designed to comfort those undergoing persecution for their Protestant beliefs.¹⁹ It is notable that the works of these two men are nearly silent on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.²⁰ In fact, Cameron even comments that Lutheran works in Scotland during the period after Hamilton's death "seemed to minimize the sacraments."²¹ According to McEwan, "There is ... no evidence that an explicitly Lutheran Communion was ever celebrated in Scotland."²² Lutheran theology apparently did not have a direct effect upon the Scottish understanding of the Lord's Supper during this period, at least to the extent to which Luther understood the presence of Christ in the sacrament.

A second figure instrumental in bringing the Protestant Reformation to Scotland was George Wishart. Prior to his work for the gospel in Scotland, Wishart had spent time on the Continent, and his stay in Zurich almost certainly influenced him greatly, particularly his view concerning the celebration of the Lord's Supper.²³ This influence ran the risk of resisting a Lutheran celebration of the Lord's Supper, although in the opposite "extreme." The original leader of the Reformation in Zurich was Huldrych Zwingli, whose theology concerning the Lord's Supper was as decidedly different from that of Luther as it was opposed to that of Rome. Zwingli confesses, for instance, that the sacrament "is not a sacrifice but a recollection of the sacrifice and an assurance of the redemption which Christ has manifested to us."²⁴ One must be careful not to caricaturize Zwingli's view. He did reject the idea that the Lord's Supper is a means of grace, preferring to view the sacrament as "a sign of *past* grace, not of *present* grace."²⁵ For Zwingli, the sacrament was viewed as a memorial or "visual aid," although "he did affirm, to some degree, the presence of Christ at the Eucharist ... [and] he did say that Christ's spiritual nature could be present among the believers at the meal but not in any way *in* the meal" (Willimon, 68). Contra the Roman Catholic dependence upon Aristotelian assumptions concerning the Mass, Zwingli's view was, in

fact, Platonic in that he preferred to distinguish between the human and spiritual presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper.²⁶ However, in adopting a memorialist view, Zwingli did not deny the spiritual presence of Christ in the sacrament.²⁷ The blame for the non-spiritual view normally leveled at Zwingli more properly rests with the Anabaptist movement. Anabaptists in Switzerland carried the views of Zwingli to an extreme by interpreting the sacrament as a commemorative service that stressed the participants' communion with one another rather than communion with God (Kyle, 168. Cf. McEwan, 51). While one could say that Zwingli's theology of the Supper may be partly responsible for such a symbolic view, he may not, in fact, deserve as much blame for this view as he usually receives.²⁸

The Zwinglian influences upon Wishart, however, were secondary at best. Wishart would have probably been more influenced during his stay in Zurich by Henry Bullinger, Zwingli's successor. When Wishart returned to Scotland, he brought with him a copy of the first Helvetic (Swiss) Confession, and his translation of this document had a definite influence on Scottish thinking.²⁹ While the document can be said to be Zwinglian in essence, there is a particular emphasis "on the significance of the sacramental signs and the real spiritual presence of Christ, who gives his body and blood – that is, himself – to believers...."³⁰ The confession's articles on the sacraments were primarily the product of a collaboration by Bullinger and Martin Bucer and, as a result, actually reflected Lutheran tendencies (Schaff, 1.389). Consider for, example, the following statements from the Confession:

These sacraments are significant, holy signs of sublime, secret things. However, *they are not mere, empty signs*, but consist of the sign and the substance.... In the Lord's Supper the bread and wine are the signs, but the spiritual substance is the communion of the body and blood of Christ.... As these signs are bodily received, so these substantial invisible things are received in faith. Moreover, the entire power, efficacy and fruit of the sacrament lies in these spiritual and substantial things. Consequently we confess that the sacraments are not simply outward signs of Christian fellowship. On the contrary, we confess them to be signs of divine grace by which the ministers of the Church work with the Lord for the purpose and to the end which He Himself promises, offers, and efficaciously provides.³¹

The influence of all this upon Wishart cannot be overstated. He returned to Scotland in 1544 and

began preaching and administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the Reformed model he had learned on the Continent.³² According to Burnet, in 1545 Wishart led the first public celebration of the Lord's Supper in Scotland.³³ As a visible departure from the Mass, this marked the beginning of the proper observance of the sacrament in Scotland.

The man who helped to nurture the correct understanding of the Lord's Supper in Scotland was none other than the Scottish Reformer *par excellence* himself, John

of the Lord's Supper (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002) 63. Mathison comments that for Zwingli, "the Supper is a memorial, not a means."

26. George Yule, "Continental Patterns and the Reformation in England and Scotland," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 22 (Sept. 1969) 307. Yule notes that Zwingli's humanist background is at work here.

27. Yule; 307; cf. Kyle, 168. Yule writes, "Quite clearly Zwingli does not deny the spiritual presence of Christ. What he denies is the presence of Christ's humanity, so forcefully stressed by Calvin and Luther." Likewise, Kyle notes, "This position did not mean that Zwingli denied the spiritual presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Rather what Christ did in the past is spiritually present to the believer by faith." Stephens makes the very important point that in his later writings, "Zwingli makes it clear that there is no dispute about Christ's being present in the supper, only about whether he is present bodily and thus offered and eaten in it. He affirms that Christ is eaten spiritually and sacramentally." See W.P. Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) 252.

28. One historian, commenting on just one of the enormous contributions of the great Protestant peacemaker Martin Bucer, writes, "In 1528 a change took place in Bucer's attitude toward the whole subject [of the Eucharist]. He had always deprecated the strife; now he discovered that fundamentally Luther and Zwingli were in agreement. They fought only because each expressed his doctrine in different words, in order to exclude different errors." See Hastings Eells, "The Contributions of Martin Bucer to the Reformation," *Harvard Theological Review* 24 (Jan 1931) 32. While the present writer would prefer to maintain a greater distinction between the views of both of these Reformers, it is still important to note that they are not nearly as far removed from one another as is commonly alleged.

29. W. Ian P. Hazlett, "The Scots Confession 1560: Context, Complexion and Critique," *Archive for Reformation History* 78 (1987) 310.

30. Philip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom*, 6th ed., rev. by David S. Schaff (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983) 1.389.

31. *The First Helvetic Confession of 1536*, Article 20 in Cochrane, 107. Emphasis is added. See Wishart's translation of this article in: George Wishart, "The Confession of Faith of the Churches of Switzerland; translated from the Latin," *The Miscellany of the Wodrow Society*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: Printed for the Wodrow Society, 1844) 18. This is volume one of only one published in a projected series by the Wodrow Society.

32. Gordon Donaldson, "Reformation to Covenant" in *Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland*, ed. Duncan B. Forrester and Douglas M. Murray (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1984) 34.

33. Burnet, 1. This is the first recorded instance of such a celebration. Burnet cites John Howie, *The Scots Worthies*, with an historical introduction by Robert Buchanan (Glasgow, 1874) 32.

Knox. Burnet credits Knox's 1547 observance of the sacrament as "the second public celebration of the Holy Communion in Scotland according to the Reformed ritual."³⁴ Knox's hatred for the Roman Catholic Mass has been well attested.³⁵ The Mass, for Knox, was the central doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.³⁶ To Knox, the Mass comprised everything that was wrong with Roman Catholicism. Hence, his concern for the proper administration of the sacrament was a driving force behind his theology. One would assume, given his opposition to the Mass, that Knox would have formulated his view of the Lord's Supper along the lines of Zwingli. To the contrary, Knox had a more mystical view of the sacrament (Wilson, 136). He rejected the superstition that surrounded the Mass, condemning it for that which it was, blasphemy and idolatry (60, 136). His objections, however, ran deeper than this. Wilson comments (163–164):

Many modern Protestants see the doctrine of transubstantiation as idolatry because man worships a created thing (the host) as God – and some Protestants have trouble seeing even this. However, Knox did not identify this as the problem. This was certainly idolatrous fruit, but it was because it had grown up from an idolatrous seed – an invention of man in worship. Something that began in idolatry could not hope to end in true and pure worship.... [Knox's] zeal was for the pure worship of God, and God was the only One with the authority to determine what that pure worship should look like.

For Knox, the Mass signified a manmade, impure, irreverent worship of God. If Christians intended to

worship God properly, then He would have to be worshipped according to the means He had revealed in Scripture.

In addition to his view of the Mass as improper worship, Knox, like Luther and the other Reformers, objected to the soteriological implications of the ritual. Because Roman Catholic theologians interpreted the Mass as a sacrifice, this view tended to diminish the importance and sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ. Torrance writes (Torrance, 182–183):

[In] trying to show what is basically wrong with the Mass, Knox points to the death of Christ. The Roman priest performing the Mass was attempting to procure remission of sins for those who were participating. Knox rejects this unequivocally. We already have remission of sins: Christ has died for us. The Roman would object: "Do we not continually need the remission of sins?" and the basic difference between him and Knox becomes clear. Knox can reply that this would be so if the league between us and God [sic] were dependent on our own state of holiness: if, that is, redemption were a process leading to sanctification. But our league [covenant] with God is not so precarious: in Christ we have a Mediator whose righteousness we are unable to spoil. Thus ... we see Knox exposing a doctrine which stems from a failure to recognise sufficiently clearly the precise nature and activity of Christ in his work of redemption.

The reason for the rejection of the Mass by Knox and others during the Scottish Reformation stemmed from a proper understanding of the work of Jesus Christ. If salvation was by the sovereign grace of God, then a manmade ceremony that misrepresented the perfect work of Christ had no place in the worship of God. In this, the view of the Mass by the Scottish Reformers was very much in line with that of the Continental Reformers.

What, however, was the correct interpretation of the Lord's Supper? On the Continent, it seemed two extreme viewpoints were struggling for control—the Lutheran interpretation and the Zwinglian interpretation. Judging from the influence of Lutheran theology and the spiritual view of the sacrament in Scotland, it would seem that Scotland was destined to progress along the lines of Lutheranism with respect to the Lord's Supper. This was not to be the case. During his exile in Geneva, John Knox was exposed to the teachings of John Calvin, and this shaped Knox's theology concerning the sacrament.³⁷ Calvin steered toward a middle ground between the theology of Zwingli and Luther

34. Burnet, 2. Burnet adds, "It was an important milestone on the road from a mere Protestant Movement to a Reformed Church." This celebration may have been based, in part, on Wishart's translation of the First Helvetic Confession. See Kyle, 170.

35. Douglas Wilson records that Knox once declared, during a sermon, "that one Mass was more fearful to him than 10,000 men." See Douglas Wilson, *For Kirk and Covenant: The Stalwart Courage of John Knox* (Nashville: Cumberland House, 2002) 66. For the source of the statement, Wilson cites Henry Cowan, *John Knox: The Hero of the Scottish Reformation* (1905; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1970) 268. In a similar vein, Knox is also quoted as describing the Mass as an "idol and bastard service." See Kevin Reed, "John Knox and the Reformation of Worship in the Scottish Reformation," *Worship in the Presence of God*, ed. David C. Lachman and Frank J. Smith (Greenville, S.C.: Greenville Seminary Press, 1992) 298.

36. A. M. Renwick, *The Story of the Scottish Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 57.

37. For example, when Knox was asked to write a Reformed liturgy for the Lord's Supper, he followed the Genevan liturgy of Calvin, although Knox "improved it considerably." See Old, 139. Cf. A. F. Mitchell, 116.

concerning the sacrament, maintaining a high view of the sacraments (as “means of grace”) but avoiding a doctrine of “real presence” in the Lord’s Supper, except to say that Christ is spiritually present in the sacrament.³⁸ Like the rest of the Reformers, Calvin condemned the Mass as idolatrous. Like Luther, he maintained a spiritual view of the sacrament and rejected the symbolism suggested by Zwingli. However, according to Calvin, Christ was not present in the sense that Luther suggested.³⁹ The bread and wine were symbolic of the body and blood of Christ, and yet the Christian feasts upon them in a spiritual way. Calvin writes:

From the physical things set forth in the Sacrament we are led by a sort of analogy to spiritual things. Thus, when bread is given as a symbol of Christ’s body, we must at once grasp this comparison: as bread nourishes, sustains, and keeps the life of our body, so Christ’s body is the only food to invigorate and enliven our soul. When we see wine set forth as a symbol of blood, we must reflect that the same are spiritually imparted to us by Christ’s blood. These benefits are to nourish, refresh, strengthen, and gladden.⁴⁰

Calvin viewed the elements of the Supper as things present, rather than things absent (Mathison, 23). In this regard, Calvin distinguishes himself from Zwingli, since “for Zwingli the bread and wine are symbols of what is absent, namely Christ’s body, whereas for Calvin they are seals of what is present – Christ’s risen humanity” (Yule, 307). At the same time, Calvin believed in the true spiritual presence of Christ in the sacrament, but he rejected the implications of the corporeal presence of Christ (Mathison, 27). Thus, Calvin maintained a view of the Lord’s Supper deeper than the symbolism suggested by Zwingli, but also avoided the Eucharistic extremes of Luther.

Although Calvin’s influence played a large part in helping to formulate the sacramental theology of Knox, the centrality of the Lord’s Supper and its importance in Scottish worship can be seen as being firmly entrenched in the thought of the latter prior to his stay in Geneva. Knox first met Calvin in 1554, so anything recorded by Knox on the sacrament prior to this date should give a clearer view of his opinions before coming under his influence.⁴¹ Of Knox’s works prior to 1554, two are noteworthy.⁴² The first is a polemic against the Mass, but the second affords the true feelings of Knox concerning the sacrament. In this second work, Knox clearly supported a high view of the sacrament (i.e., a mystical view, as opposed to a “memorial” view). He writes, “Through

the vertew of the Halie Giasť ... we, being fed with his flesche, and refrescheit with his blude, may be renewit both unto trew godliness and to immortalitie” (Knox, “A Summe,” 73). He also adds, “For in the Sacrament we receive Jesus Chryst spirituallie ... (75).” In this viewpoint, Knox objected to the Mass (a given), but he also apparently presented an opinion, which, as a consequence, was opposed to the Lutheran interpretation of the sacrament as well. The sacrament is “to be receiveit with faith, and not with mouth, nor yit by transfusioun of substance” (73). Knox firmly believed that no physical transformation of the bread and wine takes place in the sacrament, and his frequent mention of the spiritual aspects of the Lord’s Supper also seems to preclude the literal presence of Christ (in the Lutheran sense) in the sacrament. Knox comments (74):

For yf we suld beleive that his verie naturall bodie, both flesche and blude, were naturallie in the bread and yne, that suld not save us, seeing many beleif that, and yit receive it to thair dampnatioun. For it is not his presence in the bread that can save us, but his presence in our hartis through faith in his blude, whilk hath waschit

38. Willimon, 69–70. Willimon writes, “For Calvin, Christ was really and fully present in the Lord’s Supper by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit. The believer, therefore, participates really but ‘spiritually’ in the presence of Christ when the Lord’s Supper is celebrated. The presence is real, but it is a spiritual presence. Calvin’s doctrine of the eucharistic presence is somewhere between Luther’s and Zwingli’s.”

39. Many Roman Catholic theologians in the sixteenth century tended to group together all Reformed teachings on the Eucharist except Luther’s in order to critique them as sacramentarianism—merely signs or symbols, devoid of any real power or content. This is not to say that they were not critical of Lutheranism on the subject, only that there was a very obvious distinction concerning the Protestant interpretations of the sacrament. See Hazlett, 308.

40. John Calvin, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans., Ford Lewis Battles, *The Library of Christian Classics*, 20–21 (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1960) 1363 (4.17.3).

41. Wilson, 44. This is not to say that Calvin could not have influenced Knox prior to 1554, as he was almost certainly reading the works of Calvin by 1550. See Kyle, 170; McEwan, 54.

42. John Knox, “A Notable sermon, made by the sayde John Knox, wherein is evydentlye prouved that the masse is and alwayes hath ben abhominable before God and Idolyatrye,” in David Laing, ed., *The Works of John Knox* (Edinburgh: 1854; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1966) 3.33–70; Knox, “A summe, according to the Holie Scriptures, what opinioun we Christians haif of the Lordis Supper, callit The Sacrament of the Bodie and Blude of our Saviour Jesus Christ,” in Laing, 3.73–75. The first of these is a sermon delivered in 1550, while the second, which has no date, may be assigned to the same year (according to Laing). Since the original draft of this paper, the author has discovered that both of these documents may now be found on the Internet (in a modernized form) at <http://www.swrb.ab.ca/newslett/actualNLS/vindicat.htm> and <http://...summarls.htm>.

out our synnis, and pacifeit his Fatheris wraith towardis us. And again, yf we do not beleive his bodilie presence in the bread and wyne, that sall not dampn us, but the absence out of hart throw unbeleif.

Thus, Knox emphasized the spiritual aspects of the sacrament instead of any actual physical presence of Christ therein.

In this brief statement of his belief concerning the sacrament, traces of Knox's thoughts on the Supper, later found explicitly in the Scots Confession, are evident. Unlike the Mass, the sacrament is not a good work to be performed by Christians, for the believer "must in no wyse think, that for this workis sake thair synne be forgevin" (74). Through the sacrament, Christ brings together His body, the church. According to Knox, in the Lord's Supper "the Lord Jesus gathereth us unto ane visibill bodie, so that we be memberis ane of another, and mak altogether one bodie, whairof Jesus Chryst is onlie heid" (73). Thus, Knox's view of the sacrament comes forward. It is not a sacrifice, nor is it a good work to be performed. Christ is present in the sacrament, but He is present in a spiritual manner, through the work of the Holy Spirit. In the sacrament, the saints are brought together as one body. There is an aspect of remembrance in the Lord's Supper, but it is different than the memorial interpretation that is often associated with Zwingli. Knox writes, "By the same Sacrament, the Lord calleth us to remembrance of his Death and Passioun, to steir up our hartis to prais his maist holie name" (73). Far from being simply a solemn ceremony, the Lord's Supper is to be a celebration of the work that Jesus Christ has done for His people. It is a spiritual feast in which all of God's people are brought together and spiritually nourished through the partaking of the bread and wine.

The influence of Calvin's theology concerning the sacrament of the Lord's Supper greatly affected the

Scots Confession of 1560. For his part in penning the Confession, Knox looked to Calvin, particularly regarding the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Hazlett writes, "It would seem hard to deny that the main instrument behind the Confession's orientation to Calvin was Knox."⁴³ Some have apparently suggested that the Scots Confession was written along Zwinglian lines and retreated from the mystical elements of Luther and Calvin (Mitchell, 116). This, however, is in no way an accurate representation. The Scots Confession teaches the same doctrine as Calvin; in fact, within the Confession, "the Zwinglian doctrine is as explicitly rejected as the Romano-Lutheran ... [and] the language as well as the doctrine closely resembles Calvin's" (116). The Confession follows Calvin in rejecting the idea of the sacraments as merely signs or symbols.⁴⁴ The Confession states, "We utterly condemn the vanity of those who affirm the sacraments to be nothing else than naked and bare signs."⁴⁵ This is an obvious repudiation of those who took Zwingli's doctrine to its memorialistic extremes. Others claim that the Confession is somehow reconcilable with the Lutheran view of the sacrament, but it does not teach "a 'Real Presence' in the traditional or Lutheran sense" (Hazlett, 307). Chapter 21 of the Confession, which deals strictly with the administration of the sacraments within the church, essentially came directly from the thought of Calvin, such that "there is barely a feature of it which is not found in Calvin's *Institutes*" (Hazlett, 308). The Confession plainly states, "We readily admit that we make a distinction between Christ Jesus and His eternal substance and the elements of the sacramental signs" (Cochrane, 180). The Confession, therefore, appears to be making a very conscious effort to distance itself from both Luther and Zwingli. Thus, the understanding of the sacrament within the Scottish churches, as was the case with most Reformed churches, came primarily from Calvin.

Knox, however, was not content simply to copy Calvin. While Knox was an ardent follower of Calvin's doctrine, in the doctrine of the sacrament, he had an emphasis "wholly and peculiarly his own, and he impressed this peculiar emphasis permanently on the Scottish Church."⁴⁶ With Calvin, the preaching of the Word was central to the church, and the sacraments were secondary, while with Knox the sacraments held a more central role.⁴⁷ According to McEwan:

Knox is not denying that the Church is founded on the Word; but he is asserting, with a clarity and force unparalleled elsewhere in the Reformed world, that the foundation of the Church is the Word as completed and

43. Hazlett, 309. W. Stanford Reid comments, "John Calvin obviously provided the background for [the Scots Confession], although the Scottish doctrine was filtered through Knox." See Reid, "French Influence on the First Scots Confession and Book of Discipline," *Westminster Theological Journal* 35 (Fall 1972) 9.

44. James Kirk, "Scottish Confession," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 35.

45. *Scottish Confession*, Chapter 21 in Cochrane, 179.

46. James S. McEwan, "John Knox," *Reformed and Presbyterian World* 26 (Mar 1960) 20.

47. McEwan, 20; R.T. Halliday, "Will the Real John Knox Please Stand?" *The Expository Times* 106 (1995) 171. Halliday claims that the right use of the Lord's Table was "perhaps the central concern of [Knox's] life."

fulfilled by the action of Christ in the Sacrament.... To Knox, the Sacrament is creative of the very life of the Church, as it never was for Calvin, or even for Luther.⁴⁸

Knox was passionate about the proper restoration of the Lord's Supper to the church because he considered the sacrament to be as foundational to the church as the preaching of the Word of God. According to Knox, true Reformation within Scottish churches required the correct practice of the Lord's Supper as much as correct preaching.

Although the theology of Calvin undoubtedly played a large part in influencing Knox concerning the Lord's Supper, the role of Peter Martyr Vermigli cannot be overlooked. Vermigli, an Italian Reformed theologian who came to England in 1547 at the request of Thomas Cranmer, had an enormous effect on Anglo-Saxon eucharistic theology (Old, 137). Vermigli preferred to use the word "eucharist" when referring to the sacrament, "because that word emphasized that the Lord's Supper is a feast of praise and thanksgiving."⁴⁹ A central part of Vermigli's liturgy of the Lord's Supper was his Eucharistic Prayer, and Knox made heavy use of this focus when he revised Calvin's Genevan liturgy (Old, 139). It is not particularly difficult to see the reason that this theology of the Lord's Supper was so important in Knox's theological understanding. It was a celebration, not merely a religious ritual, and Knox brought the concept of that celebration to Scotland. This attitude had an influence on the Scottish custom of having the congregation sit around a table to receive the elements, a practice that was not uncommon with other Reformers.⁵⁰ If the Lord's Supper was a celebration to be shared by all of God's people, then the receiving of the sacrament should reflect this. In addition, Knox stressed the fact that the Lord's Supper should be observed in simplicity, basing this upon the Scriptural example of Christ (Reed, 315). What had once become twisted and buried under an avalanche of manmade tradition, unfounded ritual, and unbiblical theology had now been rescued and preserved through the efforts of the Scottish reformer.

It would not be incorrect to say that the understanding of the Lord's Supper during the Scottish Reformation involved a synthesis of Reformed theology on the sacrament. Undoubtedly, the greatest part of this came from Knox, who was most heavily influenced by Calvin.⁵¹ However, even Calvin's theology in this area was, at least partially, affected by Lutheran tendencies.⁵² Also, there were influences on Knox's theology of the Lord's Supper even prior to his stay with Calvin in Geneva. The

celebration of the Lord's Supper in Scotland may nonetheless be summarized as the rejection of extremes. The idolatry of the Mass was condemned, as was the bareness of the memorialist service suggested by Zwingli. In addition, Knox appears to have consciously rejected the ramifications of the Lutheran idea of real presence in the Lord's Supper.⁵³ Thus, the mystical nature of the sacrament as formulated by Calvin and adopted by Knox prevailed in Scotland. The Lord's Supper became a true celebration and thanksgiving where the people of God communed with their Redeemer in a manner prescribed in Scripture, instead of the empty ritual of manmade worship. ■

48. McEwan, "John Knox," 20–21. McEwan adds, "[Knox] refers the whole action of the Sacrament to Christ. It is not a ministerial act, or a churchly act, but something that Christ does for us."

49. Old, 138. In Greek, the verb *ευχαριστέω* means "to give thanks" or "to be thankful."

50. William Child Robbins, *The Reformation: A Rediscovery of Grace* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1962) 161. Robbins cites Zwingli and Bullinger as preferring this method of receiving the elements, "since the Lord sat at table with His disciples."

51. Richard Greaves argues that the similarity between Calvin and Knox on the Lord's Supper is not due primarily to the fact that Calvin influenced Knox, but that Martin Bucer influenced both Calvin and Knox. Greaves writes, "The continuity in Knox's doctrine of the Lord's Supper is due to the early influence on him of Bucer's views through the medium of Wishart and the *First Helvetic Confession*." See Richard L. Greaves, *Theology and Revolution in the Scottish Reformation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Christian University Press, 1980) 98. This would almost certainly be true of Knox's earlier celebrations of the Lord's Supper, prior to his contact with Calvin. Calvin's great influence on Knox, however, cannot be ignored. Neither can the fact that Knox rejected the Lutheran extremes of the sacrament, and he did this prior to meeting Calvin in Geneva.

52. Hazlett, 309. Hazlett writes, "It cannot be stressed enough that Reformed eucharistic theologizing, more particularly in its Genevan expressions, cannot be understood or divorced from the Lutheran dimension.... Like Bucer before him, Calvin was ... convinced that his sacramental theology harmonized with the *Augsburg Confession*." The mere fact that lay elders distributed the elements of the Lord's Supper (instead of the people receiving the elements directly from the minister) was not only a departure from the Mass—it was a direct result of the application of the Lutheran doctrine of the priesthood of believers. See Robbins, *The Reformation: A Rediscovery of Grace*, 161; Donaldson, "Reformation to Covenant," 33.

53. James S. McEwan, *Faith of John Knox*, 54; Richard Greaves, *Theology and Revolution in the Scottish Reformation*, 100; Richard Kyle, *The Mind of John Knox*, 171–172.

Presbyterian Due Process: *A Scottish and American Recovery of Procedural Canons*

By Stuart R. Jones

On this 300th anniversary of America's first Presbytery, a special facet of Presbyterian identity will be explored in this article, namely the Presbyterian concern with due process in formal disciplinary matters. This is a large subject worthy of a book. What will be attempted here is a sketch or large outline that might facilitate further study and reflection.

By due process, we mean that relatively fixed procedure is employed for establishing the truth or falsity of alleged wrong doing and that this process entails the use of formal accusations, hearing of witnesses or evidence, the right to offer a defense, due deliberation, etc. Employment of due process presupposes that a reconciliation process has not succeeded in resolving points of difference and so some fair method of resolving a dispute over factual allegations and/or points of doctrine or law is necessary.

The idea of employing the features of due process in church discipline cases is something that has been criticized. It has been alleged that proper church discipline has died because of Emperor Constantine's legacy. The correction of many offences has been left to the state and the church has copied "the state's pattern of dealing with offenders through legalistic machinery: filing charges, setting up courts, holding trials—in short, engaging in casuistry that obscures the spirit of the gospel."¹

This criticism, while applicable to cases that might be resolved through informal counsel, repentance, and reconciliation, ignores the plain fact that not every case

of pastoral dealing ends with an agreement about an alleged offense. Though the New Testament Community is called to forgive offenses where repentance is present, the prior question of whether an offense has been committed may not be casually assumed. As James Durham states:

For when a person brings such an offense to a public judicatory, he must make out these two: [1.] that such a person has actually given offense; and [2.] that he has effectually admonished him, and he has not heard him, nor satisfied him.²

The need for an adequate means of probation in cases of alleged offenses is the point at which due process emerges as part of the disciplinary process. The following theses or points of examination are offered to suggest the relationship between Presbyterianism and due process:

1. Due process was provided for in the Old Testament where the discretion and mandate to forgive offenses was less in evidence.
2. Due process was a concern of the Church prior to the Reformation as it incorporated Roman Law into its Canon Law procedure.
3. The special concentration of judicial power in the church officers was a special matter of concern during the Reformation as this threatened arbitrary discipline at the expense of due process.
4. The Scottish Presbyterians reconstituted due process protections (probably from earlier canon law) over a period of time culminating in the *Form of Process* of 1707.
5. American Presbyterianism eventually incorporated and adapted much of the due process notions of the Scottish Church with two major developments coming in the disciplinary rules of 1788 and 1821.

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1. Marlin Jeschke, "Fixing Church Discipline: How Discipline Died," *Christianity Today* (August 2005) 31–32.

2. James Durham, *A Treatise Concerning Scandal* (Printed by William Carron for John Cairnes, 1680); repr., ed. Christopher Coldwell and David C. Lachman (Dallas, Tex.: Naphtali Press, 1990) 62–63.

I. OLD TESTAMENT DUE PROCESS

Little needs to be said about the subject of due process in the Old Testament since most readers of this journal will recognize that due process is incipiently present in such requirements as the need for two or three witnesses and the *lex talionis* applied to wrongful or malicious accusers (Deut. 19:15–21). Similar provisions have existed in other law codes including that of Hammurabi.³

Though the OT material on due process is mixed in with substantive laws and is arguably less developed than modern ideas about due process, it is noteworthy that natural and fair means of uncovering truth are given clear expression in the OT. Though some place for the use of lots is granted in uncovering Achan's transgression (Josh. 7:14ff), this is a unique redemptive-historical occurrence which receives prominence by its exceptional nature and God's particularized instruction. In general, the OT makes little use of the ordeal as a probative device.⁴ One exception is in Numbers 5, but this provision lacks the cruelty of typical ordeals and has some affinity with the Lord's Supper warning (1 Cor. 11:29,30).

II. ROMAN-CANON LAW

The New Testament emphasis on redemption and forgiveness and general freedom from the civil laws of Moses may disguise the need for due process in disciplinary matters; yet unless there is some modern equivalent of the Urim and Thummin or continued special revelation, the Church must have some wise and accessible means of settling allegations that are in dispute. Though canons for conducting trials or arbitration are not set forth in any detail in the NT, Paul's rebuke of the Corinthians in relying on secular courts includes an appeal to their wisdom rather than to extraordinary modes of judgment (1 Cor. 6:1–8).

The Church has carried out discipline from its earliest existence, but details of procedure in probative discipline appear to emerge more clearly with various treatises of the twelfth century onward. The expressions *de iudiciis*, *ordo iudiciorum*, and *ordo iudiciarius*, are cited in connection with this procedural literature.⁵ It has been alleged that earlier, St. Augustine "maintained that no one could be condemned without a trial conducted according to the *ordo iudiciarius*."⁶

The insistence on a due process oriented method of probation was salutary in its rationality and prevention of the ordeal method. The rise of due process considerations in applying Roman Law to Canon Law could

also be used as an obstruction to prosecution and the shielding of clergy from the secular tribunal.⁷ It may be further noted that the same institution that gave definition to due process in canon law also developed the method of the Inquisition.

III. REFORMATION CONCERNS

Lutheranism

In the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* (attributed to Melancthon, 1537), the following complaint is issued:

74] It is certain that the common jurisdiction of excommunicating those guilty of manifest crimes belongs to all pastors. This they have tyrannically transferred to themselves alone, and have applied it to the acquisition of gain. For it is certain that the officials, as they are called employed a license not to be tolerated and either on account of avarice or because of other wanton desires tormented men and excommunicated them without any *due process of law* [italics supplied; *ordine iudiciorum* in Latin text of Triglotta]. But what tyranny is it for the officials in the states to have arbitrary power to condemn and excommunicate men without *due process of law*! [*ordine iudiciorum*] 75] And in what

3. Cf. J. Pritchard, ed.; T. Meek, trans., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1958) 1:139.

4. Pritchard, *ibid.* Hammurabi's code mentions the river ordeal. Oaths remain in modern secular courts, though consciousness of their self-maledictory nature are overshadowed today by concern with perjury penalties.

5. Linda Fowler-Magerl, *Ordines Iudicarii and Libelli de Ordine Iudiciorum* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1994) 20.

6. Fowler-Magerl, 20. This is said to be the first use of the expression, though Fowler-Magerl seems to be unsure about its attribution to Augustine.

7. Fowler-Magerl, 27. The Fourth Lateran Council forbade use of the ordeal in canon 18. Cf. Kenneth Pennington, *The Prince and the Law* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993) 132–135. The earliest use of the literal term, "due process," is said to be from a statute of Edward the III in 1354 (Pennington, n. 9, p. 6 and n. 95, p. 145). A literal Latin translation might have been "servare ordinem iuris," though the basic idea is present in the norm of judicial procedure entitled the *ordo iudicarius* which some scholars found present in God's dealings with Adam and Eve (p. 142). Pennington also has material on line. Antonius Mathaeus, a Calvinistic lawyer, colleague of Gijsbert Voet, and elder of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands wrote that ordeals, besides tempting God, were an "assault on the secrets of Divine Providence." Cf. M.L. Hewitt and B.C. Stoop, trans., *On Crimes: A Commentary on Books XLVII and XLVIII of the Digest*, 4 vols. (Capetown: Juta & Co LTD, 1987–96 [based on 1761 Antwerp edition, first published in 1644]) 3:536.

kind of affairs did they abuse this power? Indeed, not in punishing true offenses, but in regard to the violation of fasts or festivals, or like trifles! Only, they sometimes punished adulteries; and in this matter they often vexed [abused and defamed] innocent and honorable men. Besides, since this is a most grievous offense, nobody certainly is to be condemned without *due process of law* [*ordine iudiciali*].⁸

The precise deviations from due process of law are not specified. The “officials” referred to, appear to be vicars that were assigned duties, including judicial ones to relieve the bishops (Cf. Fowler-Magerl, *Ordo*, 83). This placed them in a position of power which could be abused for personal gain. The general point of the *Treatise* is that all pastors possess the power of jurisdiction—not just bishops. The fact that bishops were known to delegate their power to corrupt agents is a fact calculated to lower the mystique of the Episcopal office in this polity debate.

In the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (xxviii. 13–14) it is stated that:

We like the old division of power into the power of the order and the power of jurisdiction. Therefore a bishop has the power of the order, namely, the ministry of the Word and sacraments. He also has the power of jurisdiction, namely the authority to excommunicate those who are guilty of public offenses or to absolve them if they are converted and ask for absolution. A bishop does not have the power of a tyrant to act without a definite law, nor that of a king to act above the law (Tappert, *Book of Concord*, 283).

At this point, the Lutheran confession differs—as is suggested above with regard to pastors—from the *Second Scots Book of Discipline* (1581). In this latter polity guide the power of jurisdiction is said to be a joint power of the elders and ministers. But there are two qualifications placed on the power of jurisdiction in the Lutheran confession. First, the sin in view is a public one. Secondly, the power is not arbitrary but censurable offences are defined in terms of some definite command in the Word of God.

8. *Triglott Concordia* (Electronic Edition of Northwestern Publishing House, 1996 [CD developed from 1917 print edition]). Cf. T. Tappert, trans., *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959) 332–333.

9. Conrad Bergendoff, ed., “The Keys,” *Luther’s Works: Church and Ministry II*, 55 vols. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958) 40: 370–371.

When we turn to Martin Luther’s discussion of the Keys of the Kingdom, we see another side to the issue. Luther argues against bans or excommunications that are passed before they are “punished first in a brotherly manner and finally established as such by the whole congregation.”⁹ A congregation cannot be expected to perform its duty in such a ban if it is not “sure of the reason it thinks him to be deserving of excommunication....” The congregation “should be consulted” because it “is not bound to put any faith in a slip of paper issued by an episcopal representative, nor need it be concerned about any bishop’s letters.” The congregation has “a place as a judge and helper.” Luther further argues, correctly or not, that Paul was not willing to act without the congregation in the case of incest described in 1 Corinthians 5 (Bergendoff, 371–372). The same point is made in article 24 of the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* (Tappert, *Book of Concord*, 324).

Reformed Process

Luther’s statements are remarkable because they demonstrate that he was not able to avoid a polity position despite a general tendency of his movement to subordinate questions of government to larger doctrinal concerns like justification and the sacraments. Providing a place for congregational consent is a check on arbitrary power and as such contains the due process element of openness in judicial dealing. Luther’s position also suggests a possible link to early Reformed polity.

In 1560, John Knox’s *Book of Discipline* sets forth a method by which the congregation was to be involved in a disciplinary matter. This formulary contained features that would be present in the French and Dutch discipline as well. Two general characteristics of these orders are: 1) the progressive nature of the process, and 2) the involvement of the congregation, particularly at the final stage of the process. The general assumption underlying the process is that a real offense has been committed but has not yet been repented of. The process aims at achieving this goal or removing the offending member. A gracious process where guilt is probable rather than due process is the main concern. However, in the involvement of the congregation there is an element of due process protection. The 1560 order puts the matter thusly:

If the person malign, then the next day of public assembly, the crime and the person must both be notified to the Church, and their judgment must be required,

if that such crimes ought to be suffered amongst them. Request also would be made to the most discreet and to the nearest friends of the offender to travail with him to bring him to a knowledge of himself, and of his dangerous estate....¹⁰

As with Luther, there is a place for congregational judgment in the process. In 1569 a more full form of excommunication was developed in Scotland in which various prayers and admonitions are added as liturgical aids in carrying out the disciplinary process before the congregation. The process of gradual exposure and congregational involvement in the disciplinary order is affirmed in the following words:

Bot if he declair himself inobedient to the Session, then without delay the nixt Sunday aucht the cryme, and the ordor of admonitionis passed befoir, be publiklie declared to the Church, and the person (without specification of his name) be admonished to satisfie in publique that which he refused to do in secret....

But lest that we shuld seme to usurpe power owir the Church, or to doe any thing without the knowledge and consent of the whole body, for this present we delay the sentence, willing, such as have any thing to object in the contrair, to propone the same the nixt Session day, or eles to signify the same to some of the Ministeris or Eldaris, that answer may be gevin thereto; and in the meane tyme we will call to God for the conversion of the impenitent.¹¹

The “consent of the whole body” is again a concern as we shall see in the policies of the French and Dutch Churches.

The *French Discipline* began with approximately 40 articles in 1559 but these were supplemented over time. The Dutch Churches developed their first general polity articles at the Convent of Wesel in 1568 followed by the Synod of Emden. The following selections, with emphasis added, indicate the coinciding views and practices in discipline among these churches:

1565 Synod at Paris—The French Discipline¹²

And these publick *Admonitions* and Denunciations shall be prosecuted *three several times, on three several Lord's Days; on the first of which the Sinner shall not be mentioned by Name*, that so in some sort he may be spared, though he already be too well known unto the People; but *on the two succeeding Sundays he shall be particularly named*. And if after all this he does not repent, nor

become a Convert, but persisteth obstinately in his sinful Courses, then on the fourth Lord's Day, in the face and presence of the whole Congregation, such a one, mentioning him by Name, shall be declared and pronounced excommunicate and cut off as a rotten Member, from the Body of the Church; the Pastor declaring it authoritatively from the Word of God, in the Name, and with the *Consent of the whole Church*.

1571 Synod at Emden—Dutch Church Order¹³

Three admonitions shall be performed. [... drie varmaningen salmen doen]

In the first the sinner shall not be named, to spare him somewhat. [In de eerste en sal de Sondaer niet ghenoeemt worden, to spare him somewhat opdat hem eenighsins verschoone].

In the second he shall be named [In de tweede salmen hem noemen]. In the third it shall be announced to the congregation that he shall be excommunicated or ejected until he repents because he remains stiff necked, being cut off by tacit consent of the congregation. [In de derde salmen der Ghemeente aensegghen, datmen hem excommuniceren ofte uytlsuyten sal, ten zy dat hy sick bekeerde, op dat hy, ist dat hy hartneckigh blijft, door stilswijghende verwillinghe der Ghemeente, afghesneden werde].

Similar patterns can be discerned in the 1578 *Book*

10. William Croft Dickinson, ed., *John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland*, 2 vols. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950) 2:307.

11. *The Ordoure of Excommunication and of Publick Repentance* (Edinburgh: Robert Lekprevik, 1569) 448–449; 462. This order was evidently distilled from a Lasco's *Modus ac Ritus Excommunicationis*. Cf. Alexander Mitchell, *The Scottish Reformation* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1890) 165. In 1544, Vermigli expresses the need for the whole church to be involved in an excommunication rather (versus the tyranny of an individual as in Romanism). Cf. “The Apostles' Creed,” *Early Writings*, 5 vols (Kirkville, Mo.: Peter Martyr Library, 1994) 1:28.

12. John Quick, comp., *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata*, 2 vols. (London: T. Parkhurst and J. Robinson, 1692) 1:58, 59. Quick also consolidates the various canons passed over time in his introduction.

13. P. Bieſterveld and H.H. Kuiper, comps., *Kerkelijk Handboekje* (Kampen: J.H. Bos, 1905) 41. This selection is part of article 31 in the Emden Order. At Wesel a brief article was adopted to similar effect (chapter 8, §9) but without the well defined gradations of exposure. That article does speak of cutting one off as a “rotten member” or “verrot lid”, cf. *French Discipline* (*Synodicon*) above; also Calvin's “Articles concerning the Organization of the Church” (1537) in J.K.S. Reid, ed., *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, Library of Christian Classics, vol. xxii (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954) 51.

of *Discipline* by Cartwright and Travers and the 1641 *Directory for Excommunication* composed by Alexander Henderson.¹⁴ The consent of the congregation is called for in the *Directory for Church Government* which contained some disciplinary guidance and was a product of the Westminster Assembly that never received official status.¹⁵

IV. SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIAN DUE PROCESS

General Call To Formal Process

In 1582 a reference is received from the Synod of Lawthian [Lothian] asking the General Assembly, “That ane universall order be taken and made be [by] the Generall Assembly, for excommunicatione, tryall, admisionne, and ordination of ministers.¹⁶ That this order specifically concerns the probative side of discipline is not stipulated. However, the same year two ministerial cases appear before the General Assembly. The case of Robert Montgomerie is of particular interest because Andrew Melville takes the role of formal accuser. The next General Assembly finds the process pursued against Montgomerie to have been orderly and proper.¹⁷ A major question arises whether Montgomerie was aware of his suspension which he apparently had ignored. The King’s interest in the case moved the Assembly to appoint a commission to answer any royal concerns (Peterkin, 248). It appears the church was under pressure to justify its discipline and thus, its process was a matter of concern. The Assembly further gave instruction to its presbyteries that, “The forme of proces[s] in weightie matters to be in writ, at the dis-

cretiounne of particular Presbyteries, *e re nata*; in other things verball (Peterkin, 250).”

In 1597 a similar sort of directive is given:

In the Gen. Assembly at Dundie in May 1597, Sess. 7, it is appointed that all Sessions be elected with consent of their oune congregations; and that all Sessions, Presbyteries, and Provincialls [synods] use such forme in all their processes as may be found lauffull and formall, and able to abide triall, &c.¹⁸

The expression “all their processes” may include more than judicial process but the disciplinary procedures to be followed certainly seem to fall within this order. Erastian pressures may have played a roll in tightening up due process probative discipline in the Scottish Church. Such pressure in disciplinary matters was present when the Parliament convened the Westminster Assembly.¹⁹ The Parliament challenged the divines to produce a list of offenses that might merit exclusion from the Lord’s Supper which impeded ecclesiastical discretion over higher censures (Paul, 494–501). This attempt to limit arbitrary discipline was arguably less flexible than insisting upon fair process and probably more of a gambit to hamstring ecclesiastical control over discipline.

James Durham’s work, *Concerning Scandal*, was published posthumously and well after the Westminster Assembly. It is a work giving careful attention to disciplinary matters and achieved high reputation. Though it is not an official standard of discipline, its perspectives, coming from a son of the Church of Scotland, are informative in our study.

Regarding the variety of situations involved in disciplinary matters, Durham states:

Therefore we suppose there is no peremptory determining of rules for cases here, but necessarily the manner of procedure in application of rules is to be left to the prudence and conscientiousness of church officers, according to the particular circumstance case (*Scandal*, 53).

Such an acknowledgment might support a more flexible church constitution such as the Dordt Order. Upon closer inspection, however, Durham’s concern appears to be with application of discipline or censures to individuals already adjudged as culpable. In the prior sentence he states that what might humble one person would crush another. His controlling thought is that discipline, “is not to be applied equally unto all persons” and that this is not a matter of injustice, per se.

14. Cf. *The Reformation of the Church* (Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1987 [repr. from 1965]) 187, and Alexander Henderson, *The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland* (1641) 38–39.

15. Cf. C. Dennison & R. Gamble, eds., *Pressing Toward the Mark* (Philadelphia: Committee for the Historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986) 94.

16. A. Peterkin, comp., *The Booke of the Universall Kirk of Scotland* (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Printing and Publishing Company, 1839) 226.

17. Peterkin, 231, 241. Fifteen articles are at issue and listed on pages 225 and 226, immediately prior to the synodical reference.

18. Robert Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: Printed for Robert Ogle, 1841) 2,505. This is cited in a May 9, 1645 letter from George Gillespie, addressed to “the right Reverend Mr. Robert Morray, Minister at Methven; or, For Mr. Patrick Gillespie, Minister at Kirkaldy.” The appendix in this volume of Baillie contains twelve letters by Gillespie while he was in London as a Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly. Cf. also Peterkin, *The Booke*, 459.

19. Cf. Robert Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1985) 422–424.

His work does not really address the question whether there should be flexible policies in how culpability is determined. Durham is not so concerned with a policy of forensic investigation and probation aimed at assessing culpability. At the same time, his language implies that a formal process of probation will be followed.

In the scope of a single paragraph he uses the terms, “processes,” “delation,” and the counter part “complaint.” In the same paragraph he speaks of “public tabling of a scandal” (*Scandal*, 60). Such terms, taken in isolation, might not presuppose any technical process. Used in close proximity, the terms suggest recognized elements of a judicial process. Though Durham is anxious to avoid unnecessary “processes” or trials by having delations and complaints preceded by the confrontation order of Mathew 18, he is not repudiating delations, complaints, tabling scandals, and processes, per se. Most of these terms reappear later in the *Form of Process*.²⁰

It is perhaps at this point where we begin to see the uniqueness of Scottish Presbyterian discipline emerge from the general common heritage it shares with other Reformed Churches. The *French Discipline* specified that, “All possible care shall be taken; that those formalities and terms which are used in Courts of Law, may be avoided in the exercise of Church-Discipline” (Quick, *Synodicon*, xxxi). At the same time, this list of Protestant canons—for so they are designated—does not really provide much guidance in addressing the forensic or probative side of alleged offenses. Whether the followers of the *French Discipline* might have approved of Durham’s language or the subsequent developments in Presbyterian discipline is hard to say. Durham expresses the need to avoid the appearance of a civil court in the way in which a church pursues its discipline (e.g. on insisting on a formal accuser), so there is no major disagreement in principle. It may be observed that the *French Discipline* makes little or no provision for probative procedures, and may thus more easily avoid legal sounding forms and terms. Some followers of the *Dordt Order* have also expressed the view that their Church Order properly articulates only principles to be followed allowing a “maximum variability in its application, not a set of rules for constant application.”²¹

A Common Order For Judicial Process

In the wake of the Glorious Revolution the Church of Scotland met in its General Assembly in 1690 and passed the following regarding their Commissions of Visitation:

7. That they be very Cautious of receiving Informations, against the late Conformists, and that they proceed in the matter of Censure, very Deliberately, so as none may have just cause to complain of their Rigidity: Yet so as to omit[t] no means of Information. And that they shall not proceed to censure, but upon Relevant Libells and sufficient Probation.²²

The requirement for “Relevant Libells and sufficient Probation” indicates a very specific and standardized due process rule in the life of the Church. Walter Steuart, Laird of Pardovan, provides the following definition:

A libel is a law syllogism, consisting of the proposition or relevancy, which is founded on the laws of God or some ecclesiastical constitution agreeable thereto, as, whosoever is absent from public divine service on the Lord’s day ought to be censured. The second part consists of the subsumption or probation, which condescends on a matter of fact, viz. but such a person did, upon such or such a Lord’s day, absent unnecessarily from the public worship of God. The third part consists of the conclusion or sentence, which contains a desire that the profaner of the Lord’s day, according to the laws and customs mentioned in the first part, may be censured (*Compendium*, 1:414 [Book IV, title III, §1]).

The first edition of Pardovan’s work was in 1709 and his use of the words “relevancy” and “probation” are reflective of the language in the 1690 action of the General Assembly. As such, it may be reasonably inferred that Pardovan’s definition of the libel as a legal syllogism

20. Cf. *Compendium of the Laws of the Church of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing and Publishing Co., 1837) 1:405. Pardovan’s *Collections*, Book IV supplies definitions and context for various terms found in the *Form of Process*. The *Form* does not use the term “tabling a scandal” but the phrase, slightly altered, appears in the heading at the beginning of Book IV in title I of Pardovan. In several places Pardovan appears to borrow from Durham (cf. *Compendium* 1:405). The term “scandal” is generally used in the sense of an offense, whether or not notorious. A delation is defined as “a verbal information or intimation made against some persons, for faults and offenses, unto members of a church judicature.” It does not carry the same level of jeopardy as a formal accusation and the delator may, if not otherwise disqualified, act as a witness (p. 412 [Bk I, Tit. I, §. 14]). The term “complaint” generally seems equivalent to formal accusation, though it later acquires a second meaning closely akin to appeal (sometimes called a “dissent and complaint”).

21. Martin Monsma, Idzerd Van Dellen, *The Church Order Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1941) 292.

22. *The Principle Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Convened at Edinburgh the 16th Day of October 1690* (Edinburgh: Printed by George Mosman, 1691) 22. This act was passed on November 13, 1690.

reflects the thinking of the Assembly in 1690 when it required this rule to be followed by its commissions. From this we may conclude that a special concern for formalized due process in disciplinary matters was present in the Church from its earliest reestablishment after the Glorious Revolution.

The Church of Scotland reiterated its commitment to a due process discipline when it adopted the *Form of Process* in 1707. In the *Form of Process*, we have a nine chapter polity guide explicitly devoted to handling disciplinary matters. The first major front in this effort was a more ambitious proposal which may have roots as early as 1696. Overtures had been circulated regarding five chapters of a proposed plan of government and discipline. In the proposal as it was eventually edited and printed for the Assembly in 1705, the disciplinary processes of the church are integrated with the overall government platform contained in the five chapters. The overture material that was recorded is approximately five times as large as the *Form of Process* that was eventually adopted. Various committees had worked with the material and had revised the first three chapters.

23. A. Ian Dunlop, *William Carstairs and the Kirk by Law Established* (Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press, 1967) 94. W. Dunlop had asked Carstairs to peruse a draft book of discipline in 1696. "Book of discipline" probably refers to a larger platform of government inclusive of a process for censures rather than discipline narrowly defined. Also, John Carstairs, William's father, edited almost all of James Durham's posthumous publications, and wrote one of the prefaces for *Concerning Scandal*, which Durham completed just prior to his death in 1658 (David Lachman, Introduction, *Scandal*, iii).

24. Dunlop, *ibid.* The same year the Barrier Act passed, a rare execution for blasphemy took place under the civil law when Thomas Aikenhead was found to have denied the Trinity. The Barrier Act was a precedent for the American Presbyterian constitutional order that began in 1788.

25. *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing and Publishing Company, 1843) 272 [for 1698], 324 [for 1703], 336 [for 1705].

26. The last two chapters dealing with synods and the General Assembly do not, in the nature of the case, deal with original judicial processes. Thus little reason exists to suppose the terms *libel* or *fama clamosa* might be found there. Some technical Latin terms are used that are found in earlier chapters (e.g. *male* or *bene appellatum*). FP 5.6 speaks of the need to "assoilzie" a successful appellant which is not found in chapters four and five of the overtures. FP 5.9 does not seem to appear in the overture material (stipulating the same procedure of synods, etc.). "Purgation" by oath (FP 4.8) in cases where "pregnant presumptions" are present appears to be a relic of Canon (and Germanic) but not Roman Law (cf. definition of "compurgation," e.g. <http://reference.allrefer.com/encyclopedia/C/compurga.html>).

27. Cf. Fowler-Magerl, *Ordo*, 49–50. This *libellus* was distinguished by the inscription which rendered the accuser liable to the penalties of the accused if the accusation was not proven. Thus there is a common conception among Old Testament, Roman, and Canon Law feeding into the Scottish formulation.

The last two were regarded as not yet considered and the work of a private individual. This individual may have been William Dunlop, brother in law and cousin to William Carstairs.²³

The more ambitious effort was stalled from official enactment under the following circumstances. First, the Assembly had passed the Barrier Act in 1697 which required that any major Acts that would become binding law on the presbyteries must secure the approval of a majority of the presbyteries.²⁴ The proposed overtures on the "book of discipline" were not voted on uniformly by all presbyteries. Some wished to add material, others to delete, others failed to respond over time. It was apparently impossible to get a simple up or down vote on the whole package. The General Assembly opened, as it were, a second smaller front in this struggle. In 1704 it requested that action continue on the larger overtures and that a *Form of Process* be put into shape for adoption by the Church. This more limited attempt to get a standard directly focused on disciplinary matters passed through the Barrier Act procedure and into church law in 1707.

Various committees were engaged in the effort that began near the end of the previous century with some members continuing to serve over time. In addition to including prominent ministerial members who had been moderators or were principals of the colleges, there were some prominent legal people who served as ruling elder constituents. The Lord Advocate of Scotland, Sir James Steuart, retained a place on the several committees charged with this work. Other individuals with prominent legal standing also served, particularly in 1703–1704.²⁵

Some of the material from the five chapters was incorporated into the *Form of Process* (FP). The rest of the material languished. In both the overture material and the *Form of Process*, various legal terms emerge apart from those referred to in Durham's work, e.g. *libel* (FP 2.10,13; 7.5), *assoilize* (FP 2.13), *alibi* (FP 2.13), *deposition* (FP 2.14,15), and *fama clamosa* (FP 7.3). It is a reasonable speculation that the legal experts on the committees that worked with the overtures and *Form* may have influenced some of the terminology and that they were in turn influenced by Scottish, Roman, and Canon Law terms and ideas.²⁶ The *libellus* of accusation of Roman and Canon Law seems to be at the root of the Scottish concept of a *libel* that initiates judicial process against a defendant.²⁷

With the publication of Walter Steuart's *Collections* in 1709, a very definite legal form is given to the government, worship and discipline of the Church of

Scotland. In addition to the General Assembly's recommendation of this work to sessions (also in 1709), we have a testimony of Wodrow to this compilation. Wodrow helps establish biographical details about the Laird of Pardovan:

To supply what I once designed to have given you, please to receive a book from the bearer, which, if you have not seen before this comes, will give the fullest view of our discipline and practice of anything I could think upon. It was writ by a gentleman, a relation of mine, who some months ago, died in this place, Mr Walter Steuart of Pardovan.²⁸

Walter Steuart had been a member of the Scottish Parliament as a burgess commissioner for Linlithgow. In this capacity he voted against the 1707 Treaty of Union with England and several protests may be found recorded in his name in the acts of several parliament sessions.²⁹ He appears to have been an advocate and the son of Sir Archibald Stewart of Blackhall.³⁰ The material in his protests and Wodrow's letters, not to mention his *Collections*, indicates he had an ardent interest in the Church of Scotland.

In addition to Acts taken from the Church of Scotland, Pardovan includes material from civil law, canons of early church councils (e.g. Trullo, Laodicea, *et al.*) and the acts or canons of the French Reformed churches. In the fourth book of Pardovan's *Collections*, the details of disciplinary process are set forth, while the third book concerns the various offenses that deserve special attention in disciplinary process. The first two books deal with church government and worship respectively. This differs from the arrangement of the overtures that were considered by the Church of Scotland and printed in 1705 in which disciplinary policy was integrated with general material on church government. The five chapters of the overtures that were printed all take church judicatories as their starting point (judicatories in general, sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly). Several reasons may explain the fourfold division adopted by Pardovan.

First, when the church enacted the *Form of Process* into its church law in 1707, it effectively separated the specific canons for ecclesiastical discipline from the rules and principles for governing judicatories that still were contained in the overtures but not enacted into a formal constitution.

Second, Pardovan quotes material from the *French Discipline* at various places in his *Collections*. This material had become more readily available by John Quick's

translation and editing work which was published in 1692. There is similarity between the organization of the French canons (as brought together in Quick's introduction) and the first three books of Pardovan's *Collections*. The Church officers are discussed in Chapters one, three, and four of the *French Discipline*. The various assemblies of the church and their mutual relations are discussed in chapters five through nine. Matters related to worship are treated in chapters ten through twelve, with chapter thirteen pertaining to marriage. Chapter fourteen (the last), contains miscellaneous canons which can be generally described as substantive duties and prohibitions. This order of subjects is the same as Pardovan's first three books.³¹

Finally, the treatment of legal subjects in four books is not unique with Pardovan. In civil law, James Dalrymple of Stair followed this course in his second edition of his *Institutes*. Stair includes in the fourth book material from an earlier work entitled *Modus Litigandi or Form of Process*.³² This section contains various "actions" in

28. Thomas M'Crie, ed., *The Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Wodrow*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Printed for the Wodrow Society, 1842, 1843) 2.463.

29. *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, 11 vols. ([Edinburgh], Printed by Command of his Majesty King George IV, 1814–1824) 11.404, 405. Cf. 11.25, 70 for early dissents and 11.313 for a later dissent.

30. Cf. L. W. Sharp, ed., *Early Letters of Robert Wodrow*, (Edinburgh: University Press, 1937) xxi. A letter of Wodrow to his father is referenced in which "Walter Steuart Blackhalls sone" is mentioned. The index entry specifies this Walter Steuart as "advocate, son of Archibald Stewart of Blackhall" (perhaps to distinguish this person from Walter Steuart the merchant). Pardovan appears not to have been a minister or Earl as supposed by some. He bears the title "Esq." after his name in his work and his father appears to bear the title "Sir" before his name if published genealogies may be trusted. Pardovan's death is indicated by Wodrow to have been about 1719. A dispute of Pardovan with the minister John Anderson in a paper before the General Assembly is referenced in a Wodrow letter to his wife in 1718 and Wodrow (who corresponded with both parties and addressed Pardovan as a "Laird," not a "Lord") reports that the paper of Pardovan put him "quite out of humour" (Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2.382). Near the end of 1723 Wodrow sends a letter to "Lady" Pardovan informing her of the right to have an inscription placed on a wall across from her husband's final resting place. Catalogue information entered in the National Library of Scotland (cf. <http://www.nls.uk> for "Steuart, Walter") lists two individuals with death dates of 1721 and 1764, both having produced legal dissertations.

31. Pardovan's treatment of errors and offenses in the third book follows the order of the Decalogue to a considerable extent. In the first book, he treats of teachers in the place where the *French Discipline*, chapter two, treats of schools (between its treatment of ministers and elders).

32. Stair, *Institutes* (Introduction to 1981 edition) 44. Cf. the model of Justinian's *Institutes* and the 1917 RCC Code of Canon Law.

law. In a remote way, the Roman law division of persons, things, and actions may have contributed to Pardovan's organizational structure. In Pardovan's introduction, he describes the division of his work into four books and describes book two as dealing with the "the Worship of God and sacred *things*" (emphasis supplied). He groups books three and four as related to discipline, "the one concerning errors and scandals, and the other about the method of reclaiming and censuring the erroneous and scandalous" (*Compendium*, 1:186). American Presbyterian Church Orders have traditionally been divided into sub-units on government, discipline, and worship which may simply reflect natural organization or may also derive from Pardovan's divisions.

The fourth book in Pardovan's work advances beyond the *French Discipline* by focusing on the probative aspect of disciplinary process. The prior adoption of the *Form of Process* by the Scottish Church probably accounts for the advancement. Pardovan's *Collections* help explain the *Form of Process* while introducing an organizational distinction between specified errors or scandals and the process used to address such offenses.

We have seen above that evidence of canon law procedure in disciplinary cases predates Pardovan's work. Pardovan's *Collections* confirm the ability of the Scottish Church to appropriate and recontextualize some of canon law concepts within a Reformed polity. This is not a unique dynamic. A recent book dealing with the legal shift during the Lutheran Reformation in Germany provides an interesting study in the dilemma posed to a nation seeking to escape the tyranny of canon law but unable to completely jettison the elements of this massive edifice without avoiding anarchy.³³ Prior to the Reformation, a certain amount of procedural Canon Law involved recontextualized Roman Law (Cf. Fowler-Magerl, *Ordo*).

Though we have dwelt on Pardovan's work at some length here, it is well to remember that the official guide to the Church of Scotland in disciplinary matters is the *Form of Process* of 1707. A brief consideration of its structure will highlight the special way in which the due process concern emerged in Scottish Presbyterianism after the Glorious Revolution. We noted previously a certain unity among the Scottish, French, and Dutch Reformed Orders in requiring various admonitions and a graded exposure of the offense and offender to the congregation. In each of these orders there is a

concern to include the congregation in the judgment of excommunication which concern was also expressed by Luther.

When the *Form of Process* adopted a number of rules concerned with due process, the question arises, what becomes of the old process of admonitions, graded exposure, and tacit judgment by the congregation? This older process assumes the party in question is guilty. The newer process assumes we must first establish guilt by a just process before seeking repentance.

In the nine chapters of the *Form of Process*, the last two have a similar emphases and orientation to the older disciplinary orders. Chapter nine contains an order for absolving those previously excommunicated. Chapter eight contains provisions on how to proceed to the "censure of the greater excommunication." The order of these last two chapters is logical. They presume that the person in view is a proven offender. The Chapter eight, like the older orders, provides a method of confirming obstinacy (not original guilt, which is assumed) en route to excommunication (or the alternative of securing repentance).

Though the provision for gradual exposure is not set forth in the exact terms we saw in the sixteenth century, FP 8.9 specifies that *there should be three public admonitions....* When these admonitions do not produce the desired result, FP 8.11 indicates that it is the presbytery that is to pass sentence. An appointed minister informs the congregation of this resolution and that the sentence will be pronounced in *the face of the congregation, unless either the party, or some one for him, signify some relevant ground to stop their procedure*. Even on the appointed day, the minister charged with pronouncing the censure, has discretion to suspend the action if the offender gives serious intimation that he is repentant (FP 8.16).

A different emphasis is found in the first seven chapters where the "process" is primarily defined in terms of assessing and weighing guilt. This new emphasis is given an official fixed form in a standard applicable to all judicatories. With the *Form of Process* of 1707, Presbyterian due process was given a definite and fuller form. One anecdote, however, suggests that this *Form of Process* did not eliminate all discretion from judicatories in pursuing the truth in judicial cases.

In 1709, the General Assembly of Scotland entertained a distinguished visitor. Edmund Calamy, one of several descended from the Westminster Divine of the same name, was an honored guest of the Assembly. He provided an interesting insight into a discipline case that was before that body on appeal. A William Law

33. John Witte, Jr., *Law and Protestantism* (Cambridge: University Press, 2002). The book is dedicated to Harold J. Berman who also has published a recent book with a similar subject: *Law and Revolution II* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

(or Lawson) appealed the censure of suspension by the Synod of Aberdeen relative to doctrinal matters:

[Upon] Law's appearing before the Synod of Aberdeen, a committee was appointed to draw up a considerable number of questions on the most noted heads of divinity, to which he was to give a direct answer. His answers were to be taken in writing, and a judgment formed from thence as to his fitness for the ministry. The majority of that Synod was against him; but he appealed to the General Assembly, where the exceptions were read, and also the questions (above one hundred in number), together with his answers. Some of these answers it must be confessed were weak. Others were as proper as would, I believe, have been returned off-hand by many whose sufficiency was no way called in question.

The Assembly seemed to be at a loss what to do with this man. The Moderator, stooping down and whispering me in the ear as the questions were read over, asked me what my apprehensions were. I frankly answered that we in England should reckon this way of proceeding, the Inquisition revived; at which he could not help smiling. Lord Forbes who sat on the bench above me, asked what passed between the Moderator [John Currie] and me, at which he smiled. I freely told him, and he immediately fell to laughing. The Lord President, who sat on the bench above him, inquiring what he laughed at, and he giving him an account, joined also in the laugh. At last, the Commissioner, who could not well help observing this, stooped down, and whispered the Lord President of the Session, and asked what was the occasion of all this laughing? Being told, he could not forbear joining. In short, it was whispered from one to another, till it went round the Assembly (*Life* ii.155).³⁴

At the time, the Churchmen of Aberdeen were not so amused with Calamy's joke. A later Scotsman, Thomas M'Crie, son of the Knox biographer, also had difficulty with Calamy's jest, regarding it as a jab against the *Form of Process* adopted two years earlier rather than the particular method of proceeding that the Synod of Aberdeen had followed. The question turns on what is being referred to Calamy's words, "this way of proceeding."³⁵ The *Form of Process* contains no provision requiring a judicatory to compile a great number of doctrinal questions, answers, and exceptions, as the Synod of Aberdeen did at its own discretion.³⁶ Thus it would appear that the Assembly was amused by the alleged affinities of the Aberdeen process to Inquisition

process rather than regarding the remark as critical of their own *Form of Process*. Besides providing comic relief for a hard subject, the incident illustrates several things. First, though the Synod of Aberdeen was bound to follow the *Form of Process*, there were aspects of the case that they may have legitimately viewed as not addressed by the *Form*. In absence of details, they felt free to supplement the guidance given in the *Form* with their own procedure. The Assembly was well aware of what the *Form of Process* contained. Their mirth at Calamy's frank appraisal when contrasted to the unhappiness of the "Aberdonians," suggests that it was indeed the super-added process that appeared Inquisitorial. The confusion of M'Crie—a recognized author of Scottish Church history—is evidence that the disciplinary processes of a church are not always properly understood by some of the best informed church members and officers, particularly with the passage of time.

V. AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN DISCIPLINE AND DUE PROCESS

In 1706 the first presbytery met in America under the leadership of Francis Makemie. Coming a year before the *Form of Process* was finally adopted in Scotland we may wonder what sort of due process existed in the first presbytery during its early years.

The First American Presbytery And Synod

On the surface, nothing remarkable emerges in answer to the question posed. There is certainly orderly process and seriousness in the meetings, but as far as anything similar to standardized formal disciplinary process that came into the Church of Scotland after the Glorious Revolution, there is little.

In 1707 Samuel Davies' excuses for non attendance at "this and the preceding meeting" of presbytery are not sustained. If the "preceding meeting" was the first

34. John Warrick, *The Moderators of the Church of Scotland 1690 to 1740* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier, 1913) 218, 219.

35. Thomas McCrie, *The Story of the Scottish Church* (Glasgow: Bell & Bain, Ltd., n.d.; repr. Free Presbyterian Publications, c.1988) 442. The preface indicates a probable date of 1874 for the issuance. Reprint information is not given but the forward points to 1988 and the dust jacket as Free Presbyterian Publications.

36. Chapter seven deals with ministers. A general rumor or scandal (*fama clamosa*) may require investigation or process per FP 7.3. In FP 7.8 a minister's doctrine is addressed. The Aberdeen procedure is neither forbidden nor suggested. *The Practice of the Free Church of Scotland*, 8th ed. (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1995) is one modern source for this, cf. appendix, 191,192.

Presbytery meeting (1706), it is an interesting question as to what compelled an excuse. Whatever the solution to this question, there is an orderliness and expectation in place familiar to modern Presbyterians, though nothing that tells us much about how a judicial process should be handled.

By 1710 there is mention of “censure” in the cases of Messrs. David Evans and Walter Kerr. In the former matter, Evans had in his status as a layman, preached to Welsh settlers thereby “Invading ye work of the Ministry...” In the latter case, a Minister asked for advice in dealing with Kerr who had by report “defamed ye Presbry...” He was advised to “act either by private or publick Censure; as ye Nature of ye thing should appear to him, and yt [that] Report thereof be made next Meeting.”

From these cases we see supervisory accountability. Further, the fact that Presbytery determines these actions implies possible deliberation before vote and determination. The Kerr case is suggestive of what has been called a “reference for advice” in Presbyterian practice. There is the suggestion of presbytery retaining jurisdiction or at least review jurisdiction in the case. But of a fixed written order uniformly requiring citations, pleadings, witnesses, trials, and so forth, we find none. The precise sense of what the censure is must be gleaned from context. In the case of Evans it seems to be a sort of rebuke that does not preclude him from pursuing licensure.

By 1712 a more serious and demanding case arises in which the probative limits of the early Presbytery come up against a man who denies the charge of bigamy. Van Vleck agrees to a suspension of his ministry while the matter continues to be investigated.³⁷ This *modus vivendi* relies on no pre-existing rule or precedent. The case continues until 1715 when he is reported to be a fugitive, though letters in the Presbytery letter book from late October of 1712 show the investigation was turning against Van Vleck (Klett, 82–83; cf. 79, September letter). The decision to proceed deliberately in the matter shows a due diligence being exercised without a formal policy in place.

We may conclude that in the time when only a Presbytery existed, a sense of order prevailed but no uniform rules as formally adopted policy. A similar thing can be said for the Synodical period that began in 1717. The language and actions take on a slightly more familiar sound to the modern Presbyterian and there may be

more overt influence of the Church of Scotland in the style of the language and proceedings. There is correspondence carried on with [Edmund] Calamy in London and Andrew Sterling in Glasgow. The Americans had an established Presbyterian Church in Scotland for a model, but it is not clear that they tried to follow this model in any slavish fashion.

Early cases falling under the early Synod period include: Van-Dyke (1717, incest [Klett, 32]), Robert Cross (1720, fornication), John Clement (1721, interim suspension [p 45] and subsequent discovery of serious sins of violence and drunkenness [49]).

By 1722 the Synod toyed with a more formalized Act “for the better carrying on in the Matters of our Government and Discipline, ...” (51). The same year, Synod expresses serious reservations about what may be summarized as due process lapses (e.g. the right to confront accusations/evidences) in the treatment of John Walton by the Presbytery of Maidenhead; yet Mr. Walton’s deportment toward the presbytery wins him little support before the Synod (54, 55). Also the same year Henry Hook is dealt with in a manner that would be familiar to modern Presbyterians. In a very deliberative manner, some charges are dismissed, some sustained, and the degree of censure is debated. A choice between definite and indefinite suspension appears despite no formal rule or policy setting forth degrees of censure or types of suspension (56). Subsequently the Synod returned to dealing with the possibility of an Act that might regulate Government and Discipline. This created a controversy. Judging from the composure of differences that ensued, it seems that a universal policy was not to be more than advisory for all judicatories. The right of judicatories to decline from the use of “directories” upon what they may think good cause, was agreed upon (57).

In the 1758 Plan of Reunion, the first article mentions adhering to “the Plan of Worship, Government, and Discipline, contained in the Westminster Directory;...” (p. 341). Further, in article five it mentions “our known Rules of Judicial Tryal in Cases of Scandal.” These “known rules” are not specifically referenced and may be assumed to be procedures followed by custom. Most particularly, this provision may reference the need to follow an orderly course in addressing perceived ills rather than to publishing sermons in which the Christian profession of others is called into question. Gilbert Tennent’s sermon on an unconverted ministry was part of the backdrop for division and reunion. As early as 1743 an overture from the Presbytery of New York set forth a simple policy if ministers had a “Matter of

37. Guy S. Klett, ed., *Minutes of the Presbyterian Church in America 1706–1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1976) 14.

Complaint.” This amounted to little more than following private conference with an offender before filing more formal complaint.³⁸

One curious case took place in 1763 in which John Ewing files a protest because of inadequate witnesses being allowed to adversely affect the reputation of a church officer. He cites such secular authorities as Justinian, Grotius, and Puffendorf as well as reputable divines as persuasive authorities against the action that was taken or allowed. He further mentions that the woman who was at the heart of the alleged incident could not be a witness since she was not “disinterested in the Issue of the Cause.” He adds that “our church Rules also require that Witnesses swear themselves free of Bribery, malice, & party council...” (Klett, 387). The specificity of this statement is of interest. *Form of Process* 2.11 states that, “Though there be no relevant objection, yet the witnesses are solemnly to be purged of malice, bribe, good deed done or to be done, and of partial counsel.”

Ewing clearly is paraphrasing the *Form of Process* and/or Pardovan³⁹ at this point in his protest. This paraphrase is referred to as “our church Rules.” Despite the absence of an earlier Act that specifically references these rules, Ewing’s protest suggests that the Scottish rules were known and afforded some special dignity.

In 1770 a presbytery in South Carolina sends a query to the Synod “signifying their desire to unite with this Synod and asking the conditions on which it may be obtained.” They are informed that ministers must adopt the Westminster doctrinal standards and “the directory as the plan of your worship and discipline.” While the Church of Scotland is set forth as the pattern, the Synod states that

...we have not as yet expressly adopted by resolution of our Synod or bound ourselves to any other Standing laws of forms of the Church of Scotland than these above mentioned intending to lay down such rules for ourselves upon Presbyterian principles in general as circumstances should from time to time shew to be expedient (Klett, 477, 478).

The terminology used in cases mentioned within the minutes edited by Guy Klett does not have frequent reference to libels or a *fama clamosa*. In a case arising in 1769, an Alexander Miller appeals his deposition from the ministry and speaks of the presbytery publishing and ordering “a libel to be publicly read against me” (Klett, 562). If this is speaking of formal charges (*libellus accusationis*) rather than a defamatory libel, it is still the language of an individual rather than the usual language

of the recording clerk. The minutes generally speak of charges, accusations, or complaints when speaking of the initial action that sets a disciplinary process in motion. In 1786, we find the term *fama clamosa* used to describe an expedient by which the Dutch Churches or Presbyterian judicatories might be able to bring cases up for judicial consideration when no accuser prosecutes “in their own name *Cum periculo*” (606). When American Presbyterianism adopted its own *Forms of Process* in 1789, the same notion was provided for but called “common fame.”⁴⁰ Perhaps a more thorough perusal of sessional and presbyterial records would uncover greater usage of the Scottish terms of art. The point to be observed is that on a denomination wide level, Colonial Presbyterians had their own favored terms and usages for discipline though in concept these were little different from the Scottish principles. When the time came to formally adopt standards for government, discipline and worship at a denominational level, the Scottish model was consulted and used as shall be seen presently.

In 1786, in response to a query from the Dutch Reformed Church, the American Presbyterian Synod of New York and Philadelphia stated which formulas they looked to as statements of their doctrine, worship, and discipline. The Synod referred to the *Westminster Confession* as well as “the directory for public worship & form of Church government recommended by the Westminster Assembly as in substance agreeable to the Institutions of the New Testament.” Further, the Synod added,

The Rules of our discipline, & the form of process in our Church Judicatures are contained in Pardovan’s (alias Stewarts) collections, in conjunction with the Acts of our own Synod, the power of which we consider as equal to the power of any Synod or general Assembly in the world (Klett, *Minutes*, 604).

38. Klett, *Minutes*, 182–183. The overture failed and a further proposal was offered at the same meeting (184–185) with the same basic policy in handling offenses (point 7) which was refused by the estranged parties.

39. Cf. *Compendium*, 1.421 [IV.III.16]. Only the first edition of Pardovan (1709) which lacked the full appended *Form of Process* would have been available at this time.

40. A draft revision in 1819 makes more frequent use of *fama clamosa*. Cf. *Report of the Committee of the General Assembly appointed for Revising the Form of Government and the Forms of Process* (Philadelphia: Thomas and William Bradford, 1819) 22–23. This term was edited out of the finished 1821 revision. The text of the standards for various years is normally found under the title, *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*. The first edition containing the 1821 revisions is that by Anthony Finley (Philadelphia, 1821).

The question may be raised what is the specific object of, “contained in Pardovan’s collections?” If the *Form of Process* of 1707 is distinctly being referred to, then the earliest edition of Pardovan where the *Form* is distinctly appended is the 1770 edition. The *Form* is only present in the 1709 edition as elements are mixed in with Pardovan’s structure and commentary. It may also be that “form of process” in conjunction with “rules of our discipline” is being used in a generic sense and that no specific grouping of rules is in view. In any event, there is little prior evidence that the Synod had a formal constitutional commitment to specific disciplinary canons analogous to the Church of Scotland’s adoption of the *Form of Process*.

More specifically, there is evidence that an entire presbytery was ready to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church when a formal constitution defining the government, discipline, and worship was about to be approved in 1788. The Presbytery of Suffolk, through the Church’s committee, was persuaded to withdraw its petition of dismissal (Klett, 633, 644).

Rules For Discipline in 1788 and 1821

The American Presbyterian Church may be said to have begun *de facto* in 1706 with the organization of a general or classical presbytery. In 1788 the Church acquired a firm *de jure* governmental status with the official adoption of a constitution for government and discipline. Prior to this time it may be said that they possessed a specific doctrinal constitution from 1729 and a general commitment to Presbyterian government defined by various Acts of their synods and the common understanding of substantially like-minded people who had associated through their judicatories. The 1786 query from the Dutch Reformed Church coincided with a decision to become more specifically committed to fixed polity canons.

In 1789, when the first General assembly met, the

constitutional rules pertaining to discipline were very meager. Two chapters, forming a kind of appendix to the *Form of Government* were called, “Forms of Process.” Apart from the plural “forms,” this set of canons has some obvious connection to the Scottish *Form of Process* of 1707.⁴¹ Yet it is extremely brief by comparison. There is nothing said about appeals. Categorized rules and suggestions for dealing with special cases like fornication or adultery are omitted. It seems that the 1789 disciplinary canons were focused on rules for formal discipline at the beginning of processes and avoided legislation on various extenuating circumstances. It was not a comprehensive formula. Appeals continued in the life of the new Church denomination, even though no specific provision was made in the canons under the *Forms of Process*. A kind of customary or common law still would guide the church in this respect.⁴² Further, the legitimacy of appeals was implicit in the formal Presbyterian structure set forth in the *Form of Government*.

The term “libel” is not used in the 1789 *Forms of Process*. It speaks of “accusation” and “complaint or information.” It states that in an accusation, “the times, places, and circumstances should be ascertained, if possible; that the accused may have an opportunity to prove an alibi....” This seems to contain the libel concept in substance but also in a more explanatory fashion. Eventually the *Book of Discipline* would articulate this in terms of charges and specifications where specifications are the factual assertions of the “legal syllogism.” The language has changed but the libel concept is retained in substance.⁴³

The *Forms of Process* were not the only part of the new canons where policy was set forth on disciplinary matters. Though the *Directory for Worship* was dealt with somewhat separately from the polity canons, it contained a chapter on the “Mode of Inflicting Censures.” The logic for placing this chapter in the worship canons appears to have elements in common with the 1569 *Form* adopted in Scotland as a further guide to its 1560 *Book of Discipline*. Disciplinary actions taken within the privacy of a judicatory occasionally need to be shared in some fashion with the Congregation. Thus some liturgical guidance is given to decide what to say to the congregation, when it should be said, prayers to be offered, etc. It seems this chapter of the *Directory* contributed to delay in the production of a finalized *Directory*. On close inspection, some of the canons falling within the *Directory for Worship*, help define disciplinary policy. As such, some of the rules might just as easily have been placed within the *Forms*

41. The plural might have been used since the process for ministers is considered distinct from the process of other church members.

42. The 1821 revision of the *Book of Discipline* would remedy this omission. The Scottish Church would again function as a model with a considerable amount of material from Principal George Hill’s work forming the basis for church law on Review and Control, Appeals, Complaints, and References.

43. Cf. *The Case Against Professor Briggs*, 2 vols. (New York: Scribners, 1893) 1.25–26. Briggs criticizes the form of charge against him by recourse to authoritative Scottish definitions of a libel. This was a few years after the 1884 *Book of Discipline* revision. The prosecuting committee was allowed to reframe charges as long as the substance of the case was not changed (1.171).

of Process. Of particular interest is the following canon on the 1787 “draught”:

The Minister shall, after the advice of the Presbytery has been obtained, at least two Lord’s days before the excommunication, give the congregation a short narrative of the several steps which have been taken with the scandalous and obstinate brother, and inform them, that it has been found necessary to resolve to cut him off from their communion....⁴⁴

This provision survived in substance (as Chapter X, Section VII) when a later draft more conformable to the desires of the Church was produced. The explicit requirement of advice from Presbytery would later be dropped from the *Directory* (at least by 1839, at which time a more ample and revised *Book of Discipline* governed disciplinary processes. “Advise and consent” of Presbytery for restoring the person was still in place at this time, however).

In the rule requiring sharing of information with the congregation, we see a relic of the sixteenth century rule which involved the congregation in the discipline of offenders. The manner of announcement could mean that the censure is a *fait accompli*. Conversely, the two Lord’ day notice may imply that the matter is not a *fait accompli* and that further information from the congregation (or a responsive offender) might affect the final disposition of the censure. In any case, the advance notice guarantees the dissemination of knowledge of the censure so the members may respond appropriately to the one who is cut off.

On balance, the announcement probably should be seen as evidence that the excommunication is not a *fait accompli*. First, the rule in the *Directory for Worship* is concerned as much with how to engage the congregation as with policy. Second, the peculiar wording of the early draft of the rule speaks of “necessary to resolve to cut him off.” This wording unnecessarily includes the words “to resolve” if a *fait accompli* is in view. Thirdly, the precedent of the Scottish *Form of Process* is arguably a larger context for interpreting this rule. If a major departure from the Scottish rule was in view, this could easily have been accomplished by making the further announcements after the excommunication has been pronounced or by specifying the singular reason for the advance announcement.

At the same time, the American policy has no order for progressive exposure of the offense and offender nor three specific public admonitions with the announcements. If the purpose of the announcement was implied

and understood as allowing for a last minute objection or reprieve, it was not specifically enough stated to guard against later uncertainty about the full purposes of the announcement.

Functionally, the congregation’s “need to know” place in the process and ability to interpose new information or objections does not require a policy exactly modeled after the one we noted that was followed in the sixteenth century policy. The censure of suspension may precede excommunication and may be announced to the congregation.⁴⁵ The objectives of the sixteenth century policy may also be ensured by making the formal trial a matter of public record and allowing trials to be held with open doors as much as practicable.⁴⁶ A trial that is open to the public is itself a recognized due process element that has parallels to Luther’s concern to engage the congregation in a disciplinary judgment. The sixteenth century policy seems to have been animated by a combination of concern with Episcopal and Papal unilateralism in excommunication and the desire to apply the Matthew 18 provision of telling the matter “to the church.” Exegetically, some Presbyterians have regarded the word “church” as potentially referring to the assembly of church governors rather than the congregation.⁴⁷ Even if this is an overly restrictive exegesis, the Presbyterian practice of due process is not irreconcilable with engagement of the congregation.

44. *Draught of the Form of Government and Discipline* of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: S. and J. Loudon, 1787) 94. The previous printed draft in 1786 did not include a *Directory for Worship*. The 1786 and 1787 provisional drafts and the 1789 constitution are available in microfiche from American Imprints (Evans 19935, 20658, 22079). Major revisions to the disciplinary rules of the *Forms of Process* (*Book of Discipline*) followed in 1821, 1884, and 1934. No attempt has been made here to pinpoint the time of the minor changes in the *Directory of Worship*. It is generally wise to examine the *Directory* for changes at the appropriate place whenever a revision to the *Book of Discipline* has taken place.

45. There is a discretionary element here since suspension does not have to precede full excommunication. The distinction between definite and indefinite suspension is also a discretionary factor which may affect the decision whether to announce the censure to the congregation. These are factors that have caused American Presbyterianism to develop some uniqueness with respect to official congregational involvement in the process.

46. In the 1789 *Forms of Process* I.9 it was specified that a “trial shall be open, fair, and impartial.” The word “open,” though included in an 1819 draft revision, was omitted in the 1821 revision (apparently without prejudice to the normality of an open trial). A later revision stipulated that the doors of a trial might be closed with a two thirds vote. A later attempt to mandate closed door trials failed to get in the 1934 revision. J. Gresham Machen, seemingly prescient of his future, denounced the idea of star-chamber tribunals in *Christianity Today* (December 1931) 6–7.

47. James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ*, 2 vols. (1869; repr.

From a strictly practical view point, some level of congregational engagement is required if they are, in good faith, to regard and treat the one excommunicated as a Gentile and tax collector.

Only a brief note on the 1821 American Presbyterian *Book of Discipline* is necessary to complete our sketch of due process in Presbyterianism. A comparison of the 1707 Scottish *Form of Process* and the 1789 American *Forms of Process* should suffice to demonstrate that American Presbyterians eventually looked back to their Scottish roots to find material for a fixed constitutional policy in probative discipline that would bind all judicatories. The 1821 *Book of Discipline* essentially supplied the 1789 rules with additional guidance in appeals, complaints and other matters. A comparison of the new material in the 1821 *Book of Discipline* with material published by Scots polity expert George Hill, demonstrates that conceptually, the new material was also taken in large part from the Church of Scotland.⁴⁸ There was debate prior to the revised *Book of Discipline* in 1884 that argued for the removal of some of this material on the following basis:

This Section, so far as it is true, belongs rather to a treatise on Church Government than to a Book of Discipline. In fact, it is extracted almost verbatim from such a treatise (Hill's Theological Institutes [insertion original]); it never formed a part, as many suppose it does, of any law book of the Church of Scotland.⁴⁹

The material objected to was a preface, but in fact much of the material beyond the preface dealing with

Cherry Hill, N.J.: Mack Publishing Company, 1971) 2:311. This question is subsumed under the larger question of which bodies possess church power in the government of the church. Very generally, it may be said that Bannerman favors a view of balance between judicatories and the congregation, cf. 1.262–275. The target of Bannerman's concern is Independent congregationalism rather than continental reformed polity, though his comments may be applicable to the latter in some cases.

48. Cf. Samuel Miller Class Lectures of 1815, Princeton Theological Seminary Archives. Box 3, file 12 (April 10th lecture). The title in the finding aid is "3.12 Church Government, Appeals, Complaints (April 10, 1815). See "Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection: A Finding Aid (Index)," *The Confessional Presbyterian* (2005) 1.31. It appears that Miller took Hill's material up in his lectures to students and the same material was later incorporated into the 1821 *Book of Discipline*.

49. E.R. Craven, "III. The Revised Book of Discipline," *The Presbyterian Review* 4 (January 1883) 58. The material in view is found in the same *Compendium* containing Pardovan's work (1.459–494, esp. 478–482).

50. David Laing, ed., *The Works of John Knox* (Edinburgh: James Thin for The Wodrow Society; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1966) 2.227. Cf. William Croft Dickinson, 2.306.

General Review and Control, References, Appeals, and Complaints was very similar to Hill's treatment and in concept is quite arguably reflective of the practice of the Church of Scotland.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

From the sketch presented, the American Presbyterian focus on a fixed and generally binding set of rules to ensure due process in the prosecution of formal discipline has its clearest precedent in the 1707 *Form of Process* in the Church of Scotland. In the nature of the case, this precedent did not formally exist when the first presbytery was formed in 1706. When the urge to provide a more uniform rule of due process took root, however, it was to the Scottish Church that American Presbyterianism looked for its model.

The Church of Scotland, to the degree she was the mother church of American Presbyterians, was a mother in search of her own direction after being reestablished in 1690. Though having a sixteen year head start in getting her policies together, the settlement on a uniform standard for formal discipline was something that did not happen overnight. Scotland had some legal talent among her ruling elders after the Glorious Revolution, but coming to agreement on a general disciplinary standard for the church still did not occur until 1707. What the reestablished Church of Scotland had available for precedents in Knox, Melville, and Westminster, the Americans also had available. But these standards offered little in the area of a direct policy on how to do formal discipline.

That 1707 is a key date for Presbyterian due process taking on a fixed and generally binding form we think has been shown. The question that remains is what developments caused it to take place at this time. That is beyond our ability to pursue further but is worthy of study. One factor in considering such a study is the curious relationship that existed between Church and State after the Reformation. Rather than having the Church try heretics and then turn them over to the severities of state justice as did the Romanists, the State sometimes undertook such prosecutions. Calvin's prosecution of Servetus was conducted under due process protections afforded by civil customs and laws. In an environment where the civil magistrate assumed responsibility for prosecuting crimes that today are primarily offenses against the Church, it may be that the urgency for due process rules in ecclesiastical discipline was retarded. In Knox's *First Book of Discipline* (cf. seventh head),⁵⁰ the

Continued on Page 255.

Liberty of Conscience in the Westminster Confession and its Application to Modern “Worship Wars”

By John (Jack) Allen Delivuk, Th.D.

“The doctrine of Christian liberty, detached from its dogmatic basis, becomes an invitation to free oneself from the oppression of religious ordinances ...”

— A. S. P. Woodhouse¹

INTRODUCTION

As I researched into Liberty of Conscience,² one aspect of Christian liberty, it became increasingly clear that I was entering a theological, ethical, and ecclesiastical minefield, a minefield that included today’s “worship wars”. The importance of this topic was emphasized for me by a conversation with a professor in the Geneva College Bible Department. When I shared my project, he said he wanted to read my paper because this was a problem area for him. The extreme individualism that marks the lifestyle of many American readers creates a high probability that my words might be misinterpreted or taken out of context to justify sinful practices that are or can be harmful to both readers and the church. Therefore, I ask my readers to read my work with prayerful care. To do less may lead you to misunderstand God’s teaching on this topic and lead to even more disrespect for, and/or even rebellion against, the teaching and discipline of the glorious bride of Jesus Christ.

I also realized that the Westminster Assembly was called in part to settle the “worship wars” of seventeenth-century Great Britain. The keystone of their solution to their worship controversy, the doctrine of Liberty of Conscience, is discussed here. I hope that a better understanding of this doctrine will contribute to the glory of God by giving more peace and harmony to our congregations.

My approach will be as follows: I. First, this essay will briefly define the meaning of Liberty of Conscience, explaining which of the several definitions is used in this

essay. II. Secondly, it will explain the historical context in which Liberty of Conscience was developed. It will begin with the Vestments controversy and conclude with the historical context of the Westminster Confession. III. Third, it will explain the Confession’s teaching on Liberty of Conscience in its relation to church authority, Scripture and other confessional doctrines including Christian liberty and worship. The seventeenth-century theologians cited were members of the committee that wrote the Westminster Confession.³ Some applications of this doctrine to our present day will be discussed, and IV. some case studies presented to illustrate and help congregations avoid problems.

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1. A. S. P. Woodhouse, ed. *Puritanism and Liberty: Being the Army Debates: 1647–9* (London: J. M. Dent, 1951) 55.

2. This article is an expansion of a version which previously appeared in *Semper Reformanda* 11.1–2 (Spring-Winter 2002) 27–52.

3. The men who wrote the Confession were Cornelius Burges, Thomas Gataker, Robert Harris, Charles Herle, Joshua Hoyle, Edward Reynolds, Thomas Temple, Robert Baillie, George Gillespie, Alexander Henderson, and Samuel Rutherford. This method of research was pioneered by Jack Rogers in *Scripture in the Westminster Confession* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1966) 40, 161–182.

I. DEFINING LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

My research turned up four definitions of Liberty of Conscience that are to some degree overlapping. I will begin with the ones this essay either does not discuss or rejects. The first definition is the freedom of the church from the state. The second definition is the freedom of the individual from the state. The third was used by men like William Penn to justify denominationalism. For Penn it meant the freedom of denominationalism, the freedom to form and belong to a denomination of your choice. Penn summarized his view thus:

To Conclude ... we have not defended any Dissenters, whose Quarrel or Dissent is rather Civil and Political, rather than Religious and Conscientious; for both we really think such unworthy of Protection from the English Government, who seek the Ruin of it; and that such as Contributors to the Preservation of it, (thought Dissenters in Point of Faith or Worship) are unquestionably intitled to a Protection from IT.⁴

Penn's position on denominationalism is similar to that practiced by the United States government and supported by much of the Evangelical community. The Westminster Assembly condemned Penn's position because it allows freedom of heresy and antinomianism.⁵

The fourth definition, which was incorporated into the Westminster Confession, and is the subject of this essay, focuses on the role of practices neither forbidden nor commanded by Scripture—the “things indifferent.”

4. William Penn, “The Great CASE of Liberty of Conscience,” in *The Political Writings of William Penn* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002) 119. Unless otherwise noted emphasis is in the original.

5. See L. John Van Til, *Liberty of Conscience: The History of a Puritan Idea* (N. p.: The Craig Press, 1972).

6. Some editions of the Confession use the word “in” here instead of the more emphatic “if.” I have followed Carruthers. See S. W. Carruthers, ed., *The Confession of Faith of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster: From the Original Manuscript written by Cornelius Burges* (London: Presbyterian Church of England, 1946) 16. Carruthers calls this difference in combination with a punctuation change the most serious corruption in the text of the Confession. S. W. Carruthers, *The Westminster Confession of Faith: Being an account of the Preparation and Printing of its Seven Leading Editions ...* (Manchester: R. Aikman & Son, [1937]) 127–128. I believe the Divines saw the areas of worship and faith as more restrictive than the rest of life. The general rule is that we are free to do anything not forbidden in Scripture. The two exceptions to this rule are faith and worship, where we are limited to only what God commands.

7. James Reston, *Our Father Who art in Hell* (New York: Times Books, 1981). This book tells the story of Jonestown and the events leading up to it.

Westminster Confession of Faith 20.2 says,

God alone is the Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men, which are, in any thing, contrary to His Word; or beside it, if⁶ matters of faith, or worship. So that, to believe such doctrine, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

What does this definition say? It teaches that there are three types of works. Works of the first type are called good works, which are the positive commands of God such as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. The second type are sins, which are transgressions of or failures to conform to the law of God. The third type are actions that are neither commanded nor forbidden by God. These are called “things indifferent,” or “adiaphora. The Westminster Confession continues by naming the biblical exceptions to Liberty of Conscience. It says that the areas of “faith and worship” are areas where there are no things indifferent. The Confession continues by warning believers against obeying or believing man-made religious commands or doctrines ‘out of conscience.’ Many of us have seen the damaging effects of man-made doctrines and practices in the lives of members of liberal denominations, or in the lives of cult members. A very tragic example of obeying human commands in a religious body was the mass suicide that took place at Jonestown, Guyana, in 1978.⁷

Finally, this definition assumes two truths taught in Chapter 1 of the Confession, Of the Holy Scripture. First, that Christians can know with absolute certainty God's commands and doctrines, and tell the difference between human and divine commands. Secondly, it assumes that there is a balance between four sources of authority: biblical authority, church authority, state authority and individual authority. The latter three authorities hold delegated authority limited and regulated by the Holy Scriptures. In the background given below, please pay special attention to how these authorities interacted.

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE FIRST VESTMENTS CONTROVERSY

Historians normally date the beginning of the Puritan-Anglican tensions, and hence the Liberty of Conscience controversy, to the first Vestments controversy.

We begin by defining the term “vestments.” John Primus defined them as follows:

It is necessary to understand at the outset, that the vestments about which there was controversy were not garments or robes or gowns in general, nor were they simply ecclesiastical garments or robes or gowns, but they were, most specifically, those ecclesiastical garments which had gained liturgical stature in the course of the history of the medieval church. The Vestments controversy with which we are concerned then, was a dispute in the early English Protestant church regarding the question whether her clergy could legitimately use the liturgical apparel which had been introduced and was still worn by the Roman Catholic clergy. Involved, therefore, in this ostensibly insignificant controversy were implicative questions regarding the relationship, which the new Church of England should maintain over against the old.⁸

The key man in the Vestments controversy was John Hooper, an early English reformer.⁹ He spent time on the continent with Calvinistic reformers and returned to England in 1549. When he was appointed bishop of Gloucester, he hesitated to take the position because of the oath of supremacy (which King Edward altered for him) and because of the use of vestments. Archbishop Thomas Cranmer refused to consecrate him without vestments. Meanwhile, in July of that year Bishop Nicholas Ridley of London was assigned to discuss the matter with Hooper. Ridley refused to approve of his consecration. However, on August 5, 1550, the king gave Hooper a dispensation on the rule requiring vestments. Ridley appealed that decision to the king’s council. Primus said of this controversy:

Here we see the first emergence of an issue that became very important in every later vestments debate, an issue that is basic in every struggle that pits conformity against nonconformity. It is the question of the authority of the individual over against the authority of the organization. The council on May 15 had declared vestments indifferent and therefore left it to the judgment of the individual whether they were worn or not. The council only requested that bishops who differed on this score should nevertheless mutually recognize each other in love as fellow bishops. Ridley, however reasoned from the same premise—that vestments are indifferent—to quite a different conclusion—that therefore they may properly be retained and enforced without exception by church and state (Primus, 14–15).

Ridley won the debate. Hooper was eventually consecrated with vestments in 1551.

The Vestments controversy was important in the formation of the Puritan movement. It also influenced the development of the Westminster standards because of the fundamental issue, authority. The controversy left many questions unanswered such as:

Who is permitted to judge what is or is not godly ecclesiastical polity? Who may determine what is or is not contrary to God’s Word? How is a civilly ordained, ungodly practice of ecclesiastical polity to be resisted? How is the magistrate to be restrained from initiating ungodly church practices (Primus, 31)?

The Westminster Assembly would attempt to answer some of these questions.

The Vestments controversy was important for another reason. It showed that question of authority could not be considered by itself, because it involved issues such as Christian liberty, freedom of conscience, the role of the individual in the church, the priesthood of all believers, and the role of things indifferent in and to the church.

The Second Vestments Controversy

The second Vestments controversy occurred under the reign of Queen Elizabeth. After the death of Edward VI, his Roman Catholic sister, Mary, became queen. Her goal was to reestablish the Roman Catholic Church in England. The Roman bishops imprisoned during the reign of Edward VI were released and reappointed. Some Protestants were executed; many fled to Europe for their lives. In Europe, they were exposed to the Reformed churches, and were influenced by their theology and practice. After the death of Mary, the Protestant Elizabeth came to the English throne in 1558. The refugees returned home. Mary’s bishops refused to serve under a Protestant queen. Underlings who supported Mary could not be trusted, so Elizabeth was forced to appoint the dedicated exiles to the vacant sees. Their

8. John Henry Primus, *The Vestments Controversy* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1960) xii–xiii. The entire Latin text of Hooper’s defense is found in C. Hopf, “Bishop Hooper’s ‘Notes’ to the King’s Council,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 44 (January–April 1943) 194–199. This was its first publication.

9. For more on Hooper’s beliefs see, John Hooper, “The Regulative Principle and Things Indifferent,” in Iain Murray, ed., *The Reformation of the Church* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965; repr. 1987) 55–62. This book also contains another work on vestments, John a Lasco, “The Abolition of Vestments,” 63–74.

Puritan or near Puritan convictions were out of sympathy with Elizabeth.¹⁰ As a result, the second Vestments controversy arose.

This second controversy is discussed simply with the goal of further understanding the Liberty of Conscience issues that serve as a background of the Westminster Assembly, and of understanding how the Bible speaks to this issue. Therefore, only one document will be selected for consideration, the letter of Jerome Zanchi to Queen Elizabeth on the Vestments controversy. Primus described this as “a very impressive letter, containing some of the most cogent pro-Puritan reasoning of the entire controversy.”¹¹ On August 8, 1571, Zanchi, professor of divinity at Heidelberg, wrote a letter to Queen Elizabeth on the subject of vestments. It was one of the few attempts to deal directly with the one person who could resolve the conflict.¹²

Summary of Zanchi's Letter

Following is a summary of Professor Zanchi's letter. Zanchi greeted Queen Elizabeth and introduced the subject. The apostle Paul commanded in 1 Timothy 2:2 that prayers be made for those in authority so that Christians may lead a quiet life, meaning a life in godliness and honesty. This lifestyle required certain things of rulers that are summarized by the following three responsibilities of kings: They should either restore the true religion and true worship if it has been banished, and if restored, preserve it in all its integrity. Second, men should live holy and honest lives. Therefore, licentiousness should be outlawed. Third, peace and friendship should be cultivated among people, by removing all occasions of discord (*Zurich Letters*, 339–341).

These responsibilities apply to the Vestments controversy as follows: Because the magistrate is to maintain the worship of God in all its integrity, he is to remove practices that violate worship either by their own nature

or incidentally. Worship is to be restored according to the ancient, apostolic and pure rule of God's word, and not to have even the appearance of evil. How can the Queen allow “indifferent” practices that bring mischief and do not edify (*Zurich Letters*, 341–342)?

Zanchi urged the Queen to avoid bad company by not using Roman religious practices unless the practices were used by the apostles, because Roman practices would corrupt the true church. The Bible teaches “a little leaven leavens a whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:6). Zanchi says Hosea (9:10, 10:1) rebuked the Jews for “having transplanted the shoots of superstition from Israel into their garden, that is into the true church.” Why were some godly kings rebuked in Scripture for allowing Jehovah's worship at the high places, where believers worshiped before the temple was built (1 Kings 15:14, 22:43)? The answer is because the temple had been built and God no longer permitted other places of worship. These passages apply to the Christian era, because in Christ's kingdom Aaronic ceremonies no longer have any standing. “Wherefore the apostles very properly took care that they should be done away with after the ascension of Christ, so that not even any relics should remain” (Acts 15), but the impious popists restored them (342–343).

Zanchi found other problems with papal practices. The use of vestments served to confirm the Romanists in their religion (they will say that the Queen of England is beginning to return to Rome gradually). For evidence, Professor Zanchi cited Old Testament passages on purity. In 2 Chronicles 19:2 it is taught that the godly must not help the ungodly. The prohibitions against mixing such as not plowing with an ox and an ass hitched together (Deut. 22:9–11) apply here (343–344).

What is the reason for vestments? The only reason the professor found was to disgrace England by wearing the garments of a harlot. The purpose of the Roman pomp and ceremony is to lure men to commit spiritual fornication. It is a shame to have them in the church of Christ. King Hezekiah destroyed the bronze serpent because the people were abusing it contrary to the Word of God (2 Kings 18:4). The same should be done to the garments that the apostles never used, but were adopted by Rome. Both things indifferent, which have been used by Rome to dishonor God, and vestments, the invention of Satan, should be forbidden (*Zurich Letters*, 345–346). Zanchi charges the English church with guilt by association.

The second responsibility of a ruler is to see that people live holy and honest lives. Nations have laws against wearing strange garments, because they corrupt good

10. Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley: University of California, 1976) 61–62.

11. Primus, *Vestments Controversy*, 154. The reasons for the detail in which Zanchi's letter is examined here are, first, because the letter cogently states the main Anglican-Puritan issues that are behind the Westminster Assembly's positions discussed in this essay. Second, it summarizes the Scripture proofs supporting the Puritan positions. These Scripture proofs are necessary for understanding the background of the Westminster Assembly, and this letter serves as a way of giving them in their historical context.

12. Hierome Zanchius to Queen Elizabeth, 10 September 1571, *The Zurich Letters (Second Series)*, Haſting Robinson, ed. and trans. (Cambridge, 1845) 339–353. The original is found in *Epistolae Zanchii* (Hanoviae, 1609) 1.423. N.B. From this point, multiple citations in one paragraph from the same author are cited in one note at the end.

morals [this probably referred to decency laws]. How can Queen Elizabeth receive counsel to introduce garments unknown to the Christian kingdom of the apostles? This principle is proved by Bible passages such as the prohibition of a man wearing clothing which pertains to woman and vice versa (Deut. 22:5). Protestants are of a different religion, and should be distinguished from Rome by a different sign (*Zurich Letters*, 356).

The third responsibility of the ruler is keeping peace. Vestments disturb the peace as do all novelties, and the disturbance is always greatest in the area of religion. To disturb the peace to cause a reformation is good because it disturbs an ungodly peace. But peace should not be disturbed by insisting on things indifferent. In the apostolic church, the troublemakers insisted on the observance of circumcision and the ceremonial law. This caused a lot of trouble, and would have caused even more if the synod at Jerusalem had not rejected them (Acts 15). It is the Queen's duty to follow the apostles: "you must imitate the apostles in this matter: neither must you impose this yoke upon the necks of the disciples of Christ yourself, nor allow it to be imposed on them by others." If there is disagreement among the bishops on this matter, call a Synod and have the issue decided by Scripture. Then order it observed by act of Parliament (347–348).

Zanchi continues. The majority of the Reformed churches have rejected vestments. The exceptions, who for the sake of peace accepted vestments, made a mistake because the papists are not going to change their errors (348–349).

Another problem with vestments is that they are offending the sensitive consciences of English believers. As the apostle Paul teaches, it is a grievous offense to disquiet the consciences of the godly and to offend the consciences of the weak.

"If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor 8:13.) For in these words he affords by his example a general rule taken from the doctrine of Christ; namely, that nothing indifferent is to be admitted, much less enforced upon others, and still less commanded by act of parliament, if in admitting, enforcing, or commanding it the consciences of the faithful are offended. For a tender and God-fearing conscience is a most precious thing, and very acceptable to God.¹³

Zanchi then applies the argument from the liberty of Christian conscience to vestments in detail. There are two possible sources for use of vestments. They are

Divine, that is, from God, through Moses, Christ, and the Holy Spirit acting through the apostles; or human through godly or ungodly men. It cannot be through Moses because the Levitical vestments were to cease at the death of Christ as is taught in Colossians and Hebrews. "For which reason they cannot be restored without a transgression of the divine will." It cannot be said that Christ or the apostles instituted them, since there is not a word of proof for vestments. If godly men instituted them, they did it for reasons of edification, or order, or decency. However, they are not edifying, they promote disorder, and do not add to the beauty of the bride of Christ. Therefore "the church, as in doctrine, so also in ceremonies and vestments, is to be framed after the model of the apostolic church" (*Zurich Letters*, 350–351).

Zanchi closed with a plea that Her Majesty not listen to improper counsel about vestments, but instead use her time and energy seeing that the bishops did their duty to their flocks "watch over the flock; teach sound doctrine; refute heresies; drive away the wolves; keep everyone to his duty, and exhort, incite, and stimulate all persons to a life becoming a Christian man." The true vestments of a Christian bishop are those Paul listed in writing to Timothy and Titus (1 Tim. 3:2–4 and Titus 1:7). "For the garments and ornament of the Aaronic priest were types of these true ornaments: they were the shadow, there the substance" (*Zurich Letters*, 352–353). This ends the letter of Jerome Zanchi to Queen Elizabeth, a theological high point of the second Vestments controversy.

Zanchi's letter included Scriptural proofs and hermeneutical assumptions that were of great significance in the Westminster Assembly. These included the assumptions that the apostolic church was the model for the later church to follow, that the Bible had priority over all other sources of authority, that the Old Testament was useful in proving the regulative principle of worship, the attack on vestments from the priesthood of Christ, and the argument for Liberty of Conscience in the church.

The Vestments controversies included several major issues summarized by John Primus as follows:

The vestments controversy involved, probably more than anything else, the problem of authority—

13. *Zurich Letters*, 349–50. Zanchi is defining Christian liberty in terms of the individual's right to be protected from the church requiring things indifferent, a view shared by Puritans and Presbyterians. Anglicans tended to define Christian liberty in terms of the church's right to add things indifferent.

individual authority, church authority, Scriptural authority, state authority, apostolic authority—in ecclesiastical affairs. It involved a profound doctrinal question related to the whole opposition between Roman Catholics and Protestants, the question of the nature of the clerical office in the light of the doctrine that all believers are priests. It involved a methodological question: the tempo of reform. It even involved an ecumenical question: Oneness with 'best reformed churches' on the continent (Primus, 67).

Unfortunately, the English church did not resolve the issues behind the Vestments controversy at that time. They would continue to be a source of friction between Puritan and Anglican, and eventually become a cause of the English Civil War.

As Queen Elizabeth lay dying, she named King James VI of Scotland as her heir. The Puritans hoped that the king of Presbyterian Scotland would be sympathetic to the establishment of some form of Presbyterian government and worship. However, King James had developed an intense dislike for Presbyterianism, and the English bishops appealed to his ego. Therefore, he not only embraced Anglicanism but attempted to force it on Scotland as well. Two results of his reign were heightened Puritan-Anglican tensions, and increased Scottish support for Puritanism. Under the reign of James's son, Charles I (1625–1649), the tensions exploded into a civil war. Charles was a poor administrator and frequently ignored the laws of England. He was forced to call Parliament into session in 1640 when Scotland invaded England. He wanted to raise taxes to meet military and other expenses. However, Parliament required political and ecclesiastical reforms as the price of higher taxes. The King dismissed Parliament, broke more laws, and called Parliament into session again later in the year. Tensions were very high. Parliament moved to protect itself by impeaching the Earl of Strafford and Archbishop William Laud. In January 1642, Charles I attempted to arrest some leading members of the House of Commons for treason. On August 22, Charles raised the Royal Standard at Nottingham and the English Civil War began. It resulted in a victory for Parliament.

This Parliament, the Long Parliament, called the Westminster Assembly into session. The reasons for this calling included the strength of the Puritan move-

ment, the persecution of Puritans by bishops, and the administrative problem of replacing the old, abolished form of church government with a new one. The bill establishing the Assembly was passed in 1643. After England and Scotland adopted the Solemn League and Covenant, Scottish treaty commissioners were added to the Assembly. One major goal, perhaps the major goal, of the Westminster divines was to write a constitution for an ecumenical reformed church. One of their important undertakings was to determine the biblical priorities and balance among four authorities: God speaking in Scripture, the state, the church, and the individual's conscience. Finding the biblical balance between these often competing authorities was one of the great accomplishments of the Westminster Assembly.

III. LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE EXPLAINED

The Roles Of Church Authority And Scripture

To properly understand Liberty of Conscience in the Westminster Confession, we must clearly understand the places given to four authorities, namely Scripture, the church, the state and the conscience of the individual. We will begin with Holy Scripture. Chapter 1.6 of the Confession declares,

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

Question 3 of the Shorter Catechism summarizes this section saying:

Q. What do the scriptures principally teach?

A. The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man.¹⁴

Confession 1.5 teaches that the Bible is inerrant or "infallible truth" and is "the Word of God."¹⁵

The above quotations make some important points. First, the Bible is of divine authority. It is a perfect love letter from a perfect God. Secondly, it is a sufficient love letter. It could not be perfect if it was not sufficient for "salvation, faith and life" (emphasis added). Because it is sufficient for all of life, nothing—absolutely nothing—is to be added to it. Neither church, nor state, nor individual are allowed to add one thing to the Christian

14. Cited from *The Westminster Confession* (Glasgow: FPP, 1990).

15. When used in the Confession, the word "infallibility," means "inerrancy." See John Allen Delivuk, "Inerrancy, Infallibility, and Scripture in the Westminster Confession of Faith," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 54.2 (Fall 1992) 349–355.

religion. The “no additions” clause was a key Puritan/Anglican difference. In his excellent study of the differences between the two groups, John New observed,

In reality the antagonisms arose from two incompatible habits of Biblical exegesis, each consistent with its own rationality. Puritanism claimed that Scripture revealed the model for Church organization, and for all behavior; that what was in Scripture ought to be implemented, and what was not explicitly there ought not to be practiced. Anglicanism considered the Scriptures authoritative for all things that pertained to redemption, but permissive for those that did not, in which case men might adjust their own affairs.¹⁶

The Puritan/Presbyterian position gives church authorities great power, but sees these powers as subordinate to the written Word of God. These are stated in Chapter 31, Of Synods and Councils, in paragraph three.

It belongeth to synods and councils, ministerially to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his church; to receive complaints in cases of maladministration, and authoritatively to determine the same: which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in His Word.

There are some important points to attend. The first is the use of the term “ministerially.” Americans will tend to read this word as meaning “pastorally.” The historical and linguistic context of the Confession supports the traditional meaning of “Pertaining to, or entrusted with, the execution of the law, or of the commands of a superior; pertains to or possessing delegated executive authority.”¹⁷ Thus, ministerial refers to the church’s God given authority to execute His will as revealed in His Word. The role of the church is comparable with the kings of Israel in the sense that they were not to legislate laws, but to execute the laws God had already revealed. This contrasts with the Anglicans who wanted to legislate rites, ceremonies, and change the form of church government.

This position also contrasts with the Roman Catholic position, which holds to twin sources of authority, Scripture and tradition. Rome believes that the Apos-

tles left a revelation of tradition as well as a written revelation. The Roman church examines the Bible and church history to determine true doctrine and practice. Below we will see how the Westminster divines refuted the seventeenth-century skeptics who resemble modern relativists.

The second teaching of the Confession is that biblically consistent church synod decisions are to be given the reverence and submission befitting an ordinance of God, for they are the application of the Word of God to the doctrine or situation they address. In our day, the decrees of synods are too often ignored or otherwise disobeyed. The Westminster Assembly realized that God wants His will, as expressed through the church, to be reverently and submissively obeyed, not treated like the words of a fool and ignored.

“Additionalism”

The third teaching of this paragraph is that the decisions of synods and councils are to be “consonant,” that is, in agreement or accord with the Bible. Since this limitation on church authority is important in understanding Liberty of Conscience, I will discuss what the authors of the Confession taught concerning the error of adding man-made commands to Scripture, a practice called “additionism” in this essay. Robert Harris enlightens us by contrasting the Assembly’s limitation on church authority with the greater power of the Roman church.

And for the matter of our obedience, we must obey in all things: Wee owe that to God our Father, which the Papiſts teach wee owe to our Mother the Church, and that is unlimited subjection in all parts and points of duty: a man must winke (as Abraham did) and put himselfe into Gods hands, to be guided and ordered by him in all things. They goe farre for their visible head of the Church, as they call him, when they tell us, that whether hee command truth or falsehood, good or evill, yea though hee should say that vice were vertue, and vertue vice, yet `twere our part to lay our hands upon our mouthes, and to set our selves to worke without dispute: But though wee acknowledge no such law as this, yet for God, it is true, that whatsoever it bee that hee commends to our faith, wee must beleeeve it, whatsoever he commends to our obedience, that wee must practice,

16. John F. H. New, *Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition, 1558–1640* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964) 28.

17. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 13 vols. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1933) 6.474.

and whatsoever by his providence hee is pleased to lay upon us, wee must willingly stoope to it.¹⁸

Edward Reynolds argues that claiming human commands are commands of God is a very serious sin against God.

But to stamp any thing of but a human original with a divine character, and obtrude it upon the consciences of men (as papists do their unwritten traditions), to bind unto obedience; to take any dead child of ours (as the harlot did, 1 Kings iii.20), and lay it in the bosom of the Scripture, and father it upon God; to build any structure of ours in the road to heaven, and stop up the way;—is one of the highest and most dangerous presumptions that the pride of man can aspire unto. To erect a throne in the consciences of his fellow-creatures, and to counterfeit the great seal of heaven for the countenancing of his own forgeries,—is a sin, most severely provided against by God, with special prohibitions and threatenings (Deut. 12:32, 18:20. Jer. 26:2. Prov. 30:6).¹⁹

George Gillespie applied the limitation of church authority to worship in his exposition of the second commandment.

... we say that the Christian Church hath no more liberty to adde to the commandements of God then the Jewish Church had. For the second commandment is morall and perpetuall, and forbiddeth to us as well as them the additions and inventions of men in the worship of God.²⁰

18. Robert Harris, *The Workes of Robert Harris, Bachelor in Divinity and Pastor of Hamwell, in Oxford-Shire. Revised and in Sundrie Places Corrected, and Now Collected into One Volume* (London: Printed by R. Y. for J. Bartlet, 1635) 574–575.

19. Edward Reynolds, *The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Edward Reynolds, D. D.* (London: B. Holdsworth, 1826) 3.416. The biblical texts are from his footnotes.

20. George Gillespie, *A Dispute against the English-Popish Ceremonies, obtruded vpon the Chvrch of Scotland. Wherein not only our owne Arguments against the same are strongly confirmed, but likewise the Answeres and Defense of our Opposites, svch as Hooker, Mortovne, Byrges, Sprint, Paybody, Andrewes, Saravia, Tilen, Spotswood, Lindsey, Forbesse, &c particularly confuted*, (N. p.: n. p., 1637) 3.118. See also, idem, *A Dispute, etc.*, ed. Christopher Coldwell (Dallas, Tex.: Naphtali Press, 1993) 3.7.11.289.

21. William Cunningham, *The Works of William Cunningham*. Edited by his literary executors. *Historical Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870) 1:53–54.

22. Samuel Rutherford, *The Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication: or a Peaceable Dispute for the Perfection of the Holy Scripture in Point of Ceremonies and Church Government; in Which*

While Gillespie's conclusion is frequently ignored in modern Presbyterian practice, he clearly states that individuals and congregations have no say in determining the liturgical acts of worship. However, they do have some authority over the circumstances of worship such as time and place.

A more recent presbyterian theologian, William Cunningham, observes that the biblically consistent decisions of synods are “to be received with reverence and submission ... as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in His Word.”²¹ This teaching puts a heavy responsibility on members of sessions, presbyteries, and general assemblies to be totally certain of the biblical evidence before making any decision. It also lays a heavy, God-given responsibility on those disagreeing with the decisions to do serious research and show strong biblical evidence before deciding the denomination made an error. God does not run a cafeteria where people are free to choose what to obey and what to believe; He runs a kingdom, where people are expected to obey the king and his bride whether they agree with them or not.

Closely related to church authority is church social pressure. For example, a Presbyterian believing in the regulative principle of worship may join an evangelical church that includes liturgical actions in her worship service that are additions to Scripture. The pastor and the lay leadership will say, “We understand your position and we do not expect you to participate in the parts that are against your conscience.” Nevertheless, there is a social pressure to conform, and the better the congregation, the greater the desire to join them will be. Samuel Rutherford was aware of how social pressure can make an indifferent practice into a requirement. Rutherford could not understand the argument that the ceremonies are left free to the conscience because the church can alter them. Practices like kneeling at communion are common in the entire world. Crossing and surplices signify dedication to Christianity in the entire world, so these cannot be called national, alterable rites, but must be universal. The unintentional result of a universal practice is to create a *de facto* doctrinal demand.²² In other words, an indifferent practice can become a tradition, and a tradition can develop the power of a doctrine or a command. The more common the practice, the sooner this will happen and the more powerful it will be. The power of a tradition yells so loud I can't hear anyone saying, “This is adiaphora and you don't have to do it.”

In this section, we have looked at the relationship between two pillars of authority, the Bible and the

church. We have seen the sufficiency and supremacy of the Bible as the accurate revelation of the will of God. We have seen that the church is given executive authority to implement and to insure obedience to the biblical commands, and to teach biblical doctrines. We have also noticed special limitations on church authority in the areas of faith and worship. We noted how allowing indifferent practices into worship services could result in them becoming commands. Now we will look at the broad context of Christian liberty and then move to the conscience of the individual.

Christian Liberty

The Westminster Assembly wisely set Liberty of Conscience in the context of Christian liberty. The Confession at Chapter 20.1 defines and lists the important benefits of Christian liberty as follows,

freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law; and, in their being delivered from the present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin; from the evil of affliction, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation ... free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto Him ... freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law ... greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than the believer under the law did ordinarily partake of.

The freedom in 20.1 is tempered by strong warnings in paragraphs 3 and 4. Paragraph 3 warns that those who use Christian liberty as an excuse to practice “any sin, or cherish any lust” destroys the goal of Christian liberty, i. e., the serving of God in holiness and righteousness. Paragraph 4 focuses on the sin of rebellion against “lawful powers.” We will discuss the limits on Christian liberty before moving to the detailed discussion of Liberty of Conscience.

Samuel Rutherford enlightens us on the limits. In agreement with the Confession, he teaches that Christian liberty is not a license to sin. It is a changing of a condemning and cursing law yoke for the sweet and easy yoke of Christ, to serve God in holiness and righteousness. It is not using our liberty as an occasion for the flesh (Gal. 5:13–14). The service of sin is the greatest bondage, but the Son of God has freed us from this (John 8:24–26), and we should not fall back into it. The whole Gospel urges the service of God; for example, it tells us to honor our parents, have an honest walk

among the Gentiles, and abstain from fleshly lusts (Eph. 6:1; 1 Pet. 2:12; Col. 2:6).²³

Later in the same source, Rutherford stresses that Christian liberty does not give us an excuse to disobey the civil laws:

Christian liberty is not in freedome from subjection and obedience to Magistrates, Masters, Kings, Parliaments; for this, *Peter* (1 Pet. 2.16) saith, *is to use our liberty as a cloake of maliciousness*, and that opened the mouthes of the ignorant and foolish heathen ... (Rutherford, *Spiritual Antichrist*, 2.99).

As the above shows, the Westminster doctrine of Christian liberty forbids sin or rebellion against lawful authorities. This emphasis targets the antinomians. Scholars have recognized this emphasis. For example, E. Morris, commenting on Confession 20.3, said;

As the chief end of every man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever, this must preeminently be the chief end of the Christian, and the indulgence of any lust or the practicing of any sin must be intrinsically and absolutely incongruous with such a supreme purpose.²⁴

Having seen how the Assembly avoided the ecclesiastical additionism of Romans and Anglicans, and having seen the definition of Christian liberty and the rejection of antinomianism, we will now consider how the Westminster divines used Liberty of Conscience to avoid the double traps of an over emphasis on commands and antinomianism.

Liberty Of Conscience

Our discussion of Liberty of Conscience will examine the role of the conscience, the definition of Liberty of Conscience, and the limitations and abuses of this doctrine as taught by the authors of the Westminster Confession. The abuses emphasized here are those most often seen in our time and culture.

the Removal of the Service Book is Justified (London: Printed by John Field for Christopher Meredith, 1646) 2.57–58.

23. Samuel Rutherford, *A Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist. Opening the Secrets of Familisme and Antinomianisme in the Antichristian Doctrine of John Saltmarsh, and Will. Del, the Present Preachers of the Army Now in England, and of Robert Town, Tob. Crispe, H. Denne, Eaton, and Others. In Which Is Revealed the Rise and Spring of Antinomians, Familists, Libertines, Swenck-feldians, Enthysiaists, &c.* (London: Andrew Croke, 1648) 2.94–95.

24. Edward Morris, *Theology of The Westminster Symbols*, 2nd ed. (Cincinnati: Lane Seminary, 1911) 559.

The Role Of Conscience

Samuel Rutherford taught the following concerning the conscience. The Bible must be the rule followed by the conscience. The role of the conscience is as “servant, and an under-Judge” not a lord. The conscience does the following: it directs, it discerns, it excites, it approves, it executes, it absolves, it reproves, it accuses and it condemns.²⁵ The conscience is to work in accord with the law of God so that it binds “us to obedience with a knot that neither king nor kirk can loose.” It is a watchdog in the soul. It can become blind or dead “through presumption” and a failure to fear God. It can mislead people into hell.²⁶ In short, the conscience is a very valuable tool when it reinforces obedience to God and encourages repentance from sin. However, because it can be misled, it has a subordinate position to Scripture like church and state.

Definition Of Liberty Of Conscience

The definition of Liberty of Conscience requires some expansion. We must learn what it means and does not mean. Liberty of Conscience is a kind of freedom. It is the freedom to enjoy and use creation within biblical limits, such as love for our neighbors, and where no command of God is broken. It is freedom in things indifferent.

Thomas Gataker’s defense of gambling for small stakes²⁷ increases our understanding of this doctrine. Gataker’s opponent argued, because there is neither a precept nor an example of gambling in the Bible, either literal or implied, the practice of casting lots is therefore forbidden. This argument comes very close to saying

25. Samuel Rutherford, *A Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience Tending to Resolve Doubts Moved by Mr. John Goodwin, John Baptist, Dr. Jer. Taylor, the Belgick Arminians, Socinians, and Other Authors Contending for Lawlesse Liberty, or Licentious Toleration of Sects and Heresies* (London: Andrew Crook, 1649) 10–11.

26. Samuel Rutherford, “Ane Catéchisme containing the Soume of Christian Religion,” *Catechisms of the Second Reformation*, Alexander F. Mitchell, ed. (London: James, 1886) 165–166.

27. I am using gambling to illustrate how the doctrine of Liberty of Conscience is used, not to take a position on its morality.

28. Thomas Gataker, *A Ivst Defence of Certaine Passages in a former Treatise concerning the Nature and Vse of Lots, Against such Exceptions and Oppositions as haue beene made thereunto by Mr. I. B.* (London: Printed by Iohn Haviland for Robert Bird, 1623) 244.

29. Thomas Gataker, *Of the Natvre and Vse of Lots; A Treatise Historicall and Theologicall* (London: Printed by Edward Griffin and are to be sold by William Bladen, 1619) 175.

30. George Gillespie, *Male Audis; or, An Answer to Mr. Coleman’s Male Dicis* (London: Printed for Robert Bosstocke, 1646); repr. in

what is not commanded is forbidden. Gataker replies as follows: An action may be permitted without precept or example. Where God has not determined the use of any creation or ordinance, He has left its use free.²⁸ Gataker, in agreement with the Confession, defines Liberty of Conscience as follows,

For where God hath not limited the vse of any Creature or ordinance, there he hath left the vse of it free. Where he hath not determined the circumstances of any action, there what he hath not prohibited, that hath he permitted, and that is warrant sufficient for it.²⁹

The Westminster divines believed Liberty of Conscience protects the rights of laity. It protects church members against arrogant bishops, proud elders, and egotistic music directors who want to enforce their preferred human practices and ceremonies on church members. The doctrine of Liberty of Conscience thus serves a role similar to the Bill of Rights in the United States Constitution. It is a protection against church bureaucrats who make and enforce rules with no basis in Scripture, such as the ordination of elders and/or deacons by a quota system. Liberty of Conscience is also an issue in missions when the missionary must be careful to distinguish between “essential” or biblical Christianity and “cultural” Christianity. One thinks of the problems caused by missionaries like John G. Paton, who expected his south sea island converts to wear wool clothing, like modest Englishmen.

The Westminster divines lived in a state church context. They were victims of state-mandated adiaphora under King Charles, and were supported by Parliament during the English Revolution. These experiences as a victim and beneficiary are evident when Gillespie defends Liberty of Conscience against state-mandated adiaphora. He said,

... Mr. Hussey here engaged himself to hold it free and lawful to the Christian magistrate, yea, to private Christians (for he calls it Christian liberty, not parliamentary liberty—now Christian liberty belongs to all sorts of Christians), to make laws to themselves for taking sacrament anniversarily on Christmas, Good-Friday, and Easter, or to appoint a perpetual monthly fast or thanksgiving; yea, another Parliament may, if so it should seem good to them, impose against the surplice and cross ... yea, what ceremonies, Jewish, popish, heathenish, may they not impose, provided they only hold the foundation, and keep to those essentials which he calls matters of duty?³⁰

This quotation contains some important points. First, Christian liberty does not give people an excuse to legislate adiaphora, like man-made holy days such as Christmas and Easter. Second, Gillespie denies that the excuse, “We hold to the basics of the faith,” can be used by the state to legislate adiaphora. Third, if legislating adiaphora begins, where will it end? Will not such legislation make the worship wars even worse?

The last section demonstrates that Liberty of Conscience is the right of all believers and is to be maintained against church and state. Since Liberty of Conscience can be abused, we will now discuss its limitations.

Limitations On Liberty Of Conscience Tolerance And Its Limits

One of the differences between the seventeenth-century and ours is the view of tolerance. In the seventeenth century, Roman Catholics and Presbyterians persecuted each other. In our time, conservative Romanists and conservative Presbyterians pray together at pro-life rallies and march together against abortion (sometimes accompanied by orthodox Jews and Mormons). Both groups condemn denominations that ordain practicing homosexuals and clergy who perform homosexual marriages. While God has changed our circumstances so that it is easier to love and dialog with other Christian traditions, truth has not changed. It is still true that whenever two Christians disagree on a doctrine or a continuing obligation of an Old Testament law, at least one of them is wrong.

In the modern United States, there is too much tolerance of heresies and sins. Many, if not most, American Christians are reluctant to admit that if two Christians differ on a doctrine, either one or both of them are guilty of heresy. Or if they do admit it, they often do not love their believing neighbors enough to compare the biblical and theological proofs for their doctrinal positions in order to determine which position is God’s truth. The results of this lack of love for the Word of God and our neighbors are not surprising. Major denominations have become liberal because heresy was tolerated. Toleration leads congregational officers not to apply discipline in moral matters. As a result, the moral standards of far too many church members are little different from those of the world.

How extreme is tolerance in the United States today? George Barna and his organization asked Americans if they agreed with the statement, “freedom meaning being able to do anything you want to do.” A disturbing

40% agreed with this statement. Barna observed that the 40% agreement “raises interesting, if not frightening, questions about the direction which we may be moving.”³¹ This survey shows the extent of irresponsible individualism. One critic of modern liberty summarized the present American position as, “Whatever it is permitted to do, it must be permitted not only to advise others to do, but to do in public, and, moreover, to be paid by the public to so advise and so do.”³²

Next, we will examine the position of the Westminster Assembly on tolerance and the limits placed on Liberty of Conscience.

The Issue Of Individual Authority

The main Liberty of Conscience problem faced by today’s American Christians is how to deal with unbridled individualism. The Westminster divines give us several insights on this problem. While individualism was not the main problem they faced, they were aware of its dangers. We will begin with the limitations on individual liberty.

The Confession sets two definite limits on Liberty of Conscience in 20.3 and 20.4, licentiousness and heresy. For example, Edward Reynolds distinguished between “... true Christian liberty, from loose, profane, and wanton licentiousness, and a liberty to vent and publish what perverse things soever men please...” (Reynolds, *Whole Works*, 3.407–408).

George Gillespie lists three views of tolerance that give us insight into the Westminster divines’ understanding of tolerance. First is the Papist view. The Papists hold that it is “good service to God” to totally destroy adversaries of the Catholic religion. The second opinion reflects the other extreme, the civil authorities should not inflict any punishment or use coercive power on heretics and sectarians, but grant them liberty and toleration. The third view was that the state should use

The Presbyterian’s Armory (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844) 2.17.

31. George Barna, *Absolute Confusion* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1993) 45–46.

32. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *On Looking into the Abyss: Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society* (New York: Knopf, 1994) 91. The immediate context of this quotation is the justification for the National Endowment for the Arts funding indecent and offensive ‘art.’ The comment comes from her excellent essay on liberty in the United States today titled, “Liberty: ‘One Very Simple Principle’?” This discusses the view of John Stuart Mill that anything should be permitted unless it harms another person, and its effect on today’s society. Many evangelicals tend to view Liberty of Conscience in Mill’s individualistic terms rather than in terms of God’s revelation.

force to suppress heretics according to the seriousness of the crime. Gillespie said Calvin taught this when he distinguished between three kinds of errors; some to be tolerated with a spirit of meekness, these are not to separate the brethren; others not to be tolerated, but to be suppressed with a limited degree of severity, and the third type that are to be dealt with by the most severe punishments.³³

Other authors of the Confession also allow for limited toleration. Edward Reynolds recognizes a place for academic freedom for scholars who struggle with difficult Bible passages, if they exercise Christian virtues in their teaching. He said,

... God alloweth the learned a Christian liberty, with submission of their opinions always to the spirits of the prophets, so long as they do therein nothing contrary to the analogy of faith,—to the general peace and unity of the church,—to the rules of charity, piety, loyalty, and sobriety; to abound in their own sense, and to declare, for the further edifying of the church, what they conceive to be, in such difficult places, principally intended (Reynolds, *Whole Works*, 3.407–408).

A third author of the Confession, Cornelius Burges, allows tolerance for those having doubts and differences on minor and undecided points. He insists these differences must not lead to separation.

Holding fast the faithfull word (Tit. 1.9): not quarrelling to separation for euery difference in opinion touching points not fundamentall, and vndecided. In which case no man must be **iudged for his doubting** (Rom. 14.1); nor may any doubting man iudge others who (Jude ver. 3) **doubt not**.³⁴

33. George Gillespie, *Wholsome Severity Reconciled with Christian Liberty, or, The True Resolution of a Present Controversie Concerning Liberty of Conscience* (London: Christopher Meredith, 1645) 1–4. Gillespie follows with a defense of this position on 5–15. See also, idem, “Wholesome Severity,” etc., in Christopher Coldwell, ed., *An Anthology of Presbyterian & Reformed Literature* 4 (Dallas, Tex.: Naphtali Press, 1991) 179–181.

34. Cornelius Burges, *The Fire of the Sanctuarie Newly Uncouered, Or A Compleat Tract of Zeale* (London: Printed by George Miller and Richard Badger, 1625) 27–28. Bible verses added from Burges’ footnotes.

35. George Gillespie, *A Sermon Preached before the Right Honourable the House of Lords, in the Abbey Church At Westminster, August 27, 1645* (London: Printed for Robert Bostock, 1644; repr. in *The Presbyterian’s Armory* (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844) 2.12. See also, idem, “A Sermon Preached,” etc. in Christopher Coldwell, ed., *An Anthology of Presbyterian & Reformed Literature* 1.3 (Dallas, Tex.: Naphtali Press, 1988) 26–27.

Burges’ pastoral response to persons with minor doubts helps us understand why he was considered one of London’s leading ministers.

In a sermon before the House of Lords, George Gillespie attacked the policy of giving heretics and antinomians political liberty. Notice, however, that he also allows toleration for persons with small differences.³⁵

Now compare this case with the case of a Socinian, Arminian, Antinomian, or the like: they both plead for liberty of conscience; they both say our conscience ought not to be compelled, and if we do against our conscience, we sin. I beseech you, how can you give liberty of conscience to the heretic, and yet refuse liberty of conscience to him that is the conscientious recusant in point of the war?... When I speak against liberty of conscience, it is far from my meaning to advise any rigorous or violent course against such as, being sound in the faith, and holy in life, and not of a turbulent or factious carriage, do differ in smaller matters from the common rule.

In another source, Gillespie taught that “liberty of heresie and schisme is no part of the Liberty of Conscience which Christ hath purchased to us at so dear a rate.” The context of this quotation is particularly relevant to our time. Gillespie is objecting to the sectarians’ claim for Liberty of Conscience. He observes that they are refusing to have claims judged and examined by the Word of God, as Christians had formerly done (*Wholesome Severity*, Introduction, 2–3). Gillespie is aware that Liberty of Conscience was, and continues to be, used by those who refuse to allow their beliefs and practices to be evaluated in public trial by biblical standards. Gillespie’s opponents remind us of those who interpret Liberty of Conscience as meaning all Christian opinions are equally valid, so we do not have to subject them to the biblical standard of truth.

Gillespie and the other divines cited above provide the answer to the question, whether a presbytery should ordain a minister who refuses to obey a major denominational practice or teach a denominational doctrine? For example, the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Covenant) of North America practices exclusive psalmody. Suppose a candidate for ordination disagrees with the doctrine. Should the denomination, on the basis of Liberty of Conscience, allow his ordination? The Westminster divines would say no. The citation above implies Gillespie, at least, would probably want the man to read the best sources on all sides of the question, write a paper on his position, and, if he still disagreed

with the church, discuss his paper with a learned committee of presbytery.

From the evidence above, we learn that the Confession's position on the liberty of the individual is simple. Individuals are free in matters of adiaphora. People with small doubts are to be accepted providing they do not disrupt the peace and unity of the church. Heretics and immoral persons are to be disciplined. Liberty of Conscience is not to be used as an excuse for ignoring the truth of the Bible. The Confession teaches love for our neighbor, not tolerance of his sins and heresies.

As we apply these insights to our congregations today, let us recall that the authors of the Confession wanted Liberty of Conscience to be limited by the virtues of charity, peace, piety, and a desire to preserve the unity of the church. A biblical example of the loving way to practice Liberty of Conscience is the dispute over meat sacrificed to idols. Paul, the apostle, said that eating this meat was a matter of indifference, but out of love for other believers he would refrain from anything that put a stumbling block in their way (1 Cor. 8). A second example of love is Paul urging the Corinthian church to punish fornication in 1 Corinthians 5. Clearly, the church is to discipline unrepentant sinners and unrepentant heretics with the goal of their repentance.

Arguments Against Liberty Of Conscience

Some of the arguments used against the Westminster Assembly's doctrine of Liberty of Conscience are being repeated today. One "modern" basis for justifying liberty of sin and heresy is skepticism. One form of skepticism says that since we cannot know truth with total certainty, we should be utterly tolerant. Another form comes from the relativism of our age, which argues against the very existence of truth. These arguments are old ones in a new form. The seventeenth-century form of this argument stated that there was no infallibility since the apostles died, therefore "we know nothing with any certainty." Confession author Samuel Rutherford rejects this argument. He declares that there are two forms of infallibility, one flowing from immediate inspiration, peculiar to the apostles and prophets, and a second kind common to all believers. For proofs he gives Luke 1:1; Acts 5:23; 21:34; 22:30; 25:26; Col. 2:2; 1 Thess. 1:5 and Rom. 4:21 (Rutherford, *Survey*, 274, 277-78).

Rutherford's position is assumed in chapter 1.7 of the Confession, where the perspicuity of Scripture is taught. This doctrine assumes that absolute truth can be learned and taught from the Bible. The result of the

skeptical position is to leave us uncertain about all biblical truths. For example, there is no way we could be certain that Jesus died for our sins unless we can learn absolute truth from the Bible. Otherwise, a minister would have to go into a pulpit and preach, "There is a 95% probability that Jesus died for our sins," and we could never be certain of our salvation.

In another source, Rutherford defends his position against the Libertines. They argued, since men are fallible they may err, therefore they cannot teach infallible truth. This position reminds us of the relativist who says, "You cannot teach me infallible truth because it does not exist." Rutherford proves this position false by example. He said that the Apostles and Prophets, Nathan, Samuel, David and Peter could and did err when they were deserted by the inspiring Holy Spirit. In a like manner the church and her pastors can and do err when deserted by the Holy Spirit. He cites Romans 3 to prove that all men, including the Apostles and Prophets, are liars, but all men can and do carry infallible truth to others as a blind man may hold a candle to others.³⁶ Otherwise, the preaching of the Gospel would be impossible, for there would be no way of knowing it as absolutely true.

What conclusions can be drawn from the authors of the Confession concerning the limitations of Liberty of Conscience? The first conclusion is that Liberty of Conscience is limited in its extent. It does not allow individuals to break God's moral law. It does not allow one to believe heresy or encourage schism. It does allow individuals freedom in things indifferent, within the general framework of love for our neighbor and the peace of the church, when our freedom does no harm to others. It is a biblical limit on church and individual power. It forbids church members, boards, or synods from requiring the church to have practices that are not clearly commanded in the Bible, and to teach doctrines that are not clearly taught in the Bible.

It also forbids individual members from imposing their preferences on church boards and members. A lay businessman, Jack Bupp, in a conversation with this author, said he observed several laymen who had a personal arrogance about them that made them rate their individual opinions as more important than the biblically based decisions of the church. They either change churches if they are not followed, or cause dissension

36. Samuel Rutherford, *A Free Disputation*, 24-25. Additional evidence for the Holy Spirit as the giver of infallible truth to fallible men is inferred from the roles of the Spirit in bearing witness (Rom. 8:16; Heb. 10:5), illuminating the mind (1 Cor. 2:12-13; Eph. 1:16-17), and revealing the things of God (1 Cor. 2:10-12).

by grumbling and complaining and/or gossiping about those who oppose them. These “petty popes” frequently believe their opinions to be right without biblical proof. These individuals need to be lovingly disciplined.

Liberty Of Conscience Applied To Worship

In order to understand Liberty of Conscience better, we will examine one of its applications, the Regulative Principle of Worship.³⁷ From the time of the Vestments Controversy, the Anglican additions to the acts of worship listed in the Bible and the bishops’ totalitarian insistence on conformity to them caused many sincere believers serious conscience problems. They believed that these innovations were not worship, and therefore had problems of conscience every time they participated in them. Thus, a major pastoral concern of the Westminster Assembly was to protect the rights of believers with sensitive consciences from the commands of men in the guise of bishops’ rules.

In Chapter 20 of the Confession, one learns that the Westminster Assembly distinguished the several parts of Christian liberty. Liberty of Conscience found in section 2 established freedom “from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his Word; or beside it, if matters of faith or worship.” The authors of the Confession used this freedom most often and enthusiastically to prove the Regulative Principle. Because God left men’s consciences free from the doctrines and commands of men, the church is forbidden to teach or command anything, which the Bible does not. This prohibition extends to adiaphora as well as sins. In worship, the church is forbidden to add rites and ceremonies to those found in the Bible, because the conscience is to be free of human requirements, as mentioned above, Liberty of Conscience doctrine functions as an ecclesiastical equivalent to the United States’ Bill of Rights. It is to protect individuals from the bureaucrats.

Note the parallels in the Confession’s statement of the Regulative Principle of Worship (Chap. 21:1) with its statement on Liberty in the previous paragraph.

But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own re-

vealed will, that He man not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.

Let us now see how some authors of the Confession related the two doctrines. Samuel Rutherford used Christian liberty to derive the regulative principle of worship. Rutherford defined Liberty of Conscience as: 1. Freedom from the Ceremonial Law (Gal. 5:1–5) and the commandments of men, “for all these Ceremonies being now not commanded, but forbidden of God, become the Commandements of (Col. 2:18, 19, 20) men, from which the *Jewes* and *Gentiles* were freed in Christ” (*A Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist*, 2.93).

Rutherford realized that the Anglicans refused to accept his position that Christian liberty was harmed by the additions to worship that Anglicans believed were indifferent and voluntary. In answer to an opponent, Rutherford gave his position on Christian liberty, worship, and things indifferent. The opponent declared that Christian liberty is not restrained by doing or not doing a thing indifferent, for no laws should be made by the church concerning things indifferent. The opponent continued by saying that, Christian liberty is not harmed if the ceremonies are voluntary and are not made requirements, if they are not made necessary to salvation, and if they are held as alterable by human authority. Rutherford replied saying that the objection was incorrectly stated. The issue is not whether the use of things indifferent places a limit on Christian liberty, but whether the church has the authority to “... make a law of things indifferent; when there is no intrinsic necessitie in the things themselves...” (Rutherford, *Divine Right of Church Government*, 2.57). He continued citing Colossians 2:21 and Galatians 2:18 to show men are dead with Christ to external observations and thus free from them. In other words, Samuel Rutherford attacked the *right* of the church to make rules on things indifferent, and thus restrain Christian liberty. If the church has no authority from God to make rules concerning adiaphora, then there will always be Christian liberty, because the church will only be requiring precepts commanded by God.

Rutherford gave another reason for opposing the Anglican position. He could not understand how the ability of the church to alter her ceremonies meant their practice was free to the individual’s conscience. He concluded that practices like crossing and surplices signified dedication to Christianity in all the world, hence, these cannot be called national, alterable rites, but must be

37. For a longer discussion on the relationship between worship and Liberty of Conscience see John Allen Delivuk, “The Defense of the Regulative Principle of Worship by the Authors of the Westminster Confession,” in *Semper Reformanda* 2.1 (Spring 1993) 34–53. A longer form of this article was published in *The Westminster Theological Journal* 58.2 (Fall 1996) 237–256.

called universal rites, which are therefore “at all times, and in all places doctrinall.”³⁸ In other words, these practices were so deeply imbedded into the church by their traditional use that they could not be considered alterable, but had to be considered doctrinal.

George Gillespie also advocated Christian liberty against the Anglican additions to worship. He accused the prelates of enforcing ceremonies “after the heathenish and popish manner.” In contrast Gillespie desired the “the ancient apostolical simplicity and singleness,” because ceremonies distract the minds of the people “from the spiritual and inward duties.”³⁹ Here Gillespie combined the Christian liberty argument with the frequently used Puritan-Presbyterian argument that the early church, which includes the practice of Jesus in synagogue worship, exemplifies the normative pattern for Christian worship and other matters.

Gillespie was also aware of the adiaphora question. He observed that, although Anglican prelates called their religious innovations “things indifferent,” their ceremonies were a cause of great scandal among the godly who considered the ceremonies ungodly and contrary to the word of God. To protect these people the Puritan movement had adopted the loving, pastoral principle that “things indifferent ought not to be practiced with the scandal and offence of the godly” (*Miscellany Questions*, 1.83).

Gillespie continued declaring that the prelates’ policy was destructive to liberty of conscience because it compelled practices by the will and authority of the prelates, an authority not established by God. He concluded,

We say that no canons nor constitutions of the church can bind the conscience ... except in so far as they are grounded upon and warrantable by the word of God, at least by consequence, and by the general rules thereof; and that canons concerning things indifferent bind not ... when they may be omitted without giving scandal, or showing any contempt of the ecclesiastical authority (*Miscellany Questions*, 1.83).

It is clear that the authors of the Confession believed that the Christian’s liberty from the commands of men forbade the church’s adding man-made ceremonies to worship even if these ceremonies were considered matters indifferent. This limitation of ecclesiastical authority was an application of the Westminster doctrine of Christian liberty to worship. The Puritan-Presbyterian party believed that the Bible thoroughly furnished men with complete knowledge of all the acts of the worship of God (1 Tim. 3:16–17). They believed additions to

worship usurped God’s authority. God as revealed in the Bible is the only ruler of men’s consciences and thus is the sole judge of what is allowable in worship. Thus, the Regulative Principle of Worship was an application of Liberty of Conscience.

CONCLUSION AND CHALLENGE

I would fail my generation if I stopped here. The problem facing American Christians at the beginning of the twenty-first century is not corruption of powerful Anglican bishops or kings forcing adiaphoristic practices on laymen. Our problem is the corruption caused by liberty turned to license, which can be as troublesome as the corruption of power. It is the individual church members who make themselves judges of religion, often with no regard for God’s Word. One astute observer summed up the situation in these words:

As we turn to our own day we find liberty debased and clothed in rags. The word is often on our lips these days. But much of our talk about liberty is frothy talk. To the common man, liberty means escape from obligation, the right to do as we carelessly please, with little or no interference from neighbors or governments. Liberty today is clothed with mean garments. In education it becomes the satisfaction of self-centered whims ... In morals it is license and chaos. In religion it becomes indifference.⁴⁰

George Barna has surveyed and studied American evangelical churches in great detail. He has found two common elements in churches with a healthy ministry and churches that have turned around from severe decline. These are “the presence of a visionary leader, and a deep, lasting commitment to prayer” (Barna, *Absolute Confusion*, 144). Below are some suggestions for acquiring a vision and prayer life that will help develop a healthy doctrine of Liberty of Conscience in our churches.

The first is to resist the strong social pressures to ignore sin and not teach truth. The position of many

38. Rutherford, *Divine Right of Church Government*, 2.57–58. I believe Rutherford is referring in part to the strength of social practice. If every one is doing it, we feel a lot of pressure to conform. The pressure takes away our freedom.

39. Gillespie, *A Treatise of Miscellany Questions* (Edinburg: printed by G. Lighgow for G. Swintoun, 1649); repr. in *The Presbyterian’s Armory* (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844) 1.83.

40. J. Henry Cotton, “The Sovereign God and Human Liberties” *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 12 (June and September 1943) 96–97.

godly ministers and elders can be summed up by a cartoon published when Pope John Paul II was visiting the USA. The cartoon showed the Pope and President Clinton looking at a newspaper survey that said the Pope was unpopular with American Catholics. President Clinton said to him, "You must have broken your promises." A surprised President Clinton listened to the Pope say, "No, I kept them." Purging sin is usually an unpopular, thankless business with men. On the other hand, God loves holiness. Whose approval do you love more?

Our membership and ordination vows require us to resist social pressures. Many of my readers will be church officers. Your promises to work for the peace and purity of the church must be kept. Sometimes, keeping these promises requires a high price. For example, the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of San Francisco learned her organist was a homosexual. The congregation acted righteously and fired the man. First OPC won the court case when the organist sued the congregation. The story did not end there. The congregation and her pastor were the objects of numerous attacks, including a potentially fatal arson attack on the parsonage.⁴⁰ The experience of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Covenanter) may encourage harassed believers. The Covenanters went through a great period of persecution in the seventeenth century. More than three hundred years later, many members can trace a believing family member back to that period. Men and women were faithful in their lifetime, and God was faithful to their posterity.

As implied above, the battle must be fought in the public sphere as well as in the churches. We must be active in opposing legal sins like Sabbath breaking, adultery, abortion, and homosexuality.

We need to educate our members. There is always a battle between the church and the world, and we need to teach the differences between the secular view of liberty and the Christian view. I once asked a Rabbi how he educated the young men in his synagogue to prepare for their Bar Mitzvah at age thirteen. He said that he began when they were six years of age. He met with them twice a week for an hour to an hour and a half teaching them. This continued for six years. At the end, they would know Hebrew, the Bible, especially the Torah, and Jewish traditions. I wish our families and churches trained their children as diligently.

Liberty of Conscience can help us in the "worship wars" that trouble many churches. Much of the fight-

ing over styles of worship is fighting over matters God has neither commanded nor forbidden. Liberty of Conscience says these indifferent matters are forbidden in the Church. A large category of causes of contention would vanish if this doctrine was enforced. Liberty of Conscience teaches that worship is only what the Bible clearly defines as worship. Obviously, Liberty of Conscience will not solve all problems. Some will sinfully argue for matters indifferent. Also, there are some circumstantial matters such as the hour of the worship service, which are to be decided by the wisdom of church leaders, and these may cause some disagreement.

Liberty of Conscience is also an imperative to add to our confession. While the Bible contains all the revelation the church needs, our understanding of God's truth keeps growing as the discipline of historical theology shows. The new understandings are frequently products of the church addressing a problem using the revelation found in the Bible. As can be seen from this article, Liberty of Conscience was a doctrine that became well understood as a result of a challenge faced in a historical context. The Westminster Assembly used the opportunity of their increased understanding to add this doctrine to its confession to help seventeenth century believers and future Christians. A modern example of a doctrine we are coming to understand better is the biblical teaching on life as it relates to pro-life issues. The imperative for adding to our confession comes from Liberty of Conscience forbidding the teaching any doctrine not agreed on by the church as absolute truth. When the church adds a doctrine to her confession, she says this is true and is to be taught in the churches. Put another way, before it can be preached, it must be confessed as truth by the denomination. See case study 4 below for more on this topic.

Finally, we need to stress the goal of Liberty of Conscience. It is not to give us the freedom to do whatever we want heedless of the needs and concerns of others. It gives freedom to serve God and our neighbor in peace and love. It is to prevent the church from wasting her time and energy on things indifferent and concentrate her effort on making disciples and teaching them to love Jesus by following His commands (Matt. 28:20; John 14:15). As the Apostle Paul observed concerning the Corinthian adiaphora dispute over Paul and Apollos, Christians are "not to think beyond what is written." (1 Cor. 4:6 NKJV) We are to be content with God's Word and peacefully enjoy it with our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

40. The story can be read in Chuck and Donna McIlhenny with Frank York, *When the Wicked Seize a City* (Lafayette, La.: Huntington House, 1993).

IV. CASE STUDIES

Since worship is the application I chose for Liberty of Conscience the majority of the case studies concern it. The studies assume the congregation is committed to the application of Liberty of Conscience called the Regulative Principle of Worship, which is found in Westminster Confession 21. This chapter lists the ordinary acts of worship, Bible reading, prayer, sound preaching, “conscientious hearing,” singing Psalms, and the sacraments. Occasional acts of worship are vows, fasting and thanksgiving. It is significant that the ordinary acts of worship are the means of grace. This implies that our spiritual growth is one of God’s goals for His worship, and a result of biblical worship. Direct biblical proof for spiritual growth as **the** (not **a**) goal of worship is found at the end of the description of a NT church worship, “Let all things be done for edification” or the building up of the church (1 Cor. 14: 26).

Case Study 1. A Request for Worship Time.

Our first case study is on worship. One of the elders is a member of a para-church Christian group that solicits churches for money to support its cause. It is a worthy ministry, and has spread the Gospel in the community and the world. This elder asks that session for a portion of the worship service in order to report on the activities of the ministry, and request funds and prayer support. Should this session allow this group to have part of the worship service?

Analysis. There are three parts to the elder’s request. One is for worship time, the second is for financial support and the third is for prayer support. If we review the Westminster Confession Chap. 21, we find that there is no place for such an activity in the worship service. We must say no to that request. However, we can still help the elder and the ministry. The session can request that the deacons consider this ministry for an annual donation from the congregation. The ministry can also be allowed to make bulletin announcements reminding members to pray for this group. Its work can be included in the pastoral prayer. Finally, there are non-worship church activities, such as the family night dinner where the ministry can be given an opportunity to present its work. This case study shows two things. First of all, we can not add anything to worship not prescribed in Scripture, per the Regulative Principle of Worship. Secondly, there are ways to handle reasonable requests without transgressing Liberty of Conscience. We can obey God and still love our neighbors.

Case Study 2. Liturgical Dance in Worship.

Some young ladies in the congregation are taking dancing lessons. They want to glorify God with their dance, and note that in Psalm 150:4, the Bible says to praise God with dancing. They want to dance during a worship service. Can the session permit this?

Analysis. The answer is no, because dancing does not come under the worship acts permitted in Scripture (see WCF 21). The session can give them non-worship opportunities to glorify God by dancing. One common misconception is the equating of praise with worship. That these are different, but sometimes overlapping, good works is taught in the Old Testament. In the law of Moses we have the acts of worship spelled out in great detail. Dancing is not listed as one of them. However, dancing and other practices not found in the Old Testament acts of worship are all listed as good works of praising God. That there is a place outside of worship for praise is clearly shown when David and the Israelites brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. David danced before the Lord, and numerous acts of praise were done in this public celebration (2 Sam. 16). Obviously, some acts of praise, such as singing Psalms, are also acts of worship. We must be careful to distinguish between them. This request could be granted when the church meets for a social activity such as the annual picnic.

Case Study 3. Dramatic Reading in Worship.

The pastor is taking a drama course to improve his preaching. He requests permission to do a dramatic reading from the book of Job during the worship service.

Analysis. The reading of Scripture is a biblical worship practice. If the dramatic reading is limited solely to Bible passages it is permissible under our confessional understanding of worship. The session will wish to make sure it is done in a competent and respectful manner, as sloppiness does not glorify God.

Case Study 4. Political Teaching in the Church.

One of the men in the congregation is interested in developing a Christian view of politics. He has great teaching skill and has done a great deal of study on Christianity and politics. He wishes to teach a congregation sponsored Christian education class on this topic. When his teaching material is reviewed, it is found to have some viewpoints that are controversial among

Christians, and on which the denomination has taken no stand either for or against. Should the session permit this class to be taught under its supervision?

Analysis. The doctrine of Liberty of Conscience teaches that the church cannot teach anything unless it can be proven with 100% certainty from the Bible. In this case, the teacher wishes to teach topics on which the denomination has not taken a stand. In other words, the church does not know if these positions are biblical or not. Since these teaching go beyond the position of the denomination, the session cannot allow them to be taught with the church's sponsorship. Since there is no evidence the positions are heresy, the man could teach these at his home without church sponsorship.

One of the problems faced by denominations holding the Westminster standards is that the evangelical churches have increased their knowledge of scriptural truths since the 1640's. For example, Jesus used our Dutch reformed brothers to add to our understanding of culture and Christianity. Not all Presbyterian churches have chosen to include these truths in their confessional documents. Since the denomination has not verified and borne witness to the additional truths, pious church teachers are faced with the dilemma of whether to violate Liberty of Conscience or to not teach the whole counsel of God. One solution, adopted by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, is to have an additional confessional document, *The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony* to supplement the Westminster standards. Members petition the denomination to add additional truth to the Testimony, and a committee is appointed to study the issue. If the committee and Synod approve, the denomination's elders vote on whether to add the additional truth.

As cited above, Edward Reynolds allowed virtuous Christian scholars the freedom to discuss and develop ideas. For us to test and gain an understanding of additional truth, greater freedom to explore doctrines needs to be allowed in our colleges and seminaries than in our churches. This freedom must be responsibly handled and practiced in the context of our confessional truths. It needs to be handled as a chemist studies poison, with great safeguards. Participation in such activities should be limited to faculty and students firmly grounded in the truth. It does not include freedom of heresy and antinomianism.

Case Study 5. The Time of Worship.

The families with young children are concerned about their bedtimes due to the lateness of the evening service.

They request that the Sabbath evening service be moved to 6:30 PM so the children can be put to bed earlier.

Analysis. The Confession at 1:6 makes a distinction between the acts of worship and the circumstances of worship. Circumstances are things common to any human meeting—things like seating, the time and place. The circumstances are to be determined “by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word.” This matter is one that each congregation is free to determine depending on the needs of her members. When the parents in the congregation I belong to made this request, we moved the time of worship to help the parents.

Case Study 6. A Satire.

Due to incessant demands for many members, the session adopts the view that all of life is worship. This results in the opening up of the worship service to any practices not forbidden in the Bible. At first, these new practices were limited to fine arts like music and dancing. However, some of the blue-collar workers in the congregation became upset that their daily worship was not included in the Congregational worship. They complained that the worship was being dominated by a fine arts chauvinism. The most vocal were the slaughterhouse workers. They argued that their daily work was used in Old Testament worship, and the session agreed to accommodate them. The next Lord's day, the workers brought in enough sheep so that every family in the congregation could participate in slaughtering. The teenager boys were looking forward to it for weeks, and brought their unbelieving friends. The workers had the trumpets sound, as they did in the Old Testament sacrifice, and the throats of the sheep were cut. The blood gushed, people vomited, and the majority of members left and never came back.

Analysis. If you adopt the principle of worship that “any act not forbidden by God is acceptable worship,” there is no logical reason to say no to the slaughterhouse workers. You can refuse their request, but only if you commit an act of discrimination. (I picked slaughtering sheep because there is a strong Old Testament basis for it.)

Epilogue:

Having lived with this topic for years, let me close with my two strongest impressions.

First, the doctrine of Liberty of Conscience serves

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An Analysis of Open Theism

By W. Gary Crampton, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

Solomon has told us that “there is nothing new under the sun” (Eccles. 1:9). Certainly there is a sense in which this is true in the theological arena as it is in other areas. The orthodox view of the doctrine of God (“theology proper”) has always had its opponents. According to the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (Q. 4), the Bible teaches that “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.”¹ The orthodox Christian church has held this view for two millennia; yet, there have always been those who have rejected the orthodox position. One recent example is that of “open theism,”² which is well represented in *The Openness of God*,³ wherein we find the teaching of several well-known advocates of this view. For the open theist, God is not infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His wisdom nor in His power. He does not have exhaustive foreknowledge, nor does He sovereignly control all things in His creation. Neither does the open theist believe that God is immutable, because He does change depending on the actions of His creatures. Due to His “openness,” God is capable of making mistakes. Surely this reflects on God’s holiness, as it does regarding the doctrine of biblical inerrancy and truth.

Obviously, this is a serious departure from the Christian faith. As with all things, challenges to Christian theism need to be analyzed by the teaching of Scripture, which is God’s inspired, infallible, inerrant Word. This article is written to attempt this very thing. We will see, as stated by Alan Cairns, that open theism is little more than “the old liberal rejection of biblical theism running under the flag of evangelicalism.” It is a theology that is “yet another manifestation of the world’s oldest philosophy of depraved minds, man’s attempt to make God in his own image.”⁴

As noted, open theists have serious differences with orthodox Christianity. John Frame writes: “Open theists teach that God is not above time, that He does not know the future exhaustively, that He sometimes makes mistakes and changes His plans, and therefore that He is in some ways dependent on the world” (NOG, 11). This is not an exaggeration. In the words of the open theists themselves, God is a “risk taker” deity.⁵ All things are “possible” with God, but not all things are certain.⁶ He (or She)⁷ is a God of “unbounded love.”⁸ This view of God assures us that He would not punish anyone with eternal torment; non-believers will finally be annihilated.⁹ In this “new model,” God does not control all

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1. All citations from the Westminster Standards are from *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1994). Scripture quotations are from the New King James version.

2. According to John Frame, it is likely that the first use of the phrase “open theism” comes from Richard Rice’s *The Openness of God: The Relationship of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will*, published in 1980; John M. Frame, *No Other God: A Response to Open Theism* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 2001) 17n. Hereafter NOG.

3. Clark H. Pinnock, Richard Rice, John Sanders, William Hasker, and David Basinger, *The Openness of God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994). Hereafter OG.

4. Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Belfast, Ireland: Ambassador Productions, 2002) 314–315. Hereafter DTT.

5. John Sanders, *The God Who Risks* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

6. Gregory A. Boyd, *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2000).

7. Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is* (New York: Crossroad, 1992).

8. Clark H. Pinnock and Robert C. Brow, *Unbounded Love: A Good News Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994). Open theists generally elevate “love” as God’s chief attribute (OG, 18–22).

9. Clark H. Pinnock, “The Conditional View,” *Four Views of Hell*, ed. William Crockett (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 135–166.

history by His immutable decree and providence; rather, He is open to the ways of man in history.” “The course of history ... is the combined result of what God and His creatures decide to do. “God’s will is not the ultimate explanation for everything that happens; human decisions and actions make an important contribution too.” There are some things that God is ignorant of, so that He is even sometimes frustrated by things that occur. There is a sense in which He is restricted by His creatures. But “if Plan A fails, God is ready with Plan B.” The God of the Bible, it is alleged, leaves the future open to the ways of men working with God. This means that man is “free” in the libertarian sense of freedom. His choices are not foreordained by God, and neither are they determined or caused by anything else; they are “free” choices¹⁰ (OG, 15–16, 26–35, 53–57, 101–104, 113–115, 121–124, 136–137).

CHURCH HISTORY AND OPEN THEISM

How long has open theism existed?¹¹ We have already said that in theology as in other disciplines, there is really nothing new under the sun. Heterodoxy of all stripes has been around for millennia. Some open theists affirm that the God of traditional orthodox Christianity has similarities to the gods of Greek philosophy, and that Greek philosophy had a profound effect on the teaching of the early church fathers (OG, 60–80). Is this true? It is not. In actuality, it is the god of open theism that most resembles the gods of the Greeks. Plato’s Demiurge bears no resemblance to the God of the Bible. He is not the creator of the universe, nor is sovereign over it; rather, the Demiurge of Plato’s philosophical

system is subject to the universal Forms and operates as a finite deity (if divine at all). Then too, Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover, although eternal, is an impersonal god, who moves the universe, not by sovereignly causing the many finite beings to move, but by means of attracting them. This is somewhat similar to the open theist view of divine causation and intervention in the universe. In fact, a study of Greek philosophy will show that the great majority of gods were finite in nature, and far removed in essence from the triune God of Holy Scripture.

It is true that some of the early church fathers held to a libertarian view of freedom. Athanasius (296–373), however, corrected this errant thinking, as did Augustine (354–430), the greatest (post-apostolic) philosopher and theologian of the first millennium, after him. In his ongoing theological confrontations with Pelagius, Augustine placed the sovereignty of God at the center of salvation. This is why John Calvin (1509–1564) could refer to himself as an Augustinian thinker. In the middle ages, Thomas Aquinas taught a semi-Pelagian view of free will, but not in the libertarian sense that later Arminians and open theists have fostered. The Roman Catholic Church is more in line with Arminianism and open theism than was Aquinas.

In the 16th century, Erasmus (1466?–1536) adopted a libertarian view of free will, but he was refuted by Martin Luther (1483–1546) in his *The Bondage of the Will*.¹² John Calvin also took aim at free will theism in his *Institutes* (and elsewhere), where he wrote that “Man has now been deprived of [libertarian] freedom of choice and bound over to miserable servitude.”¹³

Jacob Arminius (1560–1609) also held to a form of libertarianism similar to that of the open theists, but, unlike the openness thinkers, he affirmed that the God of the Bible possesses exhaustive foreknowledge.¹⁴ The errors of Arminianism were corrected at the Synod of Dort (1618–1619) and the later Westminster Assembly (1643–1648), where the traditional view of God was reaffirmed. In the 18th century, Jonathan Edwards wrote the most thorough refutation of free will theism ever penned in his *Freedom of the Will*,¹⁵ which will be studied below.

Interestingly, Frame claims that the real “missing link in open theism’s genealogy” is that of Socinianism (NOG, 32–36). Not only did this liberal branch of the church assert libertarianism, it also denied the exhaustive foreknowledge of God. Perhaps the reason that the open theists do not lay claim to their Socinian heritage is that the Socinians also denied the full deity of Jesus Christ, along with His substitutionary atonement, and justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ.

10. See David Basinger, *The Case for Freewill Theism: A Philosophical Assessment* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996).

11. In this section, the present author has benefited from and utilized the writings of John Frame “Where Does Open Theism Come From” (NOG, 25–40), and I. John Hesselink, “Sovereign Grace and Human Freedom,” *Reformation and Revival Journal*, ed. John H. Armstrong, 12.2 (Spring 2003) 11–24.

12. Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1976).

13. John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Volumes I & II, ed. John T. McNeill, trans., Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960) 11.2 chapter heading.

14. John Frame (NOG, 40) correctly maintains that although Arminians in their assertion of divine foreknowledge are more biblical in their theology than are the open theists, the latter are more logically consistent. The reason being that if God does indeed possess exhaustive foreknowledge, then the libertarian view of free will cannot rationally be maintained.

15. Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Volume 1, *Freedom of the Will*, ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957). Hereafter FOW.

There are many other “forms” of open theism that appear in church history. Process philosophers and theologians such as Charles Hartshorne, Alfred North Whitehead, John Cobb, and Schubert Ogden affirm a finite deity who does not possess exhaustive foreknowledge and gives man free will in the libertarian sense of the term. The same is true of the Boston Personalists, such as Borden P. Bowne and Edgar S. Brightman. In truth, however, the doctrine of open theism is first seen in the Garden of Eden: “You will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5). This is where the desire for human autonomy and libertarianism began. This is where the absolute sovereignty of God and His divine foreknowledge was first questioned. The results were lethal, and remain the same today.

OPEN THEISM AND THE BIBLE

What does the Bible say about open theism? First, orthodox Christianity teaches that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God; it “cannot be broken” (2 Tim. 3:16–17; John 10:35). Second, as taught in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1.6), the Protestant view of *sola Scriptura* maintains that:

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

If open theism is true (which it is not), however, we could not have any assurance that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God. Why?—because the Bible teaches that God the Holy Spirit sovereignly governed the writers of sacred Scripture by putting His Word in their mouths (Deut. 18:18; Jer. 1:9) and by “moving” them along so that what they wrote was nothing other than the very Word of God (2 Pet. 1:20–21). But how can this certainly be true if God does not sovereignly control the writers of Scripture so that they wrote inerrant truth? If the human authors were free in the libertarian sense, there could be no certainty regarding the infallible, inerrant nature of biblical truth. At best, Scripture would be undependable, and at worst useless.

Moreover, we read in Deuteronomy 18:21–22 that one of the marks of a true prophet of God is that when he speaks of future events they will surely come to pass. But how can a god who does not possess exhaustive

foreknowledge accurately prophecy future events? A deity who is ignorant of the future cannot speak with authority on anything beyond the present.¹⁶ All biblical prophecy dealing with future events would necessarily be subject to error, thereby (potentially) bringing the prophets of this deity under the death penalty curse of Deuteronomy 18:20.¹⁷

If open theism is true, then, there would be no absolute and certain Word of God given to us in special revelation. And since it is true, as taught in the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (Q. 3), that “the Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man,” we could not know who God is, or even if there is a god at all. Open theists are left on the horns of an insoluble dilemma. It seems that advocates of this false theology are left without a starting point for their system of doctrine, and without a starting point to tell them about God, they cannot even get started. As aptly stated by Robert Reymond, when one does away with the infallible, inerrant Word of God as his *pou sto* (“place to stand”), he eliminates the possibility of knowledge.¹⁸

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY, FOREKNOWLEDGE, AND IMMUTABILITY

According to the Bible, as taught by the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (3.1–4; 5.1–4):

3.1 God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

3.2 Although God knows whatsoever may or can

16. In a personal correspondence, Dr. Kenneth Talbot, president of Whitefield Theological Seminary, pointed out to the present writer that God’s exhaustive knowledge of the present is even questionable for open theists, because the god they espouse would not have immediate knowledge of the contingent actions of men.

17. Again, Dr. Talbot has correctly stated that the ignorant god of open theism could not logically condemn prophets for erring regarding the future.

18. Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1998) 111. Hereafter NST. When the Greek mathematician Archimedes was working with the simple machine of a lever, he said “Give me [a place] where I may stand [*pou sto*] and I will move the world.” Archimedes was asking for a base for the fulcrum of his lever which would be outside of the cosmos. “So the Bible is the Christian’s extra-cosmic base for knowledge and meaning.”

come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet has He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

3.3 By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

3.4 These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

5.1 God the great Creator of all things does uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

5.2 Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the First Cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly: yet, by the same providence, He orders them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

5.3 God in His ordinary providence makes use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at His pleasure.

5.4 The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that it extends itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, but such as has joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to His own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceeds only from the creature, and not from God, who

being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be, the author or approver of sin.

God, for His own glory, teaches the *Confession*, infallibly and unalterably decrees all things that will ever come to pass, including the everlasting destiny of all men and angels. Yet He does so in a manner wherein He is not to be considered as the author of sin, and without in any sense violating the will of His creatures. Further, not only does God create all things in His universe, but as the eternal First Cause, He, with infallible and exhaustive foreknowledge, also providentially governs, sustains, and directs all things to their appointed end, and He does so by the use of secondary causes. God's providential control of all things in His universe includes the Fall of man and all other sins of men and angels. Yet, God so providentially works all things to the praise of His glory that He remains holy. God cannot sin. Sin is only identified with secondary causes.

Divine sovereignty is a major tenet in Reformed or Calvinistic theology. When the Calvinist speaks of divine sovereignty, he means that God is God in all His holy attributes, His works of creation, providence, and salvation. God is the First Cause of all that exists, and nothing exists that is not foreordained by Him, and thereby foreknown by Him. There are many biblical passages which teach these truths.¹⁹

If anything were to exist independently of God, it would of necessity be coequal with Him. But the Bible declares: "To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?" "To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal?" (Isa. 40:18; 46:5). God has no co-equals. His will determines all things: He "works all things according to the counsel of His will" (Eph. 1:11); "Our God is in heaven; He does whatsoever He pleases" (Ps. 115:3); "The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations" (Ps. 33:11).

Since God thinks and acts independently, all of His actions are according to His knowledge. God knows all things intuitively. He never gains knowledge.²⁰ All things which exist have been created in accordance with His sovereign plan.

Since God created all things, He first had to foreknow them before they were created. All things which exist, physical and spiritual, come from the mind of the all-knowing God. He has "declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure'" (Isa. 46:10). All things exist to fulfill the purpose of God. "For by Him [Christ] all things were

19. Portions of this section are taken from Kenneth G. Talbot and W. Gary Crampton, *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism, and Arminianism* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Christian Liberty Press, 1999).

20. It is noted here that the fact that God's knowledge is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, means that He does not think sequentially. He does not have a succession of ideas as men do. He does, however, have an idea of successive thought, because He has so decreed that men think this way. Open theists, on the other hand, do teach that God thinks sequentially (OG, 133, 194).

created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16).

Notice is made of the way Scripture speaks of the all-inclusive nature of God's will being the final or ultimate cause of all that comes to pass:

Of creation and providence: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created" (Rev. 4:11).

Of the civil magistrate (and by reasoning *à fortiori*, all persons): "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes" (Prov. 21:1).

Of the sufferings of Christ: "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death" (Acts 2:23).

Of election and reprobation: "And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, 'The older shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.' What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.' So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.... Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens" (Rom. 9:10–16, 18). "The LORD has made all things for Himself, yes even the wicked for the day of doom" (Prov. 16:4).²¹

Of sin and evil: "I [God] form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity [evil]; I the LORD, do all these things" (Isa. 45:7). "If there is calamity [evil] in the city, will not the LORD have done it?" (Amos 3:6).

Of the good actions of men: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Of the wicked actions of men: "The LORD has made all things for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom" (Prov. 16:4).

Of withholding saving grace from the non-elect: "At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hid-

den these things [salvific, gospel grace] from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight" (Matt. 11:25–26).

Of regeneration: "Of His own will He brought us forth by the Word and truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).

Of the means as well as the ends in salvation: "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13). "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

Of the suffering of believers: "For it is better if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil" (1 Pet. 3:17).

Of the duration of man's life: "Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass" (Job 14:5). "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep [died], was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption" (Acts 13:36). "Your [God's] eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them."

The place of man's habitation: "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings" (Acts 17:26).

Of the most minute details in life: "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will" (Matt. 10:29).

Of seemingly contingent events: "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD" (Prov. 16:33).

Of the destiny of nations: "And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings" (Dan. 2:21). "Behold, the nations [to God] are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the balance" (Isa. 40:15).

Some critics of Reformed and Calvinistic theology assert that the doctrine of the sovereignty of God is harsh and stoic, but this is not the case. The God of the Bible always acts in accordance with His attributes, which

21. Note that these verses teach that God's love is not "unbounded." He loves the elect, but He hates the non-elect; see also Psalm 5:5–6: "You [God] hate all workers of iniquity.... The LORD abhors the blood-thirsty and deceitful man"; and Psalm 11:5: "The wicked and the one who loves violence His [God's] soul hates."

are perfect in every respect. In other words, God only does that which is perfect. It is impossible for Him to do otherwise. However, what is perfect in the eyes of God often meets with disapproval by man. This is one of the many problems with the open theists.

One of God's attributes is holiness. The biblical words used for holiness, in the original languages of the Old and New Testaments, refer, not only to His purity, but also to His being "set apart." God is distinct from all His creation. This is what makes Him holy.

We must also remember that because God always acts according to His attributes, that He can never deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13). He is motivated by holiness in everything that He does. Hence, every activity of God in His creation is the epitome of perfection: "The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!' ... The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him ... saying: 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created'" (Rev. 4:8–11).

Further, God does all things for His own glory: "I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another"; "Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory"; "I will not give My glory to another" (Isa. 42:8; 43:7; 48:11). God has "predestinated us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. 1:5–6). "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 11:36). This is in direct contradistinction to open theism, which as Bruce Ware has correctly said, gives us a "diminished god," of "lesser glory."²²

The doctrine of God's immutability goes hand in hand with His sovereignty. God is unchangeable: "For I am the LORD, I do not change" (Mal. 3:6); "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17). The eternal purposes of the triune God expressed in His decrees cannot ever be altered (Isa. 14:27; 46:9–10; Job 42:2). If God could change His mind or His plans, He would not

be infinitely wise in His works of creation and providence. How could a sovereign God, who has eternally foreordained all things that will come to pass, have His decrees altered by a creature: man? What kind of a god would this be? Surely this not the God of Christianity: "I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it" (Eccles. 3:14). The triune God of Holy Scripture is absolutely sovereign; He brooks no competition; "He does not give an accounting of any of His words" (Job 33:13). His decrees, which determine all things are: founded upon wisdom (Eph. 3:9–11), eternal (Ps. 33:11), completely efficacious (Prov. 19:21), unchangeable (Job 23:13), and all inclusive (Eph. 1:11).

God decrees all things that will ever come to pass for His own sovereign good purposes and glory (Eph. 1:11; Rom. 11:36). But He likewise does so in order that men will learn to fear Him: "I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him" (Eccles. 3:14).

The sovereignty of God is foundational to Christian theism. If this tenet is removed by the false doctrine of any other system of thought (such as open theism), then the whole of biblical Christianity will fall with it. If the God of the Bible is not absolutely sovereign, He is no God at all. Loraine Boettner wrote:

God created this world in which we find ourselves, He owns it, and He is running it according to His own sovereign good pleasure. God has lost none of His power, and it is highly dishonoring to Him to suppose that He is struggling along with the human race, doing the best He can to persuade men to do right, but unable to accomplish His eternal, unchangeable, holy, wise, and sovereign purpose.²³

When we speak of God's infinite, eternal, and unchangeable wisdom, as per the *Shorter Catechism* (Q. 4) quoted earlier, it is important to understand that we are necessarily referring to His omniscience. There are a number of passages in the Bible which teach us that God is omniscient. In Acts 15:18 we read: "Known to God from eternity are all His works." 1 John 3:20 asserts that God "knows all things." Job 37:16 states that God "is perfect in knowledge" (See also Ps. 139:1–6). In Isaiah 41:21–29 God distinguishes between Himself and the false deities in that He foreknows and foretells the future. God's knowledge of all things past, present, and future, is all-comprehensive; it is eternally intuited. This being so, the future is rendered certain.²⁴

22. Bruce A. Ware, *God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2000).

23. Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Faith* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1983) 4.

24. Open theists deny that God is eternal in the sense of being an a-temporal or supra-temporal Deity. If he were supra-temporal,

When libertarian free will advocates turn to Scripture to deny the absolute sovereignty of God (as per the Reformed and Calvinistic view of sovereignty), and to support their position that God is neither immutable nor impassible, and that He does not possess exhaustive foreknowledge, they will normally adduce those passages in the Bible where God is said to repent, relent, or change His mind (e.g., Gen. 6:5–6; 1 Sam. 15:11, 35; Jon. 3:10; 4:2), or where He is said to learn something (e.g., Gen. 22:12). Too, these free will thinkers will turn to passages where God is said to suffer or grieve, e.g., Hosea 11:8–9 and Jeremiah 31:20 (OG, 22–35, 53–57, 117–119, 121–124).

Traditional orthodox Christianity explains, first of all, that if God is eternal, then it would be logically absurd to say that His essential nature (i.e., God's "essence") can change. Eternality demands immutability. But second, the traditional view maintains that the verses which speak of God's repenting (or relenting), or changing His mind, or suffering, are anthropomorphic and/or anthropopathic statements. Anthropomorphic language is a figure of speech wherein God is represented under human form to help us better understand some particular divine attribute. For example, when the Bible refers to God's eyes (2 Chron. 16:9), it speaks of His knowledge; when the Bible speaks of God's wings (Ps. 91:4), it has to do with His protection of His people; and when we read of God's face (Ps. 27:8–9), we are being told about His presence.

Anthropopathic statements are a form of anthropomorphic language and are used similarly, wherein human feelings are attributed to God. God, being pure Spirit (John 4:24), does not "have flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39) as humans do. And being an unchangeable Being, He cannot suffer harm nor experience involuntary actions (i.e., involuntary emotions). In the words of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (2:1), God is "without body, parts, or passions."

So when the Bible speaks of God as changing His mind, as Cairns maintains, we are to understand it as "the exercise of God's unchanging moral perfections in relation to changes in the creatures with whom He is dealing," as per Jeremiah 18:7–8: "The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent [change My mind] of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it" (DTT, 315; see also Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.17.12–14). In the same way, when the Bible speaks about God suffering or grieving, we are to understand this as having to do, not with His eternal, unchange-

able, essential will, but with His intentional will based on the response of certain persons or entities. For instance, when the Bible speaks of God's being grieved (Eph. 4:30), it is an anthropopathic statement telling us that God has compassion or concern for certain persons or things. It is His eternal, unchangeable nature to be compassionate.

Other passages that refer to the will or desire of God being thwarted in some sense (e.g., Ezek. 33:11) have to do with God's preceptive will, not His unalterable decretive will. The main verse dealing with this subject is Deuteronomy 29:29, where we read: "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." In this verse Moses distinguishes between God's eternal, decretive will (the "secret things") and God's preceptive will ("those things which are revealed"). The decretive will (God's decrees) determines what must happen; the preceptive will (God's commands) is the law which men are obliged to obey. The decretive will is hidden in the mind of God; it is absolute and determined by Him alone; it is not for man to know unless God is pleased to reveal it. The preceptive will, on the other hand, is revealed in Scripture. It is that will of God for man by which he is to live. It is for us and our children to know and practice. Man is held accountable for the preceptive will, not the decretive will. Man cannot disobey or thwart God's decretive will (cf. Job 42:2; Isa. 46:9–10), but he can and does disobey and thereby thwart God's commandments.

Hence, when in Ezekiel 33:11 God says "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live," we are to understand that this has to do with God's preceptive will, i.e., the gospel call for men to turn from their sins to Jesus Christ. This gospel call goes out to all men who come under the preaching of the gospel. Many, however, reject this call, and perish in their sins. In the words of Christ, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14). As taught in the *Westminster Confession* (10:4): "Others, not

then He could not know what takes place in temporal history, i.e., He could not know the events of present time (OG, 119–121). The traditional response to this is that God is eternal in the sense of being a-temporal or supra-temporal, but He is also omnipresent at every moment of time. God is both transcendent over time and immanent (i.e., omnipresent) in time. As stated in Isaiah 57:15: "For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, and with him who has a contrite and humble spirit.'" And in Jeremiah 23:23–24 we read: "Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, "and not a God afar off?... Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD."

elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved.”

Finally, when open theism claims that God’s death in the Person of Christ assures us that God can change,²⁵ they have once again involved themselves in a logical fallacy. If God is eternal, He cannot die; He cannot suffer; He is necessarily impassible. As explained by the *Shorter Catechism* (Q. 21), the second Person of the Godhead, “being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one Person, forever.” Jesus Christ is one Person with two natures: one fully divine and one fully human. On the cross, it is the human nature which dies, not the divine. It is the God-man, Jesus Christ who suffers and dies, but He does so as touching His human nature, because the divine nature cannot possibly die.²⁶

HUMAN FREE WILL

Regarding the free will of man, the Bible, according to the *Westminster Confession* (9.1–5), teaches:

God has endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil.

Man, in his state of innocence, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good, and well pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.

Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

When God converts a sinner and translates him into the state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage under sin; and by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he does not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but does also will that which is evil.

The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone, in the state of glory only.

One of the difficulties in studying the doctrine of free will is that it is so often misunderstood. The question is often posed, *If God has decreed all things that will ever come to pass, thereby necessitating their occurrence, how can man possess a free will?* As we have seen, it is indeed true that God, the First Cause of all things, has decreed all that will ever occur, but we have also seen that He decrees them to take place by means of second causes. God’s eternal decree does not violate the will of the creature or take away his liberty; rather, it establishes the fact that what men do they do freely, in accordance with their own will. God has decreed that it will occur in this way. Robert Reymond explains:

Reformed theology [i.e., biblical Christianity] does not deny that men have wills (that is, choosing minds) or that men exercise their wills countless times a day. To the contrary, Reformed theology happily affirms both of these propositions. What Reformed theology denies is that man’s will is ever free from God’s decree, his own intellections, limitations, parental training, habits, and (in this life) the power of sin. In sum, there is no such thing as the *liberty of indifference*; that is, no one’s will is an island unto itself, undetermined or unaffected by anything (NST, 373).

What the Westminster divines are teaching regarding the doctrine of free will is that, although man is never free from God’s eternal decree, which determines all things, nevertheless, God has given man the natural ability to make choices “freely.” Man’s choices are not determined by inanimate forces, nor by “any absolute necessity of nature.” Man is not a machine; he is a free moral agent.

Before the Fall, in his “state of innocence,” man had both a free moral agency and the ability “to will and to do that which is good and well pleasing to God.” As we read in Ecclesiastes 7:29: “God made man upright.” Yet, even though man was upright, he was still liable to change, and to will to do evil.

Due to the Fall, however, man is now in a spiritual state of “total depravity,” unable to do anything that pleases God (Rom. 3:9–18; 8:7–8). What man lost in the Fall is the ability to please God. Man still possesses a free moral agency, and he freely chooses whatsoever he desires to do, but he is no longer able “to will and to do that which is good and well pleasing to God.” Even though God created men in an upright condition, “they

25. Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London: SCM Press, 1974).

26. Jonathan Edwards, *Our Great and Glorious God*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, Pa.: Soli Deo Gloria, 2003) 153–154; Calvin, *Institutes*, II.12.2–3.

have sought out many schemes" (Eccles. 7:29). Men are now lost in sin and their will is disposed toward unrighteousness and inclined away from God. Men in this "state of sin," in the words of Paul, are "in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God"; the state of men is such that they are "past feeling," they "have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. 4:17–19). Not only do men sin, but they do so willingly, "with greediness."

Redeemed man, in the "state of grace," is set free "from his natural bondage under sin," and by the grace of God is restored with the ability "freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good." Not only does redeemed man have free moral agency, but he also has the ability to please God restored to him. This does not mean that man in the "state of grace" always freely chooses "that which is spiritually good." On the contrary, "by reason of his remaining corruption, he does not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but does also will that which is evil." Only in the "state of glory" is redeemed man "made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone."

These teachings are denied by open theism. God, it is alleged, does not possess exhaustive foreknowledge, and man does possess a libertarian free will. God may have, so it is claimed, a perfect knowledge of the present, but not of the future. Man's choices, say the open theists, are completely free. They are not foreordained by God and are not determined or caused by anything else. The open theist would assert (as does the Arminian) the fact that God can call sinners to repentance and faith in Christ assumes that man has the ability to make such a choice (OG, 121–124, 162–168, 173–175). This view is sometimes referred to as "the power of contrary course."

Jonathan Edwards responded to similar thinking in what is normally considered to be the most thorough Calvinistic refutation of free will libertarianism ever penned: *Freedom of the Will*. As he explained in this book, the idea of an uncaused, undetermined free will is a logical absurdity. Among other things, he argued that our choices are necessarily effects of a cause. An uncaused effect is not possible, because an effect by definition necessitates a cause. To assert the opposite would be to say that man makes a choice without choosing, or that he prefers something without a preference. And it simply will not do to claim, as the libertarians do, that the will determines itself. This too is irrational. Why?—because for the will to determine itself is for the will to act; thus, the act of the will whereby it determines it-

self must be an antecedent act of the will, otherwise it cannot be said to be "self-determined." But this act too must be determined by a preceding act of the will, *ad infinitum*. Necessarily, says Edwards, there must be a first cause for the will to act; but if there is no first cause, all we have is infinite regress, so that we could never get started. Here again we have a logical impossibility (FOW, 180–216, 337–342).

Edwards also marshaled a plethora of biblical passages to show that the Bible does indeed teach, in opposition to open theism, that God foreordains all things, and is therefore the ultimate First Cause of all things (including men's "free" choices). As God foreordains all things, He thereby foreknows all things that come to pass. The biblical view of exhaustive divine foreknowledge, of course, dispenses altogether with libertarianism; it necessitates the certainty of all future events (FOW, 239–269). Edwards' response to present day open theism's denial of exhaustive divine foreknowledge would be one of incredulity. "One would think," commented Edwards, that "it should be wholly needless to enter on such an argument with any that profess themselves Christians" (FOW, 239).²⁷

Arminians and the open theists are fond of arguing that the deterministic necessity espoused by Reformed and Calvinistic theology does away with moral virtue (OG, 173–175). That is, if a person is "determined" to make a certain choice, thereby rendering the choice necessary, then the individual must not be held responsible for that choice. John Gerstner countered by saying: "We do not see that because God predestinates that a certain action is going to come to pass that that act must violate human freedom. We do not see that it is impossible for God to predestinate an act to come to pass by means of the deliberate choice of specific individuals."²⁸ Jonathan Edwards would agree with Dr. Gerstner. He utilizes the ultimate *reductio ad absurdum* argument to make his point. According to Edwards, if it were true that the biblical doctrine of determinism does away with moral virtue, then we would have to conclude that God Himself, who is "necessarily" and unchangeably holy, is a non-moral Being. The same could be said regarding the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ, because He necessarily lived a perfectly obedient life and died a perfect atoning death (FOW, 277–294).

27. For more on this, see C. Samuel Storms, "Open Theism in the Hands of an Angry Puritan," in *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. D. G. Hart, Sean Michael Lucas, and Stephen J. Nichols (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2003) 114–130.

28. John H. Gerstner, *Primitive Theology*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, Pa.: Soli Deo Gloria, 1996) 190.

In his doctrinal study on *Original Sin*, Jonathan Edwards averred that if the idea of libertarian free will were to be established, it would vitiate biblical Christianity. He wrote:

I stand ready to confess to the aforementioned modern divines [libertarian free will thinkers], if they can maintain their peculiar notion of freedom, consisting in the self-determining power of the will, as necessary to moral agency, and can thoroughly establish it in opposition to the arguments lying against it, then they have an impregnable castle, to which they may repair, and remain invincible, in all the controversies they have with the reformed divines, concerning original sin, the sovereignty of grace, election, redemption, conversion, the efficacious operation of the Holy Spirit, the nature of saving faith, perseverance of the saints, and other principles of the like kind.²⁹

Thanks be to God that neither the “modern divines” of Edwards’ day nor the heterodox thinkers of our day are correct. Rather, they are in great theological error. They are propagating a false and fatal doctrine, which cannot possibly be supported by the Word of God; it can lead only to apostasy. The god of open theism is an impotent and “diminished god” of “lesser glory.”

What, then, is the biblical relationship between God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility? Edwards wrote:

In efficacious grace we are not merely passive, nor yet does God do some, and we do the rest. But God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what He produces, *viz.*, our own acts. God is the only proper author and fountain; we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive, and wholly active.

In the Scriptures the same things are represented as from God and from us. God is said to convert, and men are said to convert and turn. God makes a new heart, and we are commanded to circumcise our own hearts; not merely because we must use the means in order to the effect, but the effect itself is our act and our duty. These things are agreeable to that text, “God works in you both to will and to do.”³⁰

God holds man accountable to his duty, not necessarily to his ability.³¹ Man is responsible to God as His image bearer, but he is unable to come to God apart from God’s sovereign grace. Salvation is not a 50%–50% relationship (as per Arminianism and Open Theism), said Edwards; neither is it a 100%–0% relationship (as in hyper-Calvinism). Rather, it is a relationship wherein man is totally dependent on God’s sovereign grace, while man is involved. This is precisely what Jesus taught in John 6:37: “All that the Father gives Me *will come to Me*, and the *one who comes to Me* I will by no means cast out.” Those who come to Christ will be saved, but they are not able to come to Christ, as Jesus went on to teach, unless the Father “draws them”: “No one can come to Me unless *the Father who sent Me draws him*” (John 6:44; emphasis added). It is also the position expressed by the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (7:3):

Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant [of works], the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, *requiring of them* faith in Him that they may be saved, and *promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe* (emphasis added).

CONCLUSION

We conclude this article with the words of John Frame, who well summarizes the heterodoxy of free will open theism as follows:

They have denied God’s sovereign lordship over His creation. They have denied His rule over time and His unchangeable eternal purpose. They have denied His exhaustive knowledge of the future. All for what? They have done all this to make their theology consistent with libertarian freedom—an incoherent, unbiblical speculation that denies divine sovereignty and destroys what

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29. Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Volume 3, *Original Sin*, ed. Clyde A. Holbrook (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970) 376. For more on this see C. Samuel Storms, “The Will: Fettered Yet Free (Freedom of the Will),” in *A God Entranced Vision of All Things*, ed. John Piper and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004) 201–220.

30. Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Edward Hickman (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1986) 2.557.

31. In Proverbs 16:4–5, we read that God “has made all things for Himself, even the wicked for the day of doom,” yet at the same time we are told that “everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD,” and that “none will go unpunished.” And in Acts 2:22–23 we read that “by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God” Jesus Christ was “delivered” to be crucified; yet, it was by the “lawless hands” of guilty men that He was “put to death.”

Francis Makemie and the Meaning of American Presbyterianism

By D. G. Hart, Ph.D.

Francis Makemie is an icon of American Presbyterianism who is more often celebrated than understood. Widely regarded as the “Father” of the American church, few Presbyterians can put together more than one sentence about his life or ministry. This ignorance itself is understandable since Makemie, like most of the founding generation of American Presbyterian ministers, left behind few records or manuscripts from which either to commemorate or assess his contribution. As such, Makemie functions as the malleable hero whom students of American Presbyterians can shape for their own purposes. At the same time, the lack of material on the founder of American Presbyterianism says something important not only about the hardships under which Makemie labored to plant the American church but also about the kind of Presbyterianism that would emerge in the New World. What follows is an effort first to fill in some of the gaps about colonial Presbyterianism’s most prominent minister, and then to assess Makemie’s importance for the American church that would emerge from his efforts. At a time when Presbyterians in several American denominations are marking three hundred years of ministry and worship in the United States, consideration of Makemie’s life and ministry may add an appropriate measure of sobriety to celebrations that might otherwise overlook American Presbyterianism’s disquieting beginnings.

UNLIKELY HERO

Francis Makemie was born near Ramelton, Donegal County, in Northern Ireland of Scottish parents. The exact date is unclear since so few details of his childhood are known, but it was likely 1657 or 1658. If his birthday is unknown, Makemie’s ethnicity is unmistakable. He was Scotch-Irish, that is someone of Scottish descent living in Northern Ireland. This ethnic iden-

tity was important for two reasons. The first was the political situation of Great Britain in the seventeenth century and its influence upon Presbyterianism. The Stuart monarchy was committed to uniting the British isles as the United Kingdom, a commitment that involved bringing the Celtic fringe, that is, the Scots, the Irish and the Welsh under English rule. To that end the English established the Ulster colony in Northern Ireland and encouraged Scots, who in many cases were looking for better circumstances, to settle in the new territory. The second reason for noting Makemie’s ethnicity is that a majority of the American Presbyterian church’s original ministers and members were Scotch-Irish, thus accounting for important differences between the American church and other English-speaking Presbyterian communions.

Aside from his ethnic heritage, little is known about Makemie’s early life. He was one of four children—two brothers and one sister—and the only Makemie to leave Ireland. At the age of fifteen he attained to a sufficient understanding of the gospel to make profession of faith “through the pains of a godly schoolmaster, who used no small diligence in gaining tender souls to God’s service and fear.”¹ In 1676 he enrolled at the University of Glasgow where records described him as having blue-eyes and brown hair that covered “an intellectual forehead” and adorned “the dignified mien of a true Irish gentleman” (Barkley, 9). At university Makemie

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1. Makemie quoted in J. M. Barkley, *Francis Makemie of Ramelton: Father of American Presbyterianism* (Belfast: Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland, 1981) 9.

studied divinity and by 1680 was in regular communion with his home Presbytery of Laggan in order to be examined for ordination. Close supervision followed over the course of the next two years, with records of presbytery ending abruptly in 1681 during a time of persecution, only to be restored in 1690. Ordained either in 1681 or 1682, Makemie soon left for the New World with a commission to plant churches among Presbyterian settlers. In 1683 he arrived in Maryland only a year after William Penn had arrived to found the city of Philadelphia.

Because of the presence of Presbyterians in Philadelphia and the eventual founding of the first presbytery in that city, historical interest in the colonial church has generally slighted the ministry and congregations of Presbyterians in Maryland. Yet, the colony's policies of religious toleration, despite the Roman Catholic convictions of its founding proprietor, Lord Baltimore, made Maryland a place where Presbyterians were the majority of the population. In addition to Makemie's ministry there, William Trail and Thomas Wilson, both from the Presbytery of Laggan, along with Samuel Davis, whose background is unknown, were also responsible for planting churches in Maryland.

But Makemie traveled extensively beyond Maryland, ministering to Presbyterians in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, and even Barbados. He tried in 1684 to visit South Carolina but violent storms prevented him from completing the journey. In 1692 he spent time in Philadelphia and is generally credited with planting the seeds of the first congregation in that city, his sermons likely being the first Presbyterian witness in the Quaker town. Six years later he set sail for Barbados to preach among Presbyterians engaged in business enterprises in that colony. In addition to his travels for church planting and conducting worship, Makemie also embarked on trips to recruit Presbyterian ministers for the middle colonies. He visited London at least twice, once in 1689 and another time in 1704, hoping to find men looking for opportunities for ministry. Makemie also corresponded with such Boston Congregationalists as Increase Mather, Cotton Mather and Benjamin Colman in hope of securing additional ministerial support for Presbyterianism. Late in life, in 1707 Makemie undertook a trip to Boston for similar purposes but political circumstances (see below) intervened to prevent

a successful outcome. To conclude that Makemie was an itinerant evangelist and organizing administrator of American Presbyterianism is not far from the mark.

Another reason for Makemie's travels was his own business interests, which were crucial to his survival as a minister without the support of a settled congregation. Historians speculate that his relatively longer stay in Barbados from 1695 to 1698 owed to commercial dealings that required Makemie's presence on the island. Barbados was often a stop on voyages from Britain to the New World, so he may have established a sense of opportunities for trade even on his way to Maryland. One indication of Makemie's business acumen was a little pamphlet he wrote in 1705, *A Plain and Friendly Persuasive to the Inhabitants of Virginia and Maryland for Promoting Towns and Cohabitation*. The work was designed chiefly to counter a pattern of settlement and agricultural endeavor (especially tobacco farming) that spread the population out over large portions of land with few centers or towns to facilitate either commerce or cultural life. In some respects, Makemie could sound like an officer from the local Chamber of Commerce:

give all Encouragement to Traders and Strangers, especially to such as settle in Towns; lay no uneasie Burdens upon Trade, be the Forerunners and Patterns to your People, in complying with your own Laws; Let the poorer sort of Inhabitants be left to follow the Example of those of greater Ability.... Let all Gentlemen of Estates be expeditious in building Dwelling-houses, and Stores, both for Merchants Goods and Tobacco, that the Trading Part of England may not complain for want of Conveniences at your Towns.²

But Makemie had more in mind than profit or the consumption of goods. Towns he believed would diversify agricultural production and better conserve the land, they would be easier to defend against invasion, and they would make the New World more attractive to other settlers.

Makemie also had a religious motive to his commercial madness. He believed that towns and the business that sustained them would "advance Religion" because Christianity prospered best when its adherents lived in close proximity. He wrote:

... for in remote and scattered Settlements we can never enjoy so fully, frequently, and certainly, those Privileges and Opportunities as are to be had in all Christian Towns and Cities; for by reason of bad Weather,

2. Makemie, *A Plain and Friendly Persuasive to the Inhabitants of Virginia and Maryland for Promoting Towns and Cohabitation*, reprinted in Boyd S. Schlenther, ed., *The Life and Writings of Francis Makemie* (Philadelphia, Pa.: The Presbyterian Historical Society, 1971) 142.

or other Accidents, Ministers are prevented and People are hindered to attend, and so disappoint one another: But in Towns Congregations are never wanting, and Children and Servants never are without Opportunity of Hearing, who cannot travel many Miles to hear, and be catechized.... it is a melancholy Consideration, how many came very ignorant of Religion to the Plantations, and by removing to remote Settlements, have been neglected by others, and careless of themselves, continue grossly ignorant of many necessary parts of the Christian Religion; and many Natives born in ignorant Families, and by distance, seldom hear a Sermon, which would be more common, and frequently attended, if we had Towns and Cohabitation (Makemie, *A Plain and Friendly Persuasive*, 146–47).

Makemie's argument is not only interesting for what it implies about the state of society and civic life in colonial America, but demonstrated genuine insights about the dependence of healthy churches on strong communities.

In addition to his own economic activity, Makemie also likely received financial support from his father-in-law, William Anderson, a wealthy merchant and landowner in Maryland, whose daughter, Naomi, Makemie married sometime between 1687 and 1698. The earliest record of this marriage comes from Anderson's will which disclosed at the time of his death in 1698 that Makemie and Naomi Anderson had been wed. The Makemies had two daughters, Elizabeth and Anne, the former dying in 1708, the latter living until 1787, but neither bearing children. In addition to laboring as a Presbyterian itinerant, then, Makemie also supported himself and his family through commercial activity and functioned in a limited capacity as a civic leader.

Aside from his travels and business activities, three episodes in Makemie's life are important for understanding his influence upon American Presbyterianism and for grasping how fragile the Presbyterian communion was that he helped to start. The first was a dispute that occurred between Makemie and George Keith, who in England had been Presbyterian but had become a Quaker and in colonial America became a polemicist against non-Quakers. The controversy started after 1692, the year when Makemie's *Catechism* was published. Copies of the work have not survived but it was a compendium of the Westminster Standards to be used in training children in the Reformed faith. Keith took issue with the catechism for departing from Quaker teaching on any number of points and challenged Makemie to a public debate. The latter declined

because he did not want to allow "an ignorant and illiterate multitude" to be the judge of this important dispute.³ So Makemie challenged Keith to put his objections in print, which the Quaker did and were published with Makemie's rejoinder in 1694 as *Answer to George Keith's Libel*.

Makemie's answer is sketchy at many points, and somewhat haphazard since he was responding to another person. But it does reveal that the Presbyterianism of Makemie's era was following in the larger pattern of the Reformed faith handed down by the sixteenth-century Reformers. In addition to attacking Quaker beliefs about the inner light, the deity of Christ and the nature of the institutional church, Makemie also defended traditional Reformed teaching on the sufficiency of Scripture, Christ's ministry, the doctrines of grace, the office of ministers, and the sacraments. For instance, on the nature and extent of the atonement, Makemie asserted that "the most unanimous, and received Doctrine of the Reformed Churches, is, That whom Christ Died for, he absolutely and compleately Redeemed; and that was some Select and Chosen Number, given him of God, the Father, to Lay down his life for them, as our Lord himself hints plainly to us in John 17. at large, of which says he, None was Lost."⁴ Likewise, on the specific instance of the three offices of Christ, Makemie also followed the chief contours of Reformed teaching. Keith had objected to Makemie's catechism for only mentioning the three offices of prophet, priest and king, and not using any number of metaphors used in Scripture to understand Christ's additional duties of mediation. But Makemie responded that these "Three Offices include, All that Christ did, and was Requisite to be done as Mediatour," and that these are very "Obvious and Plain" in Scripture (*Answer to George Keith's Libel*, 64). For good measure, the Presbyterian minister added that Keith must be "a Man of a Perverse Spirit, and contentious mind" to raise "a Debate upon this head" (66).

If Makemie's dispute with Keith showed the colonial Presbyterian church's doctrinal understanding to be in the mainstream of Reformed teaching, the second major episode in his career illustrates the importance of ecclesiology to the American church. Prior to 1701 Presbyterian ministers like Makemie and his colleagues preached somewhat indiscriminately depending on the circumstances. Sometimes they would minister in designated Presbyterian congregations but on other occasions they might preach in a Congregationalist or Anglican setting

3. Makemie quoted in Barkley, *Francis Makemie*, 14.

4. Makemie, *Answer to George Keith's Libel*, reprinted in Schlenker, ed., *Life and Writings*, 67.

to the local Presbyterians. In fact, Makemie regarded the different branches of Protestantism as having a wide degree of unity. While living in Barbados, for instance, he wrote a pamphlet, *Truths in a True Light*, to answer Roman Catholic criticisms of Protestantism that were designed to deepen the divisions between Anglicans and Presbyterians. Makemie argued that Presbyterians agreed with Anglicans “in all points of faith, and divine ordinances, or parts of worship, ... differing only in ceremonies, government and discipline.”⁵ He then listed twelve points of agreement, from receiving the doctrinal component of the Thirty-Nine Articles, to strictly observing the Lord’s Day. The only substantial points of disagreement were the use of the *Book of Common Prayer*, the canons of the Church of England, episcopal government, and forms of church discipline.

But after 1701 affirmations of unity with Anglicans became harder to maintain because of the founding of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG). Although designed as a missionary agency of the Church of England for evangelistic work in non-Christian lands, in the North American colonies the SPG became a vehicle for establishing the Anglican communion by law. Or at least that was the perception of many, including American Presbyterians. It was also the experience of some, such as George McNish in New York, where the governor of the colony, Lord Cornbury, ejected McNish from his congregation and installed instead an SPG missionary.

When Makemie returned from London in 1704, he also laid plans for the formation of an American presbytery. Since the first pages of the presbytery’s minutes are missing, the record is not entirely clear whether the Presbytery of Philadelphia met in 1705 or 1706, though the supplementary evidence suggests that the latter date is the correct one. It is clear, though, that the presbyters elected Makemie the first moderator. The original presbytery consisted of eight men. Aside from Makemie, it included John Hampton (1679–1721), originally from Northern Ireland and a graduate of Edinburgh; George McNish (1684–1722), a Scot who studied at Glasgow; Samuel Daves (?–1725), a man about whom little is known; Nathaniel Taylor (?–1710) and John Wilson (?–1712), whose backgrounds are mysterious aside from their hailing from Scotland; Jedediah Andrews (1674–1747), a graduate of Harvard and the only New Englander in the original presbytery; and John Boyd (?–1708), another Scot also educated at Glasgow.

Church historians have long speculated about the

exact character of the first presbytery, with later generations often trying to justify their own Presbyterian predilections on the basis of the original American Presbyterian body. The issue has boiled down to one of authority. Did the presbytery function in a way that controlled the ministers and congregations within its bounds, or was it more like an association of Presbyterians who banded together for fellowship and mutual edification? The question is likely anachronistic since these debates would not become meaningful for another two decades in American Presbyterianism. Three factors were important in understanding the function of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. First, the American church was short on pastors and the presbytery became the means necessary to ordain men for the ministry. Indeed, the first business of the presbytery was to ordain John Boyd who was laboring in New Jersey. Second, American Presbyterians perceived a need to organize in response to a possible expansion of the Church of England. Although the presbytery lacked sanctions by the state and could wind up facing obstacles similar to those experienced by the Presbyterian Church in Northern Ireland where the Anglican establishment did forcibly suppress Presbyterianism, the formation of a judicatory would proactively establish a Presbyterian presence before Anglican encroachments. Third, the religious liberties provided by William Penn’s colony made Pennsylvania a place where Presbyterians could take advantage of religious disestablishment. Other colonies lacked both the religious freedoms and the conveniences afforded by Philadelphia.

The issue of religious liberty was important not only as a condition for the formation of the first presbytery but was also at the heart of the third major episode in Makemie’s life in America. Soon after the meeting of presbytery, John Hampton and Makemie traveled north with the intention of visiting Boston and recruiting more ministers for the Presbyterian church. On the way they preached in New Jersey and were planning to do so again in New York had they not run up against the obstinacy of Lord Cornbury, the governor of that colony. He was the English official responsible for actively encouraging the SPG in New York and New Jersey, and who disrupted the congregations of Presbyterians and Reformed throughout the region. To preach in New York, Makemie and Hampton petitioned the English government but were refused. The Presbyterians went ahead anyway and on January 19, 1707, Makemie preached in New York in the home of a church member “in as publick a manner as possible,”⁶ meaning the doors remained open. On the same day,

5. Makemie quoted in Barkley, *Francis Makemie*, 16.

6. Makemie, *A Narrative of a New and Unusual American*

Hampton preached in Newtown on Long Island. Later in the day when Makemie joined Hampton in Newtown, the sheriff of Queens County arrested both ministers and the next day they were imprisoned for having preached without a license. Makemie and Hampton remained in custody until March 8, 1707, but did attend the next meeting of presbytery on March 25. For unknown reasons the government dropped the charges against Hampton. Makemie, however, was scheduled for trial on June 3, 1707.

The case against Makemie rested on Cornbury's apparent misreading of instructions from Queen Ann that Anglican ministers be approved either by the Bishop of London or by the New York Governor himself before being permitted to preach in the colony. This provision did not seem to apply to dissenting ministers, such as Presbyterians and Congregationalists, for whom other laws applied. At least, that was Makemie's defense. In 1707 he wrote *A Narrative of a new and Unusual American Imprisonment of Two Presbyterian Ministers*, which included exchanges from the court proceedings and Makemie's account and defense of his actions. Here he appealed to the laws of Parliament that specified how dissenting ministers were to gain licenses to preach publicly. Because he had been licensed by English authorities in both Barbados and Virginia, Makemie believed he was free to preach in any of the English colonies, including New York and New Jersey. He appealed specifically to the policies of religious toleration implemented in 1689 by William and Mary and argued that they applied as much to the colonies as to England. "As to our doctrines," Makemie declared, "we have our Confession of Faith, which is known to the Christian World, and I challenge all the Clergy of York to show us any false or pernicious Doctrines therein; Yea, with those exceptions specified in the Law, we are able to make it appear, they are in all Doctrinal Articles of Faith agreeable to the Established Doctrines of the Church of England" (Schlenter, 201). Not only were the Presbyterians playing by the rules of the religious establishment, but Cornbury himself, according to Makemie, was applying those rules arbitrarily. "It will be unaccountable to England, to hear, that Jews, who openly blaspheme the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, ... Quakers who disown the Fundamental Doctrines of the Church of England, and both Sacraments ..." are tolerated "and only we, who have complied and are still ready to comply with the Act of Toleration, and are nearest to, and the likest the Church of England of any Dissenters, should be hindered, and that only in the Government of New-York and Jersies" (202–203).

Some believe that Cornbury set the trial date so far

after the incident because he knew the charges were weak and hoped that Makemie, for whom travel to New York was a hardship, would agree never to preach again in New York and let the matter drop. But to the leading Presbyterian the legal status of his church and the calling of the minister were at stake and he went forward with the trial. That Makemie did so was no small endeavor on his part. As he told the judge and jury toward the conclusion of his trial, "I am a Stranger, who live four hundred miles from this place, and it is known to the whole Country, what intolerable trouble I have been put to already, and we cannot consent to a special Verdict, for that is only to encrease my trouble, multiply my Charge, and give me further delay ..." (Schlenter, 232). His arguments, along with those of his legal counselors, prevailed and the jury acquitted him of the charges. Though acquitted, Makemie was still forced to pay for all the costs of the court proceedings and his imprisonment, in addition to his own travel expenses. The injustice of these charges led the New York assembly to pass a law prohibiting the assessment of innocent parties for legal expenses in court proceedings.

A year after the trial Makemie died at the age of 50 and was buried on or near his farm in Virginia. The proximity of his death to his imprisonment and trial has tempted historians to link the end of the Presbyterian minister's life to his ill treatment by New York officials. The ordeal of the incident in New York may very well have been a factor in his death, though the spottiness of the records make such a determination impossible. Just as likely the standard of living in colonial America, combined with Makemie's many travels, contributed to his seemingly short life. Whatever the case, his will indicates that he was preparing for his death as early as April 27, 1708, perhaps an indication of poor health and an awareness of his impending demise. Though the exact date of his death is unknown, it likely occurred in late July of that year. It concluded a quarter of a century of ministry in the New World by a man whose doings and ideas are only slightly less murky than the church attributed to his efforts. Unlike the Founding Fathers of Massachusetts Bay Colony or the United States, American Presbyterianism's founder remains the American church's most obscure figure of prominence.

WITHOUT MAJESTY

Francis Makemie serves a useful purpose in American church history. Students of the past invariably look ide-

Imprisonment of Two Presbyterian Ministers, reprinted in Schlenter, ed., *Life and Writings*, 202.

alistically to history for examples of courage and fidelity. They also search for first causes or important events or people that shape subsequent developments. Although very little is known about most of the original American Presbyterian pastors, Makemie appears to have written more and have been more prominent economically than his ecclesiastical peers. He was also a bundle of energy during his time in the New World, preaching in isolated posts, traveling to New England and London to recruit new ministers, and helping to organize the handful of Presbyterians in the mid-Atlantic region into a formal presbytery. His status as Founding Father is by no means arbitrary. But neither is it entirely obvious given how little is known about the original Presbyterian ministers or their activities. Makemie is indeed the unlikely pastor whom historians have designated as the Presbyterian Founding Father because without his life and work the history of American Presbyterianism would be even harder to explain.

Without discrediting the significance of Makemie's life and ministry, his work is just as useful to American church history for reminding contemporary Presbyterians of two important historical points. The first concerns how humble the origins of Presbyterianism in the New World were. It is also a reminder of how badly Presbyterianism fared in the Old World as well. American Presbyterians tend to associate their tradition's origins with the heroism of a John Calvin in Geneva or a John Knox in Edinburgh. This is the lure of the magisterial Reformation, when Presbyterian and Reformed church fathers were important figures in their societies and when churches commanded the interests of statesmen. Such historical enticement might plausibly tempt American Presbyterians to regard the coming of their church to the New World as the extension of the Reformation's greatness. But the life and work of Makemie actually reveals a magisterial Reformation tradition without majesty. His ministry culminated almost 125 years not of Presbyterian conquest but of Presbyterian subsistence. That historical background makes Makemie's achievements all the more noteworthy. They are not, however, the culmination of the Reformed faith's expansion to North America after a successful campaign through the British Isles.

Presbyterianism did begin well in late sixteenth-century Scotland. In 1560 the Scottish parliament abolished the mass and renounced the jurisdiction of Rome. It also adopted the Scots Confession of 1560, which was a simple statement of Reformed convictions. John Knox, who was the acknowledged leader of Scottish Presbyterianism, put together a directory for public worship that in

1564 was available for the churches. By 1578 the Scottish Kirk also had a book of discipline, thus adding polity to the church's existing arsenal of creed and liturgy. Presbyterianism appeared to be off to a very good start.

But then the Kirk ran into the realities and ambitions of the British monarchy. James VI, the Scottish king, cooperated with Presbyterians even to the point of ratifying the National Covenant (1581) in which he promised to uphold the true (read: Reformed) faith within the kingdom. But when James succeeded Elizabeth I and became the monarch of both England and Scotland, now James I, Presbyterians in the north became pawns in a larger battle between the king's efforts to unite the British Isles and Parliament's defense of its own authority. Throughout the seventeenth century until 1690 Scottish Presbyterians entered into a variety of alliances, sometimes with Parliament, sometimes with English Puritans, and sometimes with Roman Catholic kings, in order to preserve the Reformed faith in Scotland. Arguably the most moving instance of heroism from the era is the experience of the Covenanters who refused to cooperate with Anglicanism, were forced to meet for worship in the fields, and whose ministers were sometimes imprisoned and executed. To be a Presbyterian in late seventeenth-century Scotland was by no means a simple or agreeable affair.

Presbyterianism in seventeenth-century Northern Ireland, Makemie's homeland, was no more pleasant than in Scotland and in some ways worse. The churches and ministers there suffered the same fallout from political struggles between crown and Parliament. From 1660, the time of the monarchy's restoration, to 1690, when laws recognized the rights of certain Protestant dissenters, the English government suppressed Presbyterianism in Northern Ireland in favor of the Anglican establishment. But even after the more tolerant policies of William and Mary for non-Anglicans, after 1690 Northern Irish Presbyterianism was a second-class faith. Under the Sacramental Test Act, for instance, marriages performed by Presbyterian ministers were considered invalid. This was, of course, the background for Makemie's preparation and planning for the ministry. For many Scots-Irish Presbyterians, the difficulties of the Old World combined with the prospects of the New provided sufficient incentive to leave familiar surroundings and venture into the uncertainties of the North American colonies.

The Presbyterians who did so turned out to have made a momentous decision for the history of Presbyterianism. In the New World, and especially in the mid-Atlantic colonies where religious diversity was not

merely tolerated but agreeable, Presbyterians established a beach head for their faith unlike anything experienced in Great Britain. Although Presbyterianism would become the established faith of Scotland, the state church system was inherently flawed because it involved the church in compromises imposed by government officials. Consequently, the Scottish Kirk repeatedly witnessed controversies and divisions, from the Seceders of the 1730s down to the Free Church of the 1840s, that stemmed from state officials intervening in the appointment of ministers and interfering with other aspects of church affairs. In Northern Ireland, as already mentioned, Presbyterianism was a dissenting church whose ministry was necessarily restricted thanks to the established Church of Ireland (Anglican). In the North American British colonies, however, Presbyterians discovered a measure of religious freedom that gave the church a remarkable degree of autonomy even before the American Revolution established the principle of freedom of conscience for all believers at the national level. Of course, as Makemie's experience in New York with Lord Cornbury revealed, American Presbyterians were not completely independent of government control or regulation. But in places like Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania Presbyterians neither had to endure the burdens that came with being the established church nor the affronts that stemmed from one's status as a religious dissenter. Even before the founding of the United States, America turned out to be a place where Presbyterianism could flourish.

Still, Presbyterian success was meager at first and Makemie's experience during twenty-five years of ministry illustrates that stark reality. The Methodists of the nineteenth century gained a reputation for itinerant preaching in hard scrabble conditions to ordinary and scattered folk. The same appears to have been true of Makemie whose mode of transportation would have been no better than the Methodist itinerants and who also added trans-Atlantic voyages to his travels, ventures that were by no means luxurious or safe. Makemie also labored for over two decades before the formation of a presbytery. Even then, the oversight and support that might come from the fraternity of presbyters would have been small owing to the difficult conditions that all the members of presbytery faced. Keep in mind as well that Makemie did not have support from a mother church in the Old World. Presbyterians in Northern Ireland were struggling to make their own way and the Kirk in Scotland, established six years after Makemie came to America, was only an adolescent when the Presbytery of Philadelphia was founded. In other words, Makemie

did not bring with him a board of publication, plans for a seminary, budgets for domestic or foreign missions, or recognition of the need for office space in downtown Philadelphia. At the beginning, American Presbyterianism was a mission work without a sending church. Thanks to the efforts of Makemie along with the other ministers of his generation, the seeds of the American church took root, though ripened Presbyterian fruit would not be ready for another century.

Makemie's ministry and experience is also instructive for a second historical consideration, one that has repeatedly surfaced throughout the history of American Presbyterianism. A perennial debate among historians of the American church is whether its roots are Scotch-Irish Presbyterian or New England Puritan. Here the term Puritan includes those members of the Church of England who desired further reformation of the Anglican establishment and believed that presbyterian church government was part of that purification project. The two classic nineteenth-century statements of this debate came from Charles Hodge in his two volumes on *The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (1839–1840), and Charles Briggs in his work, *American Presbyterianism: Its Origin and Early History* (1885). Already in the late 1830s a controversy over the ethnic origins of American Presbyterianism animated Hodge to write that the Presbyterian immigrants from Ireland “could not have been less than fifty thousand, and probably were far more numerous.” Annoyed by the idea that the English were somehow responsible for the American church, Hodge continued with sarcasm:

Yet the whole Presbyterian Church owes its existence to the more overflowings of New England! It would be much nearer the truth to say, that presbyterians have been the basis of several other denominations. Half the population of the country would now be presbyterian, had the descendants of presbyterians, in all cases, adhered to the faith of their fathers.⁷

Writing almost fifty years later, Briggs was unpersuaded by Hodge's data. “The dominant influence at the close of the seventeenth century in the Middle colonies and in South Carolina,” Briggs wrote, “was Puritan and English—but the Scotch and Irish and Welsh were everywhere welcomed into Christian fellowship and communion.” To account for the influence of the

7. Hodge, *The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1839) 70.

several Scottish and Scotch-Irish pastors that comprised the first presbytery, Briggs adds, “The English Puritan churches were glad to settle Scotch and Irish pastors over them, and there was no friction.”⁸ By the twentieth century this argument over origins was settled in Briggs’ favor. The best and most comprehensive study of the colonial church (though flawed), Leonard J. Trinterud’s *The Forming of an American Tradition* (1949), concedes that the American church stemmed from English Puritanism and Scottish Presbyterianism. But he qualifies this admission by adding that the New England contribution was so “significant a part of American Presbyterianism” that Puritan ministers in New York and New Jersey receive credit for the first signs of Presbyterianism in the New world.⁹ To attribute a Scotch-Irish character to the American church’s founding because of a majority of ministers at the first presbytery is, in Trinterud’s view, a “fallacious line of reasoning” (Trinterud, 31).

To be fair, Trinterud does hedge at another point and writes that Presbyterianism in America “would emerge as something differing from all its sources,” whether New or Old World. This is close to being an obvious point since Presbyterianism was not Congregationalist like New England, and no matter how different the original presbytery was from Edinburgh or Geneva, it was by no means a southern association of Puritan ministers. This is another way of saying that without the Scotch-Irish presence led by Makemie, American Presbyterianism would have had to wait for another group of Presbyterians or Reformed believers and pastors. To be sure, the American church was no mere copy of Presbyterianism in Scotland or Ireland, partly because of the mix of Scottish, Irish and New England pastors in the first presbytery, and partly because the Old World churches were in no condition to provide a model for a new church. But to suggest that American Presbyterianism owed its initial character to New England is to slight considerably the experience of Makemie and his Irish colleagues in Maryland, Virginia and Delaware.

Nevertheless, the question of whether the American church’s origins were Puritan or Scotch-Irish Presbyterian is irrelevant. Unlike the Covenanters or the Associate Reformed Presbyterians who came to America with direct ties to churches in the Old World and looked to replicate the characteristics of their communions, the American church founded by Makemie, which would

become the mainline denomination known as the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., was a complete novelty. It arose without planning or direct appeal to historic precedents. To say that the founding generation of America made it up as they went along is certainly too strong. But it does suggest the originality of the body that Makemie formed. It also points to the humble origins of American Presbyterianism since Makemie and his colleagues had to make their own way. They could not rely on the care and oversight of other established churches.

CONCLUSION

Because the American Presbyterian church would provide substantial moral and sometimes physical support to the American Revolution, the tendency among historians of colonial Presbyterianism has been to turn Makemie into an icon of religious liberty and the sort of principled stand that led the Founding Fathers of the United States to throw off the yoke of Great Britain. Certainly, Makemie’s encounter with Lord Cornbury lends itself to this narrative of New World freedom from Old World tyranny. In the words of a twentieth-century Irish Presbyterian, J. M. Barkley, Makemie was “not only the Father of American Presbyterianism” but also one of the Fathers of Religious liberty” in the United States. Barkley adds, “in Makemie’s day the Declaration of Independence lay in the future, but by his organising of the first Presbytery and his stand for religious toleration, he helped to sow the seeds and plough the soil out of which it grew” (Barkley, *Francis Makemie*, 21, 22).

This angle may be correct in certain respects but it misses the importance of Makemie and his ministry. The Founding Father of American Presbyterianism is a constant reminder of the humble origins of the American church. It did not arrive with fanfare or a groundswell of support. American Presbyterianism was a struggle from the beginning, and it had almost no help from Scotland, the home of Presbyterianism, or from Northern Ireland, because the beginnings of the Presbyterian churches there were almost as modest as those in the New World. Makemie is a reminder then that there is no golden age in Presbyterian history. Even more important, the dire conditions he faced and the difficulties that attended the founding of an American Presbyterian church teach yet one more lesson that the church’s experience this side of glory will be plagued by hardship, toil, and discouragement. This is why it is called the church militant. ■

8. Briggs, *American Presbyterianism: Its Origin and Early History* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1885) 131.

9. Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1949) 15.

Critical Realism and the Relation of Redemptive Act to Revelatory Word

By James J. Cassidy

The current debate over the New Perspective on Paul (NPP) with reference to the doctrine of justification has focused largely upon particular, and at times isolated doctrinal formulations. So much so, in fact, that its adherents' presuppositions have been all but overlooked. In other words, we would do well to ask the question: what is the posture of the advocates of the NPP when they approach the text of Scripture? What is their foundational assumption with reference to the authority of the Bible and the interpreter's relation, responsibility, and response to it?

In particular we will look at N.T. Wright's approach to interpreting Scripture and his presuppositions with reference to the Bible. Wright is, among the major proponents of the NPP, the most prolific in his writing and also the most popular in the church. This does not mean, of course, that his presuppositions about the text of Scripture and how to approach it are the same as the other advocates. But he is, out of all the NPP proponents, the scholar with whom we must reckon.

WRIGHT'S CRITICAL REALISM

In the first volume of his aggressive program for a New Testament theology,¹ Wright sets forth his proposal for how the historian should approach the text of Scripture. This approach is dubbed by him as "critical realism."² Wright is self-consciously reacting against any kind of "reductionism" in historiography, which is to say that he wants to avoid the assumption that history is a "brute fact." This is assumed by Christian scholarship of the fundamentalist stripe which believes that the text of the bible is "objective" history; that is, history which has (as it were) dropped from the sky. Additionally Wright is reacting against critical scholarship—like that of Rudolf Bultmann—which denies any value for history from the biblical text. For such scholars, the text is untrustworthy

because the author of the text has a "bias" in his story telling and thus lacks objectivity. Wright says:

The equivalent in reading of the gospels in the twentieth century has been the apparently 'scientific' statement that 'Every text is first and foremost evidence for the circumstances in and for which it was composed.' The critic then responds to the [authors of the gospels]: 'you only say that (this story about Jesus, this word or saying) because you're a Christian.' True enough in some ways, but manifestly not enough in others. If being a mathematician might entitle somebody to a hearing on the subject of numbers, being a Christian *might* mean that someone should be given a hearing on the subject of Jesus.³

He then zeros in on Bultmann in particular:

As a particular example, it must be asserted most strongly that to discover that a particular writer has a 'bias' tells us nothing whatever about the value of the

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1. We will be drawing our material for understanding Wright's use of the critical realism approach from the first volume of the series, "Christian Origins and the Question of God": *The New Testament and the People of God: Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), see esp. pp. 32ff. Only two additional volumes have appeared in the series: *Jesus and the Victory of God: Christian Origins and the Question of God, Volume 2* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), and *The Resurrection of the Son of God: Christian Origins and the Question of God, Volume 3* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

2. See also Ben Meyer's, *Critical Realism and the New Testament*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series, v. 17 (Allison Park, Pa.: Pickwick, 1989).

3. *The New Testament*, p. 89. In this article all emphasis is original unless otherwise noted.

information he or she presents. It merely bids us be aware of the bias (and of our own, for that matter), and to assess the material according to as many sources as we can. 'Intellectual honesty consists not in forcing an impossible neutrality, but in admitting that neutrality is not possible.' Similarly, the fear of 'objectivization' which so affected Rudolf Bultmann's theology may be laid to rest. Bultmann, within his neo-Kantian philosophical heritage, was anxious about seeming to talk of objects or events other than by talking of them in relation to the observer. He therefore insisted (among other things) on doing theology by doing anthropology, following Feuerbach in collapsing god-talk into man-talk. We simply do not have to accept such false dichotomies. It is not the case that some things are purely objective and others purely subjective, or that one must reduce either to the other. Life, fortunately, is more complicated than that (Wright, *The New Testament*, 89–90).

This is, to be sure, a helpful critique of Bultmann, and modern scholarship in general. Here Wright unmasks the false assumption that because an author may be "biased" or not "objective" makes said author's history telling automatically unreliable. This unmasking is long overdue in biblical scholarship.

Now, that is critical realism negatively defined. More positively, Wright described critical realism in these terms:

Over against both of these positions [i.e., positivism on the one hand and skepticism on the other], I propose a form of *critical realism*. This is a way of describing the process of 'knowing' that acknowledges the *reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower* (hence 'realism'), while also fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiraling path of *appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known* (hence 'critical'). This path leads to critical reflection on the products of our enquiry into 'reality', so that our assertions about 'reality' acknowledge their own provisionality. Knowledge, in other words, although in principle concerning realities independent of the knower, is never itself independent of the knower (Wright, *The New Testament*, 35).

Dennis Ingolfssland, in summarizing Wright's position, says it well when he writes:

4. Dennis Ingolfssland, "The Historical Jesus according to John Meier and N. T. Wright," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155 (Oct 1998) 467. Also, see Scott J. Hafemann's helpful review of *The New Testament and the People of God* in *JETS* 40/2 (June 1997) 305.

Wright begins by laying an epistemological and world-view foundation for the historical study of Jesus and the New Testament. Arguing against both historical positivism and phenomenism, Wright advocates the philosophy of "critical realism," which proposes a "spiraling path" of interaction between the "knower" and the thing to be known. With "critical realism" as the epistemological foundation for his historiography, Wright proceeds to argue that history should be researched like other sciences, that is, by developing hypotheses and proposing tests to determine their validity.⁴

In other words, we should not be so naïve as to think that we can gain a perfect picture of the historical Jesus in the gospels, but we should also not be so skeptical as to think that we can get no picture of him whatsoever. So, we approach the text realizing that we have biases and presuppositions, and we go to the text being open to have those biases changed by the data of the text.

This we must bear in mind as we evaluate the data presented to us by the authors of the text of the gospels. We are to approach them and their history telling as critical realists. We can only see the historical Jesus through the lens of their own perspective. This does not mean, as much of postmodern scholarship has concluded, that we can not then "see" the historical Jesus through the gospel writers. The object of our study does not disappear just because we view him through the lens of another person's history telling. Wright says:

We are looking at events. The lens may distort, or the fact of looking with only one eye may lead us into errors of perspective; we may well need other lenses and view points to correct such errors; but we are looking at events none the less.... As applied to the gospels, this clearly means that, although we must read them with our eyes and ears open for the evangelists' own perspective ... (Wright, *The New Testament*, 90–91).

In this way then, the historian comes to the text as critic. He stands above the text, as it were, to evaluate it for truth and trustworthiness with reference to the object of study—in this case, the historical Jesus.

To summarize in a word, it's all about perspective. The interpreter must be self-conscious of his own perspective, presupposition, and biases when he approaches the text. This is the *sine qua non* of the task of the exegete, less he unduly import into the text a meaning that flows from his own preconceptions of what the text ought to say, rather than the text itself. But, what is more, the interpreter must also be conscious

of the text's own presuppositions—where the human author is coming from, i.e., his perspective—as it tells the story which stands back of the text. So, what we get in the text is never “mere history,”⁵ or a “neutral perspective on events” (Wright, *The New Testament*, 83), as if we are receiving some kind of camera-recorded take on the story. Thus, at the end of the day, what we are left with is a picture of Jesus that is not quite pristine. Like a view through a fishbowl, it is real enough, but a bit distorted.

AN EVALUATION OF CRITICAL REALISM

Wright's approach is a breath of fresh air, especially if the air you have been breathing in has been filled with the noxious fumes of postmodern hermeneutics. Contemporary scholarship has been heavily bent toward the reader response approach to the Bible.⁶ On this approach, the meaning of the text is not found within the text at all, but rather in the mind of the reader. The text is the proverbial wax nose, shaped according to the whim and will of the interpreter. Therefore, any knowledge of the text itself, and therefore the object of which the text speaks, is impossible. We revel in the deconstruction of the text and simply “have fun” with it, inviting imaginative interpretations.

It is to this type of skepticism (not to mention irrationalism) that Wright is responding. He can appreciate postmodern hermeneutic as it sought to correct the problems in more rationalistic approaches developed out of the Enlightenment. But Wright seeks to rein back in postmodern hermeneutics with its proclivity of going to the opposite extreme. In this way Wright offers a healthy critique of both modern and postmodern interpretive methods.

Likewise, for those who are particularly appreciative of Cornelius Van Til and his presuppositional approach to apologetics, much of what N.T. Wright says resonates.⁷ We all come to the text with presuppositions—who can deny that? However, before slapping the label “Van Tillian” on Wright, we need to pause and evaluate some of his own presuppositions.

It seems that Wright, with his critical realistic approach, still has not as of yet shed his historical-critical assumptions. At the heart of these assumptions are at least two major points: (1) man stands over the Bible—not under it, and (2) there is an unbridgeable gap between redemptive act and revelatory word. It is these unbelieving presuppositions that we must expose if we ever wish to mount a meaningful and successful attack against the teachings of the NPP where it deviates from

the system of doctrine contained in the bible and summarized in the Reformed creedal documents.

Now immediately a point of clarification needs to be made. We are not saying, nor are we even remotely intimating, that N.T. Wright is an “unbeliever.” To make a judgment on such a thing goes well beyond the scope of this essay and beyond the ability of any man to know what is in another man's heart. However, the presuppositions he adopts are unbelieving presuppositions—that is, presuppositions which stem from the wisdom of man and not from God. Let us explain.

1. *Man Standing Over the Bible: The Would-Be Autonomous Interpreter*

The first assumption of the higher-critical school (i.e., man stands over the Bible—not under it) stems from the would-be autonomous interpreter's thinking that he possesses some inalienable right to approach the text of the Bible in a posture of *dominance*. Such an assumption says (more unconsciously than consciously): “I am man, who knows better. Before me I have a brute text in need of handling according to modern day's most brilliant scientific innovations.⁸ I stand after the text; thus, I am wiser than the text. I treat the text as an object of critical analysis.”

In support of this, we come back again to Wright's own words, in which he sets forth a “critical realist” epistemology, when he says:

... the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiraling path of *appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known* ... (Wright, *The New Testament*, 35).

When this principle is then applied to the work of interpreting the text of Scripture, the interpreter is to “dialogue” and have a “conversation” with the “thing known” (i.e., say for instance, the text of the gospels). On this thinking, the human interpreter is, at best, on an equal footing with the text of Scripture; just as two

5. Wright, *The New Testament*. See his discussion on pp. 82ff.

6. For a fine survey of the history of higher criticism in general, and reader response hermeneutics in particular, see John Barton's *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996).

7. Perhaps this goes towards explaining why N.T. Wright has become so popular within conservative Reformed circles.

8. For the connection between critical realism in the field of science and critical realism in the field of theology and hermeneutics, see Ian G. Barbour, *Religion in an Age of Science: The Gifford Lectures 1989–1991* (San Francisco: Harper, 1990).

people are on equal footing as they have a dialogue or conversation.

The question then becomes: *if I and the author of the gospels are on an equal footing, why should I believe what they have to say about Jesus?* Wright may respond, “because we establish the basic reliability of that author as a good historian by drawing in other sources” (for “sources” read: Second Temple literature). At first blush, we may be encouraged to hear Wright argue for the basic reliability of the authors of the gospels. But is this a good and faithful approach to establishing the gospel writer’s knowledge of Jesus? Somehow we can not help but to desire a greater assurance. As for us, we believe it is a (grave) mistake to try to establish the truth of the text of Scripture before discussing its *inspiration*.⁹

The answer to the question *how do I know the historical Jesus*, can only be answered on the basis of an infallible and inspired text. Furthermore, we trust that we get the historical Jesus in the Bible, not because we have established Mark (for instance) as a reliable historian by having a conversation with him. Rather, because Mark was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write truth; and we know that truth through the same Spirit who enlightens our minds to trust and believe Mark’s account. Yes, there is something to be said for establishing Mark as a good historian, but at the end of the day the only reason why we would believe Mark is because of the Holy Spirit’s work in us.

The Reformed creedal tradition speaks clearly to this issue. For example, the Westminster Confession of Faith says:

The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man ... but wholly upon God ... and therefore it is to be received, *because* it is the Word of God (1.4).¹⁰

Furthermore, the Confession goes on to affirm:

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture, and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the con-

sent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts (Confession of Faith, 1.5)

Some explication of these paragraphs in the Confession is necessary. The Confession is teaching us that we “may” come to have a high regard for Scripture as we look at the evidences contained therein of its being divinely inspired, but that is never the reason *why* we believe them to be the Word of God. The reason why we are to have a high regard for the Scripture is, according to paragraph four, *because it is the Word of God* and—now in the language of paragraph five—because of the Holy Spirit *bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts*.

In other words, we do not, in the words of Cornelius Van Til, “first ... establish the question of the truth of the Bible before [we discuss] its inspiration” (*The Doctrine of Scripture*, 69). To do otherwise is to assume that there is an authority apart from and outside of Scripture to which Scripture itself must bow. Scripture does not come to the bar of human reason and man’s demand for proof of its authority. Rather man must come to the bar of Scripture and humbly submit to its inherent authority as the inspired Word of God. Critical realism does not take the latter position, but the former. It places man, at the least, on a par with Scripture as he converses and dialogues with it.

Now, this is not to dismiss Wright’s laudable efforts in arguing for the basic historical reliability of the gospel account(s) with reference to the historical Jesus. As the Confession says, such evidences in the text which commend the biblical account as reliable may certainly induce us to a high view of the Bible as the Word of God. So, our qualm is not with Wright’s effort to defend the reliability of the biblical account as much as it is with his *posture* towards the Bible in his critical realist approach. As we will discuss below, this posture yields bad fruit with reference to not only the doctrine of Scripture, but also with the doctrine of justification.

All this is to say that at the end of the day Wright falls prey to the same modernistic assumptions he seeks to subvert. Critical realism is a contemporary scientific (and thus an epistemological) principle being applied to

9. See C. Van Til, *The Doctrine of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 1967).

10. All citations from the Confession of Faith are from: *The Confession of Faith and Catechisms: The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms as adopted by The Orthodox Presbyterian Church with Proof Texts* (Willow Grove, Pa.: The Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2005). Emphasis mine.

the discipline of reading an ancient (but what is more, inspired) text. The modern historian, if he is to get to the historical Jesus, must read through the presuppositions of the author. Even then, the reader is still left with a distorted picture. The problem of the (false) dichotomy between the Jesus of history and the Jesus of faith, the Jesus of *Historie* and the Jesus of *Geschichte*, remains unresolved.

2. *The Unbridgeable Gap: Redemptive Act and Revelatory Word*

Connected with the first assumption is the second; i.e., that there is no relation between redemptive act and revelatory word. The would-be autonomous interpreter is left on his own to get to the significance and the meaning of the redemptive work of God in history through Jesus of Nazareth. This kind of interpreter, far from taking the posture of a servant who submits to the text of Scripture, stands above the text of Scripture using it like a tool to get beyond and behind the text to the redemptive act itself. In this vein, Wright readily admits that what Jesus did in history had redemptive significance—if only we can get back there and find out exactly what it is he did and why. And of course this is exactly what Wright thinks we can do, using the critical realist method.¹¹ Wright explains:

To begin with, history involves not only the study of 'what happened' in the sense of 'what physical events would a video camera have recorded,' but also the study of *human intentionality*. . . . this involves looking at, or at least for, the 'inside' of an event. We are trying to discover what the humans involved in the event thought they were doing, wanted to do, or tried to do (*The New Testament*, 109).

In this way then, the interpreter tries to look for the "inside meaning" of a historical event. And he does so by asking three basic questions of the historical subject: 1) what was their aim, 2) their intention, and 3) their motivation. With reference to their aim, Wright explains:

By *aim* I mean the fundamental direction of a person's life, or some fairly settled subset of that fundamental direction. This aim is thus the directional aspect of an individual's *mindset*, by which I mean the individual subset of, or variant on, the *worldview* held by the society or societies to which the individual belongs (110).

It should be kept in mind where Wright is heading with this notion—what is the meaning, the "inside", of the events of Jesus' life. And it is the goal of the biblical interpreter to get to that meaning through the critical realist method; or, having "dialogue" and "conversation" with the text of the gospel accounts.

Wright continues in his *The New Testament* to explain what he means by "intention."

By *intention* I mean the specific application of the 'aim' in a particular (and in principle repeatable) situation. . . . When we look at Jesus' 'intention' in going to Jerusalem for his last and fateful Passover, we must see it in the light of his overall 'aim': how did his intention on this occasion relate to the underlying aims and goals which motivated him throughout his ministry (110–111)?

So, in other words, through the biblical text, the historian gains historical data (i.e., what Jesus did), although he does so through the lenses of the gospel writers. So, the interpreter's job is to get back of those lenses, and by way of "dialogue" with the text, try to determine the meaning (or the "inside") of Jesus' actions. Of course, we see this approach as faulty because we believe that the interpreter is not to try to get behind the lenses of the author, but rather he is get those lenses for himself! The lenses through which Mark (for example) tells his story of Jesus *is* the authoritative, ultimate, and final revelatory interpretation of the "inside" and the "why" of Jesus' actions. In so much as we can speak of Mark's "bias," "agenda," or "perspective" on Jesus, that much we can say it is God's¹² "perspective" on the events of Jesus. The "lens", then, through which Mark views Jesus is not something to be by-passed by the interpreter, but is that with which he has to do. We will try to reinforce this point below.

However, before we do that, we must discuss the third and final aspect to moving from event to meaning, the "motivation." Wright explains:

By *motivation* I mean the specific sense, on one specific occasion, that a certain action or set of actions is appropriate and desirable. Jesus' aim was (we may say) to inaugurate the 'kingdom of God'; his intention, towards the end of his life, was to go to Jerusalem; within both of these he was motivated on one particular day to go into the Temple and set about overturning tables (111).

11. *The New Testament*, see his discussion on pp. 109–118.

12. Contrary to Wright's common usage of "god," I am happy to maintain the capital "G."

We could not agree more! But the question for Wright is still an epistemological one: how do you know what Jesus' aim, intention, or motivation was? Wright rightly cautions against speculations as to what is in the mind of our historical subject when he says, "This does not mean that history is covert psychology" (111). Again, we are in full agreement. So, how then can we know the intentions—i.e., the meaning—of Jesus' actions? Wright admits its not easy because Jesus is "a subject of whom we only know what history has happened to leave behind," although,

We *might* be able to make intelligent guesses at the psychological state of Napoleon, or Martin Luther, or even Jesus; but to do so is to face enormous difficulties (Wright, *The New Testament*, 111).

We hope we do not draw an uncharitable conclusion from this statement when we say that Wright has just leveled the playing field in the historical and interpretive effort between secular and sacred history. It is true we most certainly *may* guess as to the aims, intentions, and motivation of a historical subject like Martin Luther. But, if the Westminster Confession is correct in what it says about Scripture, the Gospels included, then we most certainly *may not* offer any intelligent (or otherwise!) guesses at the aims, intentions, and motivations of "even Jesus." For Mark (or, for that matter, any of the other three evangelists) provides us with the holy, inspired, and infallible interpretation (i.e., the "why") of Jesus' actions.

This is where Geerhardus Vos can provide for us a helpful as well as a thoroughly believing and consistent approach to bridging that gap between act and word, between the historical Jesus and the inspired

text of the Gospels. Vos puts it succinctly in his *Biblical Theology*:

... revelation does not stand alone by itself, but is ... inseparably attached to another activity of God, which we call *Redemption*.... Revelation is the interpretation of redemption.¹³

Or, to put it another way:

Divine acts are no doubt an integral part of revelation, but they derive their revealing power only from *divine words* preceding, accompanying and following them, by which they are placed in their proper light.¹⁴

Similarly, Michael Horton, thinking Vos' thoughts after him, summarizes the relationship between "redemptive event" and "revelatory/interpretive word" well when he writes,

... revelation unfolds in exact proportion to the unfolding of redemption, announcing and *interpreting the acts of God in history*.¹⁵

Accordingly then, the problem with Wright's overall orientation to the New Testament is that he does not see the New Testament as authoritative and divine "revelatory/interpretative word." To be sure, Wright speaks of the New Testament as authoritative. However, he recasts that term in a whole new light (Wright, *The New Testament*, 139–143). He compares the Bible to a Shakespearean play, the Old Testament being the first four acts of the play. He asks us to imagine this play which had four acts and then the fifth act was left off, to be improvised by the actors along the general trajectory of the first four acts.¹⁶ If the Old Testament is the first four acts, and the Gospels are the first scene of the fifth act (with the epistles and Revelation giving us some hints as to how the play should ultimately end), that leaves those doing theology in the church as the improvising actors trying to faithfully follow the trajectory of the first four acts and first scene of the fifth act. Wright summarizes his position when he says:

I am proposing a notion of 'authority' which is not simply vested in the New Testament, or in 'New Testament theology', nor simply in 'early Christian history' and the like, conceived positivistically, but in the creator god himself, and this god's story with the world, seen as focused on the story of Israel and thence on the story of Jesus, as told and retold in the Old and New

13. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000) 5–6.

14. Review of *Prolegomena van Bijbelsche Godgeleerdheid*, by E.H. van Leeuwen; cited in Danny Olinger, ed., *A Geerhardus Vos Anthology: Biblical and Theological Insights Alphabetically Arranged* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2005).

15. Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002) 233. See also his quote on page 234 from R.B. Gaffin's *Resurrection and Redemption* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing; 2nd edition, 1987).

16. Wright revises this analogy in his most recent volume *The Last Word: Beyond the Bible Wars to a New Understanding of the Authority of Scripture* (San Francisco: Harper, 2005). Instead of speaking about the authority of the Bible in terms of a five act play, he speaks of a commanding officer who tells his soldiers a "story" to get them up to date and prepare them for their mission. Wright says, "The narrative will bring them up to date; now it will be their task to act out the next chapter in the ongoing saga."

Testaments, and as still requiring completion (Wright, *The New Testament*, 143).

Presumably, we in the church today are completing that story. But if the Old and New Testaments are the 4.1 acts of a five act play—the balance of which we are to improvise—how ultimate of an authority does that give the Bible as a revelatory interpretation of God's redemptive acts in history? How does this view of the authority of the Bible jive with a robust Reformed view like that found in the Westminster Confession when it teaches:

The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic ... (Confession of Faith, 1.8).

Critical realism, then, while sounding innovative and promising, falls terribly short of the approach to Scripture advocated by the best of the Protestant tradition.¹⁷ Wright's view on the authority of the Bible, by not presupposing its authenticity, inspiration, and infallibility at the beginning, has compromised the absolute authority of the text of Scripture as an infallible interpreter of redemptive history. This, in effect, makes the Bible out to be no better (even if no worse) than any other secular historical document.

H. Ridderbos summarizes (though, of course, writing before Wright's day) the problem of Wright's critical realistic approach well in critiquing historical-critical exegesis when he writes,

... what we have learned plainly reveals the inadequacy of every secular approach to the New Testament. A secular approach to the New Testament is one that begins by consciously abandoning the revelatory character of this written tradition. In the words of those who employ so-called historical-critical exegesis, such exegesis excludes the canonicity of Scripture, provisionally and hypothetically, and treats those writings as profane literature.... The objection to the historical-critical method is not that it is historical. In that respect it has brought to light many things that formerly were either unknown or too often neglected. The objection is that the origin of the historical method is secular, not revelatory.¹⁸

This critique is all important for being able to properly evaluate Wright's system as a whole (and then, by extension, his more particular theological points), especially as that system stands upon his secular and unbelieving presuppositions. Now, it is important that we quickly qualify this last statement, as we did above, to say that we are not making judgments on the man's heart. Our point here is not to conclude that Wright is an "unbeliever," or even a secularist. But what we desire to point out is that while he himself may be a believer, he is inconsistently resting his belief upon presuppositions that are extra-biblical and unbiblical. Wright, in taking his lead from contemporary developments in epistemology,¹⁹ has assumed a secular posture before even coming to the text of the New Testament. He seems to have adopted the old Rogers and McKim proposal (see footnote 17) that what matters with reference to the biblical text is not so much its form but its content. Standing in the tradition of neo-orthodoxy, such a proposal advocates a dialectical relation between the human text and the divine Word. On this thinking God's Word may be found in the human text, but the human text is not itself the Word of God. Therefore, Mark's account is the "vehicle" through which God's Word in Christ may be found, not because of it, but in spite of it. In this way the Gospel accounts are lenses and windows through which God's actions in Christ are seen, but are not themselves God's actions of revelation.

However one thing is for sure, Wright's view is a far cry from that of Vos and Ridderbos. For Wright there are human historians, and only human historians. Mark is a historian on the level of any other historian of his

17. See the 2005 Auburn Avenue Pastor's Conference (available here: http://www.auburnavenue.org/auburn_avenue_media.htm). We may rightly paraphrase Wright's view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible like the one advocated by us as being a "distinctly American phenomenon." It is difficult to assess what exactly he means by that. Be that as it may, to affirm the full, plenary, inspiration and infallibility of the Bible is not restricted to American evangelical theology. Such a concern goes back, at least, to the 17th century British theology of the Puritans, the Continental Reformed churches and—back of them to—John Calvin and the other early Reformers. This is, however, a debated point. See, on this, Rogers and McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979). And, in response to their argument, see John D. Woodbridge, "Biblical Authority: Towards An Evaluation Of The Rogers And McKim Proposal," *Trinity Journal* 1.2 (1980) 165–236 and R.B. Gaffin "Old Amsterdam and Inerrancy?" *WTJ* 44 (1982) 250–89 and 45 (1983) 219–72.

18. Herman Ridderbos, *Redemptive History and the New Testament Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 1988) 49. The emphasis is mine.

19. For the development of his epistemology with reference to New Testament history, see Wright, *The New Testament*, 32ff.

day. But this leaves us then with no authoritative interpretation of the historical events of God's redemption. Contrary to this, we must stand with the Ridderbos/Vos formulation; i.e., that as we read about Jesus through the story telling of Mark we are lead to conclude that—to put it in the words of Abraham Kuyper—"God is the historian."²⁰

If we are correct here to associate Wright's view of Scripture with the so-called Rogers and McKim proposal (though in revised form and with Wright's own nuance), then what we have here is not an orthodox view of Scripture, but a Barthian one. This is not the place to get into the widespread debate concerning Barth's view of Scripture and how close or (as the case may be) how far away his view was compared to the early Reformers. If Wright is, in fact, persuaded that the view we are advocating is a "distinctly American phenomenon," we would encourage him to consult carefully R. B. Gaffin's article on Old Amsterdam's view of inerrancy (again, see footnote 17 above). But all these issues aside, and whether one's view is American or whatnot, the fact remains that Wright's view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible leaves us with a secularized text.

He would do well to, once again, heed the cautionary words of Ridderbos when he writes,

"The history of theology makes embarrassingly clear the dangers that threaten us when the character and the authority of the New Testament teaching are consciously or unconsciously determined by the presuppositions of the spirit or philosophy of the time. For that reason the teaching and the nature of the authority of the New Testament cannot be explained by analogy from an extrabiblical schema or principle but only by

the old Reformation rule, 'according to the analogy of faith' ..." (*Redemptive History*, 75).

MOVING TOWARDS A CRITIQUE OF WRIGHT ON JUSTIFICATION

Of course, the hot button issue right now in both church and academy is Wright's (and with him other advocates of the NPP) view of the Pauline doctrine of justification. Now, it is beyond the scope of this article to offer a full-orbed critique in this regard.²¹ However, perhaps we can offer some suggestions—based upon the above evaluation of Wright's over all approach to the New Testament—of how Wright's critical realism affects his doctrinal conclusions.

For the NPP in general and Wright in particular, the secret to properly understanding the teaching of the New Testament is to understand the broader Jewish community in which the authors of the New Testament lived. Wright seems to correctly point out that much of Judaism in the Second Temple Period was lead by a theology of grace, and not a legalistic soteriology. For instance, he writes:

So it was that the maintenance of traditional Torah-based boundary-markers in Galilee, or in the Diaspora, had little to do with a detached theology of *post mortem* salvation, let alone the earning of such a thing by one's own religious or moral efforts, and a great deal more to do with the preservation of traditional Jewish identity (Wright, *The New Testament*, 168).

Therefore, he concludes, we should not read Paul as reacting against a so-called "works righteousness" religion. In this way, then, much modern scholarship has misinterpreted Paul by reading Martin's Luther's spiritual experiences into his writing. According to Wright, "Paul is misunderstood if he is seen as an earlier edition of Luther" (Wright, *The New Testament*, 382 n43).

From this, Wright seems to conclude that we, in the Reformation tradition, have misunderstood what "the gospel" really is according to Paul. Wright states in *What Saint Paul Really Said*.²²

The word 'gospel' and the phrase 'the gospel' have come to denote, especially in certain circles within the church, something that in older theology would be called an *ordo salutis*, an order of salvation. 'The gospel' is supposed to be a description of how people get saved; of the theological mechanism whereby, in some people's lan-

20. Quoted in R.B. Gaffin "Old Amsterdam and Inerrancy?" *WTJ* 44 (1982) 268.

21. Some helpful work has already been done critiquing Wright's view of justification, not the least of which is R.B. Gaffin "Paul the Theologian," *WTJ* 62 (2000) 121–141. Beyond Wright, see Gaffin's helpful critique of James Dunn in "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus" in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2004), and for a survey and critique of the NPP as a whole, see Guy Waters *Justification and the New Perspective on Paul: A Review and Response* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 2004); Stephen Westerholm, "The 'New Perspective' at Twenty-Five," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: a fresh appraisal of Paul and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2001–2004) 1–38; Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004).

22. *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997).

guage, Christ takes our sin and we his righteousness.... If we continue to use a word that we find in the New Testament in a sense which the New Testament itself doesn't support, that is our responsibility.... I simply wouldn't use the word 'gospel' to denote those things.

Thus, justification has nothing to do with the imputation of our sin to Christ and of Christ's righteousness to us. Again, Wright denies this core teaching of the Reformation doctrine of justification when he says:

If we use the language of the law court, it makes no sense whatever to say that the judge imputes, imparts, bequeaths, conveys or otherwise transfers his righteousness to either the plaintiff or the defendant. . . . To imagine the defendant somehow receiving the judge's righteousness is simply a category mistake (*What Saint Paul Really Said*, 98).

Then, after he considers a couple of passages which speak of the believer's justification, Wright continues:

But the righteousness they have will not be God's own righteousness. That makes no sense at all.... But God's own righteousness remains, so to speak, God's own property. It is the reason for his acting to vindicate his people. It is not the status he bestows upon them in so doing (99).

If this is correct, Wright is attempting to bring about a paradigm shift in theology of Copernican proportions. But where Wright and his cohorts go wrong, in our opinion, is in applying this profile of Second Temple Judaism in general to the Judaizers against whom Paul is combating in Galatians (among other writings, of course) in particular. The problems in the churches to which Paul writes are particular to those churches. The problem was with professing Jewish Christians teaching that, despite the fact that Christ has come, the Gentile believer needs to add to his faith the works of the law in order to be justified and be accepted into the covenant family of God. This is a unique situation, and all the Second Temple literature on Judaism's view of the law will never be able to perfectly speak to the doctrinal debates in the early church (exactly because Second Temple Jewish literature is not written in the context of the first century Christian church). Granted, it is written within that time period, but Second Temple literature is not written in the cultural/religious milieu of the Christian church.

Now some scholars and historians may read this as

being naïve. Can we not, after all, learn anything from ancient Jewish historical and cultural studies to aid us in our interpretation of the New Testament? Of course we can! We are not denying that. But what we are denying is the practice of applying such studies to the text of the New Testament as the standard for interpretive work, rather than the text of Scripture itself. Instead of, first and foremost, reading Paul against the backdrop of Second Temple Judaism, we need to read him against the backdrop of the unfolding of God's redemption as it is interpreted for us in the Word of God. In other words, we need to read Paul in the context of the biblical revelation from Genesis to Revelation. We do well to once again recover, in the words of Ridderbos, that "old Reformation rule" of the analogy of faith: Scripture interpreting Scripture.

Nevertheless, when one assumes a posture toward Scripture as Wright does in his critical realist approach to the question of the historical Jesus, that same posture carries over to one's interpretation of Paul and his doctrine of justification. When Scripture itself is not absolutely authoritative and sufficient for determining the person and work of Christ, it will not be sufficient for determining the biblical doctrine of justification. If Scripture is not the infallible interpreter of God's work in salvation history, it is also not the infallible interpreter of what Paul means when he speaks of justification, the righteousness of God, or imputation.

CONCLUSION

This is an important lesson, especially for readers of this journal, as they find themselves ministering in the context of Christ's church. This article is really about the doctrine of Scripture and what may happen when that doctrine is not approached with thoroughly consistent Christian and believing presuppositions. Where ever the doctrine of Scripture has been compromised, unhealthy spiritual fruit inevitably is produced. Perhaps we, ministering in the twenty-first century, can appreciate the wisdom of our forefathers who ministered in the seventeenth century when they formulated the documents of the Westminster Assembly. It is no coincidence, nor a mistake, that they placed their teaching on Holy Scripture at the head of the Confession of Faith; even before the doctrine of God. This, we would contend, was not to send a message that the bible was prior to or more important than God—they did not believe in or practice any form of "bibliolatry." Rather, in their godly wisdom, they realized that if one gets their doctrine of Scripture wrong, there is very little hope of

developing sound doctrine at any other point. The only way to assure the sound pattern of the doctrine of God or justification (or whatever), is to first establish as a foundation and presupposition the correct doctrine of Scripture, from which flows all other truths of what we are to believe concerning God and what he requires of us. May we, as Confessional Presbyterians, by the grace of God and to his Glory, hold fast to that revealed Word which has been entrusted to us. ■

**In Brief: John Mitchell Mason on
the New York 'High Churchism'
Controversy**

The Christian's Magazine, an influential periodical, edited by Dr. Mason, was commenced in January, 1807. The immediate occasion of it was the publication of certain assaults upon Presbyterian doctrines and polity. Being honestly opposed to the monarchical principle of Church government—and (as truth can afford to smile at unsupported pretensions) being perhaps unnecessarily sensitive to the assumptions and the bearing of an hierarchy which denies to all other denominations of Christians the possession of any valid sacraments or ministry, and which studiously withholds from them the very appellation of *Church*—he felt provoked to a conflict which he could not, he thought, without pusillanimity avoid. Respecting the ability with which it was sustained on his part, there is probably no diversity of opinion on either side....

His own views in undertaking the publication are thus given in a letter to Mr. Thornton, of London:—"You were kind enough to request any publication of my own. I have but one, a periodical entitled the Christian's Magazine, which, for aught I can tell, it requires some assurance to submit to your perusal. The chief part of the reviewing department has hitherto been devoted to certain publications on the subject of church government. You will there meet, if you should have the curiosity to look at it, with opinions opposed to the divine right of the Episcopal Hierarchy, and these very freely and strongly expressed. But I flatter myself that dissonance of views on this point will not—I am sure *ought* not—to alienate affection among those 'who have obtained like precious faith, through the righteousness of God and Saviour Jesus Christ.' Perhaps I owe to my dear and valued Episcopal friends in England an account of my reason for such a work. I do not choose to retreat into that common right of opinion which they

as cheerfully grant as they openly take. I had never on this ground entered into the controversy. But it was impossible to avoid it. The press teemed, and the pulpit resounded, with excommunications of all non-episcopal churches—declaring them to be without a ministry, without sacraments, without ordinances—and their members to have no other hope of salvation than what they founded upon the '*uncovenanted mercies of God.*' This was too much. And as some, who walk humbly before God, were in danger of having their peace embittered, it was judged necessary, in vindication of what is infinitely more important than any external order, to put these exclusive doctrines to the test; and that naturally involved the merits of the general question. You have my explanation. That ever[y]thing has been written as it ought to have been written, I am far from supposing. Some things, not unworthy the attention of Christians, I hope, the magazine contains. Such as it is, I send it; and shall find no fault if you send me back the severest flagellation for the Presbyterians that England can furnish."

To a brother in the ministry he had previously written:—"It has become necessary to employ measures of defence against the outrages of the Hierarchists. We have long treated them with courtesy, even while they showed no disposition toward an exchange of civilities. But there is a point beyond which concession is dishonour, and to that point matters have now arrived. Treated with contumely from the pulpit and the press; their ministrations branded as impieties and themselves as thieves and robbers; the Presbyterian clergy cannot sit down any longer under Episcopal abuse without at once sacrificing their consciences and authenticating their disgrace. It is not, however, intended so much to wage war against the prelatists, as to establish the Scriptural truth. This seems to be present duty. To pass over the subject of church government, I think a common and sinful omission on the part of evangelical ministers. Laudably bent upon the precious doctrines of the cross, which bear directly upon the sinner's hope, they have insensibly dropped the habit of instructing their flocks in the constitution and arrangements of the Christian Church. This is certainly for a lamentation. It has thrown disrespect upon the Redeemer as king over his holy hill Zion; and the churches on both sides of the Atlantic are smarting under the effects of their negligence."

From Jacob Van Vechten, *Memoirs of John M. Mason, D.D., S.T.P. with Portions of His Correspondence* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1856) 284–287. ■

The Regulative Principle of Worship: Sixty Years in Reformed Literature

Part One (1946–1999)

By Frank J. Smith, Ph.D., D.D. with Chris Coldwell

Of all of the doctrines maintained historically by the Calvinistic branch of Christendom, perhaps none has been subject to as much controversy within that tradition as the regulative principle of worship.

Over the past decade or two, there have been increasing numbers of books, pamphlets and articles on the subject of worship within the Reformed community. Even before the recent plethora of material, ecclesiastical struggles spawned concern over the nature of worship. However, not all of the writings from purportedly Reformed men have held to this *sine qua non* of Reformed worship, viz., the regulative principle.

Before we take an historical overview of how the regulative principle of worship (sometimes abbreviated “RPW” in more recent literature) has fared over the past couple of generations within the Reformed world, we need to understand what is meant by the principle itself.

I. THE REGULATIVE PRINCIPLE

The phrase “regulative principle of worship” does not appear in the creeds and confessions of the Reformation and Post-Reformation era. However, this term, which may not have been used until the twentieth century, sums up the teaching of the Reformed church.¹ The principle is quite simple: whatever is commanded by God for worship is required, and whatever is not commanded is forbidden. This principle therefore goes contrary to the view of worship embraced by Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Anglicanism, viz., that whatever is not forbidden in worship is allowed. Or, to put it another way, the Calvinistic perspective is that we are not only forbidden to employ in worship what is *proscribed*, but we are limited in worship to practice only according to what Scripture has *prescribed*. The regulative principle does not simply prescribe princi-

ples that may be expressed in a variety of ways. Rather, the regulative principle prescribes the actual practices or elements of worship.

The Calvinistic branch of the Reformation, in contrast to the Lutheran branch, maintained this stricter view. However, it was in the Post-Reformation development of the Puritan movement that the principle became more refined; and it was in the Westminster Standards that the principle came to its classic expression. Chapter 21 of the Westminster Confession of Faith states:

The light of nature sheweth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.²

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1. For some clues to the origin of the term “Regulative Principle of Worship,” see the Editor’s introduction to Frank J. Smith, Ph.D., D.D. and David C. Lachman, Ph.D., “Reframing Presbyterian Worship: A Critical Survey of the Worship Views of John M. Frame and R. J. Gore,” *The Confessional Presbyterian* 1 (2005) 116, 150. Hereafter “Reframing Presbyterian Worship.”

2. S. W. Carruthers, M.D., Ph.D., *The Westminster Confession of Faith: Being an account of the Preparation and Printing of its Seven*

Furthermore, the proper way to worship has implications with regard to Christian liberty and liberty of conscience. Chapter 20 of the Westminster Confession says that “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything contrary to His Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship. So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also” (Carruthers, 127)

Other Reformed creeds and confessions also reflect the regulative principle. For example, the Heidelberg Catechism, in Lord’s Day 35, answers Question 96 (“What is God’s will for us in the second commandment?”) this way: “That we in no way make any image of God nor worship him in any other way than he has commanded in his Word.”³

But while this prescriptive principle had a solid creedal and confessional basis, and a strong attestation by countless theologians and churchmen throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, its influence waned in the eighteenth century, and it largely lost its hold in much of the Reformed community by the early nineteenth century. The reasons for this development are multi-fold.

One could cite the petering out of Reformed piety and orthodoxy in general, particularly in Europe, but also in America. From the jeremiads of New England Puritans, as they mourned the pervasiveness of genuine faith in what was to be a “city set on a hill,” to the various secession movements out of the Church of Scotland, to the theological confusion and ecclesiastical turmoil and division in American Presbyterianism, the hollowness of what was once a solid doctrinal core echoed across

both sides of the Atlantic. This twin blow—the cooling of fervor and the rise of heterodoxy—had a devastating and profound effect on the church’s worship.

Another factor was the rise of secularism—a movement which was given official blessing by American Presbyterians when they amended the Westminster Confession of Faith to tolerate pluralism. The result of this modification had a profound effect on how the church regarded the Second Commandment. Previously, the law of God was regarded as having universal application, including with regard to the civil magistrate. However, if how God wants to be worshipped was not universally applicable, then how could one claim that there was only one way to worship?

The several revival movements also had a detrimental effect on a traditional Presbyterian understanding of worship. This is true not only because of the emotionalistic approach to spiritual matters, but also because of the breakdown in denominational distinctives—the “least common denominator” phenomenon.

And yet another reason for the diminishing of the traditional Reformed perspective on worship was an increasing rationalism, which led to the diminution of the doctrine of *sola scriptura*. As Julius Melton has noted, even Old School Presbyterians in the early nineteenth century did not appeal only to the Bible, but pointed to that which is “reasonable,” as justification for various worship practices.⁴

With the loss of the foundational principle came the loss of many of the distinctives of Presbyterian worship. By the end of the nineteenth century, practices such as Psalmody and a *cappella* singing were distant and fading memories for much of Presbyterianism. The Presbyterian Church was pulled in two somewhat disparate directions: toward an evangelicalism that drank deeply from the well of maudlin Romanticism; and toward a high church liturgical perspective which aped Anglicanism.

At the same time, full-blown liberalism was making serious inroads in mainline Presbyterianism in America, especially in the North. For conservative churchmen, making common cause with “Fundamentalists” across denominational lines seemed more important than concern over the details of worship, even though the co-belligerency with believers not of the Reformed faith would lead to a further dilution of doctrine.

Not until the intra-denominational reform movements of the twentieth century—movements which led to ecclesiastical separation—would there be a serious reconsideration among conservative Presbyterians in America of the doctrine of worship.⁵

Leading Editions, to which is appended a critical text of the Confession with notes thereon (Manchester: R. Aikman & Son, [1937]) 129.

3. *Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church, 1979) 48.

4. Julius Melton, *Presbyterian Worship in America, Changing Patterns Since 1787* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1967) 30.

5. With few exceptions, the scope of this article is limited to an examination of the conservative branches of the Presbyterian and Reformed churches in the United States. In our estimation, liberals who reject *sola scriptura* as a general principle, are unlikely to adopt it with respect to worship. Moreover, when denominations have to debate the propriety of goddess worship, the regulative principle of worship must seem to that constituency to be a quaint, not to mention antiquated, notion. For the most part, the liberals who discuss the regulative principle do so merely as an historical curiosity, and not as a principle that should be followed.

II. THE 1940S—BEGINNING TO REDISCOVER REFORMED WORSHIP

From the mid-nineteenth century up through the 1940s, there was a serious decline in Calvinistic doctrine and thought. During these several decades, churches were few in number which upheld Calvinistic teaching in actuality rather than in name only. However, as conservatives awakened to the dangers of liberal theology, they also began to re-discover their theological roots. Among “Northern” Presbyterians, this theological renewal came to expression most especially in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC).

The OPC Debate

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) was embroiled in the Modernist–Fundamentalist battle. The most prominent of the conservatives in the theological fight for the soul of the denomination was J. Gresham Machen.

Machen started his teaching career at Princeton Theological Seminary, but when the seminary’s governing structure was compromised by the liberals in charge of the denominational apparatus, he resigned in 1929 to help found Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

In 1936, Machen and several others were forced out of the PCUSA itself, and he and his followers thereupon formed the Presbyterian Church of America, later renamed the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

From its start, this new denomination earned a reputation for being doctrinally careful and precise. With a desire not to repeat the mistakes of the past, the OPC often formed General Assembly study committees on controversial matters, in order to try to discern God’s revealed will.

One of the early professors at Westminster Theological Seminary was John Murray. Raised in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Professor Murray held to a strict view of the Sabbath and of worship. Particularly, the Scotsman believed in and taught that only inspired songs should be sung in public worship, and that the congregational singing should be done without musical accompaniment.

In the 1940s, as the OPC began to consider the publication of its own hymnal, John Murray raised the question as to the propriety of singing uninspired hymns in public worship. Accordingly, the OPC General Assembly in 1944 appointed a committee to consider the matter. Sherman Isbell provides the background:⁶

The committee was created in consequence of a suggestion by John Murray. The previous year the General Assembly had elected a committee to present to the 1944 General Assembly a preliminary plan for a hymnal for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and Murray was one of the nine members of that committee. When the committee reported, Murray presented a minority report, challenging three recommendations of the committee. The committee was proposing “that any larger hymnal which the General Assembly undertakes to publish contain both metrical psalms and hymns,” “that the approximate composition of the musical portion of the larger hymnal be 85 per cent hymns and 15 per cent psalms,” and finally, “that the General Assembly elect a committee of nine to begin the preparation of the larger hymnal.” Murray noted that “there has been division of judgment within the Committee as to whether uninspired compositions may legitimately be sung.... Our subordinate Standards distinctly provide that God may not be worshipped in any way not prescribed in the holy Scripture. This General Assembly, therefore, is inescapably faced with the question whether the singing of uninspired hymns in the public worship of God is authorized by the holy Scripture.”

Murray urged “that this General Assembly elect a committee of seven to make a diligent study of the teaching of the Word of God and of our subordinate Standards regarding the question of the songs that may be sung in the public worship of God and to report its findings to the Twelfth General Assembly,” and that meantime no further steps be taken toward the preparation of a hymnal. These two recommendations by Murray were adopted, and the General Assembly elected Messrs. Edward J. Young, John Murray, Robert S. Marsden, R. B. Kuiper, John H. Skilton, Arthur W. Kuschke and William Young to serve on the study committee.

The thirteenth General Assembly (1946) was presented with “a partial report” from the study committee. Murray was responsible for the opening section “A,” which provides the fundamental statement of the regulative principle. Murray’s authorship is evident from the draft text and draft cover letter, both in Murray’s handwriting, which are preserved among his papers in the archives of the Montgomery Library at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. In his letter to the committee

6. John Murray, “Song in the Public Worship of God,” Preface by Sherman Isbell, 2001. <http://members.aol.com/RSICHURCH/song1.html>. All Internet references for this article were last accessed and checked on March 31, 2006.

members, Murray says, "This paper is being sent to you in the hope that study of it beforehand will be of some assistance in furthering and perhaps expediting our work at the next meeting of the Committee on March 10th.... I thought it necessary to enter into some detail in view of questions raised at our last meeting." This statement of the Reformed regulative principle deserves recognition in the corpus of Murray's writings. William Young observes: "Section A of the 1946 report is clearly the work of John Murray.... Section C is evidently based on parts of my report on the scripture proof of the regulative principle, except for the addition to C in the 1947 report, in which I did not concur." Thus the bulk of the committee's incomplete report in 1946 was composed by the two men who dissented from the committee's majority report the following year.

7. "Murray's handwritten draft provides at this point a supporting citation which was omitted in the committee report: 'It may serve good purpose to quote from J. Henley Thornwell: "Circumstances are those concomitants of an action without which it cannot either be at all, or cannot be done with decency or decorum" (quoted from Girardeau, *Music in the Church*, p. 152).' The passage is from *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell*, ed. John B. Adger and John L. Girardeau (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1871-1873), 4:246." Isbell, *ibid*. The work by Girardeau which Murray cited, was *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1888).

8. "It is of interest to quote from George Gillespie in this connection: 'Besides all this, there is nothing which any way pertaineth to the worship of God left to the determination of human laws, beside the mere circumstances, which neither have any holiness in them, forasmuch as they have no other use and praise in sacred than they have in civil things, nor yet were particularly determinable in Scripture, because they are infinite; but sacred, significant ceremonies, such as cross, kneeling, surplice, holidays, bishopping, etc., which have no use and praise except in religion only, and which, also, were most easily determinable (yet not determined) within those bounds which God did set to his written word, are such things as God never left to the determination of any human law' (*The Presbyterian's Armoury*, Vol. 1, p. xii)." Isbell, *ibid*. Murray was quoting from Gillespie's *English Popish Ceremonies* (*The Presbyterian's Armoury: The Works of George Gillespie*, edited by William M. Hetherington [Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846] 1.xii). See also George Gillespie, *A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies*, ed., Christopher Coldwell (Dallas, Tex.: Naphtali Press, 1993) xli.

9. "Report of the Committee on Song in Worship Presented to the Thirteenth General Assembly, on the Teaching of Our Standards Respecting the Songs That May Be Sung in the Public Worship of God" (Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Minutes of the General Assembly [1946] 101-107).

10. "Report of the Committee on Song in the Public Worship of God to the Fourteenth General Assembly" (*Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Minutes of the General Assembly* [1947] 51-66).

11. Robert S. Marsden, "Song in the Public Worship of God. A Study of Committee Reports," *The Presbyterian Guardian* 17 (March 10, 1948) 72-74. Hereafter Marsden.

Isbell goes on to note that Murray's original version of this restatement of the regulative principle indicates some of the works he consulted in two footnotes left out of the official report. Where the report examines circumstances of worship, Murray makes reference to a work by James Henley Thornwell, via John Girardeau,⁷ and to one of the most important works on worship in the history of Presbyterianism, George Gillespie's *Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies*.⁸

What is clear from this recounting of the history of this report is that if there had been no John Murray in the OPC, the committee to study worship song would likely not have been formed. Nor would the OPC have had the man in her midst who crafted this classic statement of the regulative principle. As it was, the Northern Presbyterian Church from which the OPC sprang did not have a body of literature defending the regulative principle to which the committee could appeal; and apparently, judging from Murray's cover letter, at least some of the committee members were not familiar with the doctrine. Thus a Scotsmen acquainted with Scottish and Southern Presbyterian literature reintroduced the faithful remnant from the Northern Church to the historic regulative principle of Presbyterianism.

As noted, this affirmation of the regulative principle of worship was presented in a unified report to the 1946 General Assembly.⁹ The next year, however, with regard to the content of worship song, the committee split into majority and minority reports,¹⁰ and the two were considered as a whole at the 1948 meeting of the Assembly. In March of that year, prior to the meeting, a report on the committee's work by Robert S. Marsden was published in *The Presbyterian Guardian*, which was a defense of the majority's position on worship song, but repeated the finding of the 1946 report: "The committee began its work by considering the question of whether or not there was a regulative principle of worship. In examining this question, the committee found, first of all, that the Scriptures teach, and the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms enunciate such a principle."¹¹

The minority report, signed by Professor Murray and William Young, maintained that the content of worship song should be confined to inspired song. The majority report, headed by Marsden, held that "hymns" of human derivation could also be sung in public worship. The Murray-Young report criticized the majority report for abandoning the regulative principle that the whole committee had supported the previous year. Without a doubt, the majority position had not proven its case Biblically, per the requirement of the regulative

principle—a reality essentially conceded by Chairman Marsden a year later.¹²

However, the failure of the Marsden report to maintain the regulative principle was not only in terms of the outcome, but also the presuppositions. The majority report assumed that two elements of worship—the singing of praise and the praying of prayer—were essentially identical. In other words, the OPC majority report conflated these two separate practices of worship, and asserted, in essence, that prayer could take place through the medium of singing. By not understanding the uniqueness of each of the elements of worship, the OPC was setting itself up for yet further confusion on the nature of an element of worship—confusion that would become evident in the writings of more than one scholar at Westminster Seminary in the 1970s.

The Southern Presbyterian Experience

As their conservative brethren were being ejected from the ministry in the PCUSA, conservatives in the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS, commonly called the Southern Presbyterian Church), were gearing up for battle. Before its decline, the PCUS had a strong history of defending the regulative principle, evidenced by the writings of men such as James Henley Thornwell, John L. Girardeau, John B. Adger, and Robert L. Dabney.¹³ Foremost among the efforts to call the Southern Church back to her heritage was the *Southern Presbyterian Journal*.

Founded in 1942, the *Journal* focused much of its attention on opposing merger with the PCUSA, at least in part because of the Northern Presbyterian “loose” subscription (in contrast to “strict subscription”) to the Westminster Standards. But the publication also called attention to the departures from orthodoxy within the Southern Church itself.

In 1948, Dr. R. E. Hough’s article, “The New Altar,” came out strongly in favor of the regulative principle of worship. Pastor of Central Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Mississippi, Dr. Hough wrote: “[The Church] is in a world which has many new forms and ceremonies, in themselves often attractive, to tempt her from the path of obedience, and from the spiritual worship laid down in the Scripture. Sad to say in many instances [she] seems to be yielding to this seduction, and on the pretext of adorning the service in such a way as to attract people to them.... If the attraction of people is the purpose of the service, then by all means let us go all the way and put on a good show that will compete with the attraction and amusement of the world.” He

also wrote: “It is high time, many believe, for the Church to restudy the matter of public worship, not from the aesthetic and popular viewpoint, but as to what pleases God. We are no more left to our inclination and taste in fashioning altars and crosses and candles than was Ahab in fashioning his altar.”¹⁴

Johannes G. Vos

The son of famed Princeton Theological Seminary professor Geerhardus Vos, J. G. Vos built on the Biblical-theological (“history of redemption”) insights of his father. J. G.’s commitment to *sola Scriptura* led him out of “mainline” Presbyterianism into the much smaller Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), a group often known by its nickname, the “Covenanters.”

Becoming a missionary and minister in the RPCNA, and later a member of the faculty at Geneva College (the denominational school in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania), Professor Vos championed the exclusive psalmody and *a cappella* singing of his adopted church. He did so in a time when many even in the RPCNA did not understand or appreciate the regulative principle of worship, and did not know why they held to their distinctive worship practices.

Over the course of three decades, J. G. Vos edited the influential *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, a publication which set forth standard Puritan and Covenanter views, including with regard to worship.¹⁵ Among the

12. “It might have been said that a certain disciple, not one of the apostolic company, composed a song which is not recorded in Scripture, and that that song was sung in a public worship service. But even then it would be impossible to *prove* that that song was not inspired. It would thus be impossible to *prove* that uninspired songs are authorized in the Scripture, and to demand such proof before one can in good conscience sing uninspired songs is to demand the impossible!” Marsden, 73. Throughout this article, emphases within quotations are original to the text unless otherwise noted.

13. The defense of the regulative principle of worship by these Southern Presbyterians is perhaps summed up best by John L. Girardeau’s 1875 sermon before the PCUS General Assembly of that year. John L. Girardeau, “The Discretionary Power of the Church,” *Sermons by John L. Girardeau*, Rev. George A. Blackburn, ed. (Columbia, S.C.: The State Company, 1907) 369–412.

14. R. E. Hough, “The New Altar,” *Southern Presbyterian Journal* (January 1, 1948) 7; cited in Frank J. Smith, *The History of the Presbyterian Church in America: The Silver Anniversary Edition* (Lawrenceville, Ga.: Presbyterian Scholars Press, 1999) 18–19.

15. *Blue Banner Faith and Life*. Clay Center, Kan.: ed. J.G. Vos, 1946–1979. Volume 1 #1 (Jan. 1946) to v 34 #4 (Oct.–Dec. 1979). Monthly, January–June 1946. Quarterly, July–September 1946–1979. “A quarterly publication devoted to expounding, defending, and applying the system of doctrine set forth in the word of God and

many articles which Professor Vos wrote for this magazine were those penned from 1946 to 1949 which constituted a commentary on the Westminster Larger Catechism.¹⁶

Commenting on the Larger Catechism's perspective on the Second Commandment, Dr. Vos wrote that the "three duties imposed on God's people" are "(a) To receive the true worship, that is, to recognize it as a binding obligation on the conscience and conduct. (b) To preserve the true worship, that is, not merely to believe it as an article of faith, but actually to practice it in our life. (c) To preserve the true worship, that is, to adhere to it strictly as it is appointed in Scripture, scrupulously avoiding all corruptions or human changes in matters which God has appointed in his Word." "Why must we be so careful to receive, observe, and preserve the true worship of God?", he asks; and he answers: "Because God is jealous concerning his worship, that is, he is not willing to allow us to do as we please in matters of worshiping him. God is sovereign; he is supreme over all; therefore we are bound to obey his will: and he has revealed in the Scripture that it is his will that he be worshiped strictly and only according to his own appointed ordinances and in no other way whatever" (Vos, *Larger Catechism*, 283).

Professor Vos noted that the "obligation to maintain purity of worship" is nullified by the Roman Catholic position (and by Protestant bodies that follow the same principle), by allowing the church to "make decrees concerning ordinances of worship and even add new ordinances not appointed in the Scriptures. This mistaken attitude concerning worship is the explanation of many corruptions of divine worship which exist in the Church of Rome and those bodies which copy 'Catholic' worship" (283).

The professor wrote that the "scriptural principle concerning divine worship is that the only right and acceptable way of worshiping God is that appointed by himself, which may not be changed by men"; and posited that the doctrine of divine sovereignty is the basis of that scriptural doctrine of worship. Besides the

summarized in the standards of the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenant) Church." Published by Board of Publication of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, July–September 1953–1979. Place of publication varies. Also issued on microfilm by ATLA. Periodical information from the card catalog entry for the collection held by the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary Library.

16. These articles have more recently been gathered in book form, which is the text cited in this article. Johannes G. Vos, *The Westminster Larger Catechism: A Commentary*, ed. G. I. Williamson (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2002). Hereafter Vos, *Larger Catechism*.

absolute sovereignty of God, the other basic principle that would help to "convince people of the validity of the principle that God is to be worshiped only as appointed in his Word, and not according to human preferences or desires," is "the full inspiration and authority of the Bible" (288–289).

The author observed: "Unless we can succeed in convincing people of the validity of this principle [i.e., the regulative principle of worship], our opposition to particular details of false worship will seem to them to be merely a stubborn insistence on our customs of worship over against their customs of worship. To seek reform in particular matters of worship, without gaining acceptance of the underlying principle of worship, is like trying to build a beautiful and substantial house with no foundation under it but sand" (289).

The Larger Catechism's treatment of "the reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it", led him to write that "God is greatly concerned and desirous, not only that he be worshiped by his rational creatures, but that he be worshiped by them in the particular manner which he has revealed as his will concerning how he is to be worshiped. People often speak as if it made no special difference to God whether people worship him or not, or how they worship him. But God is jealous concerning his own worship; he cannot be indifferent to whether, or how, he is worshiped" (298–299).

Professor Vos posed a question—"What figure of speech is often used in the Bible to bring out the hateful wickedness of false worship?"—and he answered:

The figure of a wife who is unfaithful to her marriage vows. God is represented as the husband of his people, the Old Testament nation of Israel, and also the spiritual Israel, which is the Christian church. In this spiritual "marriage" relationship, loyalty required that Israel worship the true God, with whom she was in covenant, alone. But Israel proved unfaithful to God's covenant, and turned to worship the divinities of all the neighboring heathen nations. Time and again in Scripture this involvement in false worship is denounced as spiritual adultery. Hosea 2:2–4 is only one of many passages of the same nature in the Old Testament prophets. By this figure of speech, so often and emphatically repeated, God showed how hateful and displeasing his people's compromise with false worship was to him (300).

For J. G. Vos, then, failure to maintain the prescribed practices of worship, necessarily entailed compromise, and an infidelity on a par with worshiping false gods.

William Young

As mentioned previously, Dr. William Young was a co-signer with John Murray of the OPC Minority Report on Worship Song. A philosophy professor (who during his career taught at Christian colleges as well as the University of Rhode Island), Dr. Young penned an article in 1947 for *Christian Opinion* magazine on the second commandment.¹⁷ He wrote that the principle in question is that “The Holy Scripture prescribes the whole content of worship”; and added: “By this is meant that all elements or parts of worship are prescribed by God Himself in His Word. This principle has universal reference to worship performed by men since the fall. In other words it has equal application to the Old and the New Testament. It is also universal in that it is regulative of all types of worship, whether public, family or private” (“Second Commandment,” 75).

Dr. Young deliberately contrasted this principle with

the ambiguously stated principle that God is to be worshipped according to His Word. Of course it is true that God is to be worshipped according to His Word, but it is also true that the civil magistrate should administer his office according to the Word. In this sense, the worship of God would not be in principle regulated more directly than the conduct of civil government. Such is not the Calvinistic view of the character of the worship of God. Neither may we say that God’s Word provides us with general principles of worship, but leaves the particulars of practice to the discretion of the Church. The whole content of worship includes specific acts of worship as well as the broad principal basis of these acts. The Word of God, moreover, obviously prescribes specific acts of worship even in quite minute detail, in addition to laying down the general principles of worship. This principle may not be construed as admitting that Scripture itself opens up in the New Testament economy an area of liberty in the worship of God within which area nothing is prescribed by God and everything left to the judgment of men. The admission of such an area of liberty is tantamount to asserting the un-Reformed principle that anything not expressly forbidden in Scripture is allowable in the worship of God. On the Reformed principle no part of the content of God’s worship can be regarded as belonging to *adiaphora*, to the class of actions neither required nor forbidden by divine commandment. Whatever has not been commanded is prohibited (76).

After dealing with the matter of circumstance, using especially the writings of seventeenth century theologians George Gillespie and John Owen (76–79), Dr. Young adduced the validity of the regulative principle on the following doctrinal grounds: (1) the nature of the sufficiency of Scripture, and of Scripture’s nature as the only infallible rule of faith and practice; (2) the sovereignty of God; (3) man’s total depravity, which means that manmade worship will always be unacceptable; (4) Christ’s exclusive kingship over the Church; (5) the fact that, even as the church’s doctrine, government, and discipline are prescribed, even so she may not invent new ways of worship (79–83).

Professor Young then appealed to various Scriptures in support of the regulative principle. The first such passage was the second commandment itself (Exodus 20: 4, 5), which, in its prohibition of idolatry, implies that “every product of man’s brain and hand introduced into God’s worship is, in the very nature of the case, an idol.” Other Mosaic passages which teach the regulative principle include Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; and Exodus 25:40.

The minuteness of detail in the divine prescriptions as the construction of the tabernacle and as to the practice of worship to be performed in it made it perfectly plain to God’s ancient people that whatever was not commanded was forbidden. Those who, contrary to such clear light, worshipped God with their own inventions, ... became the object of the fearful vengeance of a jealous God. In this connection observe that the jealousy of God is revealed against idolatrous corruptions of and superstitious additions to His worship. Meditation on this much forgotten attribute of God should impress us with the grave importance of the purity of God’s sanctuary. The Lord will not suffer His bride to seek after her own heart and eyes, after which she is accustomed to go a whoring (Num. 15:39, 40), but visits such unfaithfulness with the severest rebukes (84–85).

Dr. Young also referenced Jeremiah 7:31, which says,

17. William Young, “The Second Commandment: The Principle that God is To Be Worshipped Only in Ways Prescribed in Holy Scripture and That The Holy Scripture Prescribes The Whole Content of Worship—Taught by Scripture Itself,” *Christian Opinion* 5.2 (1947). This essay was reprinted twice in Vos’s *Blue Banner Faith and Life* (12.1 [January–March 1957] 12–17; and 19.2 [April–June 1964] 66–71), as well as in Frank J. Smith and David C. Lachman, eds., *Worship in the Presence of God: A collection of essays on the nature, elements, and historic views and practice of worship* (Greenville, S.C.: Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 1992). The last is the source for the text cited in this article; hereafter, “Second Commandment”.

“They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and daughters in the fire: which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.” He commented: “How clearly does this passage show that God does not view sin as does man. Man would revolt at the unnatural and inhuman cruelty of the burning of the fruit of one’s own body before an idol. But in God’s mind this is but secondary, the essential evil being that it is worship which He did not command, neither came it into His heart” (85).

Dr. Young addressed the objection that, in the New Testament, the Church is free from such regulation of worship. He wrote that “this would be contrary to the identity of the covenant of grace in both the old and the new dispensation. The principle regulating the worship of God belongs to the substance of the covenant of grace. With reference to the heavenly Father, the most mature saint remains a covenant child, and the most mature state of the Church itself remains subject to the ordinances imposed by the Church’s Head and Lord. Notwithstanding the changes involved in abrogation

of the ceremonial law, there is no change in the divine prerogative of appointing the worship to be rendered by the Church.” Appeal was made to New Testament verses (Mark 7:7, Matthew 28:20, and Colossians 2:22, 23) in order to support the abiding validity of the regulative principle for the new covenant (86–88).

Dr. Young also utilized several Scriptural examples which illustrate the regulative principle (88–89): (1) the sacrifices of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:3, 4); (2) Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1, 7); and (3) various others, including, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16); Moses smiting the rock at Kadesh (Numbers 20); the rejection of Saul (1 Samuel 13); and the handling of the ark (1 Chronicles 15:13).

Horton Davies

We cannot close out the 1940s without noticing the first of several historical works to be covered in this survey, which, while not uncritical of or even sympathetic toward the regulative principle, nevertheless are helpful in that they present it more or less accurately in the words of those who did hold to it. The late Horton Davies’ 1948 work, *Worship of the English Puritans*, which is based upon his 1944 Oxford dissertation, presented the Puritan view of worship with frequent citations from important works of the period. In a few years it had become a standard work.¹⁸ While his book is not above criticism,¹⁹ it was particularly important at the time as a means by which many were introduced to the Puritan (and Calvinistic) view of worship, and it continues to be an oft-cited work on the subject. The opening chapter lays out the difference in the worship views of Luther and Calvin, and clearly links the Puritan principle to that of the Genevan Reformer.

The real difference between the Lutheran and Calvinist reforms in worship may be summed up as follows: Luther will have what is not specifically condemned by the Scriptures; whilst Calvin will have only what is ordained by God in the Scriptures. That is their fundamental disagreement. It is of vital importance in the history of Puritan worship, since the Puritans accepted the Calvinist criterion, whilst their opponents, the Anglicans, accepted the Lutheran criterion (Davies, *English Puritans*, 16).

Following Calvin, they [the Puritans] affirmed the sufficiency of Scripture as a directory of worship, as well as the repository of the saving knowledge of God (49).²⁰

18. “The importance of the regulative principle of worship for the origin and essential character of the Puritan movement appears in the definition of Puritanism given by Prof. Horton Davies in his standard work on, ‘The Worship of the English Puritans’ (Chap. I, p. 1). . . .” William Young, “The Puritan Principle of Worship,” *In Servants of the Word* [Puritan Conference 1957] (Southampton, England, 1958) 46.

19. “I find it surprising that so well informed a writer as Horton Davies suggests that the Puritans probably were not aware of ‘the cleavage between themselves and John Calvin’ and how their viewpoint differed from the practice of other Reformed churches [Davies, 48]. . . . The facts are otherwise, and Davies really undermines his assertion on his page 112.” Rowland S. Ward, “The Directory for Public Worship Prepared by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster in the Year 1644,” *Westminster Assembly 2004: A Conference on the Westminster Standards*, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia Pa., November 21–22, 2004 (Unpublished; MS dated February 18, 2006) 2. Ward goes on to conclude, “I am quite satisfied there is no fundamental difference between Calvin and the Westminster men on worship. They are in agreement in the principle, and the differences in form and rubric are those which a church, in due subjection to Scripture, may maintain without schism.” Ward, 13.

20. Dr. Davies had previously published a more general, less detailed and popular work on worship, *Christian Worship, its Making and Meaning* (Wallington, U.K.: The Religious Education Press, Ltd., 1946). A second edition was issued as *Christian Worship, its History and Meaning* (New York: Abingdon Press, [1957]). He gives similar definitions (citing the 2nd edition): “In comparison with the Lutheran and Anglican reformations, which were conservative, his type of churchmanship and worship may seem radical, but it was considerably less so than that of the Puritans in England and the Quakers, so that it may be termed moderate as a mediating though logical view of worship. Whereas Luther was willing to retain all features of the medieval rite that did not conflict with the understanding of the gospel he obtained from the New Testament, Calvin held that what was

Davies summed up the Puritan “apologia” for their view of worship this way:

In their apologia their first position was inevitably the all-sufficiency and perfection of the Scriptures for the ordering of worship. William Bradshaw writes in 1605:

‘IMPRIMIS they hould and maintaine that the word of God contained in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, is of absolute perfection, given by Christ the Head of the Church, to bee unto the same, the sole Canon and rule of all matters of Religion, and the worship and service of God whatsoever. And that whatsoever done in the same service and worship cannot be iustified by the said word, is unlawfull.’

Having stated their thesis in such bold terms, they proceeded to justify it by quotations from the Scriptures. It is their invariable practice to find a warrant in Holy Writ for every postulate they make. Thus, believing themselves bound to the Word of God, they do not assert a mere opinion, or a reasonable conviction, but the declared will of God. What may appear as Bibliolatry to their successors or opponents is, in fact, their consistency.

The Scriptural citations warranting their main thesis are derived from both Testaments. Thus II Peter i 19–21 and II Timothy iii 15–17 urge the perfection of the Scriptures; while Matthew xv 9, 13, and Rev. xxii 19 are taken to forbid any man-made additions to the worship of God. Even more relevant and stronger proof-texts are found in the Old Testament. Exodus xx 4–6 (the Second Commandment), Joshua i 7, Deut. iv 2, xii 32, and Proverbs xxx 6 assert that God will not tolerate any additions to his worship since he is ‘a jealous God.’

Once their thesis is established, the Puritans then diligently search the Scriptures for evidences of the worship which God demands from his people. Their norm is the Apostolic Church and their aim is to re-establish its purity and simplicity in their midst. They believe that the worship of this church is characterized by six ordinances: namely, (i) Prayer; (ii) Praise; (iii) the proclamation of the Word; (iv) the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper; (v) catechizing; and (vi) the exercise of Discipline ... (50–51).

In a final chapter entitled “A Survey and Critique of Puritan Worship,” Davies’ criticism came down to the

complaint “that its [Puritanism’s] Biblical criterion was too rigidly applied.”

The dominant principle in Puritan worship is that only the worship prescribed by God in his Word is acceptable to the Divine Majesty. It is expressed in characteristic fashion by John Owen:²¹

‘The *end* wherefore God granted his word unto the church was, that thereby it might be instructed in his mind and will as to what concerns the worship and obedience that he requireth of us, and which is accepted with him. This whole Scripture itself everywhere declares and poseth, it declareth, that of ourselves we are ignorant how God is, how he might be worshipped, Isa. viii. 20. Moreover, it manifests him to be a “jealous God,” exercising the holy property of his nature in an especial manner about his worship, rejecting and despising every thing that is not according to his Will, that is not of his institution, Exod. xx. 4–6.’

The characteristic Puritan reverence for the Scriptures, as Dr. F. J. Powicke remarks,²² was carried to the point of Bibliolatry. This meant for every detail of worship Biblical sanction or silence was required (257–258).

Davies published a companion volume to this work forty years later, *Worship of the American Puritans, 1629–1730* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).²³ In chapter one, “The Beginnings,” Davies describes the worship of early New England. Regarding New England Puritan worship, he writes: “One is impressed by the

not prescribed by the Bible was positively forbidden to the Christian man. For this reason, although his forms of worship attempted to imitate the worship of the primitive Church, he was primarily concerned to design a form of worship with strong biblical authority” (55). “These criticisms, carried over from England and Scotland to North America by immigrants, have accounted for the dislike until recent times of precomposed forms of prayer and an ornate liturgy, among the heirs of the Puritans.... But this conception of worship is not a merely negative, dissenting, or niggardly view of worship. It must be recognized that these churches have made several positive contributions to worship. The most notable of them is the use of extemporary prayer” (67).

21. Davies is citing John Owen’s “A Brief Instruction in the Worship of God,” *Works* (Edinburgh: Goold ed., 1862) 15.450.

22. Davies is citing F. J. Powicke, “English Congregationalism in its greatness and decline (1502–1770),” in *Essays Congregational and Catholic, issued in commemoration of the centenary of the Congregational Union of England and Wales*, ed. Albert Peel (London: Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1931) 299.

23. Horton Davies, *Worship of the American Puritans, 1629–1730* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

novelty of the worship in several ways. First and foremost, one notes the determination to use all the ordinances in their pristine purity as Christ's commands in Scripture, thus to avoid the arrogance of human invention, which is idolatry condemned by the Second Commandment. It is this that accounts for the insistence on the biblical basis of all the ordinances. This leads to the denial of any formal liturgy and the demand for extemporaneous prayers, and it even determines the correct order for the different types of prayers" (Davies, *American Puritans*, 11). In chapter three on "The Theology of Worship," Davies again paints the difference in Lutheran and Calvinian worship: "This was essentially not a philosophical theology, but a biblical theology, and in this way it showed its Calvinian heritage.... Calvin, by contrast, insisted that Scripture was to be dominant as God's law in church and state. His principle was in reference to God: *Quod non jubet, vetat* (He forbids what He does not command). Thus Scripture was to be dominant, not only in faith and ethics, but as God's law it must dictate church worship and polity. For Calvin the Bible was, in his own words, "*la sainte parole et loi de Dieu*," the holy word and law of God. The Puritans followed Calvin in their insistence that *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone) was the paramount and exclusive liturgical criterion" (23–24).²⁴

Overview: 1946–1949

American Presbyterianism had lost its grasp of her foundational Reformational principle governing the worship of God. A transplanted Scot (John Murray) brought new life to a twentieth century understanding of the Regulative Principle by crafting a defense which hearkened back to the literature of Scottish and Southern Presbyterianism. Conservative Southern Presbyterians had some reaction to worship innovations, with at least one call to study seriously the issue of public

24. Davies also compares and contrasts Anglicanism and Puritanism in his magnum opus, *Worship and Theology in England* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961–1975) 1.69ff. He comments on the Puritan demand for a biblical warrant for all worship ordinances as follows: "Biblical fidelity could all too easily degenerate into Bibliomania in the more extreme forms of text-hunting and strained interpretation.... Disregarding such special pleading and hair-splitting interpretation as mere eisegesis, it must still be recognized that the value of providing a Biblical warrant for all the ordinances of Puritan worship was that each was directly related to the divine will, and that this gave these ordinances an august authority for those who used them, as the Puritans did, in the obedience of faith" (71).

25. Robert S. Marsden, [Review] Henry A. Bruinsma, ed., *Accompanists of the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Calvin College and Seminary, 1954), *Westminster Theological Journal* 17.1 (November, 1954) 84–85.

worship, but there was no strong restatement of the principle their forefathers had championed. Professor Murray, joined by his fellow signer of the minority report on worship song, William Young, along with J. G. Vos in the RPCNA, were solitary voices in the wilderness at this period, but they laid a firm foundation for later generations to take up the charge of defending Presbyterianism's Biblical worship principle.

III. THE 1950S AND 1960S—A GROWING CALVINISTIC AWAKENING

As we have seen, the regulative principle came back to the American Presbyterian scene with a classic statement of Presbyterianism's historic rule of worship, laid out by John Murray in the OPC report on worship song in 1946. However, with rare exception, it remained a forgotten principle to the rest of the Reformed churches in this country. In a 1954 book review of a volume of papers "presented at the first annual Calvin College Conference on Church Music, held in August, 1953," Robert Marsden remarked:

Perhaps one word of adverse criticism would not be out of order. The papers presented at the conference generally show a striking unawareness of the implications of the regulative principle of worship, an unawareness which mars most discussions of the subject of church music which are held in groups of other Reformed backgrounds than the Scottish. A good starting place for the discussion of the problems of church music would be the accurate statement of the Westminster Confession of Faith that "the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, ... or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture" (XXI, 1). Unfortunately, most of those who have taken this important biblical principle seriously have interpreted it in a way that greatly impoverishes the church by excluding most music that is taken for granted in other Reformed communions. We believe that a conference on church music can proceed with an awareness of this biblical principle, and can arrive at sound solutions of the problems in the light of it.²⁵

The Banner of Truth Trust

More promising was the fact that throughout the 1950s and 1960s, a growing number of churchmen, seminary students, and lay people were becoming aware of

Calvinism. Aiding the Calvinistic re-emergence was the appearance of The Banner of Truth Trust, a British-based organization dedicated to re-publishing sixteenth and seventeenth century books, including that of the Puritans, as well as the fruit of contemporary authors.

Begun in 1957, the Banner of Truth was not homogeneous, but represented a wide diversity of generally Reformed beliefs. Accordingly, its efforts focused mostly on Biblical commentaries, biographies, and devotional material; and it tended to avoid what might be considered the divisive issues of ecclesiology, polity, and worship.

Three exceptions to this general observation were the republication by the Banner of Truth of James Bannerman's *The Church of Christ*;²⁶ the appearance of William Cunningham's "The Reformers and the Regulative Principle" and other pieces in *The Reformation of the Church*;²⁷ and later, an essay on worship by John Murray in his *Collected Writings*. The Bannerman book contained much that is relevant to the regulative principle of worship, particularly in a section entitled "Church Power Exercised in Regard to Ordinances" (1.322–2.185). Two of that section's subsections are "Extent of Church Power as Regards the Public Worship of God" (1.340), and "Limits of Church Power as Regards the Public Worship of God" (1.360). In these chapters, and in the one by Cunningham, these nineteenth century Scotsmen clearly advocated the regulative principle of worship. John Murray, as noted previously, also unambiguously championed the historic position; however, only one brief essay on the subject appears in the collection of his writings published by Banner of Truth. This is not the full treatment one would expect when trying to do justice to the writings of a man for whom the doctrine was so central to his thinking.²⁸

Nevertheless, despite staying away, for the most part, from issues of ecclesiology, the Banner of Truth helped sow seeds of interest in historic Reformed theology, including Puritanism; and those seeds were destined to grow in the decades to come.

William Young

Meanwhile, there were a few churchmen who contended for traditional Presbyterian and Reformed worship. Among these was the previously mentioned Dr. William Young, whom we have noted was the co-signer of the 1947 OPC minority report on the content of worship song, and author of an oft-reprinted article on the Second Commandment.

On December 18, 1957, William Young delivered an

address at the Puritan Conference in London, England, entitled, "The Puritan Principle of Worship." This article was published in serial form by J. G. Vos' *Blue Banner Faith and Life*.²⁹ Besides being another testimony for the regulative principle, this piece of writing is especially significant in that the views of Calvin and of the Puritans with respect to the regulation of worship, and largely with respect to the content of worship song, are seen as being woven of the same cloth.

The Puritan principle of worship was no invention of the Puritans. On the contrary, it is the principle regulative of worship formulated by Calvin and adopted by all the Reformed churches, as will appear from the following consideration of the Reformed creeds and the works of Reformed writers....

Calvin also finds the regulative principle of worship established by the second commandment of the decalogue. He expounds the commandment thus: "As in the first commandment the Lord declares that he is one, and that besides him no gods must be either worshipped or imagined, so he here more plainly declares what his nature is, and what the kind of worship with which he is to

26. James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ* (1869; Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1960).

27. William Cunningham, "The Reformers and the Regulative Principle," in I. H. Murray, ed., *The Reformation of the Church* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965; reprint, 1987). Other articles were: "The Regulative Principle and Things Indifferent" by John Hooper, "The Abolition of Vestments" by John à Lasco, and "Scripture and the Ordering of Worship From the Preface to the Geneva Service Book of 1556." The Banner of Truth also published the work from which the Cunningham extract came: William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967) 31–46.

28. John Murray, "Worship," *The Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh; Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth, 1976) 1.165–168. The article was a transcription from an incomplete undated manuscript. The text ends just as Murray was beginning to reference the difference in the OPC regarding psalmody.

29. "The Puritan Principle of Worship," in *Servants of the Word [Puritan Conference 1957]* (Southampton, England, 1958) 46–58. Dr. Young enlarged this paper and it ran serially in: *Blue Banner Faith and Life* 14.2 (April–June 1959) 74–78; 14.3 (July–September 1959) 133–36; 14.4 (October–December 1959) 181–84; 15.1 (January–March 1960) 11–15; 15.2 (April–June 1960) 72–74; 15.3 (July–September 1960) 129–31; 15.4 (October–December 1960) 192–94; 16.1 (January–March 1961) 28–30. It was also later printed in tract form by Dr. Young's denomination. *The Puritan Principle of Worship* (Vienna, Va.: Presbyterian Reformed Church, [1990]). The citation here is from the text as it appears on The Westminster Presbyterian website, <http://members.aol.com/RSIGRACE/puritan1.html>. Dr. Young also wrote a very short piece entitled "Acceptable Worship" (*The Presbyterian Reformed Magazine*, 2.2 [Winter 1969] 19–20).

be honored, in order that we may not presume to form any carnal idea of him. The purport of the commandment, therefore, is, that he will not have his legitimate worship profaned by superstitious rites. Wherefore, in general, he calls us entirely away from the carnal frivolous observances which our stupid minds are wont to devise after forming some gross idea of the divine nature, while, at the same time, he instructs us in the worship which is legitimate, namely, spiritual worship of his own appointment.” ...

In Calvin’s refutation of the claims of the Church of Rome, the regulative principle of Reformed worship provides a charter of Christian liberty. A superficial view might suppose the regulative principle to be a confining, restricting principle, that condemns Christian worship to barrenness and ugliness. In Calvin’s doctrine and practice, as in that of the Puritans in the following century, the regulative principle was a liberating power, cutting off at the root the tyrannical imposition of men in the worship of God, and exhibiting the worship of God in its native beauty, the beauty of holiness.³⁰

Gordon H. Clark

Gordon Clark was perhaps the most astute philosopher in the Reformed world in the twentieth century. In the 1950s, he wrote articles on the Westminster Confession of Faith which appeared, in serial fashion, in the

Southern Presbyterian Journal. Those articles were later gathered into a book, entitled, *What Do Presbyterians Believe?*

Even though Dr. Clark tended to be rather conservative in his views, he only barely touched upon the meaning of the regulative principle of worship. In discussing Chapter 21 of the Confession of Faith, he wrote that “Bible-believing Presbyterians will not make the sign of the cross, sprinkle themselves with holy water, bow to the altar, or invent any rite not prescribed in the Scriptures.”³¹ He also expressed dismay at the offering of ballet at a Christmas service, saying that that dance “was a bit incongruous with divine worship” and out of accord with “the Puritan principle of the law of God from which we should not turn aside, either to the right hand or the left.”³²

*1963 Puritan and Reformed Studies
Conference—Iain H. Murray*

Six years after Dr. Young’s 1957 address on the “Puritan Principle of Worship,” in December 1963, two additional papers on the Puritans and worship were read before the Puritan and Reformed Studies Conference. One was delivered by J. I. Packer, entitled “The Puritan Approach to Worship.”³³ In covering his subject, Packer tried to steer clear of controversy by lauding the Puritan “approach” to worship and focusing more on “the inner reality of worship, as the Puritans understood it,” rather than on their ‘rule.’ He also saw a difference between the Puritans’ worship rule and that of Reformers such as John Calvin, making the comment that the “idea that direct biblical warrant, in the form of precept or precedent, is required to sanction every item included in the public worship of God was in fact a Puritan innovation...” (*Diversity in Unity*, 4–5).

We agree with the Rev. Dr. Rowland S. Ward’s assessment of this statement as later modified and published in Packer’s *Among God’s Giants*: “I do not think J. I. Packer is correct in stating ‘the idea that direct biblical warrant in the form of precept or precedent, is required to sanction every substantive item included in the public worship of God was in fact a Puritan innovation...’ It depends on what is meant by ‘substantive’ but the statement is in any case too broad” (emphasis added).³⁴ An earlier critic of Packer’s characterization of the regulative principle as a Puritan innovation was Edmund P. Clowney, who wrote:

Now if, as a matter of fact, there is authoritative revelation from Christ, the King of the church, respecting the

30. The text of this article is online at <http://members.aol.com/rschurch/worship.html>, and these citations come from part one and two.

31. Gordon H. Clark, *What Do Presbyterians Believe?* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1956) 83ff.

32. Quoted in Carl W. Bogue, *The Scriptural Law of Worship* (Dallas, Tex.: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1988) 4.

33. J. I. Packer, “The Puritan Approach to Worship,” *Diversity in Unity: Papers Read at the Puritan and Reformed Studies Conference, December 1963* (London: Available from *The Evangelical Magazine*, 1964) 3–13. This was reprinted as chapter 15 in Packer’s *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990), which was the American version of the text published as *Among God’s Giants: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1991). The conference papers have been reprinted in *Puritan Papers Volume 3 1963–1964* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2001).

34. Rowland S. Ward, “The Directory for Public Worship Prepared by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster in the Year 1644,” *Westminster Assembly 2004: A Conference on the Westminster Standards*, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia Pa., November 21–22, 2004 (Unpublished; MS dated February 18, 2006) 8 n34. These conference lectures are to be published by P&R. Dr. Ward is citing page 326 from *Among God’s Giants*. The word “substantive” was not in the original 1963 text.

order or his kingdom; if the keys of the kingdom are his to give and are to be used by the church governors meeting in his name; then the problem of conscience that the Puritans faced cannot be evaded. It is a necessary corollary of the ministerial character of rule in the church. No man can rule in his own name or in collective human authority. Rule must be in Christ's name, in his authority. Only Christ's Word has that authority; the authority of his ministers is therefore declarative, not legislative. All of which brings us to perceive what the Puritans perceived, but which Calvin surely perceived before them.³⁵

The second of the two 1963 papers, entitled "Scripture and 'Things Indifferent' A central issue in Puritan controversy," was presented by Iain Murray, one of the co-founders of The Banner of Truth Trust. It contains an unapologetic defense of the regulative principle of the Puritans, and gives an excellent statement and defense of it, canvassing early and later Puritan writings as well as Scottish works by George Gillespie, Samuel Rutherford, William Cunningham and James Bannerman.³⁶ Murray writes:

The Puritans claimed that the Scriptures are not only a full revelation of the Gospel of Christ but also that they contain all things necessary for the government and worship of His Church. They believed it to be a fundamental principle that just as no spiritual teaching is to be accepted which is not found in Scripture, so nothing of spiritual significance is to be added to the Church beyond what is warranted by the written Word. This principle—the regulative principle of Scripture,³⁷ as it was later called—they held to be bound up with the Bible's own teaching about its authority and upon the basis of this principle they laid down their whole policy for the reformation of the Church in two major propositions:

- (1) Everything introduced into the Church without Scriptural sanction is unlawful.
- (2) The form of the visible Church in the New Testament is permanently binding upon all generations of Christians (*Diversity in Unity*, 16).

Iain Murray concluded his paper with the following five points regarding the regulative principle of worship:

1. Once the regulative principle is discarded there is no

other principle which can keep the Church true to the simplicity of the New Testament....

2. Christian liberty cannot be preserved without the maintenance of the regulative principle....

3. The opposition expressed against the regulative principle is not without significance.... Those who contended against the principle ... often showed a desire to restrict Scripture rather than be restricted by it....

4. The regulative principle is essentially a uniting principle amongst Christians, for as far as it is truly applied it puts away all man appointed practice and promotes a common concern to give allegiance to Scripture alone....

5. While the regulative principle will always arouse controversy in this world, its main force is not to make men controversialists but God-fearing.... We are not here then to spend our brief lives in a strife of words; but if we profess this principle, we must look to God alone, stand in awe at His Word, serve Him in obedience to His statutes, and pray that as His 'commandment is exceeding broad' so may we by Christ's Word dwelling richly in us, be taught an increasing conformity to all His revealed will. For, 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments' (Psa CXIX. 6). This was the essential spirit of Puritanism: may God restore such grace to His Church today! (*Diversity in Unity*, 32–34).

35. Edmund P. Clowney, "Distinctive Emphases in Presbyterian Church Polity" in *Pressing Toward the Mark: Essays Commemorating Fifty Years of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, ed. Charles G. Dennison and Richard C. Gamble (Philadelphia: The Committee for the Historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986). Clowney discusses the regulative principle on pages 100–105. Clowney is referencing Calvin's *Treatises on the Doctrine and Worship of the Church* (Eerdmans, 1958) 118, 122.

36. Iain H. Murray, "Scripture and 'Things Indifferent' A central issue in Puritan controversy," in *Diversity in Unity*, 14–35. Interestingly, Dr. Ward criticizes Murray's much later presentation of the regulative principle in his lecture on the Directory for Public Worship as similar to Packer's 1963 comments in being "too general" (Ward, *ibid.*). See Murray's later piece in J. W. Carson and D. W. Hall, eds., *To Glorify and Enjoy God* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1994) 176–178.

37. After its use in the 1946 OPC report by John Murray, the prominence given the phrase "regulative principle of worship," in Dr. Young's 1957 Puritan conference paper and in Iain Murray's for 1963, as well in *Reformation of the Church* (1964), probably did much to cement the phrase as the title for the confessional Presbyterian and Puritan principle.

G. I. Williamson

Ordained in the United Presbyterian Church of North America (UPCNA), G. I. Williamson eventually served for a number of years in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, and more recently in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He has been a defender of the

38. G.I. Williamson recently recalled how he was like a lonely voice in the wilderness: “I’m now 80 years old and I donated my library to Mid-America Reformed Seminary, so I’m not much help in any historical research.” He observes about this period of time: “I began speaking and writing on the subject of the Regulative Principle of Worship as it is stated in the Westminster Standards, and Exclusive Psalmody, in the late 1950s. And I can tell you that, in those days, I felt like one crying in the wilderness. While many things are worse now than they were then there is certainly much more sympathy for a revival of the use of the Psalter than there was in those early decades of my 53 years in the ministry. Much of what I’ve done was only in sermonic form. But the article I wrote on ‘The Singing of Psalms in the Worship of God,’ which originally appeared in the *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, has been printed and reprinted over the years as a longer tract by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Belfast, Ireland.” Personal Correspondence, G. I. Williamson to Chris Coldwell, Friday, November 11, 2005.

39. G. I. Williamson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith: For Study Classes* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1964).

40. “Holy Days of Men and Holy Days of God,” *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, July–September 1962. The tract has been available since this time in a variety of forms and appears in several places on the Internet. This quote comes from the text as published at www.fpcr.org. It also appears on G.I. Williamson’s website at http://www.evertek.net/giwopc/holy_days.html.

41. Joseph Duggan, *Should Christians Celebrate the Birth of Christ* (Havertown, Pa: New Covenant Publication Society, n.d.). NPCPS, formerly known as The Society for Scriptural Faith and Worship, began publishing in the 1970s. Bob English, who was in charge of this publishing ministry until his death several years ago, confirmed in a 1999 email to Chris Coldwell that older examples of this tract show a date as early as February 4, 1959. NPCPS also published in tract form Williamson’s “Holy Days of Men and Holy Days of God” as well as his tract on psalm singing. Another of the society’s imprints was John Girardeau’s *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of God* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1888; Havertown, Pa: New Covenant Publication Society, 1983), with a two page introduction by Duggan dated 1980. This publication contains the following statement of the regulative principle (9): “A divine warrant is necessary for every element of doctrine, government and worship in the church; that is, whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, either expressly or by good and necessary consequence from their statements, is forbidden.”

42. Iain H. Murray, “Life of John Murray,” *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1982) 3.72.

43. Edwin H. Palmer, Jay P. Green, and John Murray, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Wilmington, The National Foundation for Christian Education, 1964–1972). Only four volumes were published. While Freeman and Duggan do not mention a worship principle per se, one can see allusions to such in “Feasts and Festivals,” 2.184–185; “Easter,” 3.481–482; and “Christmas,” 2.449–450; and “Gods, False,” 4.387.

Regulative Principle of Worship since the late 1950s.³⁸ He is perhaps best known for his classic study guides on the Westminster Confessional Standards.

In his 1964 study on the Westminster Confession of Faith, Pastor Williamson taught the regulative principle of worship. In dealing with the Confession’s Chapter 21, he illustrated the difference between non-mandated worship and commanded worship by means of circles: only the “inner” circle (worship that is commanded) is maintained in Reformed churches; and it alone has the blessing of God.³⁹

Two years earlier an article by Pastor Williamson appeared serially in Vos’ *Blue Banner Faith and Life*. In “Holy Days of Men and Holy Days of God,” he took up the challenge of applying the regulative principle of worship to pretended holy days.⁴⁰

And so we say again, that such holy days are an utter abomination unto God, even though they are highly esteemed among men. And they are an abomination because God has said, “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; Thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it.” No, not even by means of time-honored and custom-hallowed tradition. For the fact is that all religious worship, reverence, feeling and conscience which comes from any source but the infallible Word of God is just that—abomination in His sight.

Joseph Duggan and David Freeman

Another enduring tract against pretended holy days, which appeared a few years prior to Mr. Williamson’s, was that by Joseph Duggan, entitled *Should Christians Celebrate the Birth of Christ*.⁴¹ Duggan was for many years a ruling elder at Knox Presbyterian Church (OPC), where David Freeman ministered—the man John Murray considered his pastor.⁴² Both Duggan and Freeman, who was John Murray’s friend from school days at Princeton, shared Murray’s commitments regarding the doctrine of worship. In addition to this tract, the two men contributed articles touching upon worship issues for the *Encyclopedia of Christianity*.⁴³ This multiple volume work was never completed and it is tantalizing to imagine who might have provided the entry under “worship” and what it might have said. Among many articles, Freeman contributed the entry on “Feasts and Festivals,” and Duggan entries on “Christmas” and “Easter.”

Freeman writes that the Old Testament feasts “were authorized and commanded by God.” Noting God’s displeasure with the Jews’ observance of these commanded

feasts, he adds, “Externals without corresponding heart devotion and commitment are worthless in Biblical religion.” He then concludes: “In the NT there is the Lord’s supper instituted by Christ to memorialize His death and to be observed by His disciples until the promise of His return is fulfilled.... The yearly celebration of the birth of Christ (Christmas) and memorializing of His resurrection (Easter), as commonly observed in the churches, are not enjoined in the NT.” Duggan notes: “The accretion of pagan elements to Christian worship, the fact that the day was often accompanied by riotous excess, and—perhaps most compelling—the fact that the establishment of holy days by the church constituted a usurpation of divine prerogatives in the province of religious practice engendered the opposition of Calvin, the English Puritans, Knox, and the Presbyterians, among others.”

In his tract against Christmas, Duggan more expansively observed:

At that time [the Reformation] Christians were called back to the Scriptures as the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God. A person who bases his religious faith and practice on the Scriptures alone must necessarily reject all inventions of men in the religious realm, whether they be of pagan origin or are alleged to be the invention of the pious.

Christians should constantly examine their religious practices to see if they be Scriptural. We are all too prone to do things merely because of tradition, without critically examining our customs. This must be guarded against lest we find ourselves adopting a heathen attitude towards religion. The heathen endeavors to worship deity according to a manner of his own invention. He acts as if he were able of himself to approach the Almighty. The Christian, on the other hand, confesses that he is of himself weak, ignorant, foolish and sinful and that therefore God, who alone is holy and wise, must reveal Himself to us and the proper manner of our worshipping Him if we are to do so at all. God has graciously done this for us in the Bible and we do well to despise our own opinions and ideas and turn only to His revelation....

It is, of course, a good thing to honor Christ and to meditate upon this very important aspect of God’s grace. However, we must ask ourselves if it is proper to do so in a manner of our own devising or in a manner which has been adapted from heathenism. The conclusion to which the Scripture demands we arrive is that

our worshipful activity must be determined by Scripture alone. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* gives excellent expression to this principle: ‘But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or in any other way not prescribed in the holy Scriptures.’

Julius Melton and Ernest Trice Thompson

In the 1960s, as some conservatives were rediscovering the doctrine of the regulative principle of worship, two Presbyterian historians in the liberal mainline churches were consigning it to the dump heap of history, while at the same time leaving a more or less clear statement of it.

Julius Melton in his *Presbyterian Worship in America* refers to “the hallowed Calvinistic and Puritan view that worship must contain no elements not specifically authorized by Scripture” (11). Referring to a famous family which helped to liberalize the Presbyterian Church, he also mentions the “elder van Dyke” who “took issue with the ‘Puritan principle’—that ‘nothing is to be permitted in our worship which is not expressly commanded or sanctioned in Scripture’—claiming that it was based on a false and legalistic view of Scripture and led to hypocritical twisting of Scripture to support established customs” (120). “Presbyterian worship ... could be characterized as worship according to the Word. This was related in turn to a view of the church as the People of the Word. John Calvin, in seeking to purge worship of accumulated ‘error,’ took the stand that nothing was to be trusted or allowed in worship except that which the Scripture—the Word of God—commanded” (14). Melton concluded at the end of his book: “Completing these new findings from the scientific study of the Bible has been a new approach to the Bible itself. Its authority is seldom today conceived of in a legalistic fashion. Therefore the Puritan-Calvinistic view of worshipping strictly by Scripture’s rules has to a large extent faded from the scene. It is more common today to seek to frame worship according to the biblical attitude and from the biblical perspective than to search out explicit biblical directions” (147).

Ernest Trice Thompson in his monumental history of the Southern Presbyterian church, *Presbyterians in the South*, was no more a favorer of the regulative principle than Melton, but he records considerably more about the historic Presbyterian principle as held by men such

as Thornwell, Dabney, Peck and Girardeau.⁴⁴ The history does have a liberal slant, and it is certainly very clear by the third volume that Thompson is intent on crowing about the success of the liberals against the conservative minority as the PCUS slid into apostasy. The bogeyman which the liberals apparently had to defeat was the commitment of the old PCUS to “divine-right” Presbyterianism, which is underscored by the fact that Thompson saw the need to have a chapter entitled “*Jure Divino* Presbyterianism” in both volume one and again in volume two of the three volume work. The value of *Presbyterians in the South*, on this score at least, is in presenting the views of the old guardians of “divine right” in their own words at a time when their works were quite scarce and out of print. Regarding “divine right” in the worship of God, Thompson writes:

Exponents of *jure divino* Presbyterianism in the South were concerned not only that the church should develop a Scriptural polity, but also that it should maintain a Scriptural mode of worship. Disturbed by innovations in the realm of liturgies and church architecture, defended by articles appearing in the *Repertory* (representing the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary), along with certain big church tendencies appearing in one of the churches still in nominal connection with the General Assembly, T. E. Peck wrote in defense of the traditional mode of worship:

“As there is nothing which God, in His blessed word, defends with more exquisite jealousy than His worship; as there is nothing that He rebukes with more severity, than the impertinent assumption of man to determine forms of worship for himself; as there is nothing in which, notwithstanding, man has been more prone to intermeddle, than in this very thing, it is of vital importance to us to ponder it. If we know our own hearts, we are seeking no paltry party ends, but the glory of our common Lord, whose sovereign prerogative we believe to be invaded, and the true welfare of that Church which is the mother of us all.”

Mr. Peck was especially concerned with the introduction of liturgical features and the intrusion of instrumental music into the worship of the church. Such innovations, he argued, were a long step toward Roman Catholicism and generally accompanied a period of spiritual decline

in which men relied on their own efforts rather than on the Holy Spirit. They were to be resisted also because they had no support in the Directory of Worship or in the Word of God. “The church,” he held in agreement with the almost “unanimous faith of the Reformed Churches,” “is bound by the written word, in the sense that she is not only to do what God has enjoined, in the matter of His worship, but to abstain from doing what He has not enjoined.” “God,” he insisted, “is absolute dictator in this affair of worship; and, consequently ... every invention of man therein ... is a grand impertinence and wickedness.” Opposition to musical instruments (including organs) in the worship of God would continue in some parts of the Presbyterian South till the end of the 19th century. Opposition to liturgical innovations, to any innovation lacking positive divine (i.e., Biblical) sanction, would linger even longer.

The idea of a *jure divino* Presbyterianism was now firmly established in the minds of influential leaders of Southern Presbyterianism. As J. B. Adger, speaking of the principle involved in the board controversy, was to write later: “The church ... is permitted to act only by divine command. For everything set up by her she must produce a ‘thus saith the Lord.’ In the whole sphere of religion, whatever is not commanded is forbidden.... Our doctrine, our discipline, our worship, are all divine and revealed things, to which the church can add, from which she can take away, nothing.” So in regard to conduct. “Neither contrary to the scriptures, nor yet in addition to the scriptures, can she impose any new duties not imposed on men by the word. On the other hand, she cannot make anything to be sinful [slavery, for example] which God himself has not, in his holy word, forbidden. In fine, the church has no legislative power, except as to the mere circumstances of time and place, order and decency, which, from the nature of the case, scripture could not regulate, and which must needs be left, and have therefore been left, to human discretion.... All the power which the church has about laws is declarative and ministerial. Her officers declare, not their own will, but the Lord’s, and that only as he makes it known in the word....” (*Presbyterians in the South*, 1.528–529).

A decade later, when the final two volumes of the work were published, Thompson recorded the growing enthusiasm for the introduction of liturgical forms, as well as the spread of the use of musical instrumentation in public worship. Regarding the desire for greater congregational ‘participation’ in the worship service,

44. Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1963; 1973). The second and third volumes were not published until 1973.

Thompson writes: “The *North Carolina Presbyterian* insisted that arguments for change based on the need of congregational participation were out of place, for the congregation participated adequately by listening attentively to the sermon. The movement for greater variety and more aesthetic beauty in worship, the editor further insisted, overlooked a fundamental principle of Presbyterian worship—that nothing is legitimate in worship unless expressly or implicitly set forth in Scripture. ‘Man has no more right to introduce new features into worship than new articles in the Faith.’ Dr. R. L. Dabney added that it was a step toward popery, the goal toward which all ritualism inevitably pointed.” Thompson then proceeds to give a brief and mostly accurate description of the Presbyterian opposition to musical instrumentation in public worship, and to observance of the church calendar, both of which innovations became generally practiced in the PCUS as the old and dwindling guardians “passed off the scene” (2.427–428, 431).

Thompson makes it very clear that the PCUS liberal agenda could only have gone forward by the church’s abandonment of *jure divino* Presbyterianism in doctrine, polity and worship. Regarding the allowing of women into office, he states: “This action is significant, not only for the particular matter in hand, but because it marked a clear departure from the Thornwellian tradition, the legalistic static *jure divino* interpretation of Scripture which had for so long dominated the church’s life ...” (3.479).

He also noted that female ordination, “though not recognized at the time, [represented] the beginning of a break from the literal, legalistic, *jure divino* interpretation of Scripture, which had retarded and confined the development of the church in other areas” (3.400). Thompson more pointedly says at the beginning of a chapter entitled “Toward Theological Maturity”:

In the 1920’s the Southern Presbyterian Church remained predominantly conservative, adhering closely to the tradition of the fathers, including the doctrinal system of the Standards, strictly construed; a *jure divino* Presbyterianism, which demanded a “Thus saith the Lord” for any change in theology, polity, or worship; a rejection of “higher criticism” and evolution; an insistence on the spiritual or non-secular character of the church; and strong opposition to any union with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

In the following decade, as we have seen, there came ferment, change, a growing desire to escape from the dead hand of the past (3.486).

Continuing Church Movement

In the Southern Presbyterian Church, conservatives started as early as the 1940s to call for separation from the mother denomination, with a view towards a Continuing Presbyterian Church. As noted above, key to this movement was the *Southern Presbyterian Journal* (renamed in 1958 the *Presbyterian Journal*).

The earlier efforts in the *Journal* to call to faithfulness with respect to worship intensified in the 1960s, as more “experimental” worship became in vogue. Perhaps most notorious in the development of experimental worship in the Southern Church was the “New Days! New Ways?” conference held under denominational auspices at Montreat, North Carolina, in August 1968, featuring face masks at the Sunday morning worship service and a psychedelic communion service that evening (Smith, *History of the PCA*, 27). The next month, the *Journal* editorialized:⁴⁵

If there is anything the Bible says clearly, it is that God is very particular about the way (the manner, the form) of worship. Cain’s offering was rejected, while Abel’s was accepted. The Lord Jesus said to the woman at the well, “God wants people to worship Him in spirit and truth.” Idolatry (in part) is the devising of false forms of worship, such as images, medals, candles, prayer wheels, flagellation, drugs, entertainment—most of which have their place, but not necessarily in church.

If proper worship is what *I* want to do, then the Hindu’s bed of spikes, the Mohammedan’s barefoot pilgrimage, the mountaineer’s snake-handling, are all praiseworthy. And if worship is the appeal to someone in his own idiom, then let’s bring the discotheque into the sanctuary.

Come to think of it, that’s what they’ve done!

But isn’t that rather a sign of the secularization of the Church, rather than of valid worship?

Other Works for this Period

Several works for this period from the mainline liberal churches and presses may be mentioned in passing—works which, while using words like “Presbyterian” or “reformed” and “worship” in their titles, contain little on the Reformed and Presbyterian regulative principle.

45. “Re: ‘Experimenting,’” *Presbyterian Journal* (September 28, 1968) 12; cited in Smith, *History of the PCA*, 495.

In 1960, George Hendry's contemporary interpretation of the Westminster Confession, published by the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern) publishing house, correctly articulated the historic words and the general concept of Presbyterian worship.⁴⁶ However, five years later, the same John Knox press published a British work by Stephen F. Winward entitled *The Reformation of Our Worship*.⁴⁷ While that author attempted to be even-handed in citing what he viewed, historically speaking, as the positives and negatives of both the Anglicans and the Puritans regarding their worship practices, he clearly was for a more liturgical approach, and there is not really much interaction with the Puritan principle of worship. Winward is also one of a number of writers, the most notable being W. D. Maxwell, and more recently D. G. Hart, who repeat the contention that Calvin believed in the necessity of set forms. This mistaken conclusion has been corrected by Dr. Rowland S. Ward in his recent lecture on the Westminster Directory for Public Worship.

It has been claimed by Charles Baird that Calvin highly approved set forms of prayer from which ministers should not be allowed to vary offering the following translation from Calvin's Latin letter of 1548 to Lord Somerset.... However, the standard English translation made in 1858 (shortly after Baird wrote) indicates the reference is to the importance of a set Catechism, *not* to a form of prayers.

46. George S. Hendry, *The Westminster Confession for Today: A Contemporary Interpretation* (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1960). "These facts [i.e., those from the light of nature] are deemed sufficient of themselves to convince men that they ought to worship God; but in order to learn *how* God is to be worshipped, and to avoid error and superstition, they have to follow the ways prescribed in Scripture." This "general obligation to worship" is "regulated only by the prescriptions of Holy Scripture." Hendry, 187.

47. Stephen F. Winward, *The Reformation of Our Worship* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1965).

48. Ward, "The Directory for Public Worship," 10, 11 n45. In this instance Winward is relying on an earlier work by Maxwell: Pehr Edwall, Eric Hayman, and William D. Maxwell, *Ways of Worship, The Report of a Theological Commission of Faith and Order* (London: SCM Press, 1951) 121.

49. Frederick W. Schroeder, *Worship in the Reformed Tradition* (Philadelphia, Pa.: United Church Press, [1966]) 67. Schroeder was president of Eden Theological Seminary from 1941 until 1962. Eden was the seminary for the Evangelical and Reformed Church which united in 1957 with the Congregational Christian Churches to form the United Church of Christ.

50. Howard G. Hageman, *Pulpit and Table: Some Chapters in the History of Worship in the Reformed Churches* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1962). For Hageman the basic Reformed principle of worship is that "there is not and cannot be one liturgy for the Reformed church, valid at all times and in all places" (Hageman, 109).

Baird ... has been followed by too many who partially cite Baird's purported quotation of Calvin in a context of prayer rather than catechesis, e.g. D. G. Hart, in his *Recovering Mother Kirk* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003) 26. Similarly, W. D. Maxwell, *A History of Worship in the Church of Scotland* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955) 72–73, a standard but not always accurate writer, who purports to cite Calvin's Latin *Opera* but it is in identical words to Baird's translation. Baird also refers to Bingham's *Antiquities* but the reference he gives [II, 747] is not relevant to the issue. Perhaps Baird worked from imperfect notes brought back from his period of study in Europe.⁴⁸

Also from this period is Frederick W. Schroeder's *Worship in the Reformed Tradition*. Schroeder observed that in "all matters of worship, theological principles have priority over any and all liturgical traditions, however much the latter may carry the sanction of antiquity or common usage"; but beyond that general principle, he does not display much comprehension of the regulative principle of Calvin and the Puritans.⁴⁹ On the other hand, long time RCA minister and professor at New Brunswick Seminary, Howard G. Hagerman, in his *Pulpit and Table*,⁵⁰ exhibits the kind of prejudiced opinion one might expect from someone strongly influenced by the Mercersburg school of thought.

For many years the idea appears to have been completely accepted in Reformed circles that nothing should be allowed in public worship but what was explicitly commanded in the Bible. With the results of that theory we are all familiar. The exclusive use of the psalms in praise, the banning of organs and musical instruments, the destruction of all forms of Christian pictorial art, the virtual reduction of worship to a sermon—these became the chief hallmarks of Reformed worship. And while we have, of course, become much less certain about most of these old standards, we have really ignored the basic liturgical questions raised by the Bible. It is the Biblical factor itself which today is asking the Reformed churches whether they have not perverted the Biblical witness in their worship. Our basic perversion goes back to the beginning of our history. It was present in the thinking of Zwingli, but it was fully developed in later centuries.

The recovery of this Biblical insight, stimulated by a renewed scholarship of the New Testament congregation, should bring us back to the conviction which we would never have lost had Zwingli not conquered Calvin in

our liturgics. In the act of Christian worship, Word and Sacrament belong together.... Word and Sacrament are only different media for the same reality, Christ's coming into the midst of his people (Hagerman, 111–112).

We agree with Thomas G. Reid's assessment that Donald Macleod's *Presbyterian Worship* "has little of note to offer"⁵¹ as it does not even address the Puritan rule.⁵² In his *Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition*, James Hastings Nichols also has very little if anything to say about the principle. As with other writers, he places the rejection of all forms in worship with the more extreme and Separatist Puritans. He does say interestingly enough (citing Martin Luther's *German Mass*) that because these churches had no "significant evangelistic or educational role, as with a state church congregation," and because they were made up of "real Christians," "one would have no need of elaborate liturgies, but would require only the simplest of forms."⁵³ More typical, however, of liberal churchmen is the attitude of liturgical theologian Jean-Jacques von Allmen. In his 1965 book, he argues for the necessity of forms as they reflect the recapitulation of the history of Christ's work of salvation.⁵⁴

Overview: 1950–1969

Starting in the 1940s, a re-awakening Calvinism occurred among conservative Presbyterians, some of whom were forced out of the "mainline" Northern Church, and some of whom remained in the Southern Church to fight the battle against modernism. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, a time often seen as one of theological decline, there was a strengthening of resolve—perhaps we might say a sharpening of doctrinal understanding, including with respect to worship—among those who were willing to count the cost of fidelity to the Lord of the church. The conservatives in the Southern Presbyterian Church, in particular, recalled their Puritan heritage, in the on-going war against theological liberalism. However, the regulative principle of worship, while it received some important attention by a few, or was a passing curiosity of historical interest to others, was still a relatively unknown doctrine awaiting the significant attention it deserved. What Iain Murray stated in 1963 regarding England, could equally describe the state of the church in this country: the "Puritan teaching on the regulative principle of Scripture is almost as obsolete in England as the teaching that the earth is flat" (*Diversity in Unity*, 17).

IV. THE 1970S—UNCERTAINTY AND CONFUSION

As the 1970s opened, the Presbyterian doctrine stating God's propriety in His worship had obtained a moniker over the proceeding decades, and become known as the *regulative principle of worship*. The principle had been classically restated and defended in a denominational report, was the subject of several conference lectures, and had received some degree of treatment in a few books. Yet, as some recall at this time, there was not even a readily available and succinct tract defending it.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the regulative principle continued to receive attention throughout the decade in various papers, articles, and books, and was the subject of at least one thesis. The scene was also set for later assaults on the doctrine.

The RPCNA

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), a denomination often referred to by its nickname ("Covenanters"), has been in existence since the eighteenth century. Despite some challenges to its worship views, particularly in the twentieth century, it has always maintained a *cappella* exclusive psalmody. However, the church as a whole has not always understood why it continued to hold to that traditional Presbyterian position.⁵⁶

51. Thomas G. Reid, Jr., "The Acceptable Way of Worshipping the True God: Recent Writings on Worship of Particular Interest," in *Worship in the Presence of God*, 338.

52. Donald Macleod, *Presbyterian Worship: Its Meaning and Method* (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1980).

53. James Hastings Nichols, *Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968) 94.

54. Jean-Jacques von Allmen, *Worship: Its Theology and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965). Professor von Allmen was one of the leading advocates in the ecumenical liturgical movement of the last century, and also supervised Hughes Oliphant Old's doctoral study on the *Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*.

55. In correspondence with Mr. Coldwell, Sherman Isbell recalled that the only tract available at the time was a booklet published by the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. The piece was not just on the regulative principle of worship, which it does not treat in depth, nor is that a phrase which is used in the text (the nearest phrasing being a single use of "principles regulative of worship"), but was largely on a *cappella* exclusive psalmody. See M. C. Ramsay, *Purity of Worship* (Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, 1968). Text online at <http://pcea.asn.au/purofwor.html>.

56. This is not to say that there were not ministers and others who did understand. Nor is it to say that the RPCNA did not maintain a general orthodoxy. Citing Nancy E. Clark's M.A. thesis at Butler University ("A History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church"), John Allen Diluvik contends that the reason why the "New Light"

In 1973, the RPCNA undertook a symposium on the doctrine of worship. The various essays were gathered in a book in January 1974, entitled, *The Biblical Doctrine of Worship: A Symposium to state and clarify the Scriptural teachings concerning worship with emphasis on the use of the Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship*.⁵⁷ Several of the essays dealt directly with the regulative principle of worship.

The opening essay was by Dr. John H. White, who would later serve as President of Geneva College, the denominational school in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania.⁵⁸ One of his conclusions is that “Worship (service) ‘latreia’ must be seen in both its narrow sense (cultic institutions, etc.) and in its broad sense (all of life is a service before the Lord)” (Robson, 11).

Reformed Presbyterians (i.e., the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod—the group that ultimately merged into the Presbyterian Church in America) changed its denominational worship, is because of a doctrinal decline; see John Allen Diluvik, *The Doctrine and History of Worship in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 1982) 178.

57. Edward A. Robson, Philip W. Martin, John M. McMillan, eds., *The Biblical Doctrine of Worship: A Symposium to state and clarify the Scriptural teachings concerning worship with emphasis on the use of the Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship* (N.p. [Pittsburgh, Pa.]: Board of Education and Publication, 1974). Hereafter Robson.

58. John H. White, “Worship in the Pentateuch,” in Robson, *The Biblical Doctrine of Worship*, 1–15.

59. Norman Shepherd, “The Biblical Basis for the Regulative Principle of Worship,” in Robson, 42–56. The quote is on page 44. See also “An Exposition of Matthew 15:3–9,” penned by the Session of the Sterling (Kan.) Reformed Presbyterian Church (99–100); the Session opines that “all of life is worship for it is lived in the presence of God.”

60. Within a few years, Professor Shepherd would become embroiled in a controversy regarding the doctrine of justification. He eventually left the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for the Christian Reformed Church of North America. His views have recently been condemned by the Reformed Church in the United States as being “another gospel”; see “RCUS Synod Declares Views of Norman Shepherd to be Another Gospel,” *Presbyterian & Reformed News* 10.1–4 (January–December 2004) 1.

61. See S. Ray Blair, “According to the Pattern Shown in the Mount: An Examination of Exodus 25:40” (Robson, 23–26); Paul M. Martin, “An Exposition of Leviticus 10:1–3” (27–31); Robert W. McMillan, “An Exposition of Deuteronomy 12:30–32” (32–39); M. L. McFarland, “An Exposition of Deuteronomy 12:29–39” (40–41); Robert B. McCracken, “An Exposition of II Chronicles 26:16–21” (77–81); Robert W. Morrow, “II Chronicles 26:16–21” (82–83).

62. John Murray, “The Worship of God in the Four Gospels” (Robson, 92–98); and William Young, “The Second Commandment: The Principle that God is To Be Worshipped Only in Ways Prescribed in Holy Scripture and That The Holy Scripture Prescribes The Whole Content of Worship—Taught by Scripture Itself” (Robson, 307–315). Dr. Young’s contribution was his classic piece on the Second Commandment.

The notion that worship can be thought of as encompassing all of life (even with a distinction between worship in a broad sense and in narrow sense) can lead to the perspective that the regulative principle applies to all of life. This is indeed the view taken by Professor Norman Shepherd, then a professor at Westminster Theological Seminary and minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Referring to Deuteronomy 12:32 (“Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor taken away from it”), Mr. Shepherd claims: “This principle applies to the whole scope of our obedience to God. We may properly speak of it as the regulative principle for human life.”⁵⁹

Professor Shepherd essentially undercut one of the key Scriptural supports for the regulative principle. If there is not an essential difference between the principles which govern life and the principles which govern worship, then the regulative principle of worship, as conceived historically in the Reformed faith, becomes meaningless.⁶⁰

On the other hand, numerous contributors did maintain the traditional understanding of the regulative principle.⁶¹ Particularly noteworthy in this regard were contributions by John Murray and William Young.⁶²

In dealing with the Four Gospels, Professor Murray argues from John 4:24 that worship “in spirit and truth” bears directly upon the content of worship. If worship must be consonant with the nature of God, it must be in accord with what God has revealed himself to be and regulated as to content and mode by the revelation God has given in holy Scripture. The sanction enunciated (“in spirit and truth”) excludes all human invention and imagination and warns us against the offence and peril of offering strange fire unto the Lord. No principle more than this inculcates jealousy to ascertain that what we offer has the warrant of divine authority” (Robson, 93–94).

In dealing with Matthew 15:2–9, he notes that the particular occasion for Jesus’ words “was the subterfuge by which the fifth commandment has been made void” (Robson, 95). At first blush, one might be led to believe that the professor’s position is that worship encompasses all of life. However, the Westminster Seminary professor was being far more precise, and rather making the point that all of life falls under God’s law. He definitely would have rejected the notion that all of life is worship, or that the regulation of life in general was synonymous with the regulation of worship.

Francis Schaeffer

One of the great popularizers of evangelical Christianity in the 1960s and 1970s was Francis Schaeffer, founder of L'Abri in Switzerland. An American who helped countless Europeans and Americans to discover “true truth” (in contrast to the relativized “truth” of a post-Christian era), Dr. Schaeffer emulated a Christian lifestyle (as seen in his radical hospitality), and worked for cultural transformation in the face of a dying Western Civilization. He was a minister in the Bible Presbyterian Church, which later became the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (1961–1965), and then the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES).

One of his concerns was that the church be relevant for the modern times. Accordingly, in dealing with the church at the end of the twentieth century, Dr. Schaeffer utilized the concepts of form and freedom in an effort to maintain absolute truths while at the same time allowing flexibility in the church's practice. The result was a confused formulation regarding the authority of the church.

Francis Schaeffer wrote:

My primary point as we prepare for the end of the 20th century is, on the one hand, that there is a place for the institutional church and that it should maintain the form commanded by God, but, on the other hand, that this also leaves vast areas of freedom for change. It is my thesis that we cannot bind men morally except with that which the Scripture clearly commands (beyond that we can only give advice), similarly, *anything the New Testament does not command in regard to church form is a freedom to be exercised under the leadership of the Holy Spirit for that particular time and place*. In other words, the New Testament sets boundary conditions, but within these boundary conditions there is much freedom to meet the changes that arise both in different places and different times.⁶³

Lest there be any misunderstanding of his view, Dr. Schaeffer stated: “It seems clear to me that the opposite cannot be held, namely that only that which is commanded is allowed. If this were the case, then, for example, to have a church building would be wrong and so would having church bells or a pulpit, using books for singing, following any specific order of service, standing to sing, and many other like things. If consistently held in practice, I doubt if any church could function or worship” (Schaeffer, 67 n1).

However, what Francis Schaeffer evidently did was to

fail to distinguish between matters which are substantive and matters which are circumstantial. Given his stature in the Reformed world, it is perhaps surprising that a trained philosopher and veteran minister would have made such a mistake. However, it is important to remember that he was a product of his time—a time when the regulative principle of worship was only beginning to be rediscovered. Dr. Schaeffer therefore represents a fundamentalist understanding of worship. His basic misunderstanding of the regulative principle led him both to caricature and to reject it.

The PCA

In 1973, out of the Continuing Presbyterian Church movement, the denomination now known as the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) was organized. Most of the congregations and ministers who initially formed the PCA had withdrawn from the Southern Presbyterian Church, because of its manifest departure from Reformed orthodoxy.⁶⁴

The Steering Committee for a Continuing Presbyterian Church asked the Rev. Dr. Morton H. Smith, founding faculty member of Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, to write a theological defense of the anticipated action to separate from the mother denomination. Dr. Smith responded with his magisterial *How is the Gold Become Dim*, a volume which took its title from Lamentations 4:1. In tracing the decline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS), the book dealt with the decline of the worship of God among Southern Presbyterians.

Dr. Smith noted that the Protestant Reformers “spoke of worship as one of the marks of the church”; and he cited questions and answers from the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms regarding the second commandment to demonstrate the Presbyterian position of the regulative principle of worship. He lamented the eventual observance of a church or liturgical calendar (religious holy days), which downplayed the significance of the Sabbath; and commented that “there is no Biblical basis for such a calendar.” He shared the consternation of many Southern Presbyterians with an overemphasis at the General Assembly on rituals and liturgies. He mentioned the “psychedelic worship service” that occurred in Montreat, North Carolina, on August 4, 1968, under the auspices of a denominational agency,

63. Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the 20th Century* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1970) 66–67.

64. For a fairly comprehensive treatment of the formation of the PCA, see Smith, *History of the Presbyterian Church in America*.

and the subsequent inaction by the General Assembly to condemn said experimental worship, as an example of the General Assembly condoning “sacrilegious, unbiblical forms of observing the Lord’s Supper”; and claimed that the General Assembly “has departed from being a true Church in this particular area.” He also stated “a marked decline in the worship of the PCUS is to be found in the use of various pictures and symbols as aids to worship.... Pictures of Christ, crosses and other such religious symbols are to be found in many Churches and Sunday School rooms.” He concluded his chapter by saying: “As the Continuing Church comes into being, it is the hope of the present writer that we shall see a concern for pure worship, and thus a reform in this area as well as in doctrine. The two go hand-in-hand together. Orthodoxy in doctrine should be expressed in orthodoxy in worship.”⁶⁵

However, as events would prove, there was a disconnect in the PCA between those who committed wholeheartedly to the Confessional standards, and those who were merely fellow travelers—broadly evangelical, but not particularly Presbyterian or Reformed. Or, one could say that there was a marked difference between, on the one hand, the official documents which not only valued worship for its own sake but maintained that it is subject to strict regulation; and, on the other hand, a significant portion (possibly a majority) of the constituency, who viewed the worship service primarily as a time for evangelism.

One could also note the irony of the setting for one of Dr. Smith’s presentations of material from this chapter, including opposition to “pictures of Christ.” The Convocation of Sessions, a preliminary meeting leading up

to the official founding of the PCA, was held in May 1973 at the historic Westminster Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, Georgia; and from the pulpit, which is under a stained-glass window “picture of Jesus,” Dr. Smith voiced his desire that the new church would be faithful to the Standards regarding such images.

*Hughes Oliphant Old:
The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*

The 1970s saw the appearance of another important historical work from the hand of a minister from a mainline liberal Presbyterian denomination, which underscored the early Reformed churches’ adherence to the regulative principle of worship. This was Hughes Oliphant Old’s *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*.⁶⁶ About this work Thomas G. Reid writes:

Occasionally, a doctoral thesis rises above the merely academic and technical to deal in a provocative way with a familiar subject. Such is Hughes Oliphant Old’s 1970 Neuchâtel dissertation, published in 1975 as *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag). All subsequent historical writing on early Reformed worship will be either elaborations or denials of his thesis: the Reformers, caught in a battle with the Romanists, returned to what they considered the common heritage of all Christians, the Fathers of the Church, for their theory and practice of worship. Long quotations from the original sources permit the Reformers to express their own thoughts.⁶⁷

Old qualifies the nature of his research at the opening of his paper:

Before we can begin our research on the question of whether the custom of the ancient Church can be considered a source of the Genevan Psalter of 1542, we must come to a certain clarity as to the historical evolution of the document. We might say that this document has three roots, a Scriptural root, a patristic root and an historical root. The subject of our work is the patristic root, and the main body of our work will be devoted to this subject. The Scriptural root was, of course, the main concern of the Reformers and therefore we cannot ever let it out of sight although it is not the subject of our inquiry.

Old goes on to say that when the Reformers embarked on a course of more radical reform of worship than simply a revision of the Roman Mass,⁶⁸ they “en-

65. Morton H. Smith, *How is the Gold Become Dim: The Decline of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., As Reflected in Its Assembly Actions* (2nd edition; N.d.: The Steering Committee for a Continuing Presbyterian Church, Faithful to the Scriptures and the Reformed Faith, 1973) 95–105.

66. Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975).

67. Reid continues: “Psalm-singing had as its primary function the praise of God (p. 253f). ‘This attitude of the Reformers was greatly encouraged by their knowledge of the literature of the ancient Church. Countless passages of the Fathers could be quoted which indicate that the ancient Church was accustomed to singing Psalms in praise to God’ (p. 255). Thus, the Reformers preferred the Psalms to man-made hymns, not for principal but pragmatic reasons (pp. 262–263). They also opposed instrumental music in worship, once again because of the patristic position (pp. 265f). Other sections of Old’s book may be less controversial but are no less illuminating.” Thomas G. Reid, Jr., “The Acceptable Way of Worshipping the True God: Recent Writings on Worship of Particular Interest,” in *Worship in the Presence of God*, 343–344.

68. The main source in which Old traces the radical break with

gaged in a return to the sources. Primarily it was a return to the Scriptures, but the writings of the Fathers were read as witnesses to the purer forms of worship of the ancient Church.” Old emphasizes “the basic similarity behind all these attempts at reform” and attempts “to show that they are not basically motivated by a desire to express a so-called Zwinglian sacramental theology.” His intent is to demonstrate “that the Reformers were far more interested in worshiping as God had commanded than in developing a ceremony that would express their theology” (Old, *Patristic Roots*, 1).

Dr. Old’s section entitled “Ceremonies of Human Origin” is worth quoting in full:

The most important criticism which the Strasbourg Reformers had of the old forms of worship was that they were of “merely human origin.” The Reformers knew that many of the liturgical traditions which they had inherited were not of truly ancient tradition. This was not a startling discovery for, as we shall see, such authors as Platina, Clichtoveus, the Liber pontificalis and Pseudo-Isidore had carefully assigned the institution of most liturgical usages to one pope or another so that one could not easily escape from the impression that the Roman Mass was the creation of the Roman popes rather than a legacy which had been received from Christ and the Apostles. The Reformers wanted to worship God according to the commandments of God.⁶⁹ It is on this basis of “the clear and lucid Word of God” that they wanted to make their reformation of worship. By the reformation of the liturgy they meant “restoration of the correct, the old, and the enduring.”⁷⁰ They wanted to be delivered from “the confusion of so many entangled and ruinous laws and regulations of merely human origin.”⁷¹

From beginning to end the *Grund und Ursach* poses the question as to what is service that is τῷ θεῷ εὐάρεστον, “pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1–2; 14:17–19; Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 12:28; 13:21. All Biblical references are R.S.V.) It is interesting to note how often a variation of the phrase “ein gottgefelliger Dienst” appears in our text.⁷² We assume that these phrases are an attempt to translate the Greek words which in the Revised Standard Version are translated by the “acceptable worship” or “logical worship” of Romans 12:1–2. The *Grund und Ursach* answers the question by saying that the “service” which pleases God is that service which God himself works in us (Hebrews 12:28; 13:21). It is that service which through the Holy Spirit the Church does in obedience to God. It is that service which God

has commanded of us. “Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to it or take from it,” (Deuteronomy 12:32). Only God can direct us to what service is pleasing to him [BDS, I, 207]. We have no right to invent new forms or “to enrich” existing forms. Ceremonies which are merely of human origin, “von der Menschen ... erdichtet,” add nothing to worship. It is on this basis, for example, that the Strasbourg Reformers can speak of the vestments of the mass as being “opposed to faith” [BDS, I, 232, BDS, II, 276–477]. It is because they do not come out of obedience and trust to God and his Word but rather from human fantasy and invention. For the same reason the Reformers of Strasbourg find it wrong to consider the holidays as a service to God [BDS, I, 263].⁷³ They have their basis in human tradition or even in heathen customs and since they have been established without the commandment of God [BDS, I, 267–268], it is hard to understand how they can be called a service to God. Quite simply put, the service of worship which pleases God is that service which God demands of us. That is why the Reformers searched the Scriptures to find out what service God commanded and what God through his Holy Spirit works in the hearts of his people⁷⁴ (Old, *Patristic Roots*, 24–25).

attempts simply to reform the Roman Mass, is Bucer’s *Grund und Ursach*. Martin Bucer, “Grund und ursach auss gotlicher schrift der neuwerungen an dem nachtmal des herren ...,” *Deutsche Schriften* (4. vols.; Gütersloth: Robert Stupperich under sponsorship of the Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1960) 2.185–278. Dr. Old subsequently refers to this work as BDS.

69. “Cf., Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, VI, 25.”

70. Old notes: “The Reformers were willing to accept the tradition of the ancient Church in that it was a witness to the commandments of God and the practice of Christ and the Apostles. That is, they accepted the argument from tradition as it might be advanced by a Tertullian or an Irenaeus. What they objected to was not tradition but “man-made tradition.” To tradition which handed down the usage of Christ and the Apostles they had no objection.”

71. In a note Old has a quote from “BDS, I, 207–208; cf., also 218.”

72. Professor Old notes: “We find the same concern in the *Messgutachten*, BDS, II, 524.”

73. Old notes subsequently that while Bucer attacked feast days such as Christmas, the Circumcision, Epiphany and Ascension which fell on week days, he does not so attack those which were observed on the Lord’s day, such as Easter and Ascension (Old, *Patristic Roots*, 29 note 1).

74. “Zwingli in the *Apologia* uses the same principle, that the worship of the Church must be in obedience to the Word of God. He has, however, what might be called a ‘loose constructionist’ view of it. He insists that God has not directed us to a special order of worship. Whether the sermon comes before communion or after it is not important. God has not limited us to certain formulations of prayer such as the Lord’s Prayer but has rather given us in the Holy Scriptures

Old writes regarding “the great number of gestures required by the mass” which the Reformers rejected: “If these gestures had been prescribed by Scripture or recommended by ancient tradition, it would have been another matter” (31).⁷⁵ Again Old writes in conclusion of his section on *The Call for a More Radical Reform*: “The Reformers believed that the worship of the Church must be ‘re-formed’ according to the Word of God. They wanted nothing less than to find again the traditions established by Christ, handed down by the Apostles and practiced by the ancient Church” (38). And Old’s concluding points are noteworthy:

12. The liturgical texts of the post-Constantinian Church, the classical rites of the Orient, and the Latin sacramentaries of the early Middle Ages held little interest for the Reformers. The recent “High Church” liturgical movement was particularly inspired by precisely these texts. The difference between the “High Church” liturgical reform and that of the early Reformed Church can easily be understood when we remember that the Reformers gave special attention to earlier liturgical documents.

13. Being students of Christian Humanists, the early Reformed theologians were concerned to rediscover the original forms of Christian worship. They were not concerned with giving liturgical expression to their theology. Nor were they concerned with giving an archaeological reconstruction of the past. It was rather that they understood their attempts as a matter of Christian obedience. They wanted to worship God in obedience to his Word. First they turned to the Scriptures to see what forms Christ and the Apostles had instituted. Secondly, they searched the writings of the ancient Church to find examples of the worship which had been obedient to that institution (*Patristic Roots*, 340).

Vern S. Poythress

In 1974, Dr. Vern Poythress, a young, brilliant professor at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia,

a treasury of examples from which we may draw upon in formulating our own prayers. CR, LXXXIX, 622–624.” [*Corpus Reformatorum* (Berlin, 1834–; Leipzig, 1906–)].

75. Old gives the opinion regarding standing for prayer on the Lord’s day: “Here is a case where the early Reformed Church accepted a practice primarily because it was recommended by ancient tradition but which is not specified by Scripture” (31 n2).

76. Vern S. Poythress, “Ezra 3, Union with Christ, and Exclusive Psalmody,” *WTJ* 37 (1974) 1:74–94; “Ezra 3, Union with Christ, and Exclusive Psalmody (Sequel),” *WTJ* 37 (1975) 2:218–35.

wrote a two-part article for the *Westminster Theological Journal* which challenged the doctrine of exclusive psalmody.⁷⁶ What is especially important for our present study is the fact that, while purportedly adhering to the regulative principle, Professor Poythress largely guts it of any significance by attempting to negate the distinctions among several distinct elements of worship.

In the first half of the article, Dr. Poythress states that in Ezra 3, “we find a decided emphasis on the regulative principle. The passage says again, and again, implicitly or explicitly, that worship was conducted in accordance with the law of Moses and the appointments of David” (Poythress, 75).

However, he later writes:

As for present-day congregational singing of believers, we regard teaching-by-singing and teaching-in-the-narrow sense as simply two forms of teaching, each particularly effective in meeting certain needs and expressing certain aspects of Christian doctrine. Each has its advantages and limitations, due to the nature of the medium of expression. We challenge the exclusive psalmist position to prove *from Scripture*, rather than *assume*, that teaching-by-singing and proclaiming are “two separate elements of worship.” To us they appear little more “separate” than preaching to a visible audience versus preaching over the radio. If the unity of Ezra 3 is to be maintained, Christ’s work cannot be divided into fragments, and neither can our worship *in Christ* (Poythress, 225–226).

Dr. Poythress gives expression to at least two other peculiar views with regard to the “elements” of worship. One is that he believes that because there is a continuum of speech, the distinction between the spoken and the sung word is merely arbitrary; and thus cannot be used to distinguish a separate element that is characterized by singing (Poythress, 226). Another is that because there is a continuum between “words of a translation” and “words of preaching and counseling,” it is difficult to draw a clear-cut distinction between singing and preaching.

Both the translation of Scripture and words of preaching and counseling are phases or aspects of application of the canonical word of God to people. The translation has to be relatively close to a one-to-one (formal) rendering, since it must serve for many, many varieties of application that believers will then derive from it. Preaching and counseling are relatively more dynamic and interpretative renderings of Scripture, since they

are directed more to a specific application. But a continuum lies between the two. The argument that [G. I.] Williamson (legitimately) uses to point out that a translation can still be the word of God also shows that preaching and counseling can faithfully communicate the word of God (Poythress, 227).

Dr. Poythress later summarized his position as this:

The exclusive-psalmody position tends to see “singing” as a separate “element” of worship alongside prayer and preaching. The didascalia-position sees singing as another means, alongside poetic speech and prose speech, to praying, praising, confessing, teaching, preaching, admonishing, etc. (231).

There are several problems with Dr. Poythress’ views.⁷⁷ First, on the basis of his position, it would be impossible to distinguish meaningfully in public worship between the reading and the preaching of the word. The minister properly says, “Hear now the word of God as it comes to us from [whatever the Scripture text is].” If all speech is a continuum, and if there is a continuum between translating and preaching (such that there is no meaningful distinction), then how can one distinguish between reading from God’s Word and preaching one’s own text?

Secondly, the specialness of the reading of the word of God is taken away when the professor writes that the reason why there must be formal translation of Scripture is because of its value of application. No, on the contrary—even though Scripture does get applied, it is applied in its reading. The reason why we should try to be as faithful to the original and as accurate in our translation is, in the primary place, simply because Scripture is the word of God and is to be handled as such.

Thirdly, this seminary professor, in essence, denies that there are “elements” of worship at all; rather, in his view, there are mere “aspects” of worship. Accordingly, the regulative principle, which is designed to specify not simply content, but the actual acts in worship, is denied.

“New Life” worship

Founded by the late C. John Miller, New Life Presbyterian Church in suburban Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, had a profound influence on the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as well as the Presbyterian Church in America.

Godly, gracious, and aggressively evangelistic, Dr. Miller pioneered a style of ministry which embraced radical hospitality and folksy, informal worship in a context of Reformed theology. The New Life Church, which attracted numerous students from Westminster Theological Seminary (where Dr. Miller was a professor of practical theology), was known for not only guitar accompaniment of congregational singing, but also liturgical dance. Worship was conducted in an atmosphere of “sharing” with one another; but, in fairness, also featured strong, and convicting, preaching. Nevertheless, both in style and substance, the New Life approach did not celebrate the regulative principle of worship.

New Life’s influence was felt because of the numerous seminarians who worshipped there; because of the evident success of the New Life model; and because of other churches around the OPC which emulated this approach. At one time the largest OPC congregation, the original congregation, and most of its satellite churches, transferred into the PCA in the late 1980s.

Michael Bushell

In 1977, a Westminster Theological Seminary student by the name of Michael S. Bushell wrote a treatise defending exclusive psalmody. Entitled *The Songs of Zion: A Contemporary Case for Exclusive Psalmody*, the volume was first published in 1980, and has gone through two subsequent editions (1993 and 1999).⁷⁸

In the first edition of this book, Mr. Bushell laid down the regulative principle as a necessary foundation for the discussion of the content of worship song. However, the later editions presented the arguments for the sufficiency of the psalter first, and then the regulative principle itself (Bushell, ii).

77. The views expressed by Professor Poythress are not unique to him. Indeed, many of them were derived from one of his professors at Westminster Theological Seminary, John M. Frame. Professor Frame would later publish books and articles on the subject of worship, but during the period under review, he first expressed his novel ideas regarding the regulative principle of worship in his course on the “Doctrine of the Christian Life.” As in his later writings, in these lectures the professor displays confusion over the doctrine of “circumstances of worship,” and demonstrates that he does not really hold to the regulative principle, as he rejects that the particular elements or parts of worship are prescribed in Scripture. John M. Frame, ST 323 Doctrine of the Christian Life, Lecture Outline, Part III, Spring 1979, 148.

78. Michael Bushell, *The Songs of Zion: A Contemporary Case for Exclusive Psalmody* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Crown and Covenant Publications, 1999). The work was circulating in mimeograph form in 1977. Dean R. Smith, “The Westminster Assembly and Worship,” in *Joint Study Conference on Psalmody*, 5 n15.

In writing of the historical background for the regulative principle, the author avers that “those who consider themselves to be children of the Calvinistic Reformation and yet who disparage to give due emphasis to the regulative principle of worship are Reformed in name only. The regulative principle is not merely an optional appendix to the Reformed faith. In a very real sense it is the Reformed faith” (Bushell, 115).

Michael Bushell sets forth the Confessional basis for the regulative principle, citing in particular Westminster Confession of Faith, I.6, XX.2, and XXI.1, Larger Catechism Q/A 109, and Shorter Catechism Q/A 51. He also quotes from James Bannerman’s classic nineteenth century work, *The Church of Christ*: “The Church has no authority in regulating the manner, appointing the form, or dictating the observances of worship, beside or beyond what the Scripture declares on these points, the Bible containing the only directory for determining these matters, and the Church having no discretion to add to or alter what is there fixed” (116–118).

What follows are several theological points supportive of and related to the regulative principle. The first of these, “the negative character of the principle,” means that

God may not be worshiped in any way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures. This way of stating the principle, in the form of a double negative, emphasizes in a rather striking way its negative, or prohibitive, character.... The negative character of the regulative principle is certainly that aspect that is most offensive to fallen man, because it dethrones his autonomy in worship, but it is in this aspect that the essence of the principle is to be seen most clearly. That essence lies in the fact that the regulative principle, again and again, drives man back to God’s word to find a warrant for his behavior in worship.”

The most important practical consequence of the prohibitory character of the regulative principle is that it places the burden of proof squarely on the shoulders of those who would introduce innovations or disputed practices into the worship of God. When there is a disagreement between two parties over whether a given practice (the singing of non-canonical songs, for example) should be introduced or continued in stated services of worship, the burden of proof rests with those who favor the practice. If a clear warrant cannot be produced for the practice in question, it must be prohibited. Whatsoever is not commanded is forbidden (Bushell, 118–119).

The second point is “the character of man’s relationship to God.” The Creator-creature relationship means that “the specification of the terms of man’s communion with God is and always has been the sole prerogative of the Lord God.” This is especially the case post-Fall, because of the “soteriological aspect”—that of the necessity of a Mediator for worship—“is at its very heart restrictive.” The regulative principle, therefore, is “a natural inference from the doctrine of total depravity.” It may also be seen “as the liturgical counterpart of the theological doctrine of salvation by grace. If it is true that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6), it is likewise true that every act of worship that we presume to perform without a divine warrant is an abomination to God” (Bushell, 119–120).

Thirdly, “the sufficiency of scripture” is adduced as support for the regulative principle.

The sufficiency of Scripture cannot be seen as a purely abstract quality of the Word of God, divorced from the practical concerns of the Church. If the Scriptures are sufficient, then they are sufficient for something. If the Word of God directs us how to worship God, it does so in a manner sufficient to the needs of the Church and satisfaction of God’s holiness. If, therefore, it were necessary for us to add anything by way of precept or ordinance of worship to that divine record, it would have fallen short of its purpose. The only way to deny this chain of reasoning is to deny the sufficiency of Scripture.

Freedom of conscience, as taught by the Westminster Confession of Faith XX, “is likewise founded upon the sufficiency of Scripture. Only the Scriptures may bind the conscience of man in matters of faith and worship because only the Scriptures are a sufficient rule in those areas” (Bushell, 120–121).

The fourth point is on “proof by inference.” Here, Mr. Bushell notes: “Commandment in the narrow sense of the term is not necessary to establish divine prescription. Approved example or inference from relevant scriptural data is sufficient to determine the proper manner of worship”—a fact underscored by the Westminster Confession’s reference to “good and necessary consequence.” The author writes that valid inferences are not “less authoritative than the express declarations of Scripture. They simply make explicit what is already expressed implicitly in Scripture.” Even though there is danger in the application of this principle of inference, the principle is nevertheless an indispensable point of Biblical

hermeneutics. Far from being feared (because of the tendency to misuse and abuse it), “the principle of inference is in fact that aspect of the regulative principle that moderates and controls its inevitable tendency towards legalism.... It is ... that which gives life to the regulative principle and permits its application to new situations in a culture that is radically different from that of the New Testament Church.” Appeal is made to the Westminster Larger Catechism’s list of rules regarding the interpretation and application of the Decalogue. The sixth of those eight principles is that “under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto” (Q/A 99). This answer “asserts in substance that every command in Scripture contains an implicit warrant for the use of whatever lawful means are necessary for adherence to the requirements of the command in question” (Bushell, 122ff).

According to Michael Bushell, “adherents to the regulative principle have all too often failed to give it [the principle of inference] the proper place in their thinking.” However, “the principle of inference and the legitimate use of necessary means must be as carefully guarded and asserted as the regulative principle itself. They are essential to a right understanding of the regulative principle, and their judicious application is essential to prevent the regulative principle from becoming a legalistic and Pharisaical noose, fit only to dishonor God and choke the life out of His Church” (127).

A fifth point deals with “the scope of the regulative principle.” Here the author takes exception to the position staked out by Professor Norman Shepherd in the volume on worship published by the RPCNA, viz., that of the application of the regulative principle to all of life.

It is certainly possible to conceive of two senses to the term “regulative principle,” a broad sense (the sufficiency of Scripture for life) and a narrow sense (the sufficiency of Scripture for worship), but the two senses are not at all the same conceptually. And the term itself has been reserved historically for use in the narrow sense. In our opinion, therefore, the use of the term “regulative principle” in two conceptually different senses can only add unnecessary ambiguity to an already confusing subject. Such ambiguities can only serve to obscure the distinctive character of the regulative principle of worship.

The author notes that the restrictive principle (“what-

ever is not commanded is forbidden”) applies to worship, but not to life in general. “The Lord has seen fit to grant unto men rather extensive powers of discretion in the ordering of their lives, and they may exercise those powers freely, so long as they adorn their acts with a little ‘sanctified common sense,’ so long as they do not contradict or ignore the moral dictates and general rules of behavior laid down in Scripture, and so long as they do not attempt to modify, by addition or subtraction, the doctrines of Scripture or the patterns of worship enjoined therein” (Bushell, 127–129).

The sixth point was on “the circumstances of worship.” Michael Bushell writes that the notion of circumstance was “intended only to forestall an obvious and common objection to the regulative principle, namely, that it requires the impossible task of deducing an indefinite number of minute circumstances from the Scriptures” (129).

The author sets out the standard understanding of “circumstances,” as formulated by George Gillespie, Scottish commissioner to the Westminster Assembly. First, a circumstance must be truly “only a circumstance of Divine Worship, no substantial part of it, no sacred significant and efficacious Ceremony.” Secondly, a circumstance “must be one of such things as were not determinable by Scripture, on that reason which Camero [*sic* Camero]⁷⁹ hath given us, namely, because *Individa* are *Infinita*.” Thirdly, “If the church prescribe anything lawfully, so that she prescribe no more than she hath power given her to prescribe, her ordinance must be accompanied with some good reason and warrant, given for the satisfaction of tender consciences” (Bushell, 131, 134, 141).

However, having affirmed the essential distinction between “substance” and “circumstance,” the author tends to confuse the issue, when he tries to distinguish between two different kinds of circumstance: “some of which fall within the jurisdiction of the Church, and some of which do not.” After quoting James Bannerman, Michael Bushell asserts that Bannerman’s position “implies that there are some circumstances of public worship that *do* properly and distinctively belong to it as worship” (130–131).

In our estimation, this not only misreads Bannerman, but also introduces confusion into the terminology. In the same way that the author correctly wants to guard against confusion between two different uses of the term “regulative principle,” we also want to guard

79. John Cameron (c. 1579–1625), or Camero as Gillespie here refers to him, was a Scottish theologian whose thinking shaped the views of Moses Amyrald.

against conflating the notion of circumstance. We understand why Mr. Bushell was trying to make this distinction, and was willing to concede that there was “overlap” between the categories of substance and circumstance. He wanted to be able to point out that the content of worship song cannot be regarded as a circumstance that is within the Church’s discretion. However, the proper way to make that point is by noting that the content of worship song is a substantial aspect of that particular element of worship, in the same way that the content of any of the elements is a necessary aspect of that particular element. In other words, whether it is an element with an objectively “fixed” content (such as the singing of praise and the reading of the Word), or an element with content which is “free” (such as prayer and the preaching of the Word), the nature of that content is determined by Scripture, and therefore is not a circumstantial matter.

After dealing with the Confessional basis, Mr. Bushell turns to the Biblical basis for the regulative principle. He begins this section by observing that the regulative principle should not be seen “as emanating from the structures of Old Testament liturgical practice. It is the one essential constituent of worship practice that is common to both dispensations. Its source is in the nature of the relationship that obtains between God and all men at all times, not in the passing ordinances of the Mosaic economy” (Bushell, 144).

The particular passages on which the regulative principle is said to be based are the following: the second commandment (Exodus 20:4–6); the offering of strange fire (Leviticus 10:1–3); warnings against false worship (Deuteronomy 12:28–32); Saul’s offering (I Samuel 13:8–14); the death of Uzza (I Chronicles 13:9–14; 15:11–15; II Samuel 6:6ff); the commandments of God and the traditions of men (Mark 7:7–13; cf. Matthew 15:7–9); worship in spirit and truth (John 4:20–24); and warnings against will-worship (Colossians 2:20–23; Bushell, 145–153).

The most extensive treatment, and perhaps the one that most advances the arguments for the regulative principle, is on the John 4 passage. The point of Jesus’ words, “an hour is coming and now is,” “is not that a new principle of worship has been instituted, but rather that the same abiding principle that is at the heart of worship in both dispensations is at last to be realized in its fullness, specifically in the person of Jesus Christ in whose name and through whose Spirit all true worship is to take place. The Old Testament saints worshiped in spirit and truth, just as we do, but they did so only in a proleptic sense. The glorious progress that we see in

worship practice as we pass from the Old to the New Testament is but the unfolding of this essential principle: ‘God is spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth’” (149).

Furthermore, the notion of “Spirit,” as seen both in the immediate context and in the light of the Old Testament, “generally has reference, not to spiritual as opposed to material being, but to spirit as life-giving, creative activity, as that which gives life to material beings.... The Spirit that is the source of eternal life must also be the source of true worship. If we assume that the Spirit works only in and through His Word, it is a fair inference from this principle that all true worship must be founded upon the Holy Spirit” (149).

The author takes issue with the common interpretation of this John 4 passage, which maintains that the omnipresence of God (who is Spirit) means that God “may be worshiped anywhere.” Instead, the proper point here is the exact opposite of that interpretation, viz., “because worship is dependent upon the Spirit of God who, like wind which ‘blows where it wishes’ (3:8), bestows life on whom He wishes, it is restricted to those times, places and conditions that He in His sovereign good pleasure determines. Because God is spirit (in the sense of sovereign, life-giving activity), He manifests Himself among His people in a sovereign and ultimately mysterious way.... It is not true, the omniscience of God notwithstanding, that God may be worshiped at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, subject only to the whim of the worshiper. God is spirit, the author of life and the giver of grace in worship, and His presence among His people in that capacity is no more ‘automatic’ now than it was in Old Testament times” (Bushell, 150).

Mr. Bushell also takes issue with the idea that worship in “spirit” is primarily a subjective reference to man’s sincerity in worship—especially if the purpose of that interpretation is to posit a stark contrast between worship in the Old Testament and worship in the New. “The piety of the New Testament is patterned very closely after that of the Old Testament, and there is no substantial difference between the two Testaments with regard to the question of whether the essence of true worship is internal or whether it is external.” Instead, the term “spirit” should be taken to be a reference to the Holy Spirit; this is so for three reasons. One, in other passages, “spirit” without the definite article unquestionably refers to the third Person of the Trinity. Two, there is a close connection in John’s writings between the Holy Spirit and truth. Three, the preposition “in” occurs only once with the two words (“spirit” and “truth”) in John

4:24, “thus uniting them in thought. The phrase, “spirit and truth,” would be equivalent to “Spirit of truth”; and “truth” would here be

a reference to God’s revealed will in Scripture as the epitome, the source of truth.... The point, then, that Jesus is making in this passage is that true worship is such as is consonant with the character of God as life-giving spirit. As in salvation it is the Spirit of God who takes the initiative in the giving of life, so in worship it is the Spirit of God who through His Word takes the initiative in determining how and where and under what conditions God is to be worshiped. Acceptable worship must be consonant with the character of God as it is revealed to us in the Scriptures and must therefore be in conformity with that sufficient rule at every point. Only that worship that proceeds ultimately from the Spirit through His Word is pleasing to God. (Bushell, 151–152).

Michael Bushell’s treatment of the regulative principle is one of the most significant ones in the twentieth century. Although we would respectfully suggest that he is just a bit “fuzzy” regarding the categories of substance and circumstance, the basic thrust of his presentation is quite correct, and in accord with the traditional understanding of the regulative principle. Moreover, in this book, he advances the cause, and especially does so, by fighting the contemporary attacks on the doctrine.

Robert D. Jarman

The year 1977 also saw the appearance of perhaps the earliest thesis to make use of the term regulative principle in relation to a study of Puritanism. This was Robert D. Jarman’s “The Regulative Principle of Scripture: The Origin of a Cardinal Doctrine in the Early Elizabethan Puritan Movement.”⁸⁰ The body of the paper consists of the chapters: “The Regulative Principle in the Vestiarian Controversy,” “The Regulative Principle and the Presbyterian Movement,” “The Regulative Principle in the Reign of Edward VI,” “The Regulative Principle in the Reign of Queen Mary,” and “The Regulative Principle up to the Reign of Henry VIII.” Jarman concludes his research thus:

At the very outset we stated our intention of contributing something to the debate over Puritan origins that has been continuing for several years. We drew attention to the importance of the Puritan doctrine of scriptural authority known as the regulative principle.

We suggested that its importance was such that if we could trace its origin we would be able to draw certain conclusions as to the parallel question of the origins of Puritanism as [a] whole. The following closing remarks are made in the light of the evidence that has been presented.

Firstly, we feel that sufficient evidence has been given to substantiate our claim that the regulative principle was a cardinal doctrine of the early Elizabethan Puritan movement. Establishing this point implies the existence of a parallel between the origins of the regulative principle and that of Puritanism as such.

Secondly, such evidence as we have presented suggests strongly that the origins of the regulative principle are to be sought in the continental theologians, particularly Zwingli and Calvin.⁸¹ We suggest that they both consciously taught and practised the regulative principle, so that their churches at Zurich and Geneva, together with other churches on the continent that followed their example, provided an object-lesson in what could be achieved through its application to church life and practice.

Thirdly, we suggest that there are definite links between these continental Reformed churches and the Puritan movement in England. While not calling Hooper a Puritan, his links with Zurich are clear, and his example was an inspiration to the later Puritans. John Calvin’s thought was brought to England in different ways, through the printing of books, through the provision of theological education at the Geneva Academy, but most powerfully by those Marian exiles who came to Geneva, and saw and heard for themselves. Here we refer to men like Whittingham, Gilby, Goodman, Lever, and Wood. In addition to these links, there was the influence and example of strongly reformed churches in London and other areas, in the reigns of both Edward VI and Elizabeth.

80. Robert D. Jarman, B.A., “The Regulative Principle of Scripture: The Origin of a Cardinal Doctrine in the Early Elizabethan Puritan Movement. A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts with a Major in Church History and the History of Christian Thought at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Deerfield, Illinois, June, 1977.” Serving as Chairman of the two-man committee that approved the thesis was Mark A. Noll

81. Jarman wrote earlier: “Our purpose here is to show that Calvin from his earliest days as a reformer, up to the most mature expression of his thought in the 1559 edition of the *Institutes* consistently taught and applied the regulative principle of scripture.” Jarman, 111.

Lastly, while acknowledging the continuing survival of Lollard principles, as also the work of Tyndale, Frith and others, we feel that the provenance of the regulative principle on purely English soil cannot be adequately documented or proven. This by implication must weaken the claims of earlier historians as to the influence of Tyndale, Frith and the Lollards in the rise of Puritanism. In a similar way, the claims of Trinterud and Clebsch⁸² would seem to need modification in the light of what has been presented.

We do not claim that Puritanism was simply imported into England from Zurich and Geneva. Yet we cannot agree with those who claim that Puritanism was a solely English phenomenon. There needs to be a balance in these views, and our suggestion is, that the seed of a principle that was essentially foreign in its origin fell upon ground prepared for its reception. If we wish to illustrate by further reference to our symphonic analogy,

82. L. J. Trinterud, "The Origin of Puritanism," *Church History* 20 (1951) 37–57. W. A. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants 1520–1535* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).

83. Paul E. Engle, *Discovering the Fullness of Worship* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Great Commission Publications, 1978).

84. Engle, 72. The author also wrote *Worship Planbook: A Manual for Worship Leaders* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Great Commission Publications, [1981]). Although Dr. Engle does hold unambiguously to the regulative principle as traditionally expressed, it is also clear that he would allow for the use of uninspired hymns and musical instrumentation, as well as offerings.

85. Jack Martin Maxwell, *Worship and Reformed Theology: The Liturgical Lessons of Mercersburg* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: The Pickwick Press, 1976). "Within the German Reformed Churches in the U.S.A., a liturgical revolution occurred in the mid-nineteenth century under the leadership of the famous Mercersburg theologians John W. Nevin and Philip Schaff. Jack Martin Maxwell believes that they were successful because they 'established and demonstrated the imperative practical and theoretical relationship between theology and liturgy' (... p. 5). Nathan D. Mitchell in his 1978 Notre Dame Ph.D. thesis *Church, Eucharist, and Liturgical Reform at Mercersburg, 1843–1857*, maintains that this coupling stems from the source of their theology: German liberalism (p. 5). Certainly the two were opposed to Calvin in some important particulars (e.g., pp. 456ff). On the other hand, Gregg Alan Maß sees the origin of Mercersburg's theology and liturgy of the Lord's Supper in the curious Catholic Apostolic Church or 'Irvingites' (*The Eucharistic Service of the Catholic Apostolic Church and Its Influence on Reformed Liturgical Renewals of the 19th Century*, Ph.D. thesis, Drew University, 1985). He also sees some lesser Irvingite influence in the worship of the Church of Scotland and the Dutch Reformed Church in America." Reid, "Recent Writings," in *Worship in the Presence of God*, 351. Avoiding the conventional tagging to German liberalism, Nevin receives more sympathetic treatment in D. G. Hart's *John Williamson Nevin: High Church Calvinist* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2005). While Dr. Hart consulted several doctoral dissertations he does not list either Maß or Mitchell among them.

we may say that the theme composed in its fundamental motifs by Zwingli and Calvin, that rose gradually from a background theme to become a leading motif in the Puritan symphony, was played enthusiastically by those who had an innate feeling and appreciation for the music they played (129–131).

Paul E. Engle

In 1978, Dr. Paul Engle was a minister in the Evangelical Free Church when he wrote *Discovering the Fullness of Worship*, a book issued by the publishing agency of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) and the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).⁸³ Seven years later, he joined the PCA, and subsequently served for three years as pastor of Christ Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Since 1991, he has labored "out of bounds," first at Baker Book House, and since 1999 at Zondervan.

In this book, the regulative principle is clearly enunciated. "True Worship" is pictured as "whatever is derived from Scripture only," while "False Worship" as "whatever is forbidden in Scripture or not derived from Scripture." With reference to the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, Dr. Engle wrote: "This event confirmed that God required Israel to worship in accordance with his revealed will" (Engle, 18–19).

Regarding "implementing" the regulative principle, Dr. Engle correctly noted the distinction between an "element" and a "circumstance" of worship: "The regulative use of Scripture pertains to all that is a 'part' of worship as distinguished from that which is merely a 'circumstance' of worship.... [Circumstances] would include the length of the service, the hour of the assembly on Sunday, the form of the seating, and the material from which the pulpit is made."⁸⁴

Other Works for this Period

We mention simply by title a few additional pieces for this period of varying interest and usefulness. Jack Martin Maxwell's *Worship and Reformed Theology: Liturgical Lessons of Mercersburg*, has little on the regulative principle.⁸⁵ Of greater significance are the following: G.I. Williamson, *The Shorter Catechism for Study Classes*, 2 vols. (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1970; Rpt. 2003) 21–35; Geoffrey Thomas, "The Nature of Worship," in *The Banner of Truth*, 153 (June 1976) 1–3; Leslie A. Rawlinson, "Worship in Liturgy and Form," in *Anglican and Puritan Thinking* (London: Westminster Conference, 1977) 71–88; Robert W. Oliver, "The External of Worship," in *Anglican and Puritan*

Thinking, 58–70; Hector Cameron, “Purity of Worship,” in *Hold Fast Your Confession* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1977) 75–128; Douglas F. Kelly, “No ‘Church Year’ for Presbyterians” *Presbyterian Journal* (November 14, 1979); J. G. Davies, ed., *The Westminster Dictionary of Worship* (Philadelphia, Pa.: John Knox, 1979);⁸⁶ Robert A. Morey, “Exclusive Psalmody,” *Baptist Reformation Review*, 4.4 (Winter 1975).⁸⁷

Overview: 1970–1979

In the 1970s, as the Presbyterian Church in America took its place on the church stage, it found that it now had to define not what it was against, but what it was for. Almost immediately, cracks appeared in what was supposed to be a united front against the PCUS liberals—cracks which eventually developed into deep divisions between those in favor of “traditional” Presbyterian worship (which for the most part meant mid-twentieth century Southern Presbyterian piety), and those for whom the worship service was a means to an end of evangelism and saving the lost.

Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, what had been regarded as a bastion of Reformed orthodoxy, Westminster Theological Seminary, began to enter a period of engaging in experimental theology. One of the results of the seminary’s avante-garde attitude was the breaking down of meaningful distinctions, including among various elements of worship. The enormous emphasis on a Biblical-theological approach, in contrast to systematic theology, contributed to an inability to embrace proper systematic theological rubrics (categories). The “unofficial” seminary of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church helped to shape that denomination in a direction that was accepting of “New Life” worship, which openly fostered liturgical dance and other innovations. At the same time, up and coming scholars, such as Michael Bushell, were rediscovering the Puritan roots of the Westminster Standards to which all conservative Presbyterians pledged allegiance.

V. THE 1980S: GROWING SUPPORT AND INCREASING OPPOSITION

With the advent of the personal computer and desktop publishing, the period of the 1980s saw an increase in publishing activity regarding the regulative principle of worship as these technologies put the tools to publish in the hands of small presses and individuals alike. A tract finally appeared that would serve many as a general introduction to the principle, but formal opposition was

founded as well, which would continue and evolve over the succeeding decades.

Robert G. Rayburn

In 1980, Robert G. Rayburn, well-beloved President of Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, wrote a book on worship, entitled *O Come, Let Us Worship: Corporate Worship in the Evangelical Church*.⁸⁸ As the title implies, the work was designed for a broader audience than a specifically Reformed one.

Perhaps because of the intended readership, Dr. Rayburn hardly dealt with the regulative principle of worship, mentioning it in only the most cursory fashion. Moreover, at points where he seemed to allude to it, his subsequent comments in context demonstrate that the burden of his remarks were in a different direction from the classic expression of this doctrine.

For example, in writing of “Corporate Worship in the Old Testament”—a chapter which, by the way, contains much useful material regarding how to relate Old Testament worship to our worship today in Christ—the professor stated: “Whatever other business occupied Moses on the mount and whatever other disclosures were made to him during his forty days there, that which chiefly occupied him was the receiving of directions concerning the tabernacle. Again it must be noted that it was God who took the initiative in the building of this house of worship. ‘Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them, according to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle’ (Exod. 25:8, 9). Again and again we are reminded in the Scriptures that our worship and service of God are simply a response to His grace and goodness. How careful we should be to make the proper response” (Rayburn, 56). All of that is true, of course. But Dr. Rayburn failed to drive home what is meant by making the “proper response.”

He does write: “Careful attention should be given to every indication in the Word of God of the very best ways to worship God. The Bible is our norm, and our

86. This work “covers ‘Reformed Worship’ from a very liturgical slant (pp. 331–332), and discusses ‘Psalmody’ only in terms of the early church.” Reid, “Recent Writings on Worship” in *Worship in the Presence of God*, 343.

87. “The Reformers wanted to re-establish the pure worship of the apostolic church. The regulative principle was their main instrument by which they sought to do this....” Morey, 46. Cited in Dean R. Smith, “The Westminster Assembly and Worship,” in *Joint Study Conference on Psalmody* (N.p. [1981]) 5. See more on this conference later in this article.

88. Robert G. Rayburn, *O Come, Let Us Worship: Corporate Worship in the Evangelical Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1980).

worship should always be judged by the standard of its teaching.” The context for those words is in the midst of his contention that the congregation should kneel for public prayer (184). But what is missing is any specific indication that the actual items (or parts or elements) of worship have been prescribed.

In dealing with “Elements in Worship,” President Rayburn uses the term in a non-traditional way, for he includes fellowship as an element (86–92). The difficulty with that perspective is that it confuses an aspect of worship (fellowship) with the particular practices of worship.

The author quotes from and appeals to the teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 21, in order to undergird the use of “The ‘Amen’” as a corporate expression of agreement with prayer that is offered in the worship service. He writes: “Yet strangely enough, those churches which hold firmly to this confession and require their ministers to take a solemn vow upholding it have completely neglected the offering of the ‘Amen,’ which is so clearly given full scriptural authority” (149).

Dr. Rayburn specifically mentions the “regulative principle” in one place, viz., in conjunction with his differing with his brethren who maintain a *cappella* exclusive psalmody. He writes that that Covenanter teaching “is based upon the well-known regulative principle which is stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 21 ...” (94f.).

What we are left with in Dr. Rayburns’ book, therefore, is a volume, directed to the general evangelical church, which contains much helpful material (and much unhelpful material). But, for whatever reason, he declined in this venue to underscore the nature of the regulative principle of worship, and accordingly did not in any appreciable way advance the cause of Reformed worship.

89. *The Application of the Regulative Principle to Song in Worship* (N.p., [1981?]). The papers apparently were not published per se, but distributed during or after the conference. At least one paper was typed up after it was delivered from rough notes. See George Hall, “How the OPC Has Applied the Regulative Principle,” Preface. “The original address was delivered from notes and not from a manuscript, without any expectation that others would read it. So, I am recomposing this paper from those notes, with hopes of reproducing what was presented verbally at the Conference on Psalmody on June 4, 1981.”

90. Smith’s paper is also titled “The Westminster Assembly and Worship.”

91. Copeland’s paper is also titled “Exclusive Psalmody and Progressive Revelation.”

1981 Joint Study Conference on Psalmody

On June 4–5, 1981, ministers from the OPC and RPCNA gathered in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania for a joint study conference on psalmody.⁸⁹ The conference schedule, bound up with the set of (unpublished) papers held at Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary Library, notes the background:

A Joint Study Conference Arranged by the Committee on Ecumenicity of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Committee of Interchurch Correspondence and Study of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of NA on “The Application of the Regulative Principle to Song in Worship.”

Delegates to the General Assembly of the OPC and to the Synod of the RPCNA will be conference participants. Others are welcome as observers. The sessions will be taped.

The papers presented were as follows: Dean R. Smith, “A History of the Regulative Principle of Worship”;⁹⁰ Bruce C. Stewart, “How the RPCNA has Applied the Regulative Principle”; George Hall, “How the OPC has Applied the Regulative Principle”; Duncan Lowe, “What is Worship?”; Donald Poundstone, “Response”; Edmond Clowney, “Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs in Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16”; J. Renwick Wright, “Response”; E. Clark Copeland, “Psalmody and Progressive Revelation”;⁹¹ Leonard Coppes, “Response”; Edward Robson, “The Concept of the New Testament Hymns”; and Lawrence Eyres, “Response.”

To one extent or another, all of these papers, even the more general ones, addressed the topic of exclusive psalmody either pro or con. Several have only a passing interest to this present study. Of the papers more generally on the regulative principle, Stewart’s is a very brief paper which explains the RPCNA’s practice from its constitutional documents. As to the Covenanter “distinctive” of a *cappella* exclusive psalmody, he writes: “The Reformed Presbyterian Church has not made exclusive Psalmody nor a capella singing our distinctive principles. Rather, those who have given up this practice of worship have made it to become distinctive for us. We stand today where all Presbyterian and Reformed churches historically stood” (Stewart, 2).

Hall’s paper, as he freely admits, is nothing more than a compendium of the material presented in the OPC reports on Worship Song.

Dean R. Smith opened the conference with a paper

focused on disproving the contention that while “the Westminster Assembly did adopt a principle for worship that ‘whatever is not commanded by Scripture is forbidden,’ they never intended it to apply to exclusive or a cappella singing.” This view contradicts that of Robert A. Morey, who, as noted earlier, had written in a 1975 *Baptist Reformation Review* article that

[t]he Reformers wanted to re-establish the pure worship of the apostolic church. The regulative principle was their main instrument by which they sought to do this.... The Reformers and the Puritans who established this principle and fought for it, never understood it to mean the exclusion of uninspired hymns from church worship.

Those who agree with Morey have tended to focus on publications prior to the Assembly to argue that the Westminster Divines meant something more than the 150 Psalms of David when they used the term “psalms” in WCF 21.5 and in the Directory for Public Worship. (Or at the least they argue that the Assembly did not mean to limit song to the Psalter.) Smith’s presentation, while not extensive, argues from the general practice of a *cappella* psalmody over the century prior to the Westminster Assembly and the Divines’ production of a new Psalter containing nothing but the 150 Psalms, to bolster the conclusion that the Assembly did indeed mean to authorize nothing but the Psalms of David for public worship in the three kingdoms. We may have opportunity to examine how well Smith’s argument holds up today in this and other aspects when Ned Needham’s more extensive 2003 article is reviewed in a subsequent section of this survey.⁹²

John Deluvik, who attended the conference and gathered a set of the papers to present to the RPTS Library, is of the opinion that Robson’s paper is a significant piece that merits greater attention than the obscurity into which the collection has generally fallen.⁹³ We present here, then, Robson’s introduction and conclusion:

The Worship Committee’s assignment to me was to write on the subject of “hymnic elements” in the New Testament. This subject has received a great deal of discussion during the past 55 years, and positions pro “hymnic” and against “hymnic” abound. There are a number of books and periodicals which ably summarize the research on “hymnic elements.” This paper presents evidence which, in my judgment, leans against all the so called “hymnic elements.” I find that the arguments for “hymnic elements” are based upon a

defective methodology. For example, if 10% of the words of Phil. [sic] 2:5–11 must be removed to make the passage a “perfectly balanced hymn,” this is evidence that the passage is not a “hymn” as it stands.

I find that the arguments for “hymnic elements” do not take into account modern linguistic studies on the structure of language in general, and the structure of the relative pronoun in particular. This study touches on both language theory and the relative pronoun. The relative pronoun is supposed to be very important for locating “hymnic elements.”

I find that the arguments for “hymnic elements” use elusive criteria for locating the N.T. “hymns.” For example, the criterion of the hapax legomenon is not a criterion for anything except hapax legomenon. The following study uses as one of its criteria for evaluating “hymnic elements” the kai-configurations of both books and sections. Kai-configurations are strings of words joined by ‘and,’ which in Greek is ‘kai.’ The uses of ‘kai’ in a “hymn” will help to indicate whether the “hymnic element” is original to the book or not. Based on an analysis of the 8947 ‘kai’s of the Greek New Testament, I am convinced that there are no “hymnic elements” at all. (I do not classify quotations from the Old Testament as “hymnic”).

In summary, I am prepared to demonstrate that those passages which have been designated as pre-Pauline and pre-Christian “hymnic elements” are not “hymns” at all. In particular, I am prepared to demonstrate that Philippians 2:5–11 is not a “hymn” adapted by Paul, but is an original part of Philippians from the Apostle himself *de novo* (Robson, “Hymnic Elements in the Greek New Testament,” 1–2)

After presenting his case, Dr. Robson concluded:

92. Nick Needham, “Westminster and Worship: Psalms, Hymns? And Musical Instruments,” in *The Westminster Confession into the 21st Century*, volume 2, ed. J. Ligon Duncan (2003; Reprint, Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2004). Lord willing, this evaluation will be presented in part two of this article, which is slated to appear in the 2007 issue of *The Confessional Presbyterian*.

93. “If you want a ground breaking paper, the one by Ed Robson is it. His doctoral dissertation proved that the Greek word ‘kai’ is always equal to an equal sign when used in the NT. This has great implications for passages like the Great Commission which used the word kai to link Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. From what I can tell, his work has been ignored.” Correspondence, John Deluvik to Chris Coldwell, March 1, 2006.

With the aid of the computer, and a great number of grammars of the Greek New Testament, all of the “hymnic elements” of the N.T. have been examined. On the basis of the usage of “kai” in these hymnic passages, it cannot be concluded that these “hymnic elements” are in any sense intrusions into the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, or Apocalypse. Neither can it be concluded that there are any features which link these so called “hymnic elements” by any generic features or structures. These observations are further confirmed by statistical analyses and graphs of the various passages.

Even more important is the evidence drawn from the uses of the relative pronoun plus ‘kai’ and the conjunction [sic] ‘dio’ plus ‘kai.’ The language complexity of these forms is more of an argument for the original nature of these forms than as an argument for their intrusion (Robson, 29).

Lawrence Eyers, who was drafted by John Galbraith just two weeks prior to the conference to present the rebuttal in favor of the presence of New Testament hymns, was a bit overwhelmed by Robson’s extensive research and made no attempt at a refutation.

Now I think I know where Dr. Robson is coming from and where he is going. Though he didn’t state it, I think it was so implicit that he didn’t need to state it. His thesis is that, if indeed the so-called hymnic elements or ‘purple patches’ in the New Testament Scripture are compatible with those Scriptures, then they did not come from a lost or unrecorded corpus of New Testament period hymnody, which corpus was not blessed with being brought under Scriptural inspiration. If that be so, then the assumption is that there was and is no corpus of early church hymnody, distinct from the Old Testament Psalter, used in the worship of the New Testament, Apostolic Church. Now certainly I am in no position to challenge that thesis. Rather I lean heavily on what some of the speakers from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church said yesterday and today in support of the point of view from which I come. Therefore, I’m not embarrassed by Dr. Robson’s conclusions, even if they are valid” (Eyers, 2).

Robert A. Morey

In 1984, Robert A. Morey penned *Worship Is All of Life*. This book, just over a hundred pages in length, seeks to

94. Robert A. Morey, *Worship Is All of Life* (Camp Hill, Pa.: Christian Publications, 1984) 9–10.

clarify the confusion between an approach to worship in which there is “total freedom” (leading to “confusion,” “emotionalism and carnal exhibitionism,” and “long on experience and short on teaching”), and an approach of “total form” (characterized by “absolute order,” “intellectualism and passivity,” and “long on teaching and short on experience”).⁹⁴

Mr. Morey states professed support for the regulative principle of worship: “For the essentials of worship, only what God has commanded in Scripture is to be allowed. Nothing is to be viewed as essential to divine worship if it is not commanded in Scripture. The non-essential aspects of worship are left up to the freedom of the conscience, and the edification of the church” (Morey, 76ff.).

However, the author believes that this Calvinistic position, which he refers to as one of “form and freedom,” is in opposition to what he calls the “extreme” position of seventeenth century English Puritanism. “Some of the Puritans, in fighting the superstition and idolatry of their age, went to the extreme of reducing the worship of God to the absolute minimum of what was commanded by Scripture. Their fear of the abuse of freedom led them to embrace only the form of the essentials. They reduced the worship of God to the bare bones of a long sermon and a few hymns” (82–83).

This Reformed Baptist writer also claims that the Puritan position “is retrogressive in seeking to arrange Christian worship according to Old Testament Law”; and adds: “It is impossible consistently to carry out this position. It ultimately leads to legalism, absurdity and dead orthodoxy.” He rhetorically asks:

To those who tell us today that we cannot have a choir of special music because we do not have a verse in the New Testament where such things are commanded we must ask, ‘Where is there a verse for the pews you sit on? Where is the New Testament passage for having a hymnal? Where is the text for an organ or piano?’

He characterizes the Calvinistic “form and freedom” view as having this basis: “For essentials look to biblical form; for non-essentials seek the edification of the church”; and the “total form” view with the following basis: “Everything in worship must have a Scripture verse to validate it” (86–88).

Besides the fact that Puritan worship consisted of more than a long sermon and the singing of praise (actually, the singing of Psalms, not hymns), Mr. Morey seems to be confused on other points as well. The Puritan position always allowed that “good and necessary

consequence” would also be valid for the demonstration of a worship practice. But more to the point, it is difficult to understand how he can consistently maintain his position that Calvin and the Puritans differed with respect to the nature of elements of worship and the nature of circumstances. It is fair to say that the Puritans further refined and developed the theology of worship; but it is not fair to say that they and the great Genevan reformer substantially differed regarding the prescription of worship.

Moreover, Mr. Morey seems to be confused about what things constitute circumstances of worship. He writes: “What are the non-essentials of worship? A non-essential element is something or some act whose presence or absence does not validate or invalidate worship. It is a matter of convenience, circumstance, culture and aesthetic taste. They refer to where, when and how we worship. Whether you worship in a barn or a cathedral is unimportant. A choir, special music, pews, a church bell or special clothing are non-essentials” (81–82). But, he is, by means of this list, trying to mix and match things that are not of the same genus. The fact that he does not understand the nature of a circumstance of worship, means that he does not understand what an element of worship is, and therefore that he has not grasped the regulative principle of worship.⁹⁵

Kevin Reed and
Presbyterian Heritage Publications

Kevin Reed founded Presbyterian Heritage Publications in 1983, which sought to publish both historic and contemporary defenses of Presbyterian orthodoxy. Mr. Reed was an early defender of the regulative principle against, and critic of, the worship views of James B. Jordan. In 1984, he penned a stinging critique of Mr. Jordan and his Theonomic Reconstructionist compatriots in the long-since defunct Association of Reformation Churches, whose main church was Westminster Presbyterian of Tyler, Texas. Reflecting the affinity of the Tyler folk towards high-church Anglicanism, Mr. Reed’s booklet carries the outrageously funny title of *The Canterbury Tales*.⁹⁶

Mr. Reed writes that *The Geneva Papers*,⁹⁷ which were produced at Tyler under the auspices of Geneva Divinity School, reveal

many alarming trends within the Tyler mentality of worship. Specifically, the activities of the church contain many corruptions of worship, under the guise of liturgical reconstruction. This corruption is evident by

(1.) their repudiation of the Reformed regulative principle of worship; (2.) their reintroduction of superstitious and unwarranted practices into the church; (3.) their rejection of confessional Presbyterianism (*Canterbury Tales*, 1).

Mr. Reed claims:

The primary indication of the Tyler corruption of worship is seen in their repudiation of the Reformed regulative principle of worship. This repudiation is manifest in four ways: by false portrayals of the regulative principle; by a failure to make proper distinctions within the regulative principle; by a faulty pairing of Reformed and Anabaptist notions; and by a failure to deal exegetically with the scriptural position of the reformers (and the Reformed confessions) on the topic of worship (*Canterbury Tales*, 2).⁹⁸

95. Although it may seem like a fine point, notice even how he links the two concepts (“non-essential element”). However, if something truly is “elemental,” then it is not non-essential! Theologically speaking, circumstances and elements are mutually exclusive categories—yet Mr. Morley uses terminology that would conflate the two.

96. Kevin Reed, *The Canterbury Tales: An Extended Review and Commentary Based upon “The Geneva Papers”* (Kevin Reed, 1984; Dallas, Tex.: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1989). This work was later cited by Richard Bacon in a review of Jordan’s *Liturgical Nestorianism*, where Bacon remarked: “The title was intended as a play on words with the archbishopric of the Anglican church and the title of Chaucer’s famous epic.” This elicited from Mr. Jordan the comment that Bacon’s church was perhaps a synagogue of Satan for harboring those who had been excommunicated from the Westminster Presbyterian church of the ARC. This led to a subsequent issue of *The Blue Banner* where proof that the ARC itself had negated these judgments was presented. See “Beyond Canterbury, Reviews of James B. Jordan’s Views on Worship,” *The Blue Banner*, ed. Christopher Coldwell, 4.3–4 (March–April, 1995); “Tyranny in Tyler,” *The Blue Banner*, 4.7–8 (July–August, 1995). Although not noted by the magazine, the late Greg Bahnsen helped to address the question of ecclesiastical standing, by compiling the data presented and in drafting the “Note from the Editor.”

97. Volume one and some of volume two of these papers are currently available from Biblical Horizons. Among Jordan’s effusions, volume one contains his “Liturgical Notes,” as well as the 23 part series “Christianity & the Calendar.” *The Geneva Papers*, Volume 1:1–37 (1982–1985). An updated version of the calendar series is available with some “retractions.”

98. Speaking of exegetical abilities, Mr. Reed notes in a review of Jordan’s *The Law of the Covenant*: “Some places are marked by sound exegesis, while other sections abound in fanciful speculations.... The section on slavery also illustrates some of Jordan’s bizarre techniques of interpretation. Frequently, he launches into wild allegorical speculations. In many cases, he has first provided us with a sound exposition of the primary focus of the text. Yet, he then supplements the initial exposition with a highly symbolic (and highly questionable) extrapolation based upon the same text. Although these extrapolations do not always present objectionable opinions, the METHOD is

Regarding various historical matters, Mr. Reed says, “Jordan’s repetitious caricature of the Reformed position is comprised of broad undocumented generalizations; he often runs roughshod over the historical *facts* with vague unfounded historical generalizations.” This is true not only with regard to the purportedly close affiliation of Reformed and Anabaptist theology, but also with regard to other issues, such as the introduction of special religious holy days in the early church.

Kevin Reed also noted that James Jordan’s pedagogic use of ceremonies is precisely what the Reformers believed had been abrogated through the coming of Christ. Not only that, but we are especially forbidden from enacting man-made ceremonies in worship.

Turning his attention to some of the major Reformation-era creeds, Mr. Reed writes:

The progression of thought in the French Confession is quite illuminating. It illustrates that the regulative principle of worship is merely an outgrowth of the *sola scriptura* rule of Protestant theology. Inevitably, opponents of the regulative principle end up espousing a concurrent authority of the church to establish modes of worship.

The Scottish [First] Book of Discipline (1560) notes that the preaching of the gospel includes “not only the scriptures of the New Testament, but also of the Old: to wit, the law, prophets, and histories.” Does this sound like men suffering from the hangups of a baptistic hermeneutic, which Mr. Jordan claims is dispensationally applied “as if only the New Testament were allowed to teach us about worship” (*Geneva Papers*, #25)? (18).

After quoting from Calvin, Reed notes that Jordan

what concerns us here....” Reed cites an example where in discussing “the Circumcision of the Ear,” Jordan writes: “Once Abraham is circumcised, he is able to circumcise Sarah, so to speak, for the woman also has a strip of flesh that hinders procreation. Women are not physically ‘circumcised’ in the Bible, for this would destroy the symbolism of the tokens of virginity (Dt. 22:13–21). The circumcision of the male child serves as a substitute for the woman, by pointing to the circumcision of the promised seed, Jesus Christ, the ‘bridegroom’ whose blood provides the tokens of virginity that an unfaithful wife (Israel, the Church) needs as legal evidence of her ethical purity (pp. 80–81).” Reid concludes: “We suggest that Mr. Jordan ‘cut off’ his typewriter, so to speak, before composing any more exegesis of this kind—especially since we have been warned that his books might ‘re-structure the way that Bible-believing scholars do theology.’ (We were trying to imagine a commentary on the book of Revelation written in this manner, and we suddenly remembered there were already at least a dozen of them.)” Kevin Reed, “Book Review. Of Exegesis and Eccentricity,” *The Counsel of Chalcedon* (1984) 21, 22, 23.

has clouded the issue. Perhaps we are beginning to see that the issue really concerns some fundamental differences of opinion between the Tyler assembly and a vast array of witnesses for the Reformed faith. Mr. Jordan complained as though the advocates of the regulative principle were unconcerned with “finding the large, overarching principles of worship in scripture, and noting particulars in that context” (*Geneva Papers*, #25). Yet, the overarching presupposition is precisely the point at issue. The regulative principle is the grand presupposition in the consideration of the means of worship. *Once this principle is recognized, the evaluation of particulars is placed in that context.* “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it” (Deut. 12:32). (20–21).

In excoriating the Tyler movement toward “superstitious” practices, the booklet states:

Consequently, we now find the Tyler community sporting an entire wardrobe bearing the designer labels of Rome and Canterbury. It is fashionable to support ministerial vestments, the litany, the ecclesiastical year (with saints’ days), the sign of the cross, and public healing services. Who knows? Next Spring we may hear talk of the re-churching of women after childbirth, the reading of apocryphal books from the pulpit, the burning of incense during worship services, and kneeling at communion. Why, the possibilities are endless for those with a fertile imagination! Shall we follow them on this pilgrimage to Canterbury or Rome? (22).

In evaluating the commitment (or perhaps we should say non-commitment) of the Tyler church to the Presbyterian faith, Mr. Reed observes:

In a recent issue of *The Geneva Papers* (#28), Mr. Jordan openly states his view that the Westminster Confession is a corpse, a dead symbol with a main value for study, in order to help the church write a new confession. Is this also the position of the Tyler assembly, which published this material? If so, we have a rather open denial of confessional Presbyterianism.

In retrospect, we marvel at Mr. Jordan’s frequent jabs and swipes at Presbyterianism, the position of the reformers, the Puritans (who, incidentally, wrote the Westminster Confession), and the confessional standards themselves. His writings often show more charity toward Papists, than toward the Reformed faith. He writes as if he hates Presbyterianism.

We believe it is time for the Tylerites to be more forthright in the representation of their church's position. Let them change their name to Canterbury Independent Anglican church. Or, let them petition to join the Episcopal denomination. But honesty requires them to announce to the world that they are not Presbyterians, for they have clearly rejected the Presbyterian doctrine of worship.

And, while they are at it, it might be in order to rename the newsletter to say, something like "Vatican Viewpoints." Otherwise, with a name like *Geneva*, people may wrongly assume they share Calvin's view of worship. If Calvin were present with us here today, he certainly wouldn't associate with the Tyler assembly, although he might pity their misguided zeal. Then again, maybe he would conduct a liturgy of malediction against those who corrupt the worship of God (25).

A later "afterword" to the original version notes:

Over the past few years, there have been significant changes among some of the principal figures mentioned in the article. The Westminster Presbyterian Church in Tyler has subsequently changed its name and affiliated with an Episcopal communion. Mr. Jordan is no longer associated with the congregation, but has continued to spread aberrant opinions among Presbyterian churches. Further, at least two families from the Tyler congregation have withdrawn and sought refuge within the pale of the church of Rome (backpage [28]).

More positively, Kevin Reed set forth a standard explanation of the regulative principle in a 1995 booklet, *Biblical Worship*.⁹⁹ The first chapter declares: "We believe that the scriptures contain a general prohibition against all elements in worship besides those which God himself has instituted. In other words, the burden of proof falls upon those who wish to introduce a practice into worship, to prove that God has required it in his word. This is the force of the scriptural law of worship; it guards against man-made innovations in worship."

The second chapter deals with worship in the Old Testament. Besides making the usual appeal to the Second Commandment, there is also a survey of Old Testament history in order to illustrate this principle: "The Lord detests corrupt worship and he punishes this sin."

The third chapter, on worship in the New Testament, appeals to Matthew 15 to discern Jesus' attitude regarding worship:

The Pharisees paid lip service to God. We know they made long prayers, fasted twice a week, and arranged financial bequests to the temple. As formalists, they were exceedingly concerned about outward conformity to man-made regulations. At first, we might not link their practices to "public worship," since many of these activities were conducted outside the temple and synagogue services. Yet, their traditional observances are accounted by Christ a measure of their worship. And their worship is declared to be *vain*. It is vain because it ignores scriptural directives; it is vain because it exalts human innovations (called traditions), thereby violating the spirit of the second commandment; and it is vain because it leads to perdition (Matt. 15:13–14).

Jesus' dealings with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 make clear that worship must be "in spirit and in truth." The term "spirit," according to Mr. Reed, implies sincerity; the term "truth" implies that

our worship must be in conformity to God's written revelation. There is, indeed, an outward measure for our worship. In the present day, it is common to hear comments that the "heart" is all that matters: a mistaken concept that sincerity of motive and fervent emotion are the substance of genuine worship. But Christ does not confine the essence of worship to worship in spirit; he adds the measure of truth. Acceptable worship is more than the gushy effervescence of a fervent heart. Without truth, such fervor is an offense before God; it is zeal, "but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2).

Kevin Reed also writes in this regard that the grouping of "fellowship" with acts of worship in the classic text on the gathering of the early church, points to the corporate nature of public worship. "It is in the context of the congregation assembled corporately that we find many expressions of public worship and service. Therefore we see why it was mentioned as an important factor that the early Christians continued steadfastly in apostolic fellowship (Acts 2:42). Corporate worship is the highest public expression of adoration rendered."

Other booklets on Biblical worship published by Mr. Reed at this time included the following: John Knox, *True & False Worship: A Vindication of the Doctrine that the Sacrifice of the Mass is Idolatry* (1988);¹⁰⁰ Carl

99. Kevin Reed, *Biblical Worship* (Dallas, Tex.: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1995).

100. The introductory essay on John Knox in slightly expanded form was reprinted as Kevin Reed, "John Knox and the Reformation of Worship in the Scottish Reformation," *Worship in the Presence of God*,

W. Bogue, *The Scriptural Law of Worship* (1988);¹⁰¹ and *Christmas: An historical survey regarding its origins and opposition to it. A Presbyterian Heritage Monograph* (1983).¹⁰²

The Westminster Conference for 1985

In 1985 Christopher L. Bennett presented one of the papers at the Westminster Conference for that year on the Puritan Regulative Principle.¹⁰³ He asks: “How can we summarize the Regulative Principle? It concerns the public worship of God in the Church, and says that all the significant events in worship must have positive warrant in Scripture, though incidentals are to be regulated by Christian common sense in the light of more general Scripture principles. It is often contrasted with the ‘Normative Principle,’ which has been associated,

ed. Frank J. Smith and David C. Lachman (Greenville, S.C.: GPTS Press, 1992). The Knox piece itself was reprinted in *Selected Writings of John Knox: Public Epistles, Treatises, and Expositions to the Year 1559* (Dallas, Tex: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1995).

101. The Bogue tract is discussed in the next section below.

102. This was the earliest form of Mr. Reed’s Christmas tract which was later paired with Michael Schneider’s *Is Christmas Christian* and published as: *Christmas: A Biblical Critique* (1993). Another PHP Christmas booklet, which is not the most irenic of pieces, was: David W. Cason, *Christmas-Keeping and the Reformed Faith: A Response to Professor David J. Engelsma* (1995).

103. Christopher J. L. Bennett, B.A., “Worship among the Puritans—the Regulative Principle,” in *Spiritual Worship: Westminster Conference 1985* (Printed in England: Published by The Westminster Conference, 1985) 17–31. The Westminster Conference again took up the topic of worship in 1989: *The Reformation of Worship* (Surrey, England: Westminster Conference, [1990]). Of these papers Alan Clifford’s “The Westminster Directory of Public Worship” is notable for discussing the regulative principle. The author also saw fit to take the position of exclusive psalmody to task, singling out Bushell, whose book he described as a “reactionary *tour de force* in favour of exclusive psalmody” which “nonetheless deserves the attention of chorus and hymn singers alike!” The author opined as well on Calvin’s position in a lengthy footnote where he also questioned the alleged exclusive psalmody in public worship of the early Scottish church: “The available evidence suggests that Calvin was really in sympathy with psalms and scripture-based paraphrases. Unlike earlier editions, the 1611 edition of the Scottish Psalter reflected Calvin’s position more closely. To say these hymns were acceptable for private rather than public worship is to rest a questionable argument on the mere size of the congregation! See Hector Cameron’s doubtful discussion of these points in ‘Purity of Worship’ in *Hold Fast Your Confession*, ed. Donald Macleod, Knox Press, Edinburgh, 1978, pp. 102–3. To say these ‘hymns’ were published in a public service book for only private use—when no such rule is indicated—is not very convincing.” As for this last statement, for further consideration see David Hay Fleming, “The Hymnology of the Reformation,” *Original Secession Magazine* (January–June and September 1884); reprinted in *An Anthology of Presbyterian & Reformed Literature*, 4 (Dallas, Tex.: Naphtali Press, 1991) 223–246.

especially since Richard Hooker’s *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, with the Anglican Church, which says that whatever is not forbidden in Scripture is allowed in worship” (“Worship Among the Puritans,” 17). Bennett then cites Westminster Confession 21.1 and 1.6 to underline this definition, and proceeds briefly to state why it is relevant to discuss worship: “If the Puritans are right about the Regulative Principle itself, and at least substantially right about the applications of it, many of the current trends in worship must be resisted tooth and nail” (18). Bennett then gives a very short “Historical Perspective” on the principle:

In some ways Puritan positions developed and became tighter: Dr Ames in his preface to William Bradshaw’s *English Puritanism* (1605) says that the Puritans had become somewhat more rigid than the Reformers and even the earlier Puritans (he mentions Cartwright and Perkins amongst others), because ‘miserable experience hath taught us many things which our fathers were ignorant of’ (preface to *English Puritanism in Puritanism and Separatism*, 1972, Farnborough, Hants.). The overall lines of the Regulative Principle, however, remained the same throughout the era. Indeed, the seeds of it can be found in Zwingli’s (1481–1531) removal of choral singing, organs, and clerical robes, and in William Tyndale (executed in 1536) who wanted scripture only to control both the Church’s government and worship. Men such as A Lasco, John Hooper and John Knox were in effect enunciating the Regulative Principle before the Puritan era proper. In a public disputation with the sub-prior of St. Andrews in 1547, Knox not only quotes Deut. 12:32, a famous Puritan text on this, saying ‘such ceremonies as God has ordained we allow, and with reverence we use them. But the question is of those God has not ordained ...’, but he also distinguishes the realm of God’s worship from ordinary daily affairs in this world, as far as *detailed* reliance on Scripture commands is concerned (quoted in note on pp. 362–3 of *The Church of Christ* by J. Bannerman, 1869); this is a fundamental Puritan distinction. Furthermore, we have the explicit testimony of the Presbyterians at the Savoy Conference in 1661, Baxter and Manton among them, that the cause of the Non-conformists had been stated in the troubles at Frankfurt, ‘and having continued still the same, you have no reason to suspect them of any considerable change’ (p. 50 in *The History of Non-Conformity*, 2nd ed., 1708). Horton Davies (in *Worship and Theology in England from Andrewes to Baxter and Fox, 1603–1690*, 1975, p.369) says that the *Exceptions of the Presbyterian brethren ... of 1661* is a good summary of Puritan

objections to the liturgy since the days of Cartwright, Travers, Field, and including the Hampton Court Conference and the preface to the Westminster *Directory for the Public Worship of God*. (“Worship Amongst the Puritans,” 18–19).

Two areas where there was some variation are whether any liturgical elements (set or precomposed prayers) are unlawful or just generally unsuitable, and whether Psalms can be sung in metre and in unison. But despite these variations as to the precise implications of the Principle, it was integral to Puritanism as a whole. If we have any remaining doubts about this, let Samuel Parker (in reply to whom Owen wrote *Truth and Innocence Vindicated*, 1669) put them to rest. He says in his attack on the Puritans that the foundation of all Puritanism is, “That nothing ought to be established in the worship of God but what is authorised in some precept or example in the word of God, which is the complete and adequate rule of worship” (quoted by Owen in his *Works*, Goold Ed., vol. 13, p. 462; Owen on the following page owns this principle as stated by Parker, with a little refinement) (19).

In the balance of the paper, Bennett states and defends the regulative principle from Puritan writings,¹⁰⁴ and covers at greatest length, some “Specific Issues.” Bennett lists these issues as “exclusive psalmody, structure and liturgy in prayer, open worship, the *charismata*, and other elements in the current worship scene” (“Worship Among the Puritans,” 22–23). Regarding the last, he names these as “drama, dance,¹⁰⁵ the use of music apart from the Psalms-hymns issue, and the use of visual impact generally (banners, processions, stunning architecture, etc....” He says: “Quite simply the Puritans did not go in for any of these” (28).

Regarding exclusive psalmody, the author, after noting some Puritan inconsistencies on the subject, concludes: “It would seem to me that if you go one inch beyond the Psalter for congregational praise, you can sing any hymn that is truly in accordance with Scripture’s doctrine and description of our relationship to God, because the content of such hymns can be defined as being derived from Scripture by just and necessary consequence, a Puritan doctrine.” On musical instruments in worship the author opines that if John Cotton allowed them in private worship to aid the singing, “[c]ould not this concession be applied to current English church life thus: that if for various reasons accompaniment in public worship is now necessary, it is allowable, provided the organ, piano, guitar, or

whatever is truly subservient to the furtherance of the singing and does not become a thing in itself” (“Worship among the Puritans,” 24).

On the second issue, that of “structured or even precomposed (or liturgical) prayers”, Bennett is not comfortable with some of the stricter Puritans’ absolute rejection of it. Noting that “as with the singing issue, there was variation within Puritanism,” he posits the questionable theory voiced by Horton Davies at least, that “if it had not been for the Independents at the Westminster Assembly, something more liturgical than a mere *Directory* would have been produced, something more akin to Knox’s *General Service Book* or the *Scottish Book of Common Order*” (25).

On the third and fourth issues Bennett largely agrees with the Puritan rejection of *charismatic* practices, and of allowing just anyone to lead in worship. On the latter he writes: “The clamour for participation, thus defined, in services of public worship seems akin to someone at a football match complaining that they cannot participate because they are not allowed onto the pitch! Surely they can be just as *involved*, in a sense, as the players (of course, the analogy breaks down at a certain point, as do most good analogies!). Could it not be that the desire for open worship is fuelled by a desire to ‘have a say’ oneself, in other words it is part of the world’s love for self-expression and its dislike for authority and submitting to it?” (27).

Bennett concludes his 1985 paper with remarks on Liberty of Conscience, a plea against radicalism, and honesty.

1. The Presbyterians at Savoy in 1661 made use of Romans 14 in their *Petition for Peace*: why drive people from Church and from preaching, or at least wound their consciences, by imposing things on them that you (Anglican Commissioners) admit not to be essential to worship, which others conscientiously object to? ‘We may conclude then, that it is good, even your selves to avoid such things unnecessary, by which your Brother stumbleth, is offended or made weak’ (*The History of NonConformity*, p. 48–49). In the current situation, even if someone is very happy, as far as their own conscience before God is concerned, to introduce or go along with some recent innovations in Protestant worship, should

104. This he does mostly from the works of John Owen, William Bradshaw, William Cunningham, and James Bannerman (“Worship Among the Puritans,” 19–22).

105. Bennett notes appropriately on dancing that the “question about dancing among the Puritans was not, ‘has it a place in worship?’ but, ‘has it a place at all?’ at least mixed dancing” (28).

not such people restrain themselves if these things are not essential but likely to cause trouble to the consciences of other Christians and perhaps even to divide the Church?

2. Secondly, how rigorist should we be if we are convinced that the Regulative Principle is right and is pretty radical and far-reaching in its implications?... If we decide, having studied the Regulative Principle, that certain elements in our Church life must go, or certain others must be introduced, whether it be something to do with 'Christmas services,' or Psalm singing, or whatever, are we really obliged to implement it fully all at once? Is that necessarily God's will? I hope not, and I think not, and I believe that some at least of the Puritans would be with me. William Cunningham's words are surely apposite here: where innovations contrary to the Regulative Principle have crept in, 'we insist upon their being turned out, although, upon this latter point, Calvin, with his usual magnanimity, was always willing to have a reasonable regard to times and circumstances, and to the weaknesses and infirmities of the parties concerned.' (*The Reformation of the Church*, p.42).

3. My final remark is a challenge to honesty. Just as everyone, it seems, wants to be found on the same side as Calvin, be they Barthians, Amyraldians, or those traditionally called Calvinists, so to a degree there are many who want to be considered as heirs of the Puritans and who therefore would want to be thought of as upholders of the Regulative Principle; and fair enough too, for Church issues are at the heart of what is distinctively Puritan, and the Regulative Principle is a great issue as far as Puritan worship is concerned. But *if* we have to widen some of their categories almost beyond recognition, or enter into numerous tortured hypotheses about what they would have done if they had stood where we stand, knowing what we know (for example, about 'hot' and 'cool' communication) — if we have to do all this to maintain our profession of the Principle, it will be better to be honest and to admit that the Anglicans have been right all along!

Reformed Worship

In 1986, a journal called *Reformed Worship* began publication, under the auspices of the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA). It is perhaps the

most misnamed magazine in church history. There is absolutely nothing distinctively Reformed about its content. Instead, its appearance helps to illustrate the theological downgrade within the CRCNA.

As a matter of fact, a search of its web site yielded no matches for the term "regulative principle." However, under the category of "classic" articles, one can find information on the use of drama, handbells, and movie clips in worship; songs for various seasons (Lent, Ascension, Pentecost, etc.); and avant-garde themes of worship and social justice—very fitting, given the CRCNA's increasing ecumenical ties with liberal Protestantism, as well as with Roman Catholicism.¹⁰⁶

Naphtali Press

In late 1986 Chris Coldwell formed the idea to found Naphtali Press to publish scarce and out-of-print classics of the Presbyterian and Reformed faith. In 1988 *An Anthology of Presbyterian & Reformed Literature* appeared under his editorship, which ran to five volumes. In addition to works covering a variety of subjects, there appeared in a 1989 issue of the *Anthology* an important extract relative to the regulative principle of worship. This was George Gillespie's "To All the Reformed Churches" which prefaced the young Scot's *Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies*, one of the most important pieces in the history of literature dealing with Presbyterian worship principles.

Besides all this, there is nothing which any way pertains to the worship of God left to the determination of human laws, beside the mere circumstances, which neither have any holiness in them, forasmuch as they have no other use and praise in sacred than they have in civil things, nor yet were particularly determinable in Scripture, because they are infinite; but sacred, significant ceremonies, such as cross, kneeling, surplice, holidays, bishopping, etc., which have no use and praise except in religion only, and which, also, were most easily determinable (yet not determined) within those bounds which the wisdom of God did set to his written Word, are such things as God never left to the determination of any human law. Neither have men any power to burden us with those or such like ordinances; For (says not our Lord himself to the churches), *I will put upon you none other burden: but that which ye have already hold fast till I come* (Rev. 2:24, 25). Wherefore, *pro hac*, etc., for this liberty we ought stoutly to fight against false teachers [*sic*].¹⁰⁷

106. See http://www.reformedworship.org/cprw_classics.htm.

107. George Gillespie, "To All in the Reformed Churches," *An Anthology of Presbyterian & Reformed Literature*, ed. Christopher

Barry Gritters

On October 29, 1987, Barry Gritters, pastor of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church, delivered a Reformation Day Speech sponsored by the Lecture Committee of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. It was so well received that it was turned into a pamphlet, entitled *Public Worship and the Reformed Faith*. In this address Pastor Gritters gave a standard presentation of the regulative principle: “Reformed believers teach that our worship is to be just what God commands it to be – nothing more, nothing less. This is of utmost importance for us to understand in connection with Biblical, Reformed worship. God does not leave it up to us to determine the manner of our worship of God. God’s Word regulates us in how we must worship Him.” He notes this is different from the Lutheran principle, “that whatever was not *explicitly forbidden* in the Bible was *permissible* in church.” “The Calvinists, on the other hand, held to what is called ‘*The Regulative Principle of Worship*.’ That regulative principle says, ‘We worship God only as He has *commanded* us in His Word.’”¹⁰⁸

Carl W. Bogue

In 1988, Dr. Carl Bogue, long-time pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church (PCA), Akron, Ohio, wrote *The Scriptural Law of Worship* for Presbyterian Heritage Publications. This is a standard, traditional defense of the regulative principle, which subsequently has served many as a succinct introductory tract on the topic. The booklet deals with the nature of worship, the Scriptural law of worship, a specific example from the Bible of the principle (Nadab and Abihu), and results when the principle has been violated.¹⁰⁹

Part of his burden is to point out that denying the regulative principle enervates criticism of Roman Catholic superstition:

... Rome justifies many of her perversions on the grounds that they are not contrary to the Word. Worship of the Virgin Mary, confession to a priest, paying money to get one out of purgatory, sale of indulgences to cover sin, and a legion of other heresies are argued on such grounds. Even if some such things are not forbidden (which is rarely the case), the plea to permit in worship what is not forbidden is a Trojan horse filled with disaster. It was said that John Newton was a great lover of cats. Once he possessed a mother cat and a kitten. To aid the cats and keep down his own interruptions, he had two holes cut in the door—one for the old cat,

and a smaller one for the kitten. It had not occurred to him that the hole that would admit the larger cat would also admit the kitten; indeed, it would not only admit two cats, but any number of cats.

When you make an opening in the door of God’s house large enough to admit divided chancels, candles to aid worship, holy days and seasons such as Ash Wednesday (dare I say Easter and Christmas?), that same hole is likely in time to admit the worship of the Virgin Mary, prayers to St. Peter, confession to a priest, holy water, kissing the Pope’s toe, and a whole host of pollutions and monstrosities from which the Church, by God’s grace, escaped in the great revival of biblical Christianity during the Reformation of the sixteenth century (Bogue, 11).

A few years later, Dr. Bogue wrote on the regulative principle again touching upon the subject of integrity to subscription vows.

When I was a seminary student in the UPC [United Presbyterian Church], the conservatives were distressed by the blatant liberalism among the faculty. Here were men who had taken vows and subscribed to the creedal standards of the church, while in the classroom they would mock and ridicule such doctrines as the substitutionary atonement, the unique authority of the Bible, Christ as the only way of salvation, and other such issues.... And yet I submit to you that it is the same question of integrity which we face in our current struggle. Though the doctrinal error is not so extreme, the question of integrity is the same. When we promise to “receive and adopt” the Westminster Standards, only to turn around and worship God in ways He has not commanded, how may we not question a person’s integrity?¹¹⁰

Coldwell, 2.3 (Dallas, Tex: Naphtali Press, 1989) 9. The last part of the text cited here should be italicized as it represents a translation (this was corrected in the 1993 text). Mr. Coldwell also published in the *Anthology* an extract from David Calderwood’s *Perth Assembly* (1619), on “Reasons Against Festival Days,” 3.3 (1990).

108. This is available online at http://www.prca.org/pamphlets/pamphlet_38.html.

109. Carl W. Bogue, *The Scriptural Law of Worship* (Dallas, Tex.: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1988); later reprinted, with slight modification and additions, as *Scriptural Worship* (Dallas, Tex.: Blue Banner Books, 1993).

110. Carl W. Bogue, “Does the Regulative Principle Matter to the PCA?” *The Presbyterian Advocate*, ed. David C. Lachman, 3.3–4 (April–May 1993) 10.

William Harrell

On May 6, 1986, the Rev. William Harrell, pastor of Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Norfolk, Virginia, presented a paper to the Tidewater Reformed Ministers Fellowship. This paper (along with a postscript) was later published and distributed, at least partially in reaction to the opening worship service at the 1986 PCA General Assembly (see below). Entitled *Concerning Worship*, the pamphlet not only champions the regulative principle of worship per se, but also notes various consequences, including the hindering of evangelism:

... For many, the public worship of God is considered to be not so much a sacred and awesome duty and privilege, as it is a joyful (translated “entertaining”) spectacle, where everyone either wants to or is encouraged to get into the act. Hence we have adult choirs, children’s choirs, special music (often followed by applause!), lay readers of Scripture, orchestrated hand-raising and foot-stomping (purportedly as signs of the movement of the Holy Spirit), altar calls, elaborate liturgies, dramas, mimes, and the list goes on.

Such things gain their entrance into the Church under the heading of “every member ministry.” It is maintained that because a woman can sing a song, or a man can play a tuba, such abilities constitute spiritual gifts which must be exercised in the public worship of God, lest we grieve the Holy Spirit. Yet, does the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Word of God, lead us to believe that it is really His will for us to obscure the glory of Christ? For the obscuring of Christ is just what happens when a collection of professedly pious sideshows crowd around the preaching of the Word of God.

However people may seek to justify such intrusions in public worship, the practical message is very clear. It proclaims in actions (which speak louder than words) that if Jesus Christ, as He is presented to us in the gospel, is too offensive, or is not engaging enough, then there are other things in the program designed to arouse and hold one’s interest. This is nothing other than strange fire.

Indeed, such corruption has even invaded the preaching of the Word in those instances in which the minister

jokes, illustrates, simplifies, and abbreviates his message, lest he lose or offend his audience. The definite signal emitted from such preaching is apologetic in the worst sense. It is as if to say God’s Word is harsh and boring and full of antique complications which have no practical bearing on our lives, thus requiring the nice man in the pulpit to spice up the message. Is this not strange fire?¹¹¹

Both William Harrell and Carl Bogue represent what might be termed “traditionalists” in their denomination. This is a broad term, and encompasses not only people who hold to a strictly Confessional understanding of the meaning of the regulative principle of worship per se, but also some who have subtly changed the meaning of the doctrine. Even among those who subscribe to the Confessional view of the regulative principle, not all would consistently maintain the implications of the doctrine on matters such as the content of worship song or the use of musical instrumentation. The unifying theme of “traditionalists” would include a rejection of “contemporary” worship (in the sense of “experimental”), particularly when such intrudes upon the proper reverence that should characterize public worship.

The PCA

But while traditionalists tried to hold the line in the PCA, other forces were moving the denomination in an opposite direction. Church bureaucrats spent thousands of dollars in 1983 on a multi-media presentation slated for the annual General Assembly meeting as part of “worship.” When the docket was adopted, the nomenclature was changed so that the event was no longer billed as a service of worship, but was rather an “inspirational service.” Even so, the slide show featured a “picture of Jesus.”

Three years later, the PCA General Assembly in Philadelphia deliberately included multi-media presentations as part of several worship services, and a local (non-PCA) church choir had the stage rocking during one of the times of public worship. Fifty commissioners to the General Assembly signed a formal protest which noted the “preponderance of musical presentations encouraged applause ... and a standing ovation...; practices which are in conflict with the Reformed understanding of worship, where recognition is given to God, not man.” The protest alleged that “the overall effect of these worship services was to produce approval and acceptance of non-Reformed traditions of worship, rather than to reflect the biblical basis and

111. William Harrell, *Concerning Worship* (Norfolk, Va.: Immanuel Publications, 1987) 5–6. Reprinted in *The Concerned Presbyterian Magazine*, ed. E. C. Case, 1.1 (Spring Quarter 1996) 19–23.

strength of our own distinct theology and practice of worship.”¹¹²

The General Assembly voted to answer the protest, and an ad hoc committee proposed a response that made a favorable reference to liturgical dance and bongo drums and endorsed applause during worship as a way of showing “appreciation to the singer and thanks to God as the author of all our gifts.” The response argued that “Insofar as the evening program contained worship, that worship was agreeable to Scripture [and] was a Biblical expression of the Regulative Principle of Worship.” The General Assembly, after a brief but spirited debate, approved the response (*Minutes*, 178–179).

Besides the obvious difficulties that this response poses in trying to reconcile it with a genuine understanding of the regulative principle of worship, what is also striking is the confusion evident in the minds of the members of the ad hoc committee. Their justification of various practices in what was billed as a worship service was predicated on their noting the fact that “The evening programs were intended to combine a worship time with programs which would illustrate and advance the great commission through the committees of the General Assembly. The programs were to include worship, but were not intended to be exclusively worship” (*Minutes*, 178). But, if the regulative principle has any meaning, and if there is not to be total confusion in our worship practices, then surely there must be services of worship which are dedicated totally to worship, and which are not cluttered or interfered with by matters of human innovation or of purely mundane interest.

Paradoxically, the same General Assembly took exception to the minutes of Texas Presbytery for its employment, in an installation service, of elements “not prescribed” in the Confession of Faith. Although not specified in the Committee on Review and Control report, the two practices which the Lone Star court had un-Constitutionally utilized were musical instrumentation and the singing of uninspired songs (*Minutes*, 200).

Other Works for this Period

Other works for the period include the following: Ernest C. Reisinger, *Thoughts on the Regulative Principle in a Reforming Situation* (Cape Coral, Fla.: Christian Gospel Foundation, 1982); Erroll Hulse, “Reformation of the Public Worship of God: A Plea for God-centered, Vertical, Structured Worship, *Reformation Today*, 70 (November–December 1982) 3–9; Daniel E. Wray, “The Importance of Worship” in *The Banner*

of Truth, 253 (October 1984) 1–5; John Allen Delivuk, *The Doctrine and History of Worship in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America* (Pittsburgh: Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 1982);¹¹³ Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship that is Reformed according to Scripture* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox, 1984);¹¹⁴ and Edward A. Robson, “The Regulative Principle of Worship: A Reconsideration of Its Application,” *Covenanter Witness*, 100.2 (February 1984) 4–9; Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1986).¹¹⁵ Dr. Robson’s work is one of the earliest writings to employ the abbreviation ‘RPW’.¹¹⁶

Overview: 1980–1989

In the 1980s, a growing re-awakening of interest in

112. *Minutes of the Fourteenth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America* (N.p.: Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, 1986) 141–142.

113. “This work is comprehensive and careful, but does not quite give the ‘sense’ of Reformed Presbyterian worship, nor does it place that worship clearly in its current historical context. Still, as a description of a Reformed church that still seeks to worship only as the Bible commands, this work is illuminating.” Reid, “Recent Literature” in *Worship in the Presence of God*, 354–355.

114. “The second commandment tells us that we are not to use images or idols in our worship, for as the apostle Paul tells us, God is not represented by human art and imagination; God created *us* to be the reflection of his image (Acts 17:22–31). Taking this commandment seriously has been fundamental to the Reformed understanding of worship. If today American Protestant worship services have confused worship with art, or even worse, if we have confused it with entertainment, it is because we have failed to fathom the meaning of the second commandment” (*Worship that is Reformed*, 2). The book has an extensive bibliography; but “‘Reformed worship’ is defined as worship ‘according to Scripture,’ which he [Old] hastens to add is not ‘Bible-thumping literalism’ but using the Word as a general guide (p. 3). So it is not surprising that Dr. Old judges exclusive psalmody as ‘extreme’ (p. 55), although admitting that exclusive hymnody is as well!” Reid, “Recent Literature” in *Worship in the Presence of God*, 338.

115. The phrase regulative principle is employed once in J. I. Packer’s foreword (xvi), but Ryken, who discusses the Puritan notion of scriptural warrant and has a chapter on “Church and Worship,” does not. Packer employs the phrase in a similar context and manner in *Quest for Godliness* (1990), 28.

116. Dr. Robson “defends four theses in a fresh way: first, the R.P.W. (as he fondly terms it), is one principle among many; all are important. Second, the R.P.W. incorrectly applied becomes prohibitionism, which is the attitude that ‘condemns one evil in specific terms, but always misses or even practices the same type of evil in a different context’ (p. 6). Third, the R.P.W. inconsistently applied allows us to fall into didactic and theological error. The errors of hymns in the *Trinity Hymnal* and the *Psalter Hymnal*—of which he discusses a few—show this. Fourth, the R.P.W., correctly applied, is a source of praise to God and edification to man.” Reid, “Recent Literature” in *Worship in the Presence of God*, 340.

Puritanism clashed with the views of others who advocated what amounted to a “high-church” liturgical approach. The Presbyterian Church in America, ostensibly committed to the Westminster Standards, largely rejected an historic Presbyterian understanding of worship; while at the same time, PCA traditionalists could point, perhaps in a Pollyannaish fashion, to little victories as a portent of better days to come. On the other hand, the work of some small publishers, and the appearance of several articles and tracts, presaged a greater interest in publishing works old and new on the regulative principle of worship.

VI. THE 1990S: AN AVOIDABLE PRINCIPLE NO LONGER

The early 1990s saw more works on the regulative principle of worship materialize, as well as greater opposition to the Presbyterian doctrine. With the Internet’s growth in the mid 1990s, the amount of material began to come at a faster pace than ever before, further cementing the moniker for the Calvinistic and Puritan principle in popular and scholastic writing.

1990 *Psalmody Conference*

This decade was kicked off so to speak with an historic Psalmody conference. “One of the key books in the early twentieth century was *The Psalms in Worship...*, originally published after two psalmody conventions in 1905, held in Pittsburgh and Chicago and sponsored by the United Presbyterian Church of North America (UPCNA).¹¹⁷ Until the 1990 Psalmody Conference at Flat Rock, North Carolina, this was the last such gathering in the world...”¹¹⁸ This 1990 conference probably ranks as one of the more important events in the latter part of the twentieth-century amongst factors contributing to a greater awareness of the regulative principle of worship. Certainly, at least one of the lasting effects was the renewed interest it sparked in conservative Presbyterian circles for a greater use of the Psalms in congregational singing. In reporting on a 2003 debate

117. John McNaugher, ed., *The Psalms in Worship: a Series of Convention Papers Bearing Upon the Place of the Psalms in the Worship of the Church* (United Presbyterian Board of Publication, Pittsburgh, Pa. USA, 1907). Reprinted by SWRB (Edmonton, Alberta: 1992). The editor’s name is McNaugher not McNaughten as misspelled on the cover and new title page of the reprint.

118. Frank J. Smith, “Psalmody Revisited,” *Contra Mundum* 5 (Fall 1992) 70. The issues of *Contra Mundum* are archived at: <http://www.contra-mundum.org/journals.html>.

119. *Presbyterian & Reformed News* 9.1 (January–March 2003) 9.

on exclusive psalmody sponsored by Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, this present author, in his capacity as an ecclesiastical journalist, observed: “Throughout the Presbyterian and Reformed community, in relatively recent history, the question of the content of worship music has become a vibrant issue only over the past decade or so. For example, when the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) was founded in 1973, the issue within PCA circles, was almost totally unknown. However, through a variety of means, the question has, as it has done in centuries past, generated extensive discussion in the Reformed world. One of the factors which impacted the discussion was the 1990 International Psalmody Conference, held at Bonclarken, Flat Rock, North Carolina, a conference which was commended or endorsed by several denominations, including the PCA.”¹¹⁹

The initial concept and planning for such a conference was undertaken by The Presbyterian Reformed Church, a small denomination which was formed with the aid of Professor John Murray in 1965. A report printed in the pages of the church’s quarterly publication details the history of the idea for the conference and its apparent success:

Four years ago, on August 22, 1986, the Presbytery voted to appoint a committee of Dr. William Young and Arthur Lamoureux for the purpose of forming a group from other Presbyterian and Reformed denominations to plan a psalmody conference. This idea was originally suggested to the presbytery [*sic*] by G. I. Williamson on April 8, 1972. On August 1, 1990, after much planning and preparation the long awaited Conference became a reality.

The Conference was favored with excellent weather and the meeting place, Bonclarken Assembly in Flat Rock, NC, proved to [be] most enjoyable. Bonclarken is owned and operated by the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and included a hotel which is on the Historic Register, a spacious Chapel in which to meet and facilities to house and feed a multitude. There were 320 registered participants with many attending as a family. They came from 26 States as well as Canada and even a representative from Scotland. Over 15 denominations took part in this Conference. Seven outstanding papers were presented over the two and a half day Conference which also included four workshops, question and answer periods and activities for the younger children. In addition to the planned activities there was also sufficient time allotted for more spontaneous gatherings to

renew old acquaintances, make new ones, sing psalms, or discuss topics of interest.

A special Psalter/Program Book was printed and distributed to all participants. In addition to brief biographies of the Conference speakers, over 30 Psalm selections with tunes from five existing Psalters are contained in this composite Psalter.¹²⁰ During the course of the Conference, the gathered assembly had opportunity to sing almost the entire Psalter. The singing was entirely *a cappella* and directed by precentors from the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America.

The ten literature and book tables on display in the foyer of the Bonclarken Hotel were another highlight of the Conference. These were staffed by various participating denominations and by publishers and distributors of Christian books.¹²¹

From all indications, we can conclude that this undertaking was well received, apparently exceeding our expectations. Many have inquired as to the possibility of having similar meetings in the future. There was in general a good feeling of enthusiasm and fellowship. We sense that there has been a blessing through new relationships that were made and the dialogue that has ensued between various like minded Reformed believers.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to all groups and individuals who supported, participated in, or assisted in any fashion to bring this program to a successful conclusion and in so doing joined in this praise to the glory of God, through this very special emphasis on the Psalms.¹²²

The lectures presented at the 1990 Psalmody Conference were “The Scriptural Regulative Principle of Worship,” by G. I. Williamson; “The Place of Psalm Singing in Public Worship,” by Frank J. Smith; “The History of Psalmody,” by Dr. William Young; “The Imprecatory Psalms,” by Rev. David Compton; “Christ and The Psalms,” by Dr. Randall Ruble; “The Psalms—The Christian’s Biography,” by Prof. Herman Hanko; and “The Psalms—Songs of Sanctification,” by Dr. Charles Butler.¹²³

Clowney’s ‘Presbyterian Worship’

Another smaller but more ecumenical gathering pertaining to worship took place in 1990 in Cambridge,

England. In the autumn of the year the Faith and Church Study Unit of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship held a meeting. This study group had produced four previous collections of papers on doctrinal issues, and the fifth volume was to be on worship. D. A. Carson notes that the members had “agreed to write chapters in advance of a meeting where all the papers were subjected, paragraph by paragraph, to discussion and critique.”¹²⁴ Each tradition presented was tasked to “not only describe but also in some measure to offer thoughtful critique of his or her own tradition” in comparison to two general studies on Old and New Testament worship, which they were also

120. 1990 Psalmody Conference: *Praising God with Psalms. Psalter and Program* (Printed in U.S.A.: Published by the 1990 Psalmody Conference Committee, 1990). The Foreword states: “At a meeting of the presbytery of the Presbyterian Reformed Church, held in Toronto, Canada on August 22, 1986, action was taken to explore the possibility of holding a non-denominational conference to encourage Psalm singing. Envisioned was a meeting on the North American continent similar to the Psalm-singers’ Conference held at Belfast, Ireland in August, 1902, although more limited in scope. The desire was to join more closely together in Christian fellowship the varying congregations who alike praise the Most High with the songs of Zion; also, to encourage a more extensive use of inspired and divinely authorized songs of praise in churches that profess adherence to the sufficiency of Scripture. In due time, there emerged seven dedicated churchmen, from several Presbyterian and Reformed church bodies, who formed the Conference Planning Committee, and preparations for this event began in earnest with the first meeting held in Pittsburgh, January 17–18, 1989. Their fervent prayer is that this unpretentious publication will serve as a lasting reminder, that the purposes noted above have been realized to the glory alone of our Lord. Grateful acknowledgements are hereby extended to those denominations and individuals who provided financial assistance and the meeting place; to all participants who so graciously agreed to serve as speakers, leaders, and in numerous unlisted capacities; and to the believers who were in attendance, that together we might enjoy praising God through the Psalms.” The committee contained the following members: Dr. Charles Butler, American Presbyterian Church; Prof. Herman Hanko, Protestant Reformed Churches; Mr. Arthur Lamoureux (Conference Director), Presbyterian Reformed Church; Rev. Frank Schutz (RPCNA); Rev. Frank Smith (PCA); Dr. John Stodghill (Committee Chairman), Associate Reformed Presbyterian; Dr. William Young, Presbyterian Reformed Church.

121. Among these were Chris Coldwell (Naphtali Press) and antiquarian bookseller David C. Lachman.

122. “News and Events: Psalmody Conference,” *The Presbyterian Reformed Magazine* 5.2 (Summer 1990) 98–99.

123. “The Program,” 1990 Psalmody Conference, 1–2. Scans of the papers, conference brochure, conference psalter, and recordings of audio and video may be obtained from Brian Hanley. Contact Grace Presbyterian Church, PMB 112, 123 E Main Street, Suite 2, Denville, N.J. 07834.

124. D. A. Carson, ed., *Worship: Adoration and Action* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1993; reprint, Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002) 11–12.

free to critique where they disagreed with the “emphasis or details....” (Carson, *Worship*, 17) The perspectives presented ranged from the Anglican and Lutheran to the Charismatic. The Presbyterian view, appropriately enough entitled “Presbyterian Worship,” was penned by the late Edmund P. Clowney, at the time Emeritus Professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. This paper was important in that it brought the Presbyterian concept of the regulative principle to a broader evangelical audience.¹²⁵ Dr. Clowney opens his contribution by stating:

If historic Presbyterian worship be judged distinctive today, it is surely not because the Scottish fathers sought to develop innovations in worship that might justify a brand name. Their desire was to reform Christian worship according to Scripture. They understood this to mean the elimination from public worship of all rites and ceremonies without divine warrant and the inclusion of only those elements of worship that God has commanded for his new covenant people. This conviction has not escaped the criticism of those who have viewed its generic, no-name-brand practice of worship as barren and sterile (110).

Following this introduction Dr. Clowney moves to a discussion of circumstances in worship by noting that even Rome via Vatican II “now sought to provide for cultural diversity in liturgy,” writing:

The Westminster Assembly, with a radically different agenda [from Rome], also took account of different customs and settings for worship. The Divines clearly recognized an area touching ‘some circumstances’ of worship ‘common to human actions and societies’ that may be ordered in the ‘light of nature’ without express warrant in Scripture [Westminster Confession, I.6]. Certainly the circumstances of worship have varied widely in Presbyterian history. Given these changing settings and the freedom of Presbyterian worship from fixed forms, can any worship be defined as distinctively

Presbyterian? So loyal a Presbyterian as the late Robert Rayburn subtitled his book on renewal in worship, *Corporate Worship in the Evangelical Church*. It is true that Reformed and Puritan emphases have been a major factor in the development of evangelical worship; it is also true that the practice of worship in evangelical Presbyterian churches may often be broadly evangelical rather than distinctively Reformed. Nevertheless, Reformed and Presbyterian principles of worship have been developed from Scripture and brought to expression in practices that have a clear tradition. Freedom from any required form of worship has not produced chaos in Presbyterian worship; indeed, the Presbyterian churches have often rejected the dictates of king, pope, and bishop only to follow uncritically the dictates of custom. Yet historic Presbyterianism has taken account of the ordering of worship as well as of its freedom. The Westminster Assembly’s *Directory for the Public Worship of God* is markedly different from the *Book of Common Prayer*, but it does describe the elements of public worship and it presents an order for the services of the church. Its directions for prayers are not mandatory, but they do model the scriptural richness of the ministry of adoration, confession, and intercession (111).

Dr. Clowney then proceeds to lay out two “foundational convictions” of Presbyterian worship, before discussing several distinctions of the tradition. The first foundational conviction is “affirmed in the phrase *solī Deo Gloria*.” The Reformed churches emphasized “God’s electing grace in Christ. Reformed theology rejoiced to find God’s glory central, not only in salvation, but in all the works of the Lord. ‘Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.’ This answer to the first question of the Shorter Catechism shapes Presbyterian worship as well as theology. God does not exist for our sake, but we exist for God’s sake. Worship ascribes to God the glory due to his name” (111). While granting then that all “of life is a service to God,” the professor then proceeds to reason for setting apart time specifically for worship, which leads naturally enough to a discussion of the second foundational conviction of Presbyterian worship, “the Reformational emphasis on the Bible.” Only “Scripture gives that knowledge of God and of his will that is necessary to salvation” (112–113).

Observing the Westminster Assembly’s recognition “that the divine authority of Scripture was exclusive,” and sufficient, the professor remarks on the consequence this has for worship practices: “If in doctrine nothing may be added to the teaching of Scripture, so, too, in worship nothing may be added to what God has

125. Peter Lewis discusses the regulative principle in reviewing the Puritan background to Free Church worship in his chapter: “Free Church’ Worship in Britain,” 147–157. In his introductory paper, Carson mentions the principle only in reference to Clowney, when, noting that there was no interaction amongst or rebuttals between the various writers, he remarks: “... that the thoughtful reader cannot help but be fascinated by the way, say, that Clowney deploys Scripture in seeking to establish (and delimit!) the regulative principle (‘Presbyterian Worship’), and the way that Alistair Brown deploys Scripture in defence of ‘Charismatically-Orientated Worship’. One cannot help thinking about how each would reply to the other in print” (17).

revealed. A preacher, a church, a pope has no right to require Christians to believe what the Bible does not teach. No more does a preacher, a church, a pope have a right to require practices in worship that God has not required” (113). Dr. Clowney then cites the Assembly’s doctrine on Christian Liberty (Westminster Confession Chapter 20), and how this is “applied specifically to worship” in their chapter on worship (21.1); he summarized the doctrine thusly: “In worship, therefore, anything that God has not commanded is forbidden” (113–114). Clowney makes clear how the “Westminster Divines saw the issue respecting worship in terms of liberty of conscience,” and concludes: “No one—no state, church, or individual—may bind my conscience to *believe* what God has not revealed in Scripture. Neither may anyone require me to *practice* in worship what God has not required” (114).

Dr. Clowney writes that this principle is “strongly presented to Israel in God’s law,” and supports this from Leviticus 10:1–3 (cf. 16:12) and Deuteronomy 12:32. After asking the question “[d]oes this principle also continue in the New Testament?”, he cites J. I. Packer’s denial and his subsequent characterization of the principle as an innovation of the Puritans (114). While granting that there was amplification of the principle, and “an unduly legalistic development of it in the Puritan reformation,” the professor, who had previously criticized Packer’s position,¹²⁶ does so for a second time, maintaining that “to describe it as an innovation fails to take sufficient account of its advocacy by John Calvin and John Knox.”

He then discusses the Reformers on Christian liberty and their rejection of the notion that the church has power to create “new ordinances respecting worship beyond what God has commanded”. Half-way into the article, he finally uses the term ‘regulative principle’ for the first time.

Discussion of this so-called ‘regulative principle’ sometimes leaves out of account the context assumed by Calvin and the Westminster Divines: the regulation of worship by the church (or, indeed, the state). Liberty of conscience is the issue. ‘All arbitrary lordship is an encroachment upon God’s Kingdom.’¹²⁷

After detailing John Knox’s statement and defense of the principle, Dr. Clowney again addresses Packer’s objection:

Packer objects that the regulative principle is not a necessary implication of the *authority* and *sufficiency* of

Scripture, but that it is a question of the *contents* and *interpretation* of Scripture. The mere fact that God has spoken in his Word, and that the Word of God is to be obeyed in all things, does not in itself exclude the possibility that God may have withheld a liberty of conscience such as the Westminster Confession describes. He may, for example, have licensed the church to determine how divine worship was to be offered. But suppose such a possibility were allowed with respect to doctrine. Could the Reformed doctrine of the *sufficiency* of Scripture then be maintained? If the church can promulgate new doctrines that bind the conscience (that *must* be believed for salvation), then the Scripture is not a sufficient revelation. But is the case different when worship is in view? Suppose the church does have the authority to determine what it will do in worship, apart from any particular teaching in God’s Word, would the worshiper’s conscience be left free, nevertheless, if the church did not make these practices binding? In the case of the Roman Mass, of course, the answer is clear, because that church *requires* participation in the Mass for salvation. But even if such a claim were not made, the problem remains. God does require participation in corporate as well as private worship. For this reason, public worship is not an optional exercise; to require attendance and participation, as it must, the church needs to be able to appeal to God’s authority. If it must then go beyond Scripture to determine what worship is acceptable to God, Scripture cannot be a sufficient rule for public worship (116).

Dr. Clowney defends the continuance of the regulative principle as expressed in Deuteronomy 12:29–32 for the New Testament church. He does so by appealing to “the authority of the Lord’s commandment (1 Cor. 14:37, 38),” and to the “term that Paul apparently coined” which expressed “his endorsement of the principle...” Paul “condemns the ‘self-imposed worship’ of the false teachers at Colosse” (Col. 2:23). Noting, as Calvin acknowledges (*Institutes*, IV.10.30), God’s wisdom in not prescribing a particular directory of worship in the New Testament “so that the church in various times and places could order its worship appropriately,” Clowney writes nonetheless that this allowance in the “proper ordering of corporate worship cannot be extended ... to include the introduction of new *elements* of worship.” He then proceeds to list the elements of

126. See Clowney, “Distinctive Emphases in Presbyterian Church Polity,” in *Pressing Toward the Mark*, 100–105. See Packer, “The Puritan Approach to Worship,” in *Diversity in Unity*, 4–5.

127. Dr. Clowney is citing Calvin’s *Institutes*, IV.10.7.

Christian worship by New Testament precept and example (116–117).

In the balance of his article Dr. Clowney covers some of the distinctive features of Presbyterian worship: a New Testament freedom regarding “appropriate arrangement of the *circumstances* of worship,”¹²⁸ its reflection of covenant theology, its being “anchored in the Presbyterian doctrine of the Lord’s Day as the Christian Sabbath,” and its care of the poor in recovering the diaconal ministry. He then concludes his paper by addressing the “history of the order of service in Reformed and Presbyterian history”:

It might seem that even a brief article on Presbyterian worship should discuss the history of the order of service in Reformed and Presbyterian history. This task

128. It is here where the author makes known his exceptions to the practice of a *cappella* singing and exclusive psalmody. “The long controversy over the use of instrumental accompaniment in singing seems to arise from a failure to grasp the implications of the Westminster Confession definition of a ‘circumstance’. If the use of instruments to accompany and support singing is a circumstance ‘common to human actions and societies’, it does not require New Testament authorization, for it is not in itself a religious observance, but only a culturally conditioned way of supporting singing” (117). Then in an endnote Dr. Clowney remarks: “Although in a service of dedication for a new organ, the instrument may be elevated to an element of worship—or almost a participant!” (238). Ironically, the implication of the first statement is that the Westminster Divines, who rejected instrumental music in worship, did not understand the implications of their own definition! For an opposing view to the notion that instrumental accompaniment may properly be regarded as a circumstantial matter, see Girardeau’s *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of God and Discretionary Power of the Church*. For the view current at the time of the Assembly, see Nick Needham’s “Westminster and Worship: Psalms, Hymns? and Musical Instruments” in *The Westminster Confession Into the 21st Century*, volume two. As for psalmody, Dr. Clowney grants its importance and that “the singing of Psalms was characteristic of the Reformation.” He writes that the “regulative principle was later invoked to require the exclusive use of the Psalms in worship” and argues against the support of the position from Ephesians 5:18–21 and Colossians 3:16–17 (117–118), concluding that “Paul surely would not have so described the production of spiritual songs if he had been speaking about the Psalms of the Old Testament.” He does grant that the “close connection in Scottish Presbyterian conviction between the regulative principle and the exclusive use of Psalms did keep worship focused on the glory of God, and undergirded it with a deep solemnity and earnestness. The richness of the God-centered piety of the Psalms shaped Presbyterian devotion.” Dr. Clowney goes on to write that “Psalm-singing Presbyterians readily understood the church as the people of God, but this understanding overshadowed their grasp of the church as the body of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit. The Presbyterian emphasis well and truly maintained the unity of God’s covenant people in the old covenant and the new. If there was a weakness, it was in the need to take fuller account of the transformation of covenant renewal and fulfillment in Christ” (118).

has been often undertaken, making it evident that a fixed order of service has deep roots in the Reformed branch of the Reformation. Charles W. Baird’s book, *Eutaxia*, published in 1855, created a stir in Presbyterian circles at that time by presenting the orders of service with accompanying prayers from Reformed sources, including Calvin’s Geneva, Knox’s Scotland, and Baxter’s England.

Yet it would run contrary to the Presbyterian theology of liberty in worship to seek to develop a fixed liturgy. Even principles of ordering liturgy would have to be given Scriptural support before they could be made mandatory. One such principle, often stated in Reformed circles, is that the order of worship must alternate between God’s address to his people and their response to God. That the elements of worship include both cannot be disputed: God does address his people through the Scriptures, in preaching, in the blessing. The people also respond to God in prayer and praise. They say, ‘Amen’ to what God says (1 Cor. 14:16). But nowhere does the Bible require that worship must proceed with a fixed alternation of God’s address and response. Further, Scripture constantly blends the worship of God with the edification of his people. When God’s people meet in his name, they meet with each other even as they stand before him. It would be not only arbitrary but unscriptural to exclude from a service of worship the means by which Christians may encourage one another as they draw near to God (Heb. 10:25; Col. 3:16). We do not seek first to benefit the saints when we hallow God’s name, but hallowing God’s name does benefit the saints.

At the same time, Paul’s careful guarding of worship at Corinth makes clear that worship is not a human-centered social occasion, arranged for entertainment and conviviality, so that only the golden calf is missing. The goal of worship is met when the stranger, rebuked for his sin, falls down, and says, ‘God is really among you!’ (1 Cor. 14:25). So are the Old Testament promises fulfilled in the New (Isa. 45:14) as the people of God draw near to the heavenly festival, to Jesus, the Lord of glory, and to our God, a consuming fire. True evangelism and nurture are not impeded, but mightily advanced when the worshipping church sees with awe the Christ of the lampstands and the glory of the throne (Rev. 1:17).

Worship in the Presence of God

In 1992, more than a decade's worth of labor came to fruition with the publication of *Worship in the Presence of God: A collection of essays on the nature, elements, and historic views and practice of worship*.¹²⁹ Edited by a Presbyterian Church in America pastor (Frank J. Smith) and ruling elder (David C. Lachman), the volume was designed as the first treatment in the twentieth century of all of the elements of worship from the traditional Presbyterian and Reformed perspective.

Several of the essays clearly set forth the regulative principle. In the introductory chapter, "What is Worship?", Dr. Smith contends that worship is special (distinct from other areas of life), dialogical (in the form of a dialog between God and man), and prescribed. He illustrates the regulative principle this way:

Imagine a hillcountry war-hero, a man who led his troops victoriously in battle, who is going to be honored by his men after their return from the war. His fellow officers, however, are from Evanston, Illinois; Berkeley, California; and Short Hills, New Jersey; and they don't exactly understand their leader's tastes. As they prepare a great banquet in his honor, they think of how he enjoys listening to music, and eating, and drinking. So, they have the best chamber orchestra, caviar, and champagne that money can buy, all prepared for him and his wife whom they have flown in from their beloved hills. What's wrong with this? Well, yes, he enjoys music, but he'd much prefer stomping his feet to the sounds of a banjo, a guitar, and a fiddle. Yes, he enjoys eating, but what's this stuff called caviar? It's black-eyed peas, grits, cornbread, and venison or squirrel meat which has pleasure. Yes, he enjoys drinking, but champagne? His specialty is "Mountain Dew" (and we don't, of course, mean the product from Pepsi-Cola). The obvious point is that if they had really wanted to honor their hero, they would have found out about those things which pleased him and provided those for him, rather than trying to please him their own way. Similarly, if we truly want to please the Mighty Warrior who has effected our salvation, we will find out which things delight Him, and perform those things for Him. Just as it is not simply the fact of a banquet, but also the content which is important, so it is not just the fact of worship which is important. The content—the elements which comprise worship—is important as well (*Worship in the Presence of God*, 15–16).

The essay continues:

The parts of worship have often been called elements of worship. 'Element' is almost metaphoric, invoking images of scientific reality. What we are contending for is the truth that whether speaking of a chemical element or an element of worship, the term 'element' signifies that which is fundamental, foundational, irreducible—in chemical terms, you can't boil it down any farther.

When we argue for the necessity of 'forms,' we are not saying that the forms exist independently of the elements or that the forms must be preserved for their own sakes. We are, however, maintaining that an element comes as a package deal; that it generally has form, purpose, and content; and that we cannot divorce these constitutive aspects from one another and still have the element. It is significant that the main mark of the Church has form as well as content: it is the *preaching* of the Word, and not just the Word itself. (*Worship in the Presence of God*, 16).

Other essays also teach the regulative principle. In "The Fear of the Lord in Worship," Herman Hanko writes: "We are not in a position to decide how we ought to worship God any more than a subject of the queen of England is in a position to decide how he or she will enter the queen's presence. God alone must tell us how He is to be worshipped. We are bound, absolutely, to the principles which God Himself sets forth in Scripture. When we refuse to follow the Scriptures' instructions on this point, we break the Second Commandment, create a graven image, and bring down on us and our children the terrible judgment of God" (*Worship in the Presence of God*, 26).

In an essay entitled, "Hear Ye Him': Worship in the New Testament," Sherman Isbell rhetorically asks, "can we conjure the blessing of God upon our own inventions?"; and he answers: "When the Lord's few and simple ordinances must vie with human traditions in worship, human fancy may be satisfied, and there may be increase in numbers of people attending, in financial resources, in construction of facilities, and in ministry enterprises. But to the extent that this increase is not occurring through the observance of Christ's commands, it is not the expansion of the kingdom of God. The kingdom is not furthered by eschewing the prescriptions of Christ in the Scripture" (*Worship in the Presence of God*, 65).

129. Frank J. Smith and David C. Lachman, eds., *Worship in the Presence of God: A collection of essays on the nature, elements, and historic views and practice of worship* (Greenville, S.C.: Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 1992).

William Young's classic article on "The Second Commandment ..." appears in this volume (75–90). So also does an original article by Dr. Lachman on "Christian Liberty and Worship," which utilized standard regulative principle proof texts (such as Leviticus 9:14–10:7; 1 Chronicles 15:2, 13; and Jeremiah 7:30, 31) to demonstrate that "worship, if it is to be pleasing to God, must be worship which He has commanded" (*Worship in the Presence of God*, 93).

Kevin Reed's historical piece, "John Knox and the Reformation of Worship in the Scottish Reformation," extensively illustrates Knox's commitment to the principle, as well as to its corollary, the purity of worship. The author applies Knox's teaching to today, by writing: "*The Church needs to reaffirm the regulative principle of worship*. Nothing should be admitted into the worship of God, unless it possesses a clear Scriptural warrant. This principle is merely an extension of the *sola scriptura* perspective of Protestant theology, as applied to the realm of worship. Anything less is a violation of the demands of the living God, who says, 'You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.' 'Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it' (Deut. 4:2; 12:32)." Kevin Reed also avers: "In the modern pluralistic age, the Church has lost a sense of the immorality of false worship. False religious opinions and practices are not simply academic differences; they are a form of moral corruption which destroys the souls of men. This truth should provide the Church with a sense of urgency as it confronts men in their false worship" (*Worship in the Presence of God*, 329, 332).

Of the remainder of the nineteen contributions, we would briefly take note of the final essay, as we have had occasion to reference it a number of times in this present survey. Thomas G. Reid's "The Acceptable Way of Worshipping the True God: Recent Writings on Worship of Particular Interest to Reformed Christians" is an excellent summary of the recent literature on the subject of Reformed worship which had appeared to that point in time (*Worship in the Presence of God*, 335–368).

James B. Jordan

In response to the Smith/Lachman book, James Jordan collated a series of articles into a book entitled,

130. James B. Jordan, *Liturgical Nestorianism: A Critical Review of "Worship in the Presence of God"* (Niceville, Florida: Transfiguration Press, 1994).

*Liturgical Nestorianism: A Critical Review of "Worship in the Presence of God."*¹³⁰

Mr. Jordan states that the "main purpose" of *Worship in the Presence of God* "is to argue for a highly rarefied version of the Reformed position regarding worship, the so-called Regulative Principle of Worship." He asserts that the view "that whatever is not actually commanded in the New Testament to be done in worship, is forbidden," is "the 'sect' form of the Regulative Principle. The 'catholic' form, which commands the adherence of most of the conservative Calvinistic community, states that we are to worship only as the Bible teaches, and that such teaching is found by way of command, principle, example, pattern, and every other mode of communication God has determined to use. The sect form of the Regulative Principle comes to the Bible with the pre-determined notion that God can direct us only by means of explicit commands, a notion that does not arise from the Bible itself, and a notion that is actually unworkable in practice. The catholic form of the Regulative Principle, to which I adhere, allows God to decide how to communicate His will to us, and thus recognizes much more in the Bible about worship than does the sect form." He also writes that most of the volume's writers "seem aware of only a small percentage of what the Bible has to say about worship" (*Liturgical Nestorianism*, 9–10).

His proposal is for a "third way," which would steer between the two extremes of those who adhere to a "sect" form of the Regulative Principle, and those who do not adhere to the principle at all (11).

With all due respect to Mr. Jordan, he has mischaracterized the traditional regulative principle position. To the best of our knowledge, no one in the regulative principle of worship camp doubts that God has prescribed the church's worship not only by direct command, but also by approved example and by good and necessary consequence.

James Jordan calls those who hold to the "sect" form of the regulative principle "Minimalists," and he accuses them of being "dispensational." "They have erected an arbitrary wall between Old Creation and New Creation worship, and they do not understand how the Old Creation is transfigured into the New in Christ. In fact, they don't seem to understand the meaning of the fact that the sacrifices and rituals of the Old Creation never took away sin, and were always memorials, dramatized prayers." In his view, Christian worship is sacrificial. Furthermore, not only are Minimalists dispensationalistic—they are also "radically anti-covenantal." This is because they fail to recognize that "the patterns that God

established for His people in their childhood—such as festivals, vestments, incense, musical instruments, and songs other than the psalter—may well be of value in showing us the kinds of things God likes and that we may still do now that we have come to redemptive-historical maturity in Christ” (21–22).

Furthermore, he accuses the Minimalists of being rationalists, since their concern for “spiritual” worship means “immaterial and intellectual, which is a Greek understanding of the term.” In his view, “the Minimalists think that structure is opposed to Spirit, an idea thoroughly bathed in the thinking of the Enlightenment, so that while worship in the Old Creation was structured, now worship in the New Creation is ‘spiritual.’ All of this shows the influence of pagan irrationalism; none of it has Biblical foundation” (22–23).

Thirdly, Mr. Jordan accuses his opponents of being pagan in their philosophical orientation. He writes that

[t]he Minimalists are otherworldly in the pagan sense. The Tabernacle and Temple of the Old Creation were symbols of the cosmos, and we still worship God in the cosmos. God is enthroned in the cosmos, the Temple He built for Himself in Genesis 1. Thus, to build a house of worship and adorn it somewhat along the lines of the Tabernacle or Temple is not a mistake. Minimalist churches have bare white walls, and this is because they are otherworldly. (The influence here is Stoicism....) To be sure, the Christian house of worship is not the same as the Tabernacle, and it would be a liturgical mistake simply to copy it. But to beautify the walls of the house of worship, and to vest the minister robes of glory—these are fully Biblical (*Liturgical Nestorianism*, 23).

In response, let it be noted that the standard Reformed Protestant position regarding the regulative principle, including corollaries such as those which would be in opposition to the continuation of an outward showiness with respect to worship, is not based on Stoicism, but is based on the very Biblical distinction between the ceremonial worship of the Old Covenant, and the fulfilled, heavenly-oriented worship of the New Covenant.

Fourthly, Mr. Jordan accuses the Minimalists of tending “to be gnostic and anti-historical.” He writes:

They assume that the “simple” worship of the New Testament era must establish the boundaries of worship for all time, as opposed to setting the direction for the course of liturgical development.

James Jordan draws connections between worship and Old Testament civil legislation. In his view,

the social laws are presented in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy in a way that connects them radically to the Tabernacle service. In order to apply them today, as 2 Timothy 3:16–17 requires, we must study them in terms of principles and analogies, something the Minimalist hermeneutics forbids. According to the Minimalists, if these laws were not repeated in the epistles, one by one, without being tied to the Tabernacle, then they are gone for good.

Contrary to the Minimalists, the Bible shows a principle of maturation from glory to glory. The “simple” worship of the patriarchs transformed into the more complex and artistically rich worship of the Sinaitic Covenant, and then further with the Temple worship of the Kingdom Covenant. Revelation 2–3 shows us seven churches in seven different estates, and uses imagery from seven periods of Bible history to describe each of them. This shows us that churches will find themselves in varying situations in history, and that these situations are analogous to situations in Bible history. Worship may be “simple” in one cultural setting and more complex and artistically rich in another, without departing from the same fundamental norms. The Minimalist, however, denies the reality of historical maturation and differentiation. In point of fact, artistically rich worship is a characteristic of city culture, and artistically plain worship is a characteristic of countryside culture. The historical movement from the camp of Moses to the city of David is a movement from farm to city, as is the larger movement from the garden of Eden to the New Jerusalem. Thus, worship should grow in artistic richness as history matures toward the fullness of Christ’s kingdom.

Now, I and other Reformed students of liturgy have expressed such ideas as these in print, repeatedly, for a decade. It concerns me that virtually none of these matters are discussed in this volume.¹³¹ To far too great an

131. Mr. Jordan apparently was not a little displeased that his own writings were not included in Thomas G. Reid’s chapter on recent literature on worship. “Jordan’s biggest disappointment with Thomas Reid’s essay is that he does not include more Eastern Orthodox (Alexander Schmemmann), Roman Catholic (Louis Bouyer), Lutheran (Luther Reed) and liberal (Geddes MacGregor) works in his bibliography. Or it may be that Mr. Jordan confesses his real reason for his criticisms when he says, ‘The first reason this essay disappoints me is that none of my numerous writings in this area are mentioned, nor are the works of my colleagues, past and present, in the liturgical

extent, most of the authors continue to bang the drum for *tradition* (*Liturgical Nestorianism*, 24–25).

Of course, one of the reasons why “Minimalists” may have chosen not to discuss these Jordanesque ideas may be that the traditionalists think it unwise to accord respect to these notions which are filled with non sequiturs and which might be regarded as just plain nutty. But in any case, what is clear is that Mr. Jordan rejects the regulative principle of worship. It is also clear that part of his theological misunderstanding comes from an inability to comprehend that the regulative principle, by definition, deals with systematic theology—a branch of learning that, of necessity, searches for unifying factors and universal rubrics.

Mr. Jordan himself seems to acknowledge our point regarding his lack of adherence to systematic theology. When discussing Frank J. Smith’s essay on the elements of worship, he writes that “the whole business of ‘elements’ is quite reductionistic”; and that the predisposition to think in such terms arises

from the continuing influence of late Medieval nominalism, which in this regard is the same as atomistic reductionism. In theology, a form of nominalism called terminism became dominant, and we can see this in the Westminster catechisms, which discuss theology almost exclusively by defining one term after another (“What is justification?”, “What is sanctification?”, etc.).

Another aspect of terministic and atomistic nominalism is the tendency to reduce everything in theology to laws and propositions. God does, of course, communicate to us in laws and propositions (statements of fact), but in the Bible He also uses symbol, type, analogy, architectural structures, and rituals, to mention only a few. Nominalism rapidly becomes blind to all these things, and converts them all into mere symbols of laws and propositions. Nominalism leads straight to a kind of legalism and a kind of doctrinalism. Thus, for instance, the nominalist looks at the Tabernacle and Temple and sees nothing but a series of symbols for Pauline theology; he does not see that God might be also

communicating something about beauty and glory.... Everything is reduced to doctrine, teaching. The communication of information to the mind becomes the sole, or virtually sole, aspect of revelation, eliminating whole-personed communication by ritual, etc. In this way, atomistic reductionism leads to intellectualism and gnosticism.

But it also leads to a kind of legalism, and we see this in the sect-form of the Regulative Principle. We must find distinct commands or laws for “elements” of worship. God is not permitted to communicate to us His desires through patterns or rituals.

... The Bible has a great deal to say about the order of worship, and the order of worship has as much to do with how the “elements” are employed, and even what the “elements” are. The Reformed tradition has, however, usually discussed “elements” in a vacuum, and there is no improvement on that discussion in the essays in the present volume (*Liturgical Nestorianism*, 61–63).

Of course, we can, as a result of these paragraphs, understand why Mr. Jordan has been off-base on a wide variety of theological subjects. When he rejects traditional Reformed systematic theology, believing that its formulations lead to intellectualism, Gnosticism, and legalism, it is easy to see why he rejects Reformed worship as well.

Jordan’s attack on William Young’s article on the regulative principle asserts, in reference to the classic text on the regulative principle (Leviticus 10:1–2), “Nadab and Abihu were killed because they committed a serious affront to God, not because they happened to do something He did not command. As with Jeremiah 7:31, ‘which God had not commanded’ has here the force of ‘which contravened God’s commandment.’” He summarizes his evaluation of Dr. Young’s position this way:

In my opinion, the view of worship advocated by Young errs in the direction of Nestorianism. Those who give virtually all power to man to decide how to worship are guilty of identifying man with God in a kind of liturgical Monophysitism, but those who radically separate man and God tend toward liturgical Nestorianism. A Chalcedonian Christology fits with what the Bible tells us about man, that he is the very image of God. God’s desire is for humanity to mature in His likeness. It is for this reason that God gives over to man progressively more responsibility as time moves along. The history in

wing of conservative Presbyterianism.’ Given the repeated hostility and name calling that Mr. Jordan has exhibited toward Reformed worship, it is at least possible that many in the Reformed camp do not consider him ‘one of their own.’ Still, whether Mr. Jordan’s essays are numerous does not determine whether they are important.” See Richard Bacon’s review of *Liturgical Nestorianism* in “Beyond Canterbury: Reviews of James B. Jordan’s Views on Worship,” *The Blue Banner* 4.3–4 (March–April 1995) 3–4.

the Bible shows this, as does world history in general. Modern technology puts before us a whole host of complex moral problems not faced by earlier generations.

Orthodox Christology says that human nature is restored and brought to maturity in union with Christ's humanity. Humanity is so wonderful that God Himself joined with it, and will remain joined with it forever. Thus, Chalcedonian Christology affirms that in worship we listen first to God, but then as His images contribute something of real value to the dialogue.

Nestorian Christology, however, denigrates human nature, saying that God and man in Christ were not joined. Rather, the humanity of Christ was just a slave and instrument of His divinity, so that there were virtually two persons in Christ. A Nestorian view of worship will, thus, say that man is always but a slave who has nothing to say and who is simply to parrot God. I say that the view espoused by Young tends toward such a liturgical Nestorianism (55–56).

At this point, one hardly knows what to say. The positions put forth in these last several paragraphs not only mix and match disparate categories, but also approach heterodoxy. It simply is not true that "Chalcedonian Christology affirms that in worship we listen first to God, but then as His images contribute something of real value to the dialogue." No, James, anything which we offer in worship is accepted only because of God's grace.

It simply is not true that with respect to determining the "elements" of worship, man has a role to play. It is true, of course, that man is not a robot, but that he is to respond, in love, to God: we know of *no* Reformed theologian who has maintained to the contrary. But man, not only because of his creaturely status but also because of his sinful state, remains a servant of God when it comes to offering Him worship.

Finally, it simply is not orthodox to assert that there is anything other than a radical distinction between God and man. It is true, as Mr. Jordan has noted, that the Lord Jesus is both God and man, with two natures, and in one person, forever. However, it does not logically follow that therefore man qua man has been raised to a status of being able to determine how he should worship an infinitely holy God. To deny to man any such authority is not to be guilty of "Nestorianism." On the contrary, it is Mr. Jordan's assertions which call into question his own orthodoxy on such a matter as the Creator-creature distinction.¹³²

Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

In the 1990s, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary published several works which dealt with the regulative principle. One of these was the book co-edited by Frank J. Smith and David C. Lachman (noted above). Another was a book on drama, authored by Stephen Gonzales (see below). And yet another was an article by Dr. Morton H. Smith, founding faculty member at the South Carolina institution.¹³³

Reprinted from *The Bulletin of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary*, the treatise affirms the basic outline of the regulative principle, based on passages such as the Second Commandment, Deuteronomy 12:32, and Mark 7. Dr. Smith also enunciates as part of the principle that "we look primarily to the New Testament, not the Old," for determining the practices of worship; this is because of the abrogation of the ceremonial law and its temple worship (Smith, "The Regulative Principle," 3–5).

Ernest Springer/Old Paths Publications

In 1993, Ernest Springer, owner of Old Paths Publications, penned *Many Verses!*¹³⁴ This book came out of his experience at a PCA congregation in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, which was not in the habit of reading significant portions of Scripture during public worship. Although the book does not concentrate on the regulative principle of worship, it does set forth the principle's validity: "We are not to insert into the worship service any elements which are the fabrications and inventions of man. God is honored *only* when we worship Him according to means set forth in His Word (either by direct commandment or logical implication), and when

132. Other works by James Jordan on worship include *The Liturgy Trap: The Bible versus Mere Tradition in Worship* (Niceville, Fla.: Transfiguration Press, 1994) and *Theses on Worship: Notes Toward the Reformation of Worship* (Niceville, Fla.: Transfiguration Press, 1994). Jordan also wrote an earlier piece: *The Sociology of the Church: Essays in Reconstruction* (Tyler, Tex.: Geneva Ministries, 1986). In the introduction he notes the influence of three writers, none of whom was an orthodox Protestant. "They are a neo-orthodox Presbyterian, Geddes McGregor; a Roman Catholic, Louis Bouyer; and a Russian Orthodox, Alexander Schmemmann. This book would not be what it is without their insights, as an examination of the footnotes will reveal."

133. Morton H. Smith, *The Regulative Principle of Worship: Is It Biblical?* (Greenville, S.C.: Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 1995).

134. Ernest Springer, *Many Verses! The Importance of Reading the Scriptures in Reformed Worship* (Audubon, N.J.: Old Paths Publications, 1993).

we do not add to or take away from anything set forth therein" (*Many Verses*, 11).

Still Waters Revival Books

Headquartered in Edmonton, Alberta, Still Waters Revival Books (SWRB) has, since the early 1990s, been a strong and often strident advocate for historic Puritan worship. The value of SWRB is in providing works at relatively cheap rates which would otherwise be difficult or expensive to obtain. After dabbling with some limited reprints of works supportive of the regulative principle,¹³⁵ they now mostly publish bound photocopies of works or CDs of scanned texts.¹³⁶

The Blue Banner

In 1992, the First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett, Texas, a Dallas suburb, began publishing *The Blue Banner*,

135. E.g., James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ* (1991); the previously-noted *Psalms in Worship* (1992); and *Works of George Gillespie* (1991). The Gillespie was not a complete printing of the Hetherington edition of the works from the middle nineteenth century. The reprint was intentionally incomplete in lacking *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, which was already in print via Sprinkle Publications, but deficient as well in omitting *Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland*. The author's name, however, was spelled correctly.

136. SWRB's founder, Reg Barrow, has written on the regulative principle. See "Worship: The Regulative Principle of Worship in History," *Christian Reformation Today* Issue #18–19 (July–Oct., 1991; revised Nov., 1995); reprinted in *Reformation Worship and Separation from Idolatry* (Edmonton, Alberta: Still Waters Revival Books, 1997). Mr. Barrow's writings on the regulative principle also brought him into a polemic against Douglas Wilson, pastor of Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho. The *causus belli* occurred in reaction to the publisher having maintained on an internet list that John Calvin would have excommunicated James Jordan and John Frame for their heretical views of worship. Reg Barrow, *Saul in the Cave of Adullam: A Testimony Against the Fashionable, Sub-Calvinism of Doug Wilson* (Editor of *Credenda/Agenda Magazine*); and, *For Classical Protestantism and the Attainments of the Second Reformation* (Edmonton, Alberta: Still Waters Revival Books, 1997). On the regulative principle, see also Greg L. Price, *Foundation For Reformation: The Regulative Principle Of Worship* (SWRB, 1995).

137. Having outgrown their property in Rowlett, in March 2005 the congregation acquired new property in Mesquite, Texas, and now goes by the name, Faith Presbyterian Church, Reformed.

138. Christopher Coldwell, "Indifferent Imaginations? The Case Against Images at Meetings of N. Texas Presbytery," *The Blue Banner* 3.7–8 (July–August 1994). Almost a complete run of *The Blue Banner* is archived in Adobe PDF format at <http://www.fpccr.org/bluebanner.htm>. The church ceased regular publication of the newsletter with the January–March 2004 issue, to focus its resources on the publication of *The Confessional Presbyterian*.

139. Richard Bacon, "The Regulative Principle and Sufficiency of Scripture in 2 Chronicles 3," *The Blue Banner* 4.5–6 (May–June 1995). Of the many articles touching on worship, one of the more

patterned after J. G. Vos' publication of a previous generation.¹³⁷ The congregation was, and is, committed to fostering historic Presbyterian doctrine, worship and polity. Originally a member of the Presbyterian Church in America, the Rowlett church departed the PCA in 1994 over a failure of North Texas Presbytery either to remove or cover images of Jesus in church buildings where the presbytery was scheduled to be meeting.¹³⁸ The congregation united with several others to form the Presbyterian Church Covenanted Reformed, later renamed the Reformation Presbyterian Church, and today known as the American Reformation Presbyterian Church. At present, this tiny denomination has only the one congregation; however, it is also engaged in union talks with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Hanover Presbytery, and has an agreement with the American Presbyterian Church for hearing judicial appeals.

Over the years, numerous articles in *The Blue Banner* have championed traditional Presbyterian views on topics such as musical instrumentation in public worship, the use of Psalms only for worship song, and the non-observance of holy days. Undergirding these positions is a commitment to the regulative principle of worship. Exemplifying that commitment is Pastor Richard Bacon's 1994 article, "The Regulative Principle and Sufficiency of Scripture in 2 Chronicles 3."¹³⁹

Dr. Bacon writes that the "reformed principle of appointed worship," which can be found in the Chronicles passage, "is simply the plain reformation doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* as it applies to worship.... We are not making something special out of it. We are simply saying that God has given us all the instructions that we need to do every good work. When you take away all the argumentation on both sides, what it comes down to is this: either God has told us everything that we need to do in order to do his will or hasn't. If we have to add something—if we have to take the decrees of counsels, or the decrees of popes, or the decrees of the minister—then what we have is something that has been added to God's Word. At the point we add anything to God's Word, we are not following the doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* or the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture" (Bacon, "Regulative Principle," 15).

George Gillespie

As previously noted, besides editing *The Blue Banner*, and now *The Confessional Presbyterian*, Chris Coldwell is sole proprietor of Naphtali Press. In 1993, following up on the extract printed in 1989, he published a complete critical edition of George Gillespie's *Dispute*

Against the English-Popish Ceremonies. A Scottish commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, Gillespie authored what even opponents of historic Presbyterian worship (such as John Frame) acknowledge is an elaborate defense of the Puritan principle of worship.

In 1995, Joel R. Beeke penned a review of this now sadly out-of-print work, noting the following:

English Popish Ceremonies was a historically crucial work written by Gillespie at the age of twenty-four, to the astonishment of both friend and foe in Scotland. In trenchant style, Gillespie divided his work into four parts, arguing against (1) the necessity, (2) the expediency, (3) the lawfulness, and (4) the indifference of the English-popish ceremonies that Charles I was seeking to impose upon the Scottish church. It is a detailed, masterful polemic against human innovation in public worship.... This new critical edition of Gillespie's first renowned work will undoubtedly become the authoritative edition of *English Popish Ceremonies*.... This book still has lessons to teach us today, not only about the dangers of liturgical renewal movements and the church growth movement, but also about the need to retain the simplicity of scriptural worship at all costs. We would do well to ask ourselves the question: Are we allowing the simplicity of scriptural worship to slip through our fingers—perhaps slowly, subtly, almost imperceptibly—so that we are actually abandoning the very principles for which our forefathers were willing to live and die?¹⁴⁰

John M. Frame

In a 1992 article in the *Westminster Theological Journal*, Professor John Frame posed “questions” regarding the regulative principle of worship;¹⁴¹ and in a subsequent issue of that journal, he received some significant “answers” from Professor T. David Gordon.¹⁴² Undaunted, four years after the journal article,¹⁴³ Professor Frame encapsulated his ideas in a book entitled, *Worship in Spirit and Truth: A Refreshing Study of the Principles and Practice of Biblical Worship*.¹⁴⁴ Despite his protestations to the contrary, the position he takes in these works denies the regulative principle of worship, even while he professes allegiance to it. This book received some well-deserved criticism in several notable reviews: (1) Brian Schwertley, “The Neo-Presbyterian Challenge to Confessional Presbyterian Orthodoxy A Biblical Analysis of John Frame’s *Worship in Spirit and in Truth*,”¹⁴⁵ (2) Dr. Joseph Pipa, Review: “Worship in Spirit and Truth,” *Presbyterian & Reformed News* 2.4 [Fall 1996]

10–11; (3) Kevin Reed, “Presbyterian Worship: Old

important by Dr. Bacon was a review of Benjamin Shaw’s *Studies in Church Music* entitled: “Worship Song Regulated by Scripture,” 2.12 (December 1993). Among valuable reprints of rare material compiled by the editor can be named the 1825 Letter by Samuel Miller to the New York *Commercial Advertiser* against the observance of Christmas (2.11, November 1993), and several letters to the Richmond *Watchman and Observer* of 1849 on the use of the organ in public worship (3.1–2, January–February 1994). The newsletter also republished lengthy articles such as John Girardeau’s *Discretionary Power of the Church* (8.5–6, May–June, 1999); James Begg’s *The Use of the Communion Table in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper* (7.11, November 1998; 7.12, December 1998; 8.1, January, 1999; 8.2, February, 1999; 8.3, March, 1999); John B. Adger’s *A Denial Of Divine Right For Organs In Public Worship* (12.3, July–September, 2003); and James Durham on *The Second Commandment*, 10.2 (April–June 2001) and 10.3 (July–September 2001), which was published subsequently in James Durham, *A Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, ed. Christopher Coldwell (Dallas, Tex.: Naphtali Press, 2001). Mr. Coldwell also contributed a lengthy historical piece taking up an entire issue, on the history of American Presbyterian opposition to the ecclesiastical observance of the days of the so-called Christian calendar, “The Religious Observance of Christmas and ‘Holy Days’ in American Presbyterianism,” 8.9–10 (September–October 1999). Mr. Coldwell’s interest in researching and writing this article was sparked by assertions in Mark Horne’s “Celebrating a Calvinistic Christmas with a Clear Conscience” (1997). Similar defenses for the ecclesiastical observance of the days of the ‘Christian calendar’ are Jeffrey Meyers’ “Brief Defense of Christmas” (December 2003) and “Is the Church Year Biblical?” (1997); see http://www.hornes.org/theologia/content/cat_worship.htm.

140. Joel R. Beeke, “Review,” *WTJ* 57.1 (1995).

141. John M. Frame, “Some Questions about the Regulative Principle,” *WTJ* 54 (Fall 1992) 357–366.

142. T. David Gordon, “Some Answers About the Regulative Principle,” *WTJ* 55 (Fall 1993) 321–329.

143. John Frame’s thoughts as expressed in the *Westminster Theological Journal* have appeared elsewhere, such as the internet; see http://www.christiancounterculture.com/articles/worship_reg-principle.html. See also his “Reply to T. David Gordon,” *WTJ* 56 (Spring 1994) 181–83.

144. John M. Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth: A Refreshing Study of the Principles and Practice of Biblical Worship* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing Co., 1996). This book is an expansion of “The Lordship of Christ and the Regulative Principle of Worship,” as well as another paper written for the Worship Task Force of the Committee on Mission to North America, PCA, both unpublished. David C. Lachman reviewed the “Lordship of Christ” article in “Worship in the PCA: a Review article,” *The Presbyterian Advocate*, ed. David C. Lachman, 5.1–2 (April–May 1995) 16–20. Dr. Lachman concluded his article: “Taken as a whole Frame’s paper is highly irresponsible and divisive. It does not even have the merit of being a decent piece of scholarly writing: rather than take the time and effort to look into what the Reformed have thought (and this includes the *Confession*), Frame simply refers repeatedly to ‘some’ and ‘others’ and then supplies whatever opinion will best set up his arguments. That such is taken seriously in the PCA does not bode well for the future of the church” (20).

145. Published on the Internet at <http://www.reformed.com/pub/frame.htm>.

and New: A Review and Commentary upon *Worship in Spirit and Truth*.”¹⁴⁶ This book as well as Professor Frame’s other writings on worship were also critically surveyed previously by this author in *Reframing Presbyterian Worship*.¹⁴⁷

Ballet in the PCA

In the PCA the worship wars continued with practices at General Assemblies being characterized as “excellent,” or not, depending upon whether there was a ballet dance in the middle of the worship service.¹⁴⁸ Roger Schultz opined on the situation in a report on the 1992 PCA General Assembly.

Reformed Presbyterians stress the regulative principle of worship (see WCF, chapter 21). Worship is to be done only in the manner that God has shown in His Word. As Jesus put it, true worship must be heartfelt and sincere (“in spirit”) and in the way God prescribes (“in truth”). True worship is not done according to human innovations and trends.

Throughout scripture, apostasy began with deviation in worship. The major problem in the Old Testament was not with atheism, the denial of scriptural authority, or the outright repudiation of the true God; it was in unauthorized human innovations in the worship and service of God. Examples can be found in Gen 4:5, Ex 32:1, Num 16:40, 1 Ki 3:3, 2 Chr 26:18.... Holding these biblical and confessional principles, Presbyterians traditionally have been suspicious of irregular worship.

Recently, however, the PCA has witnessed a number of annoying deviations from the regulative principle. At the 1991 G.A., for instance, commissioners were subjected to a ballet spectacle at one of the worship services. It was defended as an uplifting and inspiring performance. (An elderly commissioner reportedly expressed relief after the exhibition—he thought it was going to be

a belly dance, instead of a ballet dance!) Dance happy ‘BRs’¹⁴⁹ have vigorously pushed their agenda in the denomination. In one enthusiastic congregation, a ‘TR’ elder, obviously with a ranching background, has “grown weary of the staged habits of the Worship Leaders who roll their eyes up into their heads like heifers in a hail storm!”

Experimentation with worship can be a slippery slope. If one’s worship is restricted only by a ‘pragmatic principle’—[i.e.] what people like, what attracts the unsaved, what is currently fashionable—there is no limit to what might be permitted. Conceivably, there could be belly dancing. (Think of how it would attract the unsaved!) An oldtime Baptist preacher in Fort Worth, Texas, Frank Noms, once brought a horse into the sanctuary to attract the city’s cowboys. Snakehandlers of southern Appalachia claim that their unique services enhance faith. ‘BRs’ who abandon the regulative principle have no grounds to reject such practices. They might even like the snake-handling services, since participants usually dance (yes, *dance!*) with the snakes.

John (Jack) Allen Delivuk

On April 3, 1993, John Allen Delivuk, delivered a paper before The Evangelical Theological Society meeting in Philadelphia, entitled, “The Defense of the Regulative Principle of Worship by the Authors of the Westminster Confession.”¹⁵⁰ In this paper Dr. Delivuk used “documents produced by the Assembly and the writings of the members of the committee that wrote the Confession” to discuss the “reasons used in the seventeenth century to defend the regulative principle as God’s will for worship.” From the standards and the writings of committee members such as Robert Harris, Samuel Rutherford, Thomas Gataker, and George Gillespie, he concluded the following:

In this essay the arguments used to defend the regulative principle of worship have been examined. The authors of the Westminster Confession saw the regulative principle as an exception to the doctrine of good works because it had no place for adiaphora. They used the sufficiency of Scripture, liberty of conscience (their favorite), the Second Commandment, the hermeneutical principle that positive commands forbid their negatives, and the doctrine of uniformity as proofs to show whatever is not commanded in worship is forbidden. The use of these arguments involved principles of Biblical authority found in Chapter 1 of the Confession,

146. Published on the Internet at <http://www.all-of-grace.org/pub/others/regulativeprinciple.html>

147. Frank J. Smith and David C. Lachman, “Reframing Presbyterian Worship,” 116–150.

148. Roger Schultz, “PCA General Assembly, Irregulative Worship,” *Contra Mundum* 5 (Fall 1992) 24.

149. “To put it simply, the denomination is divided between Reformed and Evangelical – the ‘TRs’ and the ‘BRs’,” Schultz, 24. These stand for ‘Truly Reformed’ and ‘Barely Reformed.’

150. This paper is available at www.tren.com. It was also printed in *Semper Reformanda* 2.1 (Spring 1993) 34–53. An expanded version ran in *WTJ* 58.2 (Fall 1996) 237–256.

especially the analogy of faith, good and necessary consequence, the sufficiency of Scripture, and Scripture as the sole judge of religious doctrines and practices. The arguments for the regulative principle give great insight into the Puritan-Presbyterians' love for their neighbor and their zeal for Scripture as God's will for the church and the judge of all other forms of revelation.

What lessons do the Westminster Assembly's doctrine of worship teach? First, the value of asking the right questions about worship. The Assembly asked: what does God want in his holy worship? What is the source of God's will concerning worship? These are the two fundamental questions that need to be answered before determining the acts of worship. Secondly, the value of theistic thinking in determining the acts of worship. The rising strength of humanism in our society has affected worship in the United States. As a result liturgical forms are frequently chosen by majority vote, or imposed by powerful clergy and/or other church leaders. Often these changes have admirable motives such as attracting the lost to the church, however, because the authority for the changes is man's will, we must ask whether Christ or man is king. Finally, the Assembly reminds us that love of our neighbors is a significant factor in determining worship changes. The Westminster Divines included strong declarations concerning liberty of conscience in the Westminster Standards in large part to protect the sensitive consciences of believers from unbiblical additions to worship. In my opinion, the Westminster Divines asked the most significant questions about worship, and answered them correctly (17–18).

T. David Gordon

Presbyterian Church in America minister T. David Gordon has been in the forefront of those in his denomination who have advocated a "traditional" approach to worship. Besides being a seminary and college professor, Dr. Gordon has also been a pastor, and thus in a position to bring his beliefs to bear in practical application.

In addition to some published exchanges with John Frame regarding worship,¹⁵¹ Professor Gordon has written unpublished papers, some of which have gained wide currency on the internet and other places. One of his papers is entitled, "Nine Lines of Argument in Favor of the Regulative Principle of Worship."¹⁵² His nine points are: Argument from the Limits of Church-Power (the regulative principle of church government lying behind the regulative principle of worship);

Argument from Liberty of Conscience ("to require a person, in corporate worship, to do something that God has not required, forces the person to sin against his/her conscience, by making them do what they do not believe God has called them to do"); Argument from Faith ("God cannot be pleased by worship which is unfaithful, that is, worship which is not an obedient response to his revelation"); Argument from the distance between the Creator and the creature; Argument from the character of God as jealous; Argument from those passages where piety is described as doing exclusively what God wishes; Argument from the severity of the temporal punishments inflicted upon those who offer to God worship other than what He has prescribed; Argument from the sinful tendency towards idolatry; and Argument from Church History.

However, Dr. Gordon has also carved out a third category in his dealing with the doctrine of worship—in addition to "elements" and "circumstances," he is a staunch champion of the notion that the elements may come to expression by a variety of "forms." By "forms," he means that the particular language in which an element of worship may be expressed is a matter of indifference, rather than being fixed.

While it is true that with regard to some of the elements of worship, the content is not fixed (such as the praying of prayer and the preaching of the word), it is also true that that principle is not universally valid for all of the elements of worship. For example, the content for the reading of the Word is, by definition, fixed, since we are confined to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments for that element. Similarly, we would suggest that the content of the singing of praise is likewise fixed. The point to be maintained here is that Scripture itself will determine whether the "form" is fixed or free; and that each element must be handled on an individual basis.

Stephen Pribble and Sherman Isbell

In a 1993 issue of *The Presbyterian Advocate* an article appeared by OPC minister Stephen Pribble, entitled "The Regulative Principle and Singing in Worship," which was later reprinted as a pamphlet by Greenville Seminary.¹⁵³ Pribble defines the regulative principle:

151. T. David Gordon, "Some Answers About the Regulative Principle," *WTJ* 55 (Fall 1993) 321–329.

152. One location for this article is http://www.reformedprescamb ridge.com/articles/Regulative_Principle.html.

153. Stephen Pribble, "The Regulative Principle and Singing in Worship," *The Presbyterian Advocate*, 3.9–10 (November–December

The regulative principle of worship requires man to worship God only as He has commanded in His Word. To add elements of human innovation into the worship of God brings His just displeasure.¹⁵⁴ As defined by the Shorter Catechism, “The second commandment forbideth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word” [WSC 51]. Presbyterian office holders take a solemn vow to uphold this fundamental principle.

Mr. Pribble subsequently proceeds to argue against the position of exclusive psalmody. This brought the following reply from Sherman Isbell, in a serially run article which first appeared in *The Presbyterian Reformed Magazine*:¹⁵⁵

1993; reprint, Greenville, S.C.: Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 1995). Online at: <http://www.all-of-grace.org/pub/pribble/hymnsing.html>.

154. Pribble comments: “Note how severely God punished such a human innovation in Leviticus 10:1–2: ‘And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.’”

155. Sherman Isbell, “A study on the regulative principle and worship song, including an examination of Calvin’s view respecting the singing of Psalms” in *The Presbyterian Reformed Magazine* 8.2 (Summer 1993), 10.3 (Fall 1995), 10.4 (Winter 1996). Two additional articles, “Regulated Worship,” and “The Heavenly Sanctuary,” are a finalized form of material published earlier as “Hear Ye Him: Worship in the New Testament,” in *Worship in the Presence of God*. These articles are online at <http://members.aol.com/rsichurch/worship.html>.

156. The author cites Pribble from *The Presbyterian Advocate* 3.9–10, pages 25–26, 29.

157. Isbell notes: “The section of the majority report dealing with the Old Testament material, apparently written by Edward J. Young, acknowledges that the biblical narrative identifies specific song texts used in worship, but Young does not consider the implications of this biblical specificity for the operation of the regulative principle. ‘Report of the Committee on Song,’ p. 53: ‘We know definitely from I Chronicles 16 that the content of some of our present psalms was used in worship. It is obvious from other psalms that they were intended for use in the public worship of God; see Pss. 95:2, 27:6, and 100:4. Another reference which clearly gives an indication as to the content of song is II Chron. 29:30, where Hezekiah expressly commanded the use of the words of David and Asaph the seer for a certain occasion of worship.’”

158. Isbell, “Study on the regulative principle...,” 10.4, 143–144.

159. John R. de Witt, “The Form of Church Government,” in *To Glorify and Enjoy God: A Commemoration of the 350th Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly*, ed. John L. Carson and David W. Hall (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994) 166.

160. Iain H. Murray, “The Directory for the Public Worship of God,” in *To Glorify and Enjoy God*, 176–178.

161. As noted previously, Rowland Ward characterizes Murray’s comments as too general a treatment of the regulative principle. Rowland S. Ward, “The Directory for Public Worship,” 8 n34.

In a recent discussion of psalmody, Stephen Pribble, a minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, claims that while the Bible authorizes the practice of worship song, it does not indicate any particular text to be used in worship song.¹⁵⁶ His argument is designed to deny a specific divine appointment, because where there is a specific appointment of worship elements or religiously-significant circumstances, the biblical regulative principle would exclude additions. This objection not only fails to appreciate that the biblical narrative specifically declares that the Psalms composed by David and the seers are for use in worship song,¹⁵⁷ but it also overlooks the canonicity of the Book of Psalms. The very inclusion of the Psalter in the canon constitutes a divine prescription for its use in the church’s worship song. It is passing strange to assert that the Lord has not indicated any particular text for use in worship song, when the Lord has given the church, in the canon of inspired Scripture, a collected book of one hundred fifty worship songs. Such assertions question whether the contents of the biblical canon are a reliable indication of what God intends to be used in the church’s worship; one might as well argue that the composition of the canon provides no specific indication that the sixty-six books in the canon are those to be used when the Word of God is read in the church’s worship.¹⁵⁸

Westminster Assembly 350th Anniversary

In 1994, The Banner of Truth published a volume containing papers delivered in September 1993 at the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) commemoration of the 350th anniversary of the seating of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. The collection does not contain much on the regulative principle per se, but J. R. de Witt mentions the doctrine in its general form in passing in his paper on the Westminster Form of Church Government,¹⁵⁹ and Iain Murray’s paper on the Directory for Worship¹⁶⁰ contains a brief and very general treatment of the principle itself.¹⁶¹ In his contribution to the volume, Murray states: “The lengthy discussions necessary on such points [e.g., the Scots’ pressing for use of a table in observing the Lord’s Supper] is a healthy reminder to us that merely to adhere to the regulative principle is not to resolve all questions instantly. Nor is it an easy solution to all questions.” And then he adds an endnote at this point:

The over-doing of the regulative principle has too often been its undoing. For example, some Seventh Day

Baptists sought to use it against all sung praise in worship. More often it has been used to claim that nothing is warranted in praise except the book of Psalms. The latter was not a question which came before the Assembly but clearly some of its leading members (e.g. Thomas Manton, who wrote “The Epistle to the Reader” prefixed to the Confession) did not hold that position, notwithstanding their high view of the Psalter. See Manton on James 4:13 in his *Works* (London: Nisbet, 1872), vol. 4, p. 442” (326 n17).

In 2002 Murray wrote a short booklet against the position of exclusive psalmody in public worship where he made a similar appeal to Manton.¹⁶² There are some problems with Murray’s comments regarding Manton. First, Dr. Manton, who wrote the preface in 1658 which has long been traditionally included in Scottish editions of the Westminster Standards,¹⁶³ was not a member of the Westminster Assembly. Second, Dr. H. M. Cartwright, in a rebuttal to this work,¹⁶⁴ suggested Murray was selectively quoting from Manton regarding psalmody and pointed Murray and the reader to the very next page (page 443) of the volume the latter referenced where Manton writes: “If the practice of the apostles may be interpreted by their instructions, the case will be clear. In Col 3:16 and Eph 5:19, Paul bideth us ‘speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs’. Now these words (which are the known division of David’s Psalms, and expressly answering to the Hebrew words *Shurim*, *Tehillim*, and *Mizmorim*, by which his Psalms are distinguished and entitled), being so precisely used by the Apostle in both places, do plainly point us to the Book of Psalms.”

Thomas Manton, along with twenty-four other eminent Puritan divines, also put his name to the preface of an English version of the 1650 Scottish Psalter, which expressed this opinion: “Now though spiritual songs of mere human composure may have their use, yet our devotion is best secured, where the matter and words are of immediately divine inspiration; and to us David’s Psalms seem plainly intended by those terms of “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” which the apostle useth (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).”¹⁶⁵

PCA “Consensus” Statement

In 1994, there was an attempt within the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) to devise a “consensus” statement regarding the on-going theological struggles between “strict subscriptionists” and “system subscriptionists.” That attempt, which had as its focal point

a meeting in September that year at the Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, Tennessee, proved to be abortive, as the organizers of the event were shocked at the strong grass-roots opposition to their direction.

In conjunction with this meeting in Knoxville, a “Proposed Statement of Identity” was printed and distributed to all PCA ministers. Among the matters addressed in the booklet was the issue of worship.¹⁶⁶

First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett, Texas, also weighed in, and put together a booklet in opposition to the “consensus” document. This present author was responsible for the chapter responding to the “statement of identity” with respect to worship,¹⁶⁷ and what follows in this section is taken almost verbatim from that work.¹⁶⁸

The *Proposed Statement of Identity for the Presbyterian Church in America* begins the discussion on worship with some lofty comments, affirming that “[a]s Presbyterians, we are the grateful heirs of the Reformed tradition, which has clearly based its faith and practice on the Word of God alone. In particular, the Protestant reformers modified and sanctified the worship of God in their day to conform to the pattern of biblical, apos-

162. Iain H. Murray, *Should the Psalter be the only Hymnal of the Church?* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2002)

163. The Manton preface first appeared in the 1658 edition which goes by the name “Rothwell B”. See “Antiquary: The Development of the Traditional Form of *The Westminster Standards*,” in *The Confessional Presbyterian* 1 (2005) 170.

164. H. M. Cartwright, “Psalms or Hymns in Public Worship,” *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* (May 2002). Online: <http://www.fpchurch.org.uk/EbBI/fpm/2002/March/article4.htm>.

165. *The Psalms of David In Meeter. Newly Translated ...* (London: Printed for the Company of Stationers..., 1673). The signers of the preface to the reader were Thomas Manton D.D., Henry Langley D.D., John Owen D.D., William Jenkyn, James Innes, Thomas Watson, Thomas Lye, Matthew Poole, John Milward, John Chester, George Cockayn, Matthew Meade, Robert Francklin, Thomas Doodelittle, Thomas Vincent, Nathanael Vincent, John Ryther, William Tomson, Nicolas Blaikie, Charles Morton, Edmund Calamy (the son of the Westminster Divine), William Carslake, James Janeway, John Hickeys, and John Baker.

166. *PCA Consensus: A Proposed Statement of Identity for the Presbyterian Church in America* (privately published and distributed by the Vision2000 Caucus of the PCA, [1994]).

167. Another collection of papers on the Proposed Statement of Identity, reproducing three papers from the FPCR collection, was published in *The Presbyterian Witness*, ed. Byron Snapp, Part One, 8.4 (Fall 1994); Part Two, 8.5 (Winter 1994). The chapter on worship was penned by Pete Hurst: “Worship: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly” (8.5.10).

168. *Answers to PCA Consensus: An Analysis of A Proposed Statement of Identity For the Presbyterian Church in America* (Dallas, Tex.: Blue Banner Books, 1994). Available on-line at http://www.fpcr.org/blue_banner_articles/answers_to_pca_consensus.htm.

toloc practice. In this respect, we believe our tradition still provides a model for true, spiritual worship. As we affirm our past, we are eager to live out these same principles in today's world. In order to do this carefully and fruitfully, especially when there are differences of opinion in the Church, we would always return to the first principle of our Reformation forefathers: *Sola Scriptura*, the Word of God alone."¹⁶⁹

What follows are three fairly good statements about the place of worship in the life of the believer. The fourth statement affirms "a broader sense of worship, which includes the whole of the Christian life offered as a living sacrifice to God"; and denies that "either 'broad' or 'narrow' worship without the other pleases God." While we would have preferred that the life of Christian service not be called 'worship' even in a broad sense, we are grateful that the distinction is being made.

The fifth statement affirms "that worship which honors God will also edify believers ... and challenge unbelievers." We wholeheartedly agree. There is an apologetic value to all of God's Law, including the Second Commandment; and, when worship properly emphasizes His transcendence and glory, people are brought to their knees in adoration and worship. However, we are disturbed by the last portion of the statement: "We deny that seeking the glory of God in worship requires us to ignore ... our obligation to show the love of Christ to fellow worshippers (1 Cor. 11:17–34; John 13:35; James 2:1–4)." While the words themselves may in a technical sense be true, the implication seems to be that washing one another's feet, for example, may be appropriately a part of the worship itself. That, of course, would not be a warranted conclusion.

We would agree with the subsequent paragraphs that worship is "vertical" in focus: God-centered and Christ-centered, in and through the Holy Spirit"; and that "there is also a 'horizontal' aspect of worship, for glorifying God does not forbid, but requires, us in worship to edify one another (1 Cor. 14:26)." The only potential problem is that we need to make sure that the 'horizontal' aspect comes not for its own sake, but as a function of the 'vertical'—i.e., we must maintain that worship remains, principally, theocentric.

Statement six begins to get into where there are some fundamental disagreements. This thesis says that the elements of worship are to be "limited to those which God approves in Scripture, ... in both the Old and New Testaments." Further, it denies "that human beings have liberty to devise elements of worship that God has not

prescribed or to disallow others to perform elements He has clearly approved."

On the surface, it might appear that these sentiments are quite sound and orthodox. But there are at least a couple of subtle problems with the way in which they are phrased. In the first place, although it is true that all of Scripture informs our worship, we need to be careful to affirm that the ceremonial worship of the Old Covenant has no place in the New Covenant. The abrogation of the ceremonial law, indeed, was set forth previously in the *PSI*. However, it is important to underscore the fact of the essential difference between the symbolical service, particularly as associated with the sacrificial system, and the streamlined, unadorned worship of the era in which we have been brought, as it were, into direct approach to our God. Part of the basic teaching of our *Confession of Faith* is that the New Covenant, in contrast to the Old, is administered with greater simplicity and less outward glory (WCF VII.6). This radical covenantal distinction must be maintained. The problem is that statement six, taken by itself, might be used by some to justify such practices as burning incense.

Secondly, this implication seems more plausible when we look at the curious way in which the denial is framed. Put simply, the regulative principle of worship is this: whatever God has commanded is required, whatever is not commanded is forbidden. The proper opposite, then, of the first part of the denial—human beings having liberty to devise non-prescribed elements of worship—should not be "to disallow others to perform elements He has clearly approved," but rather, "not to perform elements He has clearly approved." While we certainly believe that mere mortals should not forbid the performance of commanded worship practices, there is at least the possibility that the awkward wording could be used by some to justify such things as liturgical dance, since some might believe that that was a worship practice and one which God has clearly approved. With regard to that example, please note that if liturgical dance is that which is divinely approved, then its use not only should not be forbidden, but it would also be *mandated* for use in all churches.

Statement seven deals with what we might term the *adiaphora*—those things which are indifferent. We have no particular problem with the first two sentences, which speak of the 'circumstances' of worship. But then a novel, a-historical term is used—'expressions' of worship. We are not sure where exactly this term came from, although there is an attempt towards the close of the chapter to justify it bibliographically. The problem is that, in contrast to the paper's contention (*PSI*, 21), the

169. PCA CONSENSUS: A Proposed Statement of Identity for the Presbyterian Church in America (PSI), Chapter V, 18–21.

“idea of a variety of ‘expressions’ of normative worship ‘elements’” does not appear conceptually in Calvin’s *Institutes*, nor in this author’s chapter on “The Singing of Praise” in *Worship in the Presence of God*, nor in Samuel Miller’s *Thoughts on Public Prayer*. Nor do the “concept and the terminology” appear in the Westminster Assembly’s *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. The late (and beloved) Robert G. Rayburn can hardly be considered an authority on Reformed worship, as he did not give adequate treatment of the regulative principle in his book. Furthermore, to refer to Charles Baird as an expert on Presbyterian worship is like regarding Hillary Clinton as an expert on ethics and public policy. And William D. Maxwell cannot be viewed as approaching the topic from the historic Presbyterian perspective. All of which means that the document is left pretty much with no support for its position.

Much better would have been to remain with the standard terminology of ‘circumstance,’ which is the Confessional language (WCF I.6) and has a long history of definition and understanding. Circumstantial matters have to do with the time and place of worship, the order of the elements, the specific words of sermons, the tunes used, whether to have chairs or pews, and so forth. They are the ‘accidents’ of worship, without which the elements could not be performed.

The confusion engendered by use of the term ‘expressions’ of worship continues in statement eight, in which elements and expressions of worship are treated similarly. Of course, the elemental parts of worship and the circumstantial details of worship, by definition, are absolutely distinct—they may not be conjoined in any way. But here we see the attempt to deal with elements and expressions of worship as if they are of the same genus. This paragraph goes on to speak of “somewhat [!] controversial” practices of worship, “such as the use of drama, dance, musical instruments and vocalists, the lifting or clapping of hands, the use of women in liturgical leadership, and the use of various forms of art.”

Trying to unpack this list of these practices would require several essays in order to do justice to them. Briefly, we would simply say the following. Drama (i.e., play acting) is nowhere commanded in Scripture as an element of worship; and, indeed, the rise of such in the church’s liturgy has always, historically, been a sign of the degeneration of preaching. Similarly, dance has always been accompanied by a decline in genuine piety.¹⁷⁰ With regard to musical instruments and vocalists, the historic Presbyterian view is that of a *cap-pella* congregational singing during worship.¹⁷¹ The clapping of hands is a form of instrumentation, and so,

if we follow the Presbyterian faith on this point, would be forbidden along with the other instruments (other than the human voice).¹⁷² Raising hands, with palms upturned, during prayer seems to be perfectly Biblical and in accord with divinely-approved posture for that element of worship. Women are to keep silent in the church (1 Cor. 14:34)—which certainly means that they are not to exercise leadership in worship. In contrast to the contemporary practice in some PCA churches to have women read Scripture, Answer 156 of the Larger Catechism tells us that not everyone is to read the Word of God during public worship: the clear implication being that only elders should do so (with the allowance for others, such as ministerial candidates, who are in training for office). Art for its own sake has no place in worship—indeed, if such were allowed, there would be no possible hedge against ‘false’ worship, for almost anything can be fit under the category of ‘art.’

This last item helps to highlight the problem with the next sentiment found in statement eight: “... we affirm that the use of these elements and expressions, although not specifically prohibited by the Scriptures or the Directory of Worship, ought always to be decided with full reverence to God alone, and under the guidance of biblical principles, and with humble respect for the unity of the Church.” Now, we all can be grateful for the humble respect expressed for the Church’s unity. We trust that this desire may represent a change from what has occurred in the past, in which General Assembly Arrangements Committees have felt free to impose bizarre worship practices upon the entire As-

170. The best treatment of these two liturgical practices is Brian Edwards, *Shall We Dance? Dance and Drama in Worship* (Welwyn, Herts, England: Evangelical Press, 1984). Such practices are essentially the same as those that were tolerated in the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS), and which served as partial grounds for the withdrawal from the PCUS by the Continuing Presbyterian Church movement in order to form what is now the PCA. It is surely hypocritical for the PCA now to tolerate the same kinds of practices that not a generation ago were grounds for the exercise of discipline in reverse. If we expect revival and genuine church growth to occur, we must not experiment in worship practice, but rather be faithful to what God has revealed in His Word, remembering the dire consequences to many of God’s people throughout Biblical history for their innovations.

171. The best treatment of the question of musical instrumentation remains John Lafayette Girardeau’s *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1888; rpt. Havertown, Pa.: New Covenant Publication Society, 1983). Girardeau was one of the premier Southern Presbyterian theologians in the nineteenth century.

172. Of course, applause would be inappropriate, whether directed to God or man; for God has not authorized such, and, if directed to man in worship, would be tantamount to idolatry.

sembly while knowing full well that that imposition would engender resentment and cause heartache for many of the commissioners. We trust also that this represents a mature view of the Church as being an organic whole, in which things that happen in one congregation are seen as affecting all of us (and thus, potentially, causing concern throughout the entire denomination). And, we trust that this principle of charity would inform PCA worship practices from now on.

The concern we have, however, has to do with the fact that worship elements (and expressions) are being legitimized on the basis of the principle of their not being ‘specifically prohibited.’ This, of course, is essentially the Catholic/Lutheran/Anglican position; it is also, stunningly, a complete reversal from the fine statements found in the opening paragraphs of this chapter. We are, quite frankly, at a loss to comprehend how the author(s) could subscribe to the regulative principle of worship, and then two pages later in essence deny it. If someone were writing a parody of a ‘loose’ theological position (or of the state of theological and intellectual reflection in today’s church), he could hardly do better than simply to quote from the document under consideration.

The eighth statement ends with the denial “that the Reformed tradition of worship should never change or that it should change without careful reflection in the Church.” This is, to say the least, very ambiguously worded. If what is being said is that the touchstone for determining the elements of worship is always Scripture, we have no problem with that. However, if it is saying that a subjective reverence to God alone, even under the guidance of (general) Biblical principles and even with humble respect for the unity of the Church, may change the substantive parts of worship, then we would be steadfastly opposed to this sentence.

Statement nine deals again with the adiaphoric aspects of worship (using the twin terminology again of circumstance and expression). We agree that circumstances are often determined by “the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed” (WCF I.6). We agree that decisions regarding circumstances should not be made without consulting Scripture, and with the idea “that we [do not] need specific scriptural warrant for every circumstance.” However, we would again point out that a circumstance is not just anything that any-

body wants it to be—that it must be genuinely ‘circumstantial’ (i.e., that it must have no liturgical significance in and of itself, and that it must be something that has to occur in order for the performance of the element).

We agree with statement ten that the New Testament gives freedom “in arranging the elements ... of worship” and that that freedom “should be balanced with concerns for the unity of the worldwide church,” which “unity extends horizontally across the current generation of Christians throughout the world and also vertically across every age (and therefore back into biblical times). Sensitivity towards unity of form and style will also lessen the difficulty that believers experience when visiting other congregations or in relocating and transferring membership.” We concur with this thought, along with the denial “that churches are so free in developing their own styles that they should ignore the practice of other churches, losing sight of the unity of the church at worship.” It is truly a principle of Reformed worship that unity implies uniformity, in terms of the parts of worship. Moreover, even in terms of circumstantial matters, there does need to be sensitivity.

We affirm, with statement eleven, “that the regulative principle sets us free from the ‘traditions of men’”; and we agree with the denial “that the regulative principle should be used to promote an uncritical acceptance of tradition in worship, whether that tradition be Presbyterian or from some other branch of the Church.”

However, there are some difficulties with the next two paragraphs. In passing, we would note that there is the confusion of circumstances and parts of worship: the time of service and whether to use pews or chairs are circumstantial, while the use of a piano or a guitar is not. Also, there is the continuing use here of the term ‘expressions’ of the elements of worship, which, as we have pointed out, only causes confusion.

The final paragraph appears to be raising a straw man argument against the Reformed tradition. Again, let it be said that there are many circumstantial details regarding worship—including which tunes to use—that can, may, and do change throughout time. However, if our tradition, in terms of the elements/practices of worship, is thoroughly Biblical, then there is no reason to modify it. Indeed, why should it be so hard to believe that the Westminster Assembly, representing the pinnacle of Reformation thought and working during a time when the subject of worship was intensely debated, actually may have known what it was talking about with respect to it?¹⁷³

Even though this 1994 review of the *Proposed Statement of Identity* goes beyond a consideration of the reg-

173. The article concluded with these words:

In conclusion, we may say that there are many fine precepts to be found in this section on worship, and many things which we

ulative principle per se, we believe that this material is important for at least two reasons. First, it demonstrates how a significant segment of the PCA was going about to reject the regulative principle, even while, in some sense, trying to affirm it. Secondly, this rebuttal delineates some of the implications of a rejection of the regulative principle.

Steve Gonzales

In 1995, Steve Gonzales, an organizing pastor for the Presbyterian Church in America in Clifton Park, New York, published a booklet which utilized the regulative principle in opposition to the use of drama in worship.¹⁷⁴ Among other points, he urges that worship is not entertainment, and worship does not aim to make people “feel good” (Gonzales, 6–7).

Pastor Gonzales states that determining the manner of our worship is not only according to Scripture’s explicit commands, but also by good and necessary consequence, deduced from Scripture (9).

Besides a basic affirmation of the regulative principle of worship, the booklet utilizes the tri-partite division of elements (which are non-negotiable), circumstances (always negotiable), and forms (which “must be intelligible and bring honor to God” and which “must be clear and in some way assist the worshipper in the offering of meaningful and biblical worship to his God”). (10–13).

Using this three-fold distinction, Pastor Gonzales maintains that drama cannot be justified on the basis of any of those three categories. Drama “is nowhere to be found in the New Testament either by explicit command or a command through inference.” Drama does not meet the standard definition of circumstance, for it is not “a means of communication that is ‘common to human actions and societies.’” And the issue of “form” with respect to drama is irrelevant, since the form “is not concerned with the vehicle through which the substance is conveyed” (13–19).

The author concludes his study by saying: “The application of these principles will assist the true worshiper in determining what is acceptable in worship on biblical grounds instead of basing one’s decisions on personal preferences with no rational, biblical grounds for such preferences” (20).

Mark Dalbey

In 1999, Mark Dalbey became Dean of Students and Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at Covenant

Theological Seminary in St. Louis. At the same time, he completed his D.Min dissertation at Covenant Seminary, entitled, “A Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Look at the Regulative Principle of Worship.”¹⁷⁵

By his own admission, Dr. Dalbey largely follows the views of John Frame with respect to worship. Therefore, there is the same Frame format of distinguishing among “elements,” “circumstances,” and “applications,” although Professor Dalbey tends to use terms such as “forms” and “styles.”

Among the churches which were observed in order to evaluate contemporary worship was a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Lutheran, Evangelical Presbyterian, and PCA congregations were also looked at. However, one of the weaknesses of the study is that “traditional Presbyterian worship” was not defined in terms of the view of the Westminster Standards; accordingly, other than a few passing references to the worship at the chapel at Geneva College, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America school in Beaver Falls,

can all affirm in common. The conceptual problems, however, abound in this treatment of the topic, especially with regard to lack of clarity regarding the relationship of the Old Testament to New Covenant worship and with regard to total confusion over the difference between substantial and circumstantial matters in worship. If this document were to be given serious consideration by a church court, it would have to be significantly revised in order to clean up the terminology and the misconstrued concepts. However, instead of that, we would recommend the following. First, let there be a formal, public debate on the matter, preferably at General Assembly. We believe that that would help to clarify in many people’s minds what is at stake in terms of worship, and to enable them to come to a better understanding of this great subject. Second, perhaps there is a way of expressing consensus, constitutionally. For example, maybe next year or the year after there should be renewed consideration of the proposed Directory for Worship that came as Overture 10 to the 1988 General Assembly, which was designed specifically to state in positive terms what the church does believe regarding worship, while leaving controverted topics such as the content of worship song for future debate by means of using terminology that was deliberately non-specific.

We believe that there can be significant agreement on many matters with regard to worship within the PCA, as evidenced by calls from Roy Taylor and ... John Wood for a rejection of entertainment during public worship. However, for all the reasons cited above, we do not believe that this series of theses from the *Proposed Statement of Identity* can possibly serve that purpose.

174. Steve Gonzales, *The Regulative Principle & Drama in Worship* (N.p. [Greenville, S.C.]: Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 1995).

175. Mark L. Dalbey, “A Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Look at the Regulative Principle of Worship” (unpublished dissertation, Covenant Theological Seminary, 1999).

Pennsylvania, there was no consideration of a genuinely Presbyterian service of worship.

In dealing with a couple of PCA churches in Indiana where he had been pastor, Dr. Dalbey notes that introducing contemporary worship had caused division in those congregations. However, his view of producing unity in the church appears to be that of “traditionalists” learning to submit to the imposition of new “forms” and “styles,” with never a thought given to how the others might learn to worship in accord with the norms of the Presbyterian faith.

At several points, he indicates that those who look to a particular period of church history—say, seventeenth century British Puritanism—as being an ideal time with respect to worship, are guilty of imposing historical-bound models upon the church; whereas those who are more “flexible” with respect to the regulative principle of worship are the ones who are more in tune with Scripture.

In short, one could say that this dissertation is filled with content-less platitudes with respect to worship, which are then bent in a certain pre-determined direction in order to underscore the author’s own predisposition toward “freshness of present expressions of biblical worship.” Perhaps the most telling factor in drawing this conclusion is the fact that the scholar deliberately did not choose to focus on even one congregation that would seek to emulate worship according to the Westminster divines’ understanding of worship—apparently, he does not believe that any such congregations are “relevant” to a “contemporary” society.¹⁷⁶

Steve Schlissel

The Rev. Steve Schlissel is one of the more colorful characters in the Reformed world. A converted Jew, he at one time considered joining the Presbyterian Church in America and even appeared before the Candidates, Credentials, and Internship Committee of the PCA’s Northeast Presbytery in the early 1980s with a view

toward becoming a Presbyterian minister. Because of the greater “warmth” of the Heidelberg Catechism vis-a-vis the Westminster Standards, he eventually became Dutch Reformed, taking his Messiah’s Congregation into the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA). Subsequently, because of his stalwart stance against the liberals in the CRCNA, he was deposed in that denomination from the ministry. He continues as pastor in Brooklyn, New York, as well as chief visionary behind Messiah’s Mandate (a ministry to many of the ethnicities represented in the Metropolitan New York area), and a powerful and persuasive writer and speaker.

Mr. Schlissel has been caught up in several recent controversies. One of those has to do with his being one of the “Monroe Four”—a reference to his participation in the 2002 pastor’s conference at Auburn Avenue Presbyterian Church, Monroe, Louisiana, where comments were made by the speakers which, to many in the Reformed camp, seemed to imply a denial of justification by faith alone. Prior to that controversy, throughout 1999 and into 2000, he also caused alarm throughout Reformed circles by his attack on and rejection of the regulative principle of worship. His series of articles articulating his views appeared in *The Chalcedon Report* and also in the publication of his New York congregation.¹⁷⁷

In the first of five articles, Mr. Schlissel takes the regulative principle head-on. He alleges that the principle is an example of an over-reaction against Romanist excesses; and he denies that the principle is founded on a solid Biblical foundation. Dealing with several of the classical texts adduced in favor of the regulative principle, Pastor Schlissel asserts that the standard Presbyterian exegesis ignores the context for those verses. Specifically, the context often indicates that when the Bible says “don’t add to nor take away from God’s worship,” what is really meant is that God has already prohibited what is in view. In his opinion, “Regulativists consistently ignore the Biblical contexts of their cited passages. One might say that they have, by sheer force of will, domesticated their pet verses.”

Mr. Schlissel also alleges that regulativists miss the point of the regulative principle in the classical text of Deuteronomy 12:32. His perspective is perhaps best summed up in these words: “The point, however, is that what is strictly regulated is the sacrificial system of worship, not worship per se. In fact, mere sacred assemblies are not covered by this rule.” He continues:

176. For his defense of the worship services at the 31st PCA General Assembly (2003) after they had been criticized, see http://www.covenantseminary.edu/resource/Dalbey_Worship.pdf.

177. Mr. Schlissel’s articles appeared in special editions of his church’s newsletter, *Messiah’s Mandate*, and in more numerous parts in the *Chalcedon Report*, throughout 1999 and into 2000. The Chalcedon series began with issue 404 (March 1999) and ran to ten parts. The series appeared as five letters in special issues of *Messiah’s Mandate*, in August, September, December 1999, and January, February 2000 (“First” through “Fourth Letter,” 1999, and “First Letter,” 2000). They are available on the world-wide web at <http://www.messiahnyc.org/articles.asp?catid=8>.

We have no evidence or suggestion that there were divinely originating directives for the elements found in these public assemblies. Clearly, prayer was a great part of it (calling upon the Lord), but the point is that they seem to have arisen from the covenant sensibilities of men, not from a known injunction from God.

The matter of sacrifice, on the other hand, was different. That was clearly set forth by God as the norm. We know this both from early Genesis and all subsequent Scripture. However, from the Fall until the entry to the promised land, even this sacrificial worship was largely unregulated. Noah offered sacrifices, as did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These were offered perhaps in a general conformity to a pattern received from Adam or another. Indisputable, however, is the fact that the offerings were decentralized. There was no one place where God caused His name to dwell, where alone sacrifices could be lawfully rendered. They could be—and were—offered anywhere.

According to the New York pastor,

The Temple worship was strictly regulated because the Temple worship was the Gospel of the Messiah. Thus, when we come to the Scriptures composed after Messiah completed His earthly work—fulfilling the service of types (Col 2:17)—the rigors we read in the New Testament concern the Gospel and sound doctrine.

The New Testament application of the Tabernacle/Temple Regulative Principle is discovered in its intolerance to false doctrine. The RPW becomes the RPD: the Regulative Principle of Doctrine! This is why Paul could abide poor motives, so long as the content of Gospel preaching was sound.

In his estimation,

wherever we find truly orthodox Christianity being practiced we are among those who are abiding by the real Regulative Principle of Worship as found in the Old and New Testaments: covenant-keepers approaching God in faith through the atonement He has provided in His Son, our Lord. This does not mean that any and all things are permissible in worship, or that all manner of worship is equal! I only insist it means that the Biblical RPW is alive and well in orthodoxy, and there only.

Mr. Schlissel rejects the notion that the regulativists

are really genuine guardians of Christian liberty and liberty of conscience. “The regulative principle of worship, said to guard the people of God from the inventions of men, is itself an invention of men and therefore an imposition upon the consciences of those forced to accept it.”

He also bases his argument on the existence of the synagogue, and the fact that early Christian worship was based on synagogue, not temple, worship.

The very existence of the synagogue, however, undoes the regulativist’s position! For he knows that synagogues existed. And he knows that Christ and the Apostles regularly worshipped at synagogues without so much as a breath of suggestion that they were institutionally or liturgically illegitimate. And he knows that he cannot find so much as a sliver of a Divine commandment concerning what ought to be done in the synagogue. And, according to his principle, if God commanded naught concerning what ought to be done, then all was forbidden. And if all was forbidden then the whole of it—institution and liturgy—was a sinful abomination. But that brings him back to Christ attending upon the service of God there and Christ following its liturgy: did He sin by participating in an entire order of worship that was without express divine warrant? The thought is blasphemy!

But for us the synagogue presents no problem at all. We find that it is sacrificial worship only, from Deuteronomy 12 on, that is absolutely restricted in regard to place, performers and particulars. Such restrictions never governed common sacred assemblies.

In the second article, Pastor Schlissel attacks regulativists for their opposition to special religious holy days. Although such opposition was appropriate when fighting against the numerous, and onerous, observations of said days imposed by Roman Catholicism prior to the Reformation, now that the Protestant Church has grown up, she may, with the maturity of an adult, imbibe carefully of such observances.

He also excoriates regulativists for their unthinking opposition to “tradition.”

Without doubt, our Lord condemned any human tradition which obscured, nullified, set apart or contradicted the Word of God (e.g., Mark 7:9 and context). But there is no indication that He opposed traditions which supported, magnified or drew attention to the Word and works of God. It is not, for us, a question

merely of whether an observance can be traced to human tradition, but it is also a question of fidelity to Scripture, propriety in worship, and profitability to the people of God.

In this regard, he cites Jesus' attendance at synagogue worship. According to the author, not only is there no command for the institution of the synagogue, but there is also no command to read any Scripture other than the Mosaic law. But the fact of Jesus' participation in the synagogue, and the fact of His reading from Isaiah, are, for Pastor Schlissel, sufficient proof that Jesus did not hold to the regulative principle.

The New York minister proposes instead of the regulative principle of worship, what he calls the "informed principle of worship." Instead of "if not commanded, it is forbidden," he would say, "if not commanded, it might be forbidden." This "informed principle" is characterized, first of all, by being doctrinally-driven. That is to say, rather than being overly-concerned with "regulation," it is concerned with the teaching of all of Scripture (*tota Scriptura*), and especially with the idea that doctrine will govern one's worship. Secondly, the informed principle is Word-centered, in two senses. One, "informed worship is Word-centered because it self-consciously follows the synagogue pattern endorsed by our Lord and His apostles." It "insists that New Order worship be heavy on instruction." Two, "the clear Word" replaces "an entire system of approach to God." In the New Covenant, in contrast to the Old, we have the reality, a reality which can only be fully-realized in a word-oriented (rather than picture-show) system.

In teaching children we rely heavily on symbol. In teaching adults we rely heavily on words. Words are the things which penetrate the conscience and the heart. Words are what we use to make a direct appeal to a mature man's reason. Words are the true democratizing force behind the Gospel, in God's providence. For non-verbal symbols are indirect and not equally accessible by all, while virtually all people rely on verbal communication for nitty-gritty understanding. This is why the apostles urged, appealed, pleaded, reasoned and explained, and why they didn't dance the message.

Rome is looking for God in all the wrong places. In the Romish/High church approach to things, symbol remains paramount in their liturgy. Accordingly, their message is essentially authoritarian (the priest is the real actor while the audience is made up of rankless observers), is directed at child-like vassals (not

free men) and encourages implicit faith (faith in the clergy rather than faith in Christ). The drama of the Mass, for most of its existence, need not have been in the vernacular because its supposed efficacy was/is not dependent upon any self-conscious understanding on the part of the worshipper. The Word withers where emblems abound.

High church worship begins with alleged mystery and continues along a path of allusion wherein the true God is not directly encountered. Informed worship, on the other hand, begins with a direct encounter between God and His people through His own Word, and brings God and His people closer throughout worship by the very same means. It begins & ends with covenant clarity: I am your God, you are my people. Amen.

High church worship, by depending upon symbol, mystery and allusion, hides God and His Word behind incense, altars, confessionals, pantheons of saints, robes, colors, candles, and magic formulas. It is pure show business, keeping the true God apart from the people. High church worshippers are taught in one thousand gross and subtle ways that the God who created the world cannot be approached directly.

In the fourth article, Pastor Schlissel re-emphasizes the points he has made previously with regard to Deuteronomy 12:32 not teaching the regulative principle of worship as a universal, abiding principle.

Try to see what our regulativist friends have done. They've taken a principle and yanked it from its context wherein sacrificial worship—and that alone—was being regulated. Nevertheless, these same folks, recognizing that the system was to be observed only until the Christ, abstract the principle and then absolutize it. They themselves no longer practice the things the verse was (in context) given to guard, yet they continue to regard the verse as having an independent existence!

Regulativists don't have a human priesthood, which the verse protected—they believe in a priesthood of all believers. They don't have a human-constructed Temple, made according to exact requirements, which the verse guarded—they make church buildings any way they please. They don't have daily, weekly, monthly or annual blood offerings, which the verse oversaw—they use no blood at all in their rituals. They don't do pilgrimages, they don't honor the dietary restrictions, they don't refrain from mixing cloths, they don't keep the same

calendar, they don't do any of the things demanded in the verse's immediate context! And all this is well and good. They see in so many ways that all this must be interpreted in light of the whole Word of God. But when it comes to the principle which was part of the same package which terminated upon Christ's sacrificial work ...¹⁷⁸ Like men in a swoon and afraid of falling, they reach out to steady themselves with a principle rather than the Christ who was therein honored. They are left embracing a verse when all the while the verse was given only so that we might embrace the Christ! Its meaning is found in Him.

Careful now! We are not saying of this whole matter, That was the Old Testament! Rather, we are saying of the sacrificial system, That was Gospel declaration in the Sinaitic administration. The Gospel declaration today is guarded precisely the way it was then: it is forbidden to add to it or take from it (Galatians 1:8 makes that reasonably clear!).

Towards the end of the same article, he compares a proper understanding of 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Peter 3 (in light of all Scriptural teaching), to the subject of worship:

Just as women, though seemingly forbidden by 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Peter 3 from adorning themselves—just as they are actually, in view of all the Scripture, most certainly permitted to adorn themselves, in moderation, so also the people of God may adorn the historical deeds and commandments of God.

But just as a woman must abide by limits in her self-adorning, so must the people of God. Adornment must be just that. It must draw attention to the thing being adorned, not to itself. When adornment becomes obfuscation, deceit or mutilation, it has crossed the boundaries. God permits make-up, He forbids cross-dressing. Putting something on is not sinful in itself. It depends. And that's the Informed Principle of Worship.

Yes, this requires wisdom. Yes, this means we must operate without the convenience of the RPW. At least, we must operate without pretending that it is what God requires. If we'd only say, We've found the RPW helpful in keeping our communion free from Roman excesses, for example, all well and good. And if someone found another route to the same end, no harm done. But at least we'd be able to talk about worship in categories that hold promise for agreement, categories like good/

better/best, rather than I'm faithful and acceptable and you're a papist pig.

In the fifth article, the minister from Brooklyn asserts that the regulative principle is not a doctrine of most of the creeds of the Reformation, but is a construct found primarily within Presbyterianism.

The problem is not a Reformed one. To be perfectly frank, it is a Presbyterian one. Not all Presbyterians are guilty, to be sure, just as not all Reformed are innocent. But the RPW is held as a given far more commonly among Presbyterians. And it is often joined to the conviction that all the wide world must be compelled to conform to this odd and extra-biblical principle. It stands against Christian liberty just as other oddities of a like fundamentalism do: no long hair for men, no short hair for women, no pants for women, no kilts for men, no smoking, no drinking, no movies, and so on.... We should be able to commend Reformed worship to people without relying upon unproved assumptions, legalisms and impositions. A colleague in Virginia characterized the RPW as "Presbytyranny." Too often this is true. For regulativists sometimes blithely eschew the sound reasoning that might persuade people of whatever wisdom there may be in the practices or convictions they advocate. Instead they try to impose them upon God's people.

Mr. Schlissel also claims that the difference between Continental Reformed and British Presbyterian reflects profound theological differences:

There is a very big difference between the regulativists and the Continental Reformed in their respective approaches to many things, worship being just one. It is the covenantal character of the Reformed that Presbyterians have sometimes been unable to understand and rarely have been able to emulate. (Speaking as a re-grafted son, it's hard enough keeping it alive among ourselves!) This difference in "approach" is discovered in the character of the Westminster Shorter Catechism compared to the Heidelberg. We might put it this way: In the Shorter Catechism we hear someone tell us what a Christian ought to believe. In the Heidelberg we hear the Christian who believes it. In the Shorter, the Word comes from outside. In the Heidelberg, it only comes to us after it has been absorbed by a transformed child of God. As such, our catechism is

178. The ellipse is in the original.

militantly anti-abstractivist whereas the Westminster Standards, for all their magnificence, have come to us in a form which allows, invites or even encourages abstractivist theology.

This is a difference of note.... It helps explain why it is difficult for a Regulated Presbyterian to hear what is being said on this issue. It helps explain why our Confessions (particularly our catechism), while expressing the same truths as Westminster, express them in such a vitally different manner.

The Regulative Principle of Worship—and I refer to it here as it is understood and pressed by its “strict” adherents—is expressive of what might be a fundamentally different way of looking at the Law, the Bible, the Confessions and, in a very real way, expressive of a different way of looking at God. When the RPW (in the strict sense) becomes a core holding, a different character comes to inhabit the church. And that character is not compatible with the rich covenantal legacy as it has come down to us and as is presently enjoyed in some of our Reformed churches.¹⁷⁹

Pastor Schlissel’s articles did not go unanswered. One of the strongest critiques came from the pen of Brian Schwertley.¹⁸⁰ Pastor Schwertley writes:

Even though, according to Schlissel, the regulative principle is unbiblical, legalistic, an invention of men, based on obfuscation and false exegesis, dictatorial, totalitarian, contrary to our legal obligations to God and a human imposition upon the consciences of men, what the Reformers did was not unethical because of their unique historical situation. They were just coming out

of Romanism. If the regulative principle is an unbiblical, dictatorial and human tradition that is a perversion of biblical worship (as our brother asserts), then what the Reformers did was positively sinful.

According to Mr. Schwertley, to repudiate the regulative principle is to repudiate the Reformed faith.

He also asserts that Steve Schlissel sets up a straw man opponent, in that he does not give full weight to the standard understanding of the regulative principle which allows for approved example and good and necessary consequence as well as direct command.

With regard to Mr. Schlissel’s argument regarding the synagogue, Mr. Schwertley notes:

If we accept Schlissel’s false version of the regulative principle (that an explicit divine imperative must be found for every worship practice) then this would be a good argument. However, since good and necessary consequence and approved historical examples are sufficient, this argument is worthless. The fact that Jesus Christ participated in synagogue worship without the slightest hint of disapprobation is warrant enough. Further, there are many passages by which synagogue sabbath worship can be deduced. Leviticus 23:3 says, “Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work in it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.”

After quoting classic Biblical commentators Matthew Henry and Matthew Poole, he continues:

Not only can one deduce weekly synagogue worship from the Bible, but also the basic worship elements of Scripture reading and exposition (cf. Neh. 8:7–8; Lev. 10:8–11; Dt. 17:8–13; 24:8; 31:9–13; 24:8; 31:9–13; 33:8; 2 Chr. 15:3; 17:7–9; 19:8–10; 30:22; 35:3; Ezra 7:1–11; Ezek. 44:15; 23–24; Hos. 4:6; Mal. 2:1, 5–8; Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 13:54; Mk. 1:21, 39; 6:2; Lk. 4:15–22, 44; 13:10; Ac. 15:21; etc.) and prayer (2 Chr. 6:34–39; Neh. 8:6; Isa. 56:7) can be deduced. Virtually all regulativists recognize that the Christian church was the natural outgrowth of the synagogue, in which the covenant people conducted weekly non-ceremonial public worship.

Pastor Schwertley contradicts Pastor Schlissel’s understanding of non-canonical revelation. Regarding standard Puritan exegesis, he writes: “based on the analogy of Scripture (Scripture cannot contradict itself and is its own best interpreter) and the clear

179. The notion that the regulative principle of worship is not found in Continental Reformed theology has been challenged. For example, see Wes Bredenhof’s 1997 internet article, “The Whole Manner of Worship... Worship and the Sufficiency of Scripture in Belgic Confession Article 7,” found on-line at <http://www.swrb.com/newslett/actualNLs/wholewes.htm>. Other writers referenced in this survey sufficiently show the facts to be otherwise as well.

180. See “A Brief Critique of Steven M. Schlissel’s Articles Against the Regulative Principle of Worship,” found on line at <http://www.reformedonline.com/view/reformedonline/schlissel.htm>. For another critique, see also G. I. Williamson’s “A Critique Of Steve Schlissel’s ‘All I Really Need To Know About Worship—I Don’t Learn From The Regulative Principle,’” *The Blue Banner* 9.1–3 (January–March 2000). See also, http://www.fpcr.org/blue_banner_articles/Schlissel.htm. Peter J. Wallace takes a pox-on-both-your-houses approach in “Which Regulative Principle?: A Response to Steve Schlissel and Brian Schwertley” (2000). Online at <http://www.nd.edu/~pwallace/schliss.htm>.

need of divine warrant, it is assumed that historical examples that are not accompanied by explicit commands are based on some prior revelation that did not make it into the canon.” He continues: “Given the testimony of Scripture regarding human tradition and adding or subtracting from what Jehovah says, the Puritan view of approved historical examples (because not all prophecies and divine imperatives were inscripturated) makes perfect sense. Schlissel’s procedure of *assuming* that human traditions are the foundation of worship practices that are not accompanied by explicit inscripturated divine imperatives violates the analogy of Scripture and cannot be proved from the Bible. It is nothing but an assumption. Thus, a large portion of Schlissel’s argument against the regulative principle is nothing but pure speculation—a speculation that contradicts Scripture and supports the foundational principles of Romanism and rabbinical Judaism.”

Pastor Schwertley also addresses the New York minister’s desire to incorporate “human tradition” into worship:

Suppose the elders of a church decide that “Christian drama” should be introduced into public worship. Is it expressly forbidden in Scripture? Can it be profitable to the people of God? Can it be done in a tasteful orderly manner? Suppose the elders decide that readings from the Apocrypha and notable Christian authors should be introduced into public worship. Is it forbidden? Can it be profitable? Can it be done decently and in order? How about a new sacrament? Why not? It’s not forbidden. It certainly can be edifying. We promise it will only be done with proper solemnity. Or, how about a new holy day to commemorate the martyrs of the Reformation? One could come up with thousands of innovations which meet Schlissel’s conditions. Schlissel himself may not want to introduce such things into worship. He may even have a very old-fashioned, traditional Reformed service. However, the only difference between Schlissel and pastors who introduce such innovations is personal preference. Schlissel’s position regarding human tradition in worship is nothing but the typical evangelical understanding of worship.

Steve Schlissel is taken to task for his contention that the regulative principle applied only to temple and ceremonial worship. Mr. Schwertley writes that Mr. Schlissel’s argument fails to appreciate that temple worship included both ceremonial and non-ceremonial elements. Furthermore, if any Scripture passage affirms the regulative principle outside of temple worship,

then the argument linking the principle only to temple worship falls to the ground. Texts such as Matthew 15: 13, Colossians 2:20–23, and John 4:21–24 are adduced in order to demonstrate that the principle applies universally to worship.

Regarding Mr. Schlissel’s easy dismissal of the phrase, “which I commanded them not,” Pastor Schwertley counters:

If God in these passages is merely condemning violations of His law and is not also reminding the covenant people of God of the important principle that human innovations in worship are forbidden, then why is the phrase ‘which I commanded them not’ in these passages at all? Schlissel apparently assumes that if it can be shown that an express violation of God’s law has occurred, then explicit statements of the regulative principle by the Holy Spirit can be ignored. The statement “which I commanded them not” is the regulative principle. The prophet’s covenant lawsuit preaching clearly presupposes that the regulative principle is an integral part of God’s law. It presupposes that God’s people are only to base their worship practices on divine revelation. It makes perfect sense for God not only to condemn explicit violations of His law, but also to remind His people of the principle that underlies purity of worship.

Brian Schwertley concludes his critique with these words:

The regulative principle of worship (i.e., truly Reformed worship) is the only principle that can withstand all exegetical attacks and stem today’s sweeping tide of human worship innovations. It can withstand all exegetical attacks because it is founded upon the sacred Scripture and nothing else. It can stem the tide of human innovation in worship because it cuts off, at the root, all innovation, all human tradition and will-worship. The seeds of will-worship are killed before they can sprout. Humanly originated worship traditions are forbidden at the outset, and are thus not given the opportunity of taking root and displacing that worship which God has instituted. Everything in worship must have a divine warrant; i.e., it must be proved from the word of God. Thornwell writes: “As under the Old Dispensation nothing connected with the worship or discipline of the Church of God was left to the wisdom or discretion of man, but everything was accurately prescribed by the authority of God, so, under the New, no voice is to be heard in the household of faith but the voice of the Son of God. The power of the church is purely

ministerial and declarative. She is only to hold forth the doctrine, enforce the laws, and execute the government which Christ has given her. She is to add nothing of her own to, and to subtract nothing from, what her Lord has established. Discretionary power she does not possess.”¹⁸¹

It is our prayer and desire that our brother would cease his arrogant attacks upon Reformed worship, and instead use his many talents to work for the reformation of worship in these times of serious declension.

We would venture another critique of Brother Schlissel’s writings in this regard. It appears to us that he himself gives us the clue when he notes the difference between Continental Reformed and Presbyterian creeds and confessions. It is not that we would want to posit such a sharp bifurcation between the two—and, indeed, there is good evidence that the regulative principle was embraced, to a greater or lesser degree, in most of the Reformed creeds. However, in making this profound distinction, he also alludes to the fact that the theology of the Westminster Standards is “abstract.” Well, yes, of course—that is precisely what systematic theology is! One of the key problems in the Reformed world over the past several decades has been the reluctance to engage in systematic theology, coupled with the attempt to squeeze systematic theology into a Biblical-theological mold. (This is at least partially to blame for the current controversy over the doctrine of justification.) The

regulative principle of worship, by definition, is an abstract ideal, by virtue of its being a rubric of systematic theology. Mr. Schlissel’s views fail to take that reality into account; indeed, they explicitly deny it.

Terry Johnson

Presbyterian Church in America pastor Terry Johnson has served quite capably since 1987 as senior pastor of the historic Independent Presbyterian Church, Savannah, Georgia. Besides helping to rejuvenate the ministry of an old downtown congregation, he has also helped revive interest in traditional worship, especially by taking the lead in the production of the *Trinity Psalter*, an inexpensive, words-only version of the metrical Psalter conceived as a supplement manual of praise for churches familiar only with hymnals.¹⁸²

In 1996, Pastor Johnson published *Leading in Worship*, designed to aid modern churchmen in the practice of worship.¹⁸³ In a brief introduction, he postulates that not all forms of worship are suitable to perpetuate Presbyterian theology (“Charismatic [and] Episcopalian buckets [cannot] carry Presbyterian water.... repetitious choruses and litanies cannot accommodate the subtlety of Reformed theology”), laments the contemporary liturgical diversity among Presbyterians (“We may face the defection of a whole generation if we do not achieve a greater uniformity of worship”), and advocates the rediscovery of the regulative principle (*Leading in Worship*, 1–3).

Regarding the regulative principle, the Georgia minister argues for its validity not so much on the basis of proof texts, as from the character of Reformed theology as a whole: “Can the creature know how to please the Creator apart from His self-revelation? Can fallen humanity create a form of worship that is approved by a Holy God? May the church legislate ceremonies and rituals for use in public worship not commanded by God in His Word? The Reformed doctrines of Scripture’s sufficiency, God’s transcendence, man’s infinitude, sin’s corruptions, the limits of church power, and the Christian’s liberty of conscience, to name a few, all require the restrictions of the regulative principle” (*Leading in Worship*, 5–6).

However, Pastor Johnson’s presentation is not totally satisfactory. He does properly list the various elements of worship, according to the Westminster Confession of Faith; however, he then says: “While these elements are fixed and unchanging, *circumstances* (e.g., time of meeting; place of meeting; systems for lighting and voice amplification, etc.) and *forms* (e.g., written prayer vs.

181. The author cites James H. Thornwell, *Collected Writings* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1872) 2.163.

182. *The Trinity Psalter* (Pittsburgh: Crown & Covenant Publications, 1994). In 1993 the Twenty-First General Assembly of the PCA received a report from the “Psalm-Singing” Subcommittee whose task was to “formulate practical ways in which Psalm-singing can be encouraged in the congregations of the Presbyterian Church in America and other Reformed churches” (21st General Assembly, 1993, Appendix D, Attachment 1, pages 362–366). The report is online at <http://www.pcanet.org/history/pca/psalmody.html>. At the end of the online text, an editorial note states: “One result of this report was the production in 1994 of the *Trinity Psalter*. As noted in the *Preface* to that work, it is essentially the *Book of Psalms for Singing*, reduced greatly in size by using only one version of each Psalm, by citing only one tune per Psalm, and through the elimination of the musical score. Besides Terry Johnson (who served as Chairman), the other members of this Sub-Committee were as follows: ministers Richard Bacon, Wallace “Bill” Marshall, J. Ligon Duncan III, Larry Roff, Anthony Dallison, J. Camerson Fraser, and Joseph Pipa; and ruling elders J. R. “Sonny” Peaster, J. Ligon Duncan, Jr., and George Caler.

183. Terry L. Johnson, ed., *Leading in Worship: A Sourcebook for Presbyterian Students and Ministers Drawing Upon the Biblical and Historic Forms of the Reformed Tradition* (Oak Ridge, Tenn.: The Covenant Foundation, 1996).

extemporaneous; hymns vs. Psalms; topical vs. expository sermons) are determined by the ‘light of nature and Christian prudence,’ leading us to expect more variety in these areas” (*Leading in Worship*, 5).

The problem, of course, is that his category of “forms” is too broad. While it is true that there is “freedom of speech,” so to speak, with respect to those elements of worship where the actual words are not prescribed (prayer and the preaching of the Word), it is not true to say that that same diversity applies to other elements of worship (such as in the singing of praise). Or, to put the point somewhat differently, the content of each of the elements of worship is prescribed as being a necessary part of that element, but in some elements the divine prescription allows for spontaneity, while in others (the singing of praise and the reading of the Word) it does not.

Furthermore, Pastor Johnson demonstrates his willingness to have the church’s worship modified based on practices of antiquity, rather than based solely on what is indicated in the Bible. For example, he writes: “While moderate liturgical worship developed very early (with use of the Ten Commandments, Creed, Confession, Lord’s Prayer), the responsive litanies (e.g., *sanc-tus, sursum corda, kyrie eleison*, the peace) are mainly a later development. Their use may tip the balance too far in the liturgical direction. Worship that employs only fixed forms is stifling. The complete absence of fixed forms, however, may leave the church unnecessarily vulnerable to the ever changing cultural-ecclesiastical environment” (*Leading in Worship*, 7). However, “using the (Apostles’) Creed” is not an element or practice of worship recognized by the Westminster Confession which he quotes with favor. And responsive litanies and responsive readings of Scripture also do not fit the approved categories. In fairness to Terry Johnson, he does advocate only “few fixed forms”; he urges resistance to the strong temptation “to move the church in a more liturgical direction”, insofar as that movement goes “beyond the use of the Lord’s Prayer, Creed, Ten Commandments, and confession of sin” (*Leading in Worship*, 17).

Another example of his willingness to appeal to what is historical is his favorable treatment of “seasonal services.” Pastor Johnson does reject “the full-blown calendar of ‘holy days,’” citing concerns over creating man-made “ceremonies and rituals not authorized in Scripture,” the resulting downplaying of the weekly Sabbath, the interference with “regular, sequential expository preaching,” and the fact that “the church year is both of dubious historical origins and contemporary

motivation.” Nevertheless, he also concedes that “Reformed churches would do well to follow the example of the Continental Reformed churches in limiting their church year to what has been called the ‘five evangelical feast days’: Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. Some might add Trinity Sunday to this list as well (e.g., Nichols in *Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition*). In this way, the high points of the Gospel message would be commemorated in Reformed churches annually along with most of Christendom, without becoming entangled in the full calendar cycle” (*Leading in Worship*, 103–104).¹⁸⁴

Terry Johnson therefore represents a moderate regulative principle position. He very much wants to restrict worship to the several elements of worship. However, he uses an expanded concept of forms—a modification that can allow for the singing of uninspired hymns during public worship. Moreover, he is willing to engage in practices that have the pedigree of antiquity, but not the approbation of Scripture. These extra-Biblical approaches allows for expanded use of responsive litanies and readings, and moderate observance of the so-called Christian calendar.

Robert Godfrey

In 1999, as part of a series from the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, Robert Godfrey wrote *Pleasing God in Our Worship*.¹⁸⁵ President of Westminster Theological Seminary in California, Dr. Godfrey had witnessed plenty of deviation from regulated worship in the Christian Reformed Church of North America

184. Perhaps Terry Johnson is unaware of this, but James Hastings Nichols is a liberal, and certainly no friend to conservative Presbyterians. Nichols contended that “The Reformers did not ... attempt to emulate the forms of worship of the apostolic church,” but that they “accepted, rather, the patterns established in the second century and maintained by Catholic tradition.” He also wrote: “New Testament worship ... in its variety and flexibility, questions the finality of all liturgical regulations, and by its refusal to admit the cultic as such, it sets authenticity of religious life above all aesthetic criteria. In this sense the Reformers were faithful to the New Testament precisely in declining to pursue either New Testament or patristic patterns literally.” See James Hastings Nichols, *Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968) 19, 23. See also William Stacy Johnson, “Equally Yoked,” in *Presbyterian Outlook*, May 28, 2001, commenting on “Affirmation 2001,” a document which advocated homosexual ordination: “Made public at the Downtown United church of Rochester, N.Y., ‘Affirmation 2001’ claims to stand in the impressive tradition of Harry Emerson Fosdick, James Hastings Nichols, Henry Sloan Coffin and the Auburn Affirmation published in January 1924.”

185. Robert Godfrey, *Pleasing God in Our Worship* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1999).

(CRCNA), a denomination from which he transferred into the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA). Reflecting the burden of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals (ACE), the booklet was targeted at the baneful worship practices in much of evangelical Christianity.

President Godfrey notes that idolatry entails not only worshipping false gods (the focus of the first commandment), but also worshipping the true God falsely (the focus of the second commandment): “This commandment clearly forbids the use of images of God in worship, but it also implicitly forbids all human invention in worship. This prohibition against images means that we must please the true God only in ways that please him. The people of Israel claimed they were worshipping the Lord as the true God when they fashioned the golden calf. They regarded the image as Jehovah (Exod. 32:5–6). But such false worship offended God and brought judgment on the people.” Appeal is made also to other standard texts which demonstrate the Reformed view of worship: Leviticus 10:1 (Nadab and Abihu offering “strange fire”), Colossians 2:23 (prohibition of “self-imposed worship”), and Matthew 15:6 (compared with Isaiah 29:13).¹⁸⁶

While not using the term, “regulative principle of worship,” in his book, this church history professor is clearly intent on maintaining the principle. His desire in this regard can perhaps best be seen in an historical piece he wrote five years earlier on the worship views of John Calvin. Dr. Godfrey concluded the article this way:

For Calvin true worship must wed inward sincerity to outward faithfulness to God’s Word. Worship must be outwardly obedient to God’s inspired direction and also flow from the heart: “... it is not sufficient to utter the praises of God with our tongues, if they do not proceed from the heart...” In true worship the believer exercises faith and repentance as he meets with God and grows in grace. As Hughes Oliphant Old stated, “The outward form of worship and the inward adoration of the heart must remain firmly joined together.”

Calvin’s labor to relate the inward and outward dimensions of worship properly flowed out of his theology as a whole. Reformed Christianity for him was an integrated whole. His doctrine of sin made him deeply suspicious of human instincts and human desires in the matter of worship. His doctrine of grace led him to expect God

to be sovereign in directing worship. He would have insisted that those who think that they can preserve Reformed systematic theology while abandoning a Reformed theology of worship are wrong. Rather he would suggest that where theology stresses the sovereign power and work of God, where the priority of his action and the regulative authority of his Word are recognized, there a form of worship very like Calvin’s own will emerge. The church today needs to listen anew to Calvin on worship so that its worship will not be man-centered, but God-centered and God-directed.¹⁸⁷

The PRCA

The Protestant Reformed Churches in America is a denomination which, since its founding in 1925, has steadfastly maintained a traditional Reformed ministry. In a special 1998 edition of the denominational magazine, *Standard Bearer*, the Rev. Ronald VanOverloop, pastor of Georgetown Protestant Reformed Church, Bauer, Michigan, set forth a standard understanding of the regulative principle. He wrote:

The second commandment’s prohibition of images speaks specifically to the manner in which the one true God is worshiped. Whereas the first commandment rejects all other gods for the one God, the second commandment determines the contents and manner of the worship of Jehovah. It emphasizes that the one God is to be worshiped only in the way He commands, and not as man imagines. An image is the effort of the human imagination to represent the deity, which representation is thought to be needed to regulate the relationship between the god and its worshipers. Thus the second commandment regulates the worship of the one true God.

Pastor VanOverloop appeals to the confessions of the Reformation, including those in the Continental tradition, as well as to standard Scripture proof texts. He also makes the appropriate distinction between “element” and “circumstance”:

By “elements” is meant an item or a matter which is included in the liturgy of the service of worship. “Circumstances” refer to the way in which the elements are included or practiced in the worship service. The elements which God’s Word authorizes to be used to worship Him are: salutation, blessings, singing of Psalms, reading of Scripture, prayer, the administration of the two sacraments, offerings, and chiefly the preaching of

186. *Pleasing God*, 14–16.

187. W. Robert Godfrey, “Calvin and the Worship of God,” *The Blue Banner*, 3.11–12 (November–December 1994) 1–10.

the Word. The regulative principle demands these elements to be a part of the service.

Although there is freedom with regard to circumstantial matters,

the way in which the elements are present in the worship service is to be always one of reverence, so that it is obvious that the Most High Majesty is being worshiped. Also solemnity, simplicity, orderliness, and stability are to characterize the way in which the elements are present in the worship service (1 Cor. 14:40). The way in which the elements of the worship of God are present should not be ritualistic and strictly external ceremony, on the one hand. And, on the other hand, the way in which the elements of a divine worship service are present should not be frivolous and entertaining.¹⁸⁸

In the same issue of the *Standard Bearer* appears an article on preaching by David Engelsma, “Preaching in Worship: Voice of God, Voice of Christ.” In speaking to this subject the professor addresses his problems with a journal and writer mentioned already in this lengthy survey.

The question whether preaching is the Word of God or the word of man is forced on us at the present hour by the assault on preaching in the Reformed churches. It is this assault that drives the movement to overhaul Reformed worship.

One does not have to read many issues of the journal *Reformed Worship* to realize that in the restructured worship that this Reformed periodical envisions and promotes preaching is, at best, one element among many. Fact is, although the editors pay lip service to preaching, preaching does not have their heart. What truly interests them are banners, dialogue, dance, and especially music.

Whereas *Reformed Worship* damns preaching in worship with faint praise and scant attention, Presbyterian theologian John M. Frame expresses that the current renewal of worship in supposedly conservative Presbyterian and Reformed churches takes dead aim at preaching. He does this in his recent book, *Worship in Spirit and Truth: A Refreshing Study of the Principles and Practice of Biblical Worship* (P&R, 1996). Under the heading “Preaching and Teaching” Frame denies that “teaching in the church is ... restricted to elders” (p. 91). He affirms that drama is a legitimate form of

preaching and teaching. He asserts that “teaching can take place through dialogue” (pp. 92–94).

This reputedly conservative and certainly influential Presbyterian theologian says, “I see no reason why some worship services should not be entirely musical” (p. 114).

Basic to his gutting of the regulative principle of worship (by so expanding it that it becomes meaningless) is his denial of any validity to the distinction between official, public worship by the church and informal worship at home by a family (pp. 44, 45). This effectively negates the necessity of preaching at church, for obviously we do not have preaching in our family devotions.

It comes as no surprise, then, that in the last chapter, “Putting It Together,” where Frame describes the ideal worship for which he has laid the foundation throughout the book (which also happens to be the public worship that Frame has created and leads in his southern California “New Life Presbyterian Church”), the preaching of the Word is lost in the shuffle. (I use the word “shuffle” deliberately since Frame also approves dance in the worship, pp. 130–132.) Not the preaching, but the lively praise songs; the choruses; the clapping; the whistling; the tapping of tambourines; John Frame’s prayer; hymn after hymn after hymn; John Frame’s talking to the congregation between the hymns; the Lord’s Supper; and John Frame’s directing the choir are on the foreground (pp. 145–154).

All these other activities take up most of the time. Unless they hold services for two hours or more in southern California, the sermon cannot be longer than 15 minutes.

The remaining articles in this issue of the *Standard Bearer* were Prof. Herman Hanko, “The Songs of Zion: What Shall the Church Sing?” (where the author argues for exclusive psalmody); Barry Gritters, “The Participating Pew,”¹⁸⁹ and Steven Key, “Reformed Worship: Fellowship with the Holy One.”

188. Ronald VanOverloop, “The Force of the Second Commandment in Worship,” *Standard Bearer* (January 1998); available on-line at http://www.rsglh.org/saved%20files/reformed_worship.htm.

189. Gritters writes: “Participation of the pew can be lost, really, in two directions. On the one hand, the pew can participate in the worship in an improper manner, either by usurping the place of the duly appointed officebearers or by involving itself in activities that are not required by Scripture. By allowing this improper participation, the church will inevitably lose the true worship of God.... On the other

The PRCA also makes available on line and in print *Psalm Singing: A Reformed Heritage*, by the Rev. J. Korterling. This pamphlet defends exclusive psalmody and gives a brief statement of the regulative principle from the Westminster Confession of Faith 21.1 as well as the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 35.¹⁹⁰

Gregory Rickmar

A lay member of the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA), Gregory Rickmar helped lead reform efforts in, and later secession movements out of, the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA). In an on-line paper entitled "An Introduction to Reformed Worship," Mr. Rickmar attempts to incorporate insights from James B. Jordan with those who advocate the traditional regulative principle of worship.¹⁹¹

The paper's Abstract states: "This paper concludes that Scripture specifies that certain activities should be included in worship and the order that these activities should proceed. It also concludes that the Lord's Supper should be included in worship every Sunday."

Three characteristics of worship are set forth, viz., dialogue (between God and man), covenant renewal (an emphasis championed by James Jordan), and the fact that worship is regulated by the Word of God. Mr. Rickmar demonstrates that, even though the term "regulative principle of worship" is almost never heard in churches in the Dutch Reformed tradition, the principle is without doubt found in standard Dutch Reformed creeds and theologians, and rooted in the views of John Calvin himself.

The author argues that the Reformed church should begin to develop a greater understanding of worship, especially with regard to the order of public worship.

hand, pew participation can be lost by a reversion to the mentality of Roman Catholic sacerdotalism, where the pew only observes the worship of the priests or ministers, but does not actually participate in the worship of God."

190. The pamphlet also ran as an article in *Reformed Witness*, 6.3 (March 1998), a newsletter published under the auspices of the Evangelism Committee of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California. Online at <http://www.hopeprc.org/reformedwitness/1998/RW199803.htm>.

191. Available on-line at <http://pws.prserv.net/rickmar/aitrw.htm>.

192. The paper also appears in Biblical Horizons Occasional Paper No. 15, *Manual for Lord's Day Worship*.

193. The article, simply entitled "The Regulative Principle," is available on the web at http://www.thirdmill.org/newfiles/ric_pratt/TH.Pratt.Reg.Princ.pdf. The paper is not dated but the file is dated 9/6/1999.

Citing the work of Anglican scholars on the Apocalypse, he writes: "This evidence suggests that New Covenant churches are required to follow the Old Covenant order of worship. After all, if the book of Revelation, which describes a heavenly Lord's Day worship service, repeats themes and ideas from the Old Covenant liturgy *in the same order*, it follows that New Covenant worship should follow that same sequence."¹⁹²

Richard L. Pratt, Jr.

A Professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Dr. Richard L. Pratt, Jr., has offered a redefinition of the regulative principle all the while professing to maintain it. In a brief article on the world wide web,¹⁹³ Dr. Pratt quotes from Westminster Confession of Faith 21.1 as providing "a very common statement of the regulative principle"; and then writes: "The word 'prescribed' has frequently led to the types of narrow assertions listed above, i.e., that we ought not to sing songs other than the Psalms or to use musical instruments in worship. A more helpful formulation of the regulative principle is: 'We must have positive biblical support for all that we do in worship.' This formulation keeps us from a Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, or other model. But it also acknowledges the hermeneutical complexities of deriving directives for worship from the Bible" (Pratt, 1).

Professor Pratt states that the regulative principle was designed to protect against two abuses: Roman Catholic idolatry, and Anglican violation of liberty of conscience with respect to worship. However, he then writes: "To apply the regulative principle appropriately today, we cannot simply repeat the way it was applied in earlier centuries. Rather, we must identify the idols and attacks on liberty of conscience that are present among our churches today. This will differ from church to church and from time to time. One of the principles which the Reformation embraced was *ecclesia semper reformanda est* — the church is always reforming. This means that we cannot represent the Reformed tradition without re-presenting it. Simply to repeat it is not to represent it at all" (Pratt, 2).

This RTS professor sees several contemporary forms of idolatry to be eschewed.

Evangelicals tend to reduce the throne room experience of worship to: a) a classroom for learning; b) a family reunion for mutual encouragement; c) a welcome wagon for visitors and seekers; d) a therapist's couch for psychological healing; and/or e) a variety show for

entertainment. None of these models is entirely wrong, but when any of these becomes the central model for worship, it also becomes idolatrous.

In many Reformed churches today, the idol is intellectualism. We turn worship into a classroom for learning. This emphasis on intellect was appropriate in earlier historical periods, and may become necessary again some day. But just as Hezekiah destroyed Moses' bronze serpent because it *became* and [*sic*] idol, we must destroy the tendency toward intellectualism that has *become* an idol in worship for many of us. There are other worship idols as well, and these must become the focus of our attention as we apply the regulative principle today (Pratt, 2)

With regard to violation of liberty of conscience, he writes: "Ironically, perhaps the closest thing in Reformed circles to the Anglican book of prayer is the insistence of some on particular practices such as Psalm singing. The biblical support for insisting that Psalms be sung (and sometimes exclusively) in every worship service is weak to say the least. In effect, it reflects the convictions of some being forced on others. This violates the regulative principle, and must be rejected in the spirit of the reformation" (Pratt, 2)

He concludes: "It is time for those devoted to continuing the Reformation to revive commitment to the regulative principle. The regulative principle has characterized our tradition for centuries, and we must stop yielding exclusive claim to it to those who have idealized its past applications. We should move forward by applying it in new ways so that we may worship God in the Spirit and in truth" (Pratt, 3)

But, of course, this seminary professor misses the point: the regulative principle of worship, properly understood, is universally applicable, so that the practice of worship should be uniform regardless of the place or time. Therefore, the elements of worship are determined according to Biblical prescription, not on the basis of whether some worship practice might be twisted in the minds of some into idolatry.

Furthermore, Professor Pratt also misconstrues the notion of freedom of conscience. Those who insist on singing only Psalms in public worship are affirming and upholding the principle of liberty, by pointing out that no one has the right to impose on the congregation that which cannot be shown to be Biblical.

While it is true that the Reformed church is always *being reformed*, this work of re-formation is properly the work of the Holy Spirit, not human cleverness. Dr.

Pratt's pleas for a new reformation sound dangerously close to the siren song of liberals.

Other Works for this Period

Two reprints of older works supportive of the Puritan principle of worship appeared about 1990: John L. Girardeau, "The Discretionary Power of the Church,"¹⁹⁴ and Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Worship*.¹⁹⁵ Other books and articles of interest for the period include Richard E. Bacon, "Corporate Worship and Covenant Children" (1992);¹⁹⁶ Henry Sikkema, "Understanding the Regulative Principle of Worship" (1999);¹⁹⁷ R. E. Pot, "In Pursuit of Plainness: The Puritan Principle of Worship" (Spring 1997);¹⁹⁸ and Dr. John F. MacArthur, Jr., "How Shall We Then Worship?" in the IFCA *Handbook* (May 1997).¹⁹⁹ G. I. Williamson's study guide to the Heidelberg Catechism describes the principle,²⁰⁰ as does the guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith by Gerstner, Kelly and Rollinson.²⁰¹ W. Gary

194. John L. Girardeau, "The Discretionary Power of the Church," in *Life Work and Sermons* (Harrisonburg, Pa: Sprinkle Publications, n.d.) 369–412.

195. Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Worship* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990; reprint 1993).

196. Richard E. Bacon, "Corporate Worship and Covenant Children," in *The Presbyterian Reformed Magazine* 6.4 (Winter 1992) 196–199. "If the regulative principle is true, then God is to be worshiped only as He has ordained in His Word. But He has ordained that covenant children are to be present in congregational worship. Therefore, the unlawfulness of [church] nurseries seems to us to be most attractive" (196). Dr. Bacon subsequently penned a larger treatment of this theory, *Revealed to Babes: Children in the Worship of God* (Audubon, N.J.: Old Paths Publications, 1993).

197. Online at http://prcedm.netfirms.com/documents/sikkema/understanding_spw.htm.

198. Pastor Pot writes as one not convinced of the stricter applications of the regulative principle, but presents an overview of writings pro and con. He concludes: "What marks the Puritan approach to worship, then, is an appeal to Scripture. And it is for this reason that the least we can do is give serious consideration to this approach, and provide a well-reasoned Biblical response. When we, as heirs of the Reformation, are accused of departing from the Reformational principle of sola scriptura, then surely we are at least compelled to give this accusation a fair hearing." Online at http://www.geocities.com/r_e_pot/papers/puritan.html.

199. John MacArthur, "How Shall We Then Worship?" in the IFCA *Church and Ministers Handbook* (May 1997). Originally published in: John Armstrong, ed., *The Coming Crisis in Evangelicalism* (Chicago: Moody, 1996). http://www.ifca.org/Handbook/Title_index_page.htm.

200. G. I. Williamson, *The Heidelberg Catechism: A Study Guide* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 1993).

201. John H. Gerstner, Douglas F. Kelly and Philip Rollinson, *A Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith: commentary* (Signal Mountain, Tenn.: Summertown Texts, 1992). The treatment of the principle in

Crampton's study guide to the same asks "What is the Puritan (or regulative) principle of worship?"²⁰² The Rev. Dr. Rowland S. Ward's popular commentary on the Confession of Faith, which first appeared in 1992, addresses the principle, making particular note of it in the context of Chapter 20 and liberty of conscience.²⁰³ James Bordwine's index to the Confession and Larger Catechism includes entries for the principle.²⁰⁴ However, if one were to expect to turn and find an entry regarding the regulative principle in the 1999 *Dictionary*

this commentary seems rather mediocre given the attention the principle had received up to the date of this publication, and while the term 'regulative principle' is used in the index, it does not appear in the commentary itself. On the singing of psalms the writers acknowledge: "The singing of Psalms has also now just about died out. Originally Reformed churches only allowed congregational singing of the Psalms, because they were authentically and authoritatively Biblical and hence lacked the potential contamination of false teaching which might come from the mere human authorship of hymns. Subsequently, however, hymns (which are not even mentioned by the *Confession*) have been introduced into Reformed liturgical use and have virtually driven out what is mentioned and was once exclusively sung" (104–105).

202. W. Gary Crampton, *Study Guide to the Westminster Confession* (N.p.: Trinity Foundation, 1996) 56.

203. "Most editions of the Confession perpetuate a typographical error in that the word *in* replaces *if* in the statement of the original: '... and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word; or beside it, *if* matters of faith or worship.' The error obscures the fact that the conscience is never bound to anything contrary to God's word, and in matters of faith or worship is not bound to anything additional to what is revealed in Scripture (as explained in WCF 1:6). The result of the application of this 'regulative principle' to matters of faith and worship is simply to exclude all the additions of the ages, and bring us back to apostolic standards. It also places limits on the rights of civil government. A civil government may require us to use seat belts in our cars, contribute to a Pension Fund or pay a particular tax. These are not matters of faith or worship, nor are they contrary to Scripture. Such laws should therefore be obeyed." Rowland S. Ward, *The Westminster Confession of Faith: A Study Guide Expanded Edition* (Melbourne: New Melbourne Press, 2004) 178.

204. James Edward Bordwine, *A Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger Catechism, with Scripture proofs: also including chapter summaries and topical index* (N.p.: Trinity Foundation, 1991).

205. D. G. Hart and Mark A. Noll, eds., *Dictionary of the Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition in America* (Westmont, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1999).

206. The RPCNA is said to hold "to classical Presbyterian beliefs and practices. Thus the RPCNA is committed to the regulative principle of worship and therefore sings the psalms exclusively without instrumental accompaniment, using a psalter last revised in 1973" (Hart and Noll, 211–212). "Reformed worship came to America along with the Puritans who settled New England. Puritans seemed radically Zwinglian. The Bible was their textbook, and what was not specifically mentioned in Scripture was banished from Sunday assemblies—God should be worshiped God's way" (282).

of the *Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition in America*, one would be disappointed.²⁰⁵ The term is mentioned as a distinctive of the RPCNA, but the article "Worship, Presbyterian and," suffers from an obvious bias against Puritanism as well as from a false notion that there is a significant difference between the Reformers and the Puritans on the Scriptural rule governing worship.²⁰⁶

Overview: 1990–1999

This decade began with an important marker for interest in the regulative principle of worship with the holding of the 1990 Psalmody Conference. In the 1990s, discussion of the Scriptural rule of worship became more fashionable, indeed unavoidable within mainstream conservative Presbyterianism, with a resulting growth in the amount of literature, both pro and con. The publication of *Worship in the Presence of God* signaled a significant increase of interest in the doctrine, a fact borne out as well by the severity of criticism it received from those opposed to the principle.

In this decade also, various publishers of books and newsletters likewise contributed support to a traditional understanding of the doctrine. Less consistently, others supported the principle in general terms, but with sufficient modifications as to decrease its full import, and still others attempted to redefine the principle altogether.

Further to the left, the conception of the regulative principle itself was being questioned, not only by James Jordan's writings, but by people such as Westminster Seminary professor John Frame, who utilized the term "expressions" as a way of trying to insert into worship practices that, in his view, were neither properly "circumstantial" or "elemental." In the PCA, a "consensus" statement, that appeared the year before Professor Frame's *Worship in Spirit and Truth*, used similar terminology.

At the end of the decade, the most frontal attack upon the regulative principle itself came from the pen of Steve Schlissel, who totally rejected the doctrine, and advocated instead the "informed principle of worship." The assault was sufficiently met; however, Presbyterianism's regulative principle would face new foes in the early years of the twenty-first century.

[Editor's Note. Lord willing, this article will be concluded in the 2007 issue of *The Confessional Presbyterian*.] ■

REVIEWS & RESPONSES

RESPONSE: Leonard J. Coppes, *The Divine Days of Creation* (Thornton: Providence Presbyterian Press, 2004). Response by Leonard J. Coppes to “Reply by Dr. Benjamin Shaw” (*CPJ* 1.154–155).

I thank the editor for allowing me to respond a second time to Dr. Benjamin Shaw, the reviewer of my book on the days of creation. The thesis of my book is: the days of creation were real historical days consecutively and contiguously recorded and occurring, but their length cannot be determined from the text. Hence, it is going beyond the text to say conclusively that they were long or short, although I believe some were very short and the seventh day was long (it has not yet come to a close because God is still in His creational rest). I would grant that it is debatable as to how long days 3 and 6 were—there might be convincing textual evidence that they were longer than an ordinary day. I do affirm that the view I defend, since it is tied to the statements of the creational record, cannot reasonably be used to introduce macro-evolution. I note that the reviewer often agrees with my conclusions but repeatedly affirms that he disagrees with my methodology. Moreover, in developing the definition(s) of words, couplets, and idioms, I did examine multiple occurrences of each element in their respective OT contexts. I thank him for pointing out the three errors in the Biblical references. Finally, I truly apologize if what I wrote previously or below is in any way impolite or offensive—it is not my intention.

I. Dr. Shaw in his Reply to my Response to his Review states (*CPJ*, 1.154): “First, no one disputes something that Dr. Coppes goes to great lengths to demonstrate—that *yom* is used in a variety of senses in the Hebrew Bible. He alleges at the beginning of chapter 4 that ‘there has been so much debate on the range of meaning (semantic distribution) of this Hebrew word.’”

To this I would like to make the following points:

1. “Range of meaning” is not equal to “used in a variety of senses.” Hence, the quote from my book does not say that the debate is whether *yom* has a variety of senses, but it focuses on what those various senses are.

2. As a pastor, I have encountered many who doubt that the Hebrew word means anything other than an ordinary day. Moreover, I was writing essentially to address the discussion in the Orthodox Presbyterian General Assembly, sessions and congregations and not simply to address lexicographers.

3. There certainly is a lot of debate as to whether *yom* always refers to a period of historical time (one of the basic elements of its meaning)—some appear to believe it may signify a literary category (Kline, Collins).

4. Dr. Joseph Pipa wrote, “I doubt if it [the Hebrew word *yom*] ever means ‘stage (era?)’ or a ‘long indefinite period’” (*Did God Create in Six Days?* Pipa & Hall eds. [The Covenant Foundation, Oak Ridge, 1999] 87).

5. Moreover, since the question in the debate on the significance of the creation days should be which of the many connotations of the word is used in its various appearances in that passage, it seems appropriate to present a survey of those connotations.

I note that the reviewer disagrees with my interpretation of *beyom* in Gen. 2:4 (see below), and my statement that the word *yom* is used in “several” ways in the creation account. In discussing the latter statement, he lists three uses. I see four. The *American College Dictionary* defines several as “being more than 2 or 3, but not many” (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1109). Hence, since four is several, how is it misleading to use language accurately?¹ To be certain, this point is not at the heart of my thesis that *yom* is used in several ways in the creation account, and except for the semantic distribution of the Hebrew expression *beyom*, it appears Dr. Shaw agrees with my conclusions.

II. Continuing, Dr. Shaw writes secondly (*CPJ*, 1.154):

Coppes says, “The Bible, outside of Genesis 1, never uses the evening-morning couplet to mean an ordinary day.” This assertion, as stated, is simply not true. I suspect that what Dr. Coppes means is that the couplet, outside of Genesis 1, never refers to the totality of an ordinary day. Instead every single case where the morning and evening occur in the same verse, they refer to a part of an ordinary day.... There is not a single verse where evening and morning are used in the same verse that refers to anything other than an ordinary day. Second, there is no place in the Bible where the precise clause “and there was evening and there was morning” occurs, outside of Genesis 1. Hence, given the fact that every verse where “morning” and “evening” occur in the same verse they refer

RESPONSES critical of articles and reviews may be submitted for consideration for publication by sending drafts to the editorial address. Please contact the editor beforehand to obtain submission requirements and preferences. When possible, the subject of a negative or possibly controversial review will be contacted beforehand for any appropriate response for publication along with the review, and the reviewer will be given an opportunity for a response. If required, responses and replies may continue in subsequent issues.

1. “Coppes states in his response, ‘The creation account itself uses Heb. *yom* in several connotations.’ This is technically true, since ‘several’ means more than two but less than many. But it tends to mislead the reader.” “Reply by Dr. Benjamin Shaw,” *CPJ*, 1.154

to parts of an ordinary day, it is reasonable to conclude that the sequence “and there was evening, and there was morning” refers to the course, or the totality, of an ordinary day....

To this portion of Dr. Shaw’s reply, I respond as follows:

1. He seems to identify my use of “mean” with “refer.” I see the difference as that between the concepts “represent” and “point to.” Thus, he erects a “straw man.” He says that the couplet in the creation days may be *equivalent* to its common use in English, viz., as parts of a day—I agree. He misses my point that the couplet as such can never signify (mean) an ordinary day so that, in essence, evening means nighttime and morning means daytime—they are “*descriptive*.” This would mean that in the flow of the first day there was a nighttime and then a daytime and this flow is repeated/summarized/set forth in the phrase “there was evening and there was morning, the first day.” The two words are *descriptive* of the day’s proceedings.

2. I do not intend to say in the words cited that outside Genesis 1 *yom* never refers to the totality of an ordinary day. I agree that outside Genesis 1 the couplet almost always describes two parts of an ordinary day, i.e., when used in the same verse the couplet is almost always accompanied by the background implication that they are parts of an ordinary day (I prefer stating the matter this way rather than using the ambiguous word “refer” which is used in two different senses in the above quote).

3. In his rebuttal Dr. Shaw appears to state his own reasoning as to why the creation days are to be viewed as ordinary. This helps one understand his objections to my primary thesis better. His reasoning seems to be as follows:

The two words outside Genesis creation days are always used to signify disparate parts of an ordinary day,

The two words are used in Genesis 1 to signify parts of the creation days,

Therefore, the two words in Gen. 1 signify disparate parts of ordinary days.

The argument he suggests appears to be well reasoned: since the two words in every other Biblical verse in which they both occur outside Genesis 1 usually signify parts of an ordinary day—but is it well defended? I label this view the *equivalent* usage of the couplet. I respond to his reasoning as follows:

(1) Dr. Shaw’s argument assumes that reference to what are parts of an ordinary day requires the conclusion that an ordinary day is being set forth. But this hardly follows. It falsely assumes that the two parts in the creation days necessarily

infer the context in which they occur elsewhere, i.e., it begs the question. This error is clearly demonstrated since every time the couplet occurs outside the Genesis record it “refers” to an ordinary day regulated by the sun, then this reasoning would seem to carry with it the existence of the sun on day 1.

(2) The conclusion appears to ignore the unusual nature of day 1. The first day includes the darkness mentioned in Genesis 1:2 and 4 (where we are told that God called the darkness night). So, darkness-night in verse 4 is the precedent of the light. If one takes the *equivalent* sense (see above) of evening and morning (as my reviewer does), then the day also concludes with nighttime. Since the day opened with a nighttime (night), then this first day consisted of a nighttime, a daytime, and another nighttime. Hence, either it is not an ordinary day in length insofar as it appears to have had two mornings, or it is not an ordinary day in content (nature) since it has two nighttimes within the space of 24 hours—John Lightfoot, the Westminster divine, wrote that the first day was 36 hours long (*The Works of the Reverend And Learned John Lightfoot D.D.*, Vol. 1, London, [1684]). In this verse then, the couplet enveloping the evening and morning appears to be a means of stating the conclusion to the day and not its length. The couplet certainly does not carry with it the assumed backdrop of an ordinary day.

(3) I respectfully point to a third problem with the reviewer’s reasoning: regulators were not introduced until day four where we read that God made the two great lights, the sun and the moon, “to divide the day from the night ... and ... for days and for years” (Gen. 1:14). Hence, since the evening-morning couplet does not determine the length of the day on day 1, perhaps it does not function this way in days 2 and 3. Apart from assumption, how can one possibly know for sure that days 2 and 3 were the same length as the *solar* days? All we know for sure is that these were truly days and that they concluded. Surely, the assumption of uniformitarianism is unfounded in the text. However, had God used night and day in the concluding formula, then there would be a stronger argument for the ordinary day position insofar as this is a usual Hebrew “idiom” for an ordinary day. On the other hand, apart from the uniformitarian assumption, even with such a change there would be no certainty as to how long the days lasted—at least not before day 4.

(4) From my perspective there is another problem with this reasoning, viz., the major proposition is not true. It denies or ignores that the couplet in Daniel 8 refers to something other than parts of an ordinary day. This exegesis is defended by E. J. Young and C. F. Keil in their respective commentaries on verses 14 and 26. They argue that in Daniel the couplet evening-morning signifies days of indeterminable length. It is one thing to offer every occurrence of the phrase as evidence but quite another to find an exception to the general assertion.

(5) Moreover, if one accepts the *equivalent* exegesis, Dr. Shaw introduces additional problems. If evening and morning are parts of an ordinary day, and if the textual order states their order on the days of creation, then the days begin and end with a morning, and extend from morning to morning. This distinguishes the creation days from the ordinary and sacramental days of Israel that were marked from evening to evening. This, in turn, introduces a conundrum in the fourth commandment because it sees God as commanding man to imitate Him by resting one day a week from evening to evening just as He rested one day a week from morning to morning. It certainly seems preferable to argue that the days of Genesis and the days of the fourth commandment were the same insofar as they were all periods of time going from evening to evening and with a beginning and end—although they differed as to length or in nature.

III. My reviewer Dr. Shaw continues in his reply, writing (*CPI*, 1.155), “Third, when Dr. Coppes argues that the couplet ‘day-night’ is necessary to conclude that an ordinary day is in view, he is arguing far beyond what the evidence will allow. As just demonstrated, the morning-evening couplet clearly refers to ordinary days, and we should not think Moses must have been constrained to the use of day-night if he wanted to refer to ordinary days.”

The argument to which reference is made is an argument against the *descriptive* exegesis and not an argument against the *equivalent* exegesis (p. 168–172 of my book) as the reviewer seems to assume—at least, I do not apply it to the *equivalent* exegesis in my book. On the other hand, in view of what the record of the first day reports (as discussed earlier), my argument also applies to the *equivalent* position: since the first day includes a night, a day, and then a night, it seems it would be more clearly an ordinary day if God had used the usual couplet signifying an ordinary day—in the order night-day. That language would exclude an extra nighttime (be used as a summary statement) and would less likely represent only a concluding statement.

IV. Dr. Shaw states (*CPI*, 1.155): “Fourth, due to what I perceived as serious flaws in Dr. Coppes’ arguments, I decided ... to deal ... with ... underlying methodological issues.”

I respond that, in spite of his protestations, he appears to agree with my conclusions as to the semantic distribution of “day” and “evening-morning”—other than my seeing Daniel 8: 18, 26 as a use of the couplet in the *descriptive* sense and a usage that does not “refer to” an ordinary day. I do believe that those who read my treatment of these couplets will see that I derive the various usages from the Biblical contexts rather than reading into the contexts a preconceived sense. It is also interesting that Dr. Shaw appears to violate his own principle with reference to idioms when he affirms that *beyom* “simply means when.” It appears that he means that *beyom*

has no usage other than “when.” My reviewer agrees with my affirmation, at least in part, that the use of the Hebrew word *yom* in the phrase *beyom* often means “when.” On the other hand, he seems to say it always means “when” and refers to the translations as support (and understandably not as proof). Yet, the translations do not always render the phrase “when.” Indeed, in Genesis 2:4 the NKJV, RSV, ESV, ASV, and NASV render the phrase “in the day” (as I do), while only the NIV renders it, “when.” In 2:17 the NKJV, ASV, and NASV render it “in the day,” and the RSV, NASV, and RSV render it “when.” Thus, the reviewer seems to deny the proposition that the meaning of idioms (e.g., *beyom*) may vary from context to context and must be determined from the contexts.

Finally, Dr. Shaw writes (*CPI*, 1.155): “... in my review I state that the Hebrew phrase *beyom* simply means ‘when.’ Dr. Coppes offers Psalm 18:1 as a counter-example. It is not, as the reader can easily tell.... In addition, he dismisses the work of Barr with the statement ‘that work is seriously flawed methodologically.’ While it may be that Barr sometimes paints with too broad a brush, one of the things against which Barr warns is the ignoring of context in the determination of the connotation of a word. In my opinion, Dr. Coppes regularly ignores this stricture....”

The matter about Barr appears inconsequential since both Dr. Shaw and myself reject some of what Barr held and accept some of it. I deny that I ignored the context of words when exegeting or doing word (and phrase) studies. Moreover, as pointed out above, the reviewer appears to contradict one principle he affirms when he says *beyom* “simply means ‘when.’”

[Editor’s Note: Dr. Shaw is giving Dr. Coppes the last word on this exchange over his 2005 review of *The Divine Days of Creation*.] ■

REVIEW. *In Thesi Deliverances in Constitutional Perspective—A Response to Dr. C. N. Willborn, “The ‘Ministerial and Declarative’ Powers of the Church and In Thesi Deliverances,” The Confessional Presbyterian (2005) 94–101.* By Stuart R. Jones, Instructor in Polity, Ministerial Training Institute of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Pastor of First OPC, Baltimore, Md..

Dr. Willborn’s recent article on *in thesi* deliverances provides an opportunity to consider, by way of response, a major injustice in the case of J. Gresham Machen who was disciplined by the Presbyterian Church USA seventy years ago. As a supplement, this response differs from Dr. Willborn mainly in emphasis rather than principle. Particularly, there is agreement with the following statement near the end of his article:

Nevertheless, we do admit there is a difference between the constitutional law of the church, the judicial decisions of the supreme judicatory, and *in thesi* deliverances.¹

Compared with the position of Thomas Peck, Willborn argues for a reduced distance between *in thesi* deliverance authority and the authority of judicial decisions or the constitution. For Presbyterians that followed J. Gresham Machen out of the Northern Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) to form the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), this question possesses special interest. It will be argued here that due process and the constitutional nature of American Presbyterianism argues for a sharp distinction between *in thesi* deliverances and constitution and that *in thesi* deliverances do not bind the conscience beyond their persuasiveness and truthfulness. How different this position is from that of Mr. Willborn, the reader may decide.

The question for OPC members and churches with a similar Form of Government may be framed in the following terms: Is there a tension or conflict between the polity constitution and the doctrinal constitution, i.e. *Westminster Confession*, Chapter 31.3 (31.2 in the PCUSA text) regarding the requirement to receive the “decrees and determinations” of synods and councils with “reverence and submission?”² If there is such a conflict, one might suppose that the tertiary standards should give way to the secondary standards, i.e. the *Confession* and *Catechisms*. It will be further argued here that the WCF needs to be understood in terms of the special American Presbyterian context in which it was given constitutional status.

DUE PROCESS

In 1934 the constitutionality of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions was questioned and in effect decided by a General Assembly mandate. The question was not raised by formal appeal or complaint but through entities of church judicatories acting on their own initiative, particularly the General Council. This was an interim creature of the

General Assembly which was by rule precluded from doing judicial business.³ Certain “Constitutional Studies,” not specifically mandated or authorized by any judicatory, resulted from the concerns of the General Council. These studies were leveraged to produce the 1934 Assembly Mandate that all members of the Independent Board resign the Board. Failing to do so, the appropriate judicatories were mandated to take disciplinary measures against the same.⁴ Whether the General Council acted beyond its charter is secondary to our concern here. The point to be observed here is that the General Assembly issued an authoritative mandate, binding judicatories to discipline certain parties based on purported constitutional grounds. No due process was afforded affected parties before the mandate. The specific resolution of the General Council, as opposed to the “Studies” per se, was only made known on the day of the Assembly when action was to be taken (Rian, 112–113). This rendered all due process after the mandate illusory since the “law” question of the Independent Board had been decided without opportunity for adequate defense. The appearance of due process in the subsequent trials was an illusion as the “law” question had already been decided independently.

This illustrates the potential for abuse of *in thesi* deliverances. By nature, such deliverances concern themselves with what may be called questions of law, conceived broadly to include doctrine, ethics, constitutional rules, etc. They are considerations that may be argued “mostly” independent of the “facts” in a judicial case. The “mostly” qualification is given here because it is debatable whether “law” can be completely explained apart from concrete cases. The “Studies” addressed a question of law in the abstract without overt direction at specific parties. The 1934 Mandate arising from the “Studies” was more specific in its application of the “Studies” material to parties but without the safeguard of due process. In other words, the not so well disguised purpose of the “Studies” blurred with the Mandate to constitute an *in thesi* deliverance that was in truth, more *in hypothesi* than *in thesi*; or in other words, a judicial judgment arrived at using the teaching and/or legislative powers of the church rather than the judicial powers that are guided and ruled by due process constraints. The result was a bill of attainder.

When a Presbyterian judicatory inquires whether a charge and specifications are in order, it seeks, *inter alia*, a legal determination at the outset whether the major premise of a legal syllogism (the charge) really articulates an offense subject to formal discipline. This inquiry and determination has much in common with an *in thesi* deliverance. Both address matters that are abstractly legal in form rather than factual. Though the preliminary legal inquiry in a judicial case seems detachable from the minor premise (specifications of fact), in truth, the specifications may have an effect on the major legal

1. C.N. Willborn, “The ‘Ministerial and Declarative’ Powers of the Church and *In thesi* Deliverances,” *The Confessional Presbyterian* (2005) 1.101.

2. One of the well known changes made to the Confession of Faith when adopted by the PCUSA in 1788 was the deletion of the original paragraph 31.2. The OPC text of course derives from the PCUSA tradition. See *The Book of Church Order of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (Willow Grove, Pa.: The Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2005) and *Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1994).

3. Edwin Rian, *The Presbyterian Conflict* (Philadelphia: Committee for the Historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1992 [reprint]) 103–104.

4. N.B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954) 485.

premise. Walter Steuart of Pardovan, in addressing the law of the Church of Scotland, states it this way:

But in causes intricate and difficult, the discussing of the relevancy [the overall validity of the legal syllogism] may be delayed till probation be taken; and then greater light being thereby given, both relevancy and probation may be advised jointly, as the Lords of Session and Privy council have oftentimes done [secular courts].⁵

Though exceptional, this practice may be appreciated in view of a provision in most Presbyterian Churches that cases should not be dismissed for technical reasons but may be reformulated by a judicatory. For example, when specifications of fact are examined, it may be that a charge of *teaching* false doctrine should be recast more precisely to something like *believing* or *confessing* false doctrine. The right verb may be vital for proving the major premise and deciding on a suitable censure. It may be an important consideration that a man believes an error that he does not publicly teach. Thus, it becomes important to allow the major premise to either be reformulated or re-interpreted according to the facts being alleged. For example, the Northern General Assembly gave leave to the prosecuting committee to reformulate charges, “not changing the general nature of the same”, in the Charles Briggs case.⁶

Though a defendant may argue that an *in thesi* deliverance is not relevant to the charge and facts alleged or that such pronouncements are not part of the constitution, this does not change the danger attached to assigning undue authority to such deliverances. One motive behind such deliverances is belief that the doctrinal constitution is not sufficiently clear. In such a situation, rather than applying the doctrinal constitution to a specific case while making appropriate adjustments in light of the facts alleged, a formulation is given that threatens to become a grid through which the constitution is interpreted. This amends the constitution in practical effect without undertaking the proper and more deliberative process of amendment. This danger is more acute when an *in thesi* deliverance is afforded more authority than pious advice. Thus, it is helpful that a church maintain a bright line between advice and constitutional authority.

Presbyterians of the South may appreciate this in connection with their distaste of the Gardiner Spring Resolutions. The typical criticism of these resolutions is that they compromised the spiritual nature of the church. A better argument might be made that these resolutions were in fact corrupted *in thesi* deliverances that were issued to the deprivation of due process rights of Southern Presbyterians.⁷

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN CONSTITUTIONALISM

When Machen was tried, the 1934 Form of Government XIII.VI stated:⁸

Before any overtures or enactments proposed by the [General] Assembly to be established as rules regulative of the constitutional powers of presbyteries and synods, shall be obligatory upon the Church, it shall be necessary to transmit them to all the presbyteries, and to receive the returns of at least a majority of them, in writing, approving thereof, and such rules, when approved, shall be appended to the Constitution of the Church.

This provision separates constitutionally defined obligations from the persuasive authority of an *in thesi* deliverance. The requirement of approval of the presbyteries before General Assembly acts become binding has its origins in Scotland with the Barrier Act of 1697.⁹ In America the practice took root in 1788. Prior to these dates, the highest Presbyterian judicatories had to be restrained by either civil government or their own good sense. The acts of any given Assembly were in force until repealed by some subsequent Assembly. Customary under-

5. Cf. Pardovan's *Collections*, Book IV, Title III, Article 3. “Pardovan” is the abbreviated title for Walter Steuart, Laird of Pardovan, ruling elder in the Church of Scotland, advocate, and Burgess member of the Scottish Parliament (which Parliament ceased during his lifetime). The first edition of the *Collections* is 1709. One of the latest editions is found in *Compendium of Laws of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: 1837), Part I.

6. Cf. *The Case Against Professor Briggs* (New York: Scribners, 1893) 171.

7. Cf. Edgar Caldwell Mayse, “Robert Jefferson Breckinridge: American Presbyterian Controversialist” (diss.; Union Seminary, Richmond, Va., 1974), 638, 697–698. Further, Henry Van Dyke argued that the Spring resolutions were not binding because they had not been ratified by the presbyteries per the requirement of the Presbyterian Constitution.

8. Cf. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.* [1934] (Philadelphia: Office of the General Assembly, 1934) Part I.

9. Cf. Samuel Baird's *Digest, A Collection of the Acts, Deliverances, and Testimonies of the Supreme Judicatory of the Presbyterian Church* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1856) 22. In 1639 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed an act that appears to have required fair notice to lower judicatories before bringing major items of business to the General Assembly. In 1648, explicit mention is made of the fact that Presbyteries were informed of the contents of the Larger Catechism prior to the Assembly's adoption of that instrument. This order of deliberation shares concerns similar to the ones expressed in the Barrier Act, except that the Barrier Act moves in a different direction and forms a constitutional protection for presbyteries that goes beyond protection against surprise proposals. Cf. *Records of the Kirk of Scotland, Containing the Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies, from the Year 1638 Downwards, As authenticated by the Clerks of Assembly* by Alexander Peterkin, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: John Sutherland, 1838) 208, 496.

standing (leaving aside civil law) distinguished the fundamental law from the incidental decrees of the church judicatory.¹⁰ Under the pre-Barrier Act mode of doing business, efficiency ruled over greater deliberation. This is hard to resist when a single assembly might by a majority vote resolve a crisis. In the post 1788 history of American Presbyterianism, the Old School-New School Division, the Gardiner Spring Resolutions, and the Machen case are examples of constitutionally questionable quick fixes to perceived crises. Presbyteries were by-passed or dictated to with little justification beyond the emergency of the times.¹¹

Since 1788, American Presbyterianism has a distinct method of recognizing its “fundamental” law or constitution. This must be duly appreciated when seeking to apply *Westminster Confession*, Chapter 31 to the discussion of *in thesi* deliverances and the degree of authority they should be afforded. The *Westminster Confession* predates the Barrier Act and the establishment of a full fledged constitutional American Presbyterian Church. As such, Chapter 31 was not

10. Cf. William Mair, *A Digest of Laws and Decisions Ecclesiastical and Civil: Relating to the Constitution, Practice, and Affairs of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1887), 1–2. Mair lists various documents that form the constitution of the Church of Scotland using as his criterion what is fundamental to the “position and character” of the Church.

11. Charles Hodge seems to suggest an emergency basis for the manner of dealing with the New School in the work, *Discussion in Church Polity* (New York: Charles Scribners, 1878) 407. Whether there was an “express” violation of the constitution or not is where the debate seems to lie. An express violation is problematic, but since the constitution for Hodge is simply a limitation of original powers rather than a granting of powers, it is easier to argue for the constitutionality of Old School Actions in excising the New School judicatories. Hodge’s position on this distinction probably helps explain some differences between him and strict constructionist Southern Churchmen.

12. In most American Presbyterian churches, the term “complaint” usually carries the technical meaning of bringing a charge of error against a judicatory, usually for the purpose of correcting a governmental action. The term appears to have evolved from an earlier general usage of the term which might refer to a charge or accusation in which the offending party was not always a judicatory. An example of a more general use of this term occurs as early as 1562 where it is specified that “no Minister leave his flock for coming to the Assembly except he have complaints to make, or else be complained on, or at least be warned thereto by the Superintendent.” Cf. *The Booke of the Universall Kirk of Scotland*, ed. A. Peterkin (Edinburgh, 1839) 10.

13. Peck uses the terms diatactic, and diacritic in his discussion of *in thesi* deliverances. Cf. “The Powers of the Several Church-Courts,” *Paradigms in Polity*, ed. Hall & Hall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 589; also available as a free e-book at www.fpccr.org. Some of the Westminster divines used a similar three-part differentiation of church power during their polity debates, particularly in reference to which powers might have been present in the Acts 15 Council. Cf. “Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and Other Commissioners at Westminster,” *The Works of George Gillespie* (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846) 40.

specifically tailored to function in a context where a distinction between a constitution under ecclesiastical control and *in thesi* deliverances is present.

In WCF 31.3 (31.2 PCUSA), we may ask which enumerated acts compare with *in thesi* deliverances. There is a threefold categorization of “decrees and determinations” set forth in this chapter which are set apart by semicolons. The structure of the chapter takes the following form (key outline items are underlined):

Decrees and Determinations

A. Determine

1. controversies of faith,
2. cases of conscience

B. Set down rules and directions for the better ordering

1. of the public worship of God, and
2. government of his Church

C. Receive Complaints in cases of maladministration and ... determine.¹²

1. receive
2. authoritatively determine

This three-part scheme was part of the debate at the Assembly. The Independents did not disagree with Presbyterians that there was a threefold church power (dogmatic power, power to order, and power to discipline)¹³ but disagreed that all these powers resided in synods and councils beyond the congregational level. Parliament also, with its Erastian bent, was disinclined to accept chapter 31. Synods confined to dogmatic pronouncements were of lesser consequence than synods that authoritatively imposed constitutional rules or oversaw discipline. The Presbyterian party advocated for the same powers being present in all church assemblies.

From the above outline, it can be seen that the only class of determinations listed in the *Confession* that might qualify as ‘*in thesi*’ are those first listed, i.e. “determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience.” The “rules and directions” for worship and government do not qualify. This power (diatactic), under modern Presbyterian practice, is manifested primarily in tertiary standards that have been adopted by the special process to establish constitutional law. The WCF does not address the “how” or “form” by which rules are established (i.e. single majority vote versus a more intricate constitutional process). It is anachronistic to apply the WCF to questions it did not address. It can be fairly assumed that the Westminster Divines were not immediately thinking of a system like that which evolved in America after 1788.

It may be safely assumed that the Westminster Divines were thinking in terms of how the church historically met in councils and dissolved them after their business was done.

To the degree this meant following the model of the best Reformed churches, including the Church of Scotland, we can assume they were thinking of national synods that met on a yearly or regular basis. None of this is spelled out and so the unspoken assumptions of the Divines do not constitute a constitutional law. The *Confession* framers were concerned with the broad powers of higher assemblies rather than specific polity rules.

The clear burden of the Divines who advocated Chapter 31 was to assert that synods had more than a dogmatic power at their disposal. When the *Confession* says “which decrees and determinations are to be received with reverence and submission” we understand that the powers of ordering and discipline were most in the spotlight and that the precise degree of authority assigned to the dogmatic powers of synods was not much in dispute. But it is the dogmatic power that today most readily furnishes a basis for the *in thesi* deliverance.

Allowing that the *Confession* includes the dogmatic deliverances and determinations within the sphere of things “to be received with reverence and submission,” we must not immediately conclude that the *Confession* requires giving equal weight to (what we today call) *in thesi* deliverances and our doctrinal constitution. Our doctrinal constitution has already been “received with reverence and submission” in a uniquely privileged sense. It contains many of the sorts of decrees and determinations with which the Westminster Assembly was concerned. Using the outline given above, it may be asked, “Under which power does the adopting of a doctrinal constitution (Confessions and Catechisms) fall?” At first, a constitutionally minded Presbyterian may assume that this falls under the diatactic ordering function (i.e. “B”). But this sub-function is not listed there. Confession and creed adoption most naturally fall within the activity of “determining controversies of faith.” The situation is also a bit complicated by the fact that the Westminster Divines had been called to draft their *Confession* but had no power to actually adopt it as Church law for the three Kingdoms.

Because of developments in Presbyterian polity over time, WCF 31.3 (31.2 PCUSA) cannot be used simplistically to give undue weight to *in thesi* deliverances. At the time the *Confession* was being drafted, those synods of Reformed churches that existed operated under a system where all deliverances of the Synod were similar to a constitutional deliverance. Even today Reformed Synods are held where a simple majority vote establishes guidance—presumably in matters of faith and order—that is hardly distinguishable in effect from a Presbyterian’s more clumsily determined constitutional faith and order. The Church Order of Dort, article 31 (Cf. *Paradigms in Polity*, 180), speaks of “settled and binding” decisions arrived at by majority vote (though the article is descriptive of an appellate matter, little else in

the Dort Order exists to suggest a more deliberate policy to elevate fundamental law).

The distinction between constitutional rules and less binding deliverances was made clearer for Presbyterians by the passage of the Barrier Act about fifty years after the *Westminster Confession*. At the time of the *Confession*, there was little basis for distinguishing between contumacy for disobeying an *in thesi* deliverance and contumacy toward the fundamental law of the Church. The disestablished nature of American Presbyterianism meant that it was able, in time, also to provide a serious deliberative policy for distinguishing its doctrinal constitution from the momentary deliverances of a single Assembly. In short, American Presbyterianism, by use of its diatactic power of order, has established a more deliberative process for how controversies of faith will be authoritatively resolved.

Let this treatment leave the impression the Church after 1788 has no dogmatic power except when it passes an amendment to the doctrinal constitution, it must be noted that the polity constitution of the OPC, *Form of Government* XIV.7 (cf. PCA BCO 11.4) speaks of a presbytery having authority “to condemn erroneous opinions....” This power is particularly important in an age when not every opinion maker is subject to the discipline of a sound Presbyterian Church. Increasingly, some “Presbyterian” seminaries have ruling elders or non-officers teaching who are not directly under the original jurisdiction of a Presbytery. In such a state of affairs, a Church must have power to issue pastoral advice about what it may see as errors of the day. But where errant teachers are under the jurisdiction of a Presbyterian church body, the use of *in thesi* pronouncement to challenge their teaching may be unfair, an abrogation of real responsibility, or both.

The Westminster Standards, as doctrinal constitution, have already resolved a great deal of doctrinal controversy among Presbyterians and an amendment process is still available to address new controversies, but the excellent and comprehensive nature of the Westminster Standards has made this cumbersome process less needful in many doctrinal matters. Application of the existing standards by judicial means is often sufficient. The danger of creating “in effect” amendments to the constitution by *in thesi* pronouncements is real and must be resisted (cf. OPC FG XV.8). For this reason, Machen and his followers did not regard the 1934 Mandate as binding.

There is a place for a Church giving “constitutional advice” and it should not be thought that such advice is of no value. There can be value in the persuasive authority of advice issued in a context where the heat and divisiveness of a specific case is not present. Further, since Christians are generally commanded to submit to one another and to obey leaders, there certainly is a proper moral respect that should be paid

to advice from the church's higher judicatories. However, the practice of issuing *in thesi* advice should avoid the "authoritative interpretations" of the constitution one finds in PCUSA polity today. Such interpretation may introduce discord between the constitution and the will of a given Assembly.¹⁴ Precisely because councils and synods may err, there is wisdom in the constitutional limits we now impose on our assemblies. Had the Assembly of 1934 afforded proper "reverence and submission" to its constitution and the due process rules previously respected by previous Assemblies, it might have avoided a tyrannical error. ■

REVIEW: Sean Michael Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 2005). Hardcover, 295 pages. \$24.99. Reviewed by C. N. Willborn, Professor, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life is the inaugural volume in the American Reformed Biographies series from P&R. The subjects of these biographies will be men who received scant if any biographical attention during the twentieth century, but are believed to be of continuing relevance for twenty-first century Christians by the editors and authors. The editors of this series are Drs. D. G. Hart and Sean Michael Lucas. Hart has served the faculties of Westminster Seminaries in Philadelphia and Escondido and is currently Director of Academic Projects at Intercollegiate Studies Institute in Wilmington, Delaware. Lucas is Assistant Professor of Church History at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Both men are active historians with keen interests in American Presbyterianism and are well qualified for both the editorial involvement in this series as well as their contributions as biographers.

The present review is in many ways both an easy task and a difficult one. It is easy because the subject matter is one with which the reviewer is familiar and one which he enjoys researching and discussing. It is difficult because the subject matter, R. L. Dabney, is a lightning rod of a man. There are lovers and haters, but seldom if ever are there indifferentists when it comes to Mr. Dabney. Therefore, to criticize this treatment of Dabney will be to inflame haters of Dabney; and to commend it will incite to riot the lovers of the Virginian. With this in mind, one can hardly expect to win the Nobel Peace Prize with this review.

Another complicating factor is the reviewer's friendship with the author. Frankly, it is hard for a Southerner to critique

a friend in a public forum. I am sure, however, Dr. Lucas will both expect and appreciate (even if he does not agree with) this exercise in academic honesty.

Finally, a review of *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life* is complicated by the nature of previous reviews. In addition to being altogether uncritical, one reviewer seems to suggest that future criticism of Lucas's work should be expected because Lucas has offered a "truthful account" of Dabney. Further, it is surmised, the "polarized response" (i.e., the criticism that will come from lovers and haters of Dabney) is a "testament to his [Lucas] competence as an historian."¹⁵ Thus, to criticize Lucas would suggest that one is a representative lover or hater of Dabney; or, it is to question Lucas's competence as an historian if one begs to differ with or question him. Now the former reviewer surely did not intend to create such a dilemma for future reviewers, but, as the reader can see, it does complicate any effort at an honest review from someone who may differ at points. With these preliminaries stated, it is hoped that all would admit that an objective, truthful, and critical review of Dr. Lucas's work can be offered without impugning Dr. Lucas as an historian or joining ranks with the less than objective readers of Dabney's life.

While objections will be made in this review to certain interpretations of Dabney, there are a number of positive aspects to *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life*. It was this reviewer's privilege to read the pre-publication text and it was found then to be extremely readable. If anything, the published version is even better in this regard. Dr. Lucas is a very able writer whose style is imitable. He uses his lucid style to place before his readers a number of Dabney's contributions that can positively serve and challenge today's church. For example, Lucas discusses Dabney's view of theological education and its relationship to the ordained ministry. The theological seminary, for Dabney, was not a place for "literary novelties." It was a place where men were to be moored in the Holy Scriptures, as those Scriptures are understood and summarized in the public confession of the church (in his case, the Westminster Confession and Catechisms as received by the Presbyterian Church US). In this, Dabney stands in the company of Thornwell's successor at Columbia Seminary and his contemporary, John L. Girardeau. In his lengthy debates with James Woodrow over evolution, Girardeau insisted on the seminary's singular role as a teacher of the Church's Confession. Over against Dabney's and Girardeau's view of the seminary's purpose, there was something of a plea for "academic freedom," which figured into the defense of Woodrow during the 1880s in Dabney's Southern Church. While the Dabney-Girardeau view ultimately prevailed in the evolution battle in the Southern Church, the greater war was lost and the seminaries in the United States soon came to be

14. A provision for this is in the PCUSA Governmental Standards (cf. 1992 edition, Chapter on the General Assembly, G-13.01037). ■

1. T. David Gordon, "Reviews," *New Horizons* (December 2005)
25. Online at http://www.opc.org/review.html?review_id=43

graduate schools for ministerial students. With the graduate school model came the license of academic freedom and the end of a confessionally-oriented ministerial preparation. Lessons from history can be helpful.

A correlative to Dabney's view on theological education was his insistence on an educated ministry. Dabney was not for lowering the standards or requirements for education and preparation toward the ordained gospel ministry. He knew like so many that to jettison requirements for pragmatic or perceived reasons would only weaken the church and her message. There had been the Cumberland experiment earlier in his century, which substantiated his concern. Frontier activists, many with the best of intentions and desires, were willing to reduce or abandon altogether ministerial preparation for the sake of the expansion of the kingdom, due to the great need on the frontier for preachers and churches. The product was a sadly anemic church that more resembled the world than heaven. Here again, Dabney's concerns need to be echoed through the halls of many presbyteries today. The church will neither be strengthened, nor the gospel advanced ably by compromising the standards.

In the same discussion, Lucas offers Dabney's timely advice to the church in regard to seminary oversight. Who should provide the oversight of the theological education of the church's future ministers? Dabney's answer was "to emphasize local control ... so that each seminary would be supported and governed by local ministers and churches ..." (79). He was a firm believer that centralization of power and influence, whether it is in government, church, or education, was both unwise and unhealthful. Therefore, "multiplication of seminaries under local synodical control" (80) was best for educational purposes and preservation of orthodoxy. His commitment to "grassroots" Presbyterianism, particularly as applied to ministerial academies, could be a productive topic for the church's consideration today.

Another characteristic of Dabney that Lucas brings to his readers' attention and which could go far to aid the church is his theological moderatism. Interestingly enough, most people think of Dabney as a "hardliner" on most subjects and, in a day that lauds pluralism and diversity and tolerance, summarily dismiss the Presbyterian as passé. Lucas rightly points out that Dabney was as his students regarded him—"essentially moderate" (88). It is true that Dabney was an adherent to confessional Presbyterianism and had little sympathy for novel innovations, but he was a biblical theologian first and so was willing to stand down from an inherited position when he concluded it to be extra- or contra-biblical.

While he followed the *Elenctic Theology* of Francis Turretin for classroom lectures, and agreed in many respects, he was not a blind follower. For example, he was a vocal opponent of Turretine's federal view of imputation, especially as

it pertained to the imputation of Adam's sin to his progeny. His arguments are found in his systematic notes and in his *Discussions* where he objects at length to Charles Hodge's treatment of Romans 5. Dabney, following Robert Landis, opted for what B. B. Warfield termed an "agnostic" position on the imputation of Adam's sin. Those interested in this debate should confer with the fine little book by George Hutchinson, *The Problem of Original Sin in American Presbyterian Theology*.²

Dabney was also opposed to the fine tooth speculating that often attended the lapsarian question. Indeed, the supra- and infralapsarian distinction was one he preferred to avoid on grounds that the Bible simply did not provide enough information to support a dogmatic position on one or the other position. Sometimes, however, his differences with Turretin were not over the insufficiency of special revelation (as in the case of the lapsarian matter), but revolved around a different understanding of God's revelation. To illustrate this point, Lucas briefly explains Dabney's development of Providence. While the point is a welcome one, disappointment may follow as one fails to find the expected explanation of "how" Dabney differs from the master Calvinist. This is a weakness of the book, as comparisons or explanations of Dabney's similarities and differences with others are lacking throughout. It would have been very useful at points like this to find documentary references to Turretin and others, at least in the footnotes. Nevertheless, to know Dabney's divergences is helpful to the uninitiated reader.

It is a good providence for the church that Lucas dealt fairly with Dabney's epistemological consciousness and portrays Dabney's philosophical commitment not as something to be ridiculed or ignored, as is too often the case today, even among those in Dabney's Presbyterian and Reformed tradition. Dabney was indebted to and a practitioner of Scottish Realism and in this he was not alone. The Princetonians, from Archibald Alexander to B. B. Warfield, utilized this system as did fellow Southerners such as James Henley Thornwell, John L. Girardeau, and B. M. Palmer. Charles Hodge utilized the Scottish Realism in establishing the prolegomena to his magnum opus, *Systematic Theology*. In these men's hands Common Sense Realism was not anthropocentric, egocentric, or rationalistic. It was the key to their orderliness and it was unmistakably theocentric. Lucas rightly explains that Dabney followed the Thomas Reid school of Realism. This is notable and distinguishes him from his most notable contemporaries in the Southern Church, Thornwell and Girardeau. The latter men leaned more heavily toward the school of Sir William Hamilton.

2. George P. Hutchinson, *The Problem of Original Sin in American Presbyterian Theology, An International Library of Philosophy and Theology: Biblical and Theological Studies* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1972).

In Dabney's hands, Common Sense Realism was an effective tool for use in dismantling the sensualist or positivist philosophy of Spencer, Mill, and the like. Likewise, Dabney applied his keenest arguments against the radical empiricism that promoted materialism and evolution. Lucas draws from Dabney's comprehensive work on the topic, *The Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century Considered*, to illustrate both the inductive and deductive arguments against the rationalism of Christianity's opponents. This apologetical work appeared in two editions (1875 and 1887) during Dabney's lifetime, is currently in print, and stands next to *The Practical Philosophy* as the Virginian's most notable academic work. While some may dismiss Dabney's approach as outmoded or lacking in sophistication (although this can hardly be imagined) or "not Reformed or Biblical," Lucas's presentation should serve as an invitation to revisit some of the old paths in apologetics. It is a real shame to neglect the genius of men like Dabney and Warfield no matter who your guru is.

Another positive side of this work is the handling of Dabney and the black population. Here the reviewer enters into very lonely ground. Many friends no doubt will disagree; many who thought they disagreed with the reviewer will be pleasantly surprised. Dabney was wrong in his view of the Africans brought to America through slaver trade, as Lucas argues. Until the end, Dabney insisted that they were inferior to his Caucasian ancestry and contemporaries. Unlike his South Carolina friends and co-laborers, John L. Girardeau and Thomas Peck, Dabney did not believe that a black man could ascend to majority status in society. A black man could never be qualified to fill the office of Pastor in Dabney's world. Girardeau demurred from his friend. Prior to filling Thornwell's shoes as the theologian at Columbia Seminary, Girardeau had labored among the slaves and free blacks of Charleston. He built a church for the black population that numbered over a thousand in membership and witnessed thousands in attendance every Lord's Day. Girardeau ordained black ruling elders in 1869 and agitated for integrated churches as soon as possible. It was Girardeau who held out to the end (1875 General Assembly) for the Southern Church to withstand segregation along the color line. The action of the 1875 Assembly for "organic separation" was to Dabney's liking. One must think that Dabney would have been a better man had he followed Girardeau in his view of blacks and their ability within the church.

There is also an excellent treatment of Dabney on the topic of anti-modernism. Lucas helps the reader to gain perspective on the distinctions between anti-modern and anti-intellectual. Dabney was the former but not the latter. In the church today, it would be good for these distinctions to be maintained and understood. There is a place for anti-modernism, especially when it comes to modernity's influence on the preaching of

the gospel and regulation of worship. A number of lessons may be extracted from Lucas's representation of Dabney's intellectualism and anti-modernism.

Aside from the main text, Lucas's labors also provide a helpful and insightful *Bibliographic Note*. In this final section of the book, the author surveys various volumes that influenced and informed his thought on R. L. Dabney. The notes are helpful in directing both the novice and informed to further studies on the life and times of this complex subject.

Having noted a number of the strengths of the book, there are a few concerns that deserve to be noted. As a biography, the book lacks in relational development. That is, very little is said of Dabney's relationship with his wife, children, and friends. Allusion is made to his correspondence with certain peers and students, but little space is given to early friendships with men like William White of Lexington, which according to T. C. Johnson were foundational to his early and later ministry. Had Lucas traced out such influences perhaps he would have stayed away from the psychologizing tendency that riddles portions of the book. For example, Lucas speculates that Dabney's "fatherless upbringing during his key intellectual years" fueled his "hatred for ambiguity and his quest for certainty" (34). Disorder in the family, Lucas suggests, can explain "at least partly" Dabney's penchant for order (34). In fact, a number of other factors could more easily and naturally explain Dabney's propensities for order and precision. His commitment to truth and his indebtedness to the Scottish Realism (mentioned above), not to mention his rearing within a Puritan work-ethic model, provide better and less speculative reasons for his proclivity for precision and certainty.

One must believe the tendency to apply a psychological model to Dabney's life (over one hundred years after Dabney's death!), goes hand in hand with Lucas's wholesale (and seemingly uncritical) acceptance of the "honor" model he applies to Dabney's war time activities. Lucas portrays Dabney as a man struggling to maintain his manly honor. According to Lucas, Dabney struggled with his self-esteem due to his lack of front line involvement. The author goes so far as to say Dabney attempted "to rationalize his avoidance of the war," in order to reclaim his manhood and honor (129).

Dabney, however, did not avoid the war. It is true that he was not on every or most campaigns; but, as Lucas records for his readers, the preacher's wartime colleagues attested to his bravery in duty—"Our parson is not afraid of Yankee bullets and I tell you he preaches like the Devil" (116). It should be noted that Dabney and a number of his students at Hampden-Sydney had rushed off to join the fracas early and the theologian had served at First Manassas as a chaplain. Chaplains were often thrust into the heat of the battle, the front lines, and this often without arms or cover. Like the surgeons of every war, the chaplains of the Civil War were remarkable for their

valor and the record reveals Dabney was “not afraid of Yankee bullets.” Dabney was later called upon by T. J. Jackson to serve as his adjutant. Jackson was careful in his selections and chose Dabney on reputation as a man of character and honor. The records show that Jackson was pleased with Dabney’s service and that Dabney only left the field of action (where he entered the front lines on several occasions during his tenure) for health reasons. Lucas attests that recurring illness, not fear, forced Dabney’s resignation, which Jackson accepted “with great reluctance,” (116). We have hardly described a dishonorable military life, albeit brief.

In the light of the few facts set forth above, it appears unnecessary and highly speculative to portray Dabney as a man fighting to regain his honor and manliness. Yes, Dabney evinces all the signs of an embittered man after the war. He became entrenched in his positions on race and sectionalism. This, however, reflects more his disappointment over the loss of a culture and the abuses of Reconstruction, which were great. His bitterness is further understood by his despair over the demise of a Constitutional Republic and the erection a democratic egalitarian state centered in a central government in Washington D.C. All of these factors, by the way, are not speculative but find clear expression in Dabney’s *Discussions*.

Finally, there are a number of places where Lucas fails to give his readers the bottom line. For example, he details a number of Dabney’s comments on temperance and alcohol (58) but fails to tell his readers Dabney’s view of the right or wrong of alcoholic consumption. One is left wondering if Dabney held a position of total abstinence or a position like his fellow Southerners Thornwell and Girardeau. The latter tandem spoke for temperance or moderation but not for total abstinence.

From what has been said, it may be clear that several readings of this book have left the reviewer ambivalent toward *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life*.

As Dabney is offered to the public as a representative Southern Presbyterian, it can only be wished that he had been compared throughout to his Southern contemporaries and fathers. How did he compare to Girardeau on ecclesiastical relations of the freedmen? Did he agree with his colleague Thomas Peck on social issues? What about comparisons to other leading Virginia Presbyterians like the popular Moses Hoge of Richmond? The comparison at the end of the book to Abraham Kuyper, the Dutch reformer, is interesting but does little to prove the thesis of a representative Southern Presbyterian.

Dabney was far from perfect. He did view black Americans, as a class of people, as inferior and for that he should be criticized. He was wrong in ignoring the biblical mandate to provide Jubilee for slaves. He was, however, a fine theologian,

with much to offer the church. Therefore, it is a good providence of God that a new biography is available to honor the life of this man who trained many young men in the Scriptures and left the church a legacy of rich writings on many topics which remain germane to our life as Christians and citizens of this world. Dr. Lucas is to be thanked for bringing Robert Lewis Dabney back to the table. Hopefully his work will spur a number of the uninitiated (and perhaps those who have dismissed Dabney) to plum the depths of Dabney, imbibing the truly good and disdaining the truly bad. The product of reading Dabney closely will be loving God and hating sin; and that is what Dr. Dabney would want. SDG! ■

REVIEW: George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2003). Hardcover, 640 pages. \$35.00. Paperback (2004). \$22.00. Reviewed by W. Gary Crampton, Th.D.

The author of *Hebrews* tells us that there are certain men whose godly examples are to be emulated: “Remember those who rule over you, who spoke the Word of God to you, and considering the outcome of their conduct, imitate their faith.” Jonathan Edwards was such a man. He was a theocentric, “God-intoxicated” man, who was “mastered” by the Word of God; he thought biblically.¹ He was a man of great spiritual insight, “who put faithfulness to the Word of God before every other consideration.”² It is beyond serious question, as Samuel Davies suggested, that this Puritan divine is “the profoundest reasoner, and the greatest divine ... that America ever produced” (Murray, xv), and it more likely, as stated by B. B. Warfield, that he was a man whose “analytical subtlety has probably never been surpassed.”³ R. C. Sproul agrees with Warfield, claiming that (in his opinion), Jonathan Edwards is the greatest thinker in the history of Christ’s church.⁴ Of all men, said Martyn Lloyd-Jones, this was the man “most like the Apostle Paul.”⁵ We might conclude, with Perry Miller, that Edwards was “so much ahead of his time that our own [time] can hardly be said to have caught up with him.”⁶

Since his death in 1758, various persons (beginning with

1. Carl W. Bogue, *Jonathan Edwards and the Covenant of Grace* (Cherry Hill, N.J.: Mack Publishing Company, 1975) 42, 50.

2. Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1987) 471.

3. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Studies in Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988) 528.

4. R. C. Sproul, “Foreword,” *Altogether Lovely*, edited by Don Kistler (Morgan, Pennsylvania: Soli Deo Gloria, 1997) v.

5. Cited in Stephen J. Nichols, *Jonathan Edwards: A Guided Tour of His Life and Thought* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 2001) 9.

6. Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Meridian, 1959; first edition, 1949) 305.

Edwards' protégé, Samuel Hopkins), have written biographies on Edwards, but Edwardsian scholars in general agree that George Marsden's new biography on Jonathan Edwards is the most comprehensive "definitive life" of this Puritan divine, and correctly so.⁷ Samuel Logan has written that "there is no question that Marsden's biography is the best book ever written about America's (and perhaps the world's) greatest theologian.... It is thorough, meticulously researched, and in touch with all of the relevant sources both in Edwards himself and in secondary literature."⁸ Some of the most salient features of the Puritan's life and ministry follow.⁹

George Marsden, who devoted nearly ten years of his life to the writing of the work, introduces this biography with the statement that "Edwards was extraordinary," and that even though "his pen brought lasting influence," his "life involved far more" (Marsden, 1). The "Introduction" and the thirty chapters that follow go on to show just how "extraordinary" Edwards was. Throughout the book it is obvious that Marsden, who is himself well versed in the Reformed and Calvinistic theology which Edwards embraced, has immersed himself in the study of the life and theology of the New England Puritan. In his own words, "one of my goals has been to understand him as a real person in his own time." "I find him," says Marsden, "to be a person of immense personal integrity. He was intensely pious and disciplined, admirably but dauntingly so for those of more ordinary religious faith." Yet, there were flaws in the New England Puritan as well. The seriousness with which he took most all matters "made him not an easy person to spend time with as a casual acquaintance, although he would have been fascinating to talk to about matters that concerned him." Nevertheless, "his prowess as a logician made him exceedingly sure of his opinions, sometimes given to pride, overconfidence, tactlessness, and an inability to credit opposing views." He was a man "much loved by those closest to him," but "his opponents found him aloof, opinionated, and intolerant" (2, 5–6).

Marsden begins at the beginning. Jonathan was born on October 5, 1703, in East Windsor, Connecticut. He was the fifth child, and the only son among eleven children, each of whom would grow to be over six feet tall (Jonathan's dad jokingly referred to his "sixty-feet of daughters" [18]). His father, Timothy, was the Harvard trained, influential pastor of a Congregational church in East Windsor. His ministry began in 1694, and lasted until 1755. Jonathan's mother, Esther,

was the daughter of Solomon Stoddard, the renowned pastor of the Congregational church in Northampton, Massachusetts. Stoddard's influence among the New England ministers was so substantial that he was dubbed the "pope" of the Connecticut River Valley. Years later, Jonathan would replace Stoddard at Northampton.

Timothy Edwards taught his son, along with a number of other boys in his congregation, the Bible, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and other disciplines from an early age. Pastor Edwards' major emphasis was on the need of his students to "close" with Christ. Young Jonathan saw several seasons of revival under his father's ministry at East Windsor, which deeply affected him, and would continue to do so in his later years. As a youngster, Jonathan would spend much time in prayer and religious conversation with other youth, but, as he later commented, this "religious" involvement soon died out, and he turned back to sinful behavior.

At the age of thirteen, Jonathan entered the Collegiate School at Connecticut (which was later named Yale), where he studied a number of subjects, including (Calvinistic) theology and philosophy. He was an excellent student and rigorously disciplined, qualities which did not endear him to at least some of his less concerned classmates. During his senior year in college, Jonathan fell deathly ill with pleurisy, but he recovered and graduated in 1720 as the top student in his class; he delivered the valedictory address in Latin. Edwards then continued his studies for several more years preparing for the ministry. At the age of nineteen he was licensed to preach, and completed his studies in divinity in 1723; his Master of Arts' thesis (written in Latin) was on the doctrine of "justification." He accepted a call as "supply" pastor at a small Presbyterian church in New York where he ministered for eight months, returning home to be with his parents for a period of time.

During his years of study for the ministry (probably in 1721) he was converted. It was in the reading of 1 Timothy 1: 17 ("Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.") that Edwards was subdued by the great triune God of Scripture, and bowed his knee to kiss the Son. Now the sovereignty of God which at one time had been so difficult to embrace, became his fondest thought. "I thought to myself," wrote Edwards, "how excellent a Being that was; and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be wrapped up to God in heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in Him" (41). This was that "new sense" of divine things that God gives to those who have genuinely professed faith in Him. Young Edwards was a new creature in Christ.

As Marsden explains, to understand Jonathan Edwards, one must understand his devotion to the Bible as the Word of God. From start to finish he was a devotee of *sola Scriptura*:

7. Philip F. Gura, *Jonathan Edwards: America's Evangelical* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005) 271.

8. Samuel T. Logan, Jr., Review of George M. Marsden's *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, *WTJ* 65 (2003) 373, 375.

9. Samuel Storms, "A Chronology of the Life, Ministry, and Writings of Jonathan Edwards," has also been very helpful in the preparation of this study of the life of Edwards. Online: <http://www.enjoyinggodministries.com/article.asp?id=371>.

The Bible and the Bible alone is the Word of God, and it has a monopoly on truth. For him there was always “the paramount importance of Scripture for everything else in his thought.” From early on he took “the greatest delight in the Holy Scripture, of any book whatever.” He held to the “firm conviction that special revelation provided the only hope to know God’s ways,” and he devoted himself to mastering the Word of God (473–474, 477).

During this time Jonathan, who had been trained to study with his pen in his hand, began writing his miscellaneous thoughts on various topics. He penned his “Notes on Scripture,” his “Notes on the Apocalypse” (the book of Revelation), and his “Miscellanies.” These “Miscellanies” (which number over 1300) were notes, articles, and papers on various subjects (e.g., theological, philosophical, scientific). Some of these were very short, while others were quite lengthy. Edwards added to the “Notes” and “Miscellanies” throughout his life, continuing to demonstrate, says Marsden, that he “was a polymath interested in all knowledge and fascinated by how things worked” (68).

During the nineteenth year of his life, Jonathan also started a Diary, which he, like many Puritans kept as a record of his spiritual state. It was also during this year that he began to write out his Resolutions, which he viewed as God-honoring instructions and maxims which would guide him through his pilgrimage in this world. There were 70 resolutions in all.

It was in 1723 that Jonathan wrote glowing words about a young teenage girl (whom he had likely met several years earlier), by the name of Sarah Pierpont. She “is a young lady in New Haven who is beloved of that almighty Being, who made and rules the world.” And she in turn loves Him. You “could not persuade her to do anything thought wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness and universal benevolence of mind; especially after those times in which this great God has manifested Himself to her mind.” And this young girl “loves to be alone, and to wander in the fields and on the mountains, and seems to have someone invisible always conversing with her.” Sarah Pierpont, states Marsden, “was the perfectly embodied ideal of all that he [Edwards] aspired to be, the pure spiritual being, sweet tempered, singing sweetly, always full of joy and pleasure” (93–94). Four years later, Sarah became Mrs. Jonathan Edwards. In the next twenty-three years the Edwards would have eleven children of their own: three sons and eight daughters (the first child born was Sarah in 1728, and the last one born was Pierpont in 1750).

From late in 1723 until the spring of 1724, Edwards had a brief pastorate at Bolton, Connecticut. He then, however, returned to Yale as a tutor, where he served for a period of two years. During this time (for a period of three months in 1725), he became seriously ill. God, however, once again

delivered His servant. During this time at Yale Edwards underwent a period of (spiritual) depression, which lasted nearly three years, until the Lord brought him out of it in the last part of his tutorship. Then in late 1726 Jonathan resigned this teaching post to accept a call as the assistant pastor to his maternal grandfather, Solomon Stoddard. He was ordained in February of 1727.

Years before Edwards accepted this call, Stoddard had introduced a view of the Lord’s supper wherein the sacrament was treated as a “converting ordinance.” Persons who lived upright lives, yet with little claim to genuine conversion, were invited to join the congregation and partake of the Supper. This might, said Stoddard, lead to their conversion. The result, however, was a general laxity in matters of the Christian faith. When Jonathan came to Northampton as assistant to his grandfather, he accepted this “converting ordinance” view, even though, as he later admitted, he was always wary of the doctrine. Years later, when Edwards publicly challenged Stoddard’s view, it led to his dismissal.

Nevertheless, Edwards entered into his ministry with a servant’s heart, taking his calling very seriously. He was a fine pastor as well as a theologian and philosopher. His ministerial duties included preaching, teaching, counseling, and aiding his grandfather. He also continued his writing ministry. The young pastor devoted himself to the study of Scripture. The Bible was not just a manual for ministry to Jonathan Edwards; he was firmly convinced that it is the very Word of God. As Marsden notes, Edwards was a “deeply spiritual” and “intensely hardworking” man. He “regulated his days by the strictest disciplines.” It was his practice to rise “at four or five in the morning in order to spend thirteen hours [a day] in his study, involving himself in Bible study, meditation, writing, and prayer (253, 133). This intenseness continued throughout his life.

The “pope” of the Connecticut Valley died in 1729, and Edwards was called to be the pastor of the Northampton church. He would serve in that capacity until 1750. Shortly after becoming the sole pastor of the church, Jonathan suffered from emotional and physical fatigue, even losing his voice, which prohibited him from carrying out his pastoral duties. But when he recovered, his ministry flourished. He pastored his people, preached the Word of God, and even mentored young candidates for the ministry. At the age of twenty-six, writes Marsden, “Edwards was now a man of authority.... He was God’s spokesman in Northampton. He was, in one of his favorite metaphors, ‘the trumpet of God’” (132).

The young pastor not only preached to his own congregation, but he was also asked to speak in other church gatherings. Some of his sermons were published during this time. Edwards was even asked to deliver a sermon/lecture to a gathering of the clergy at Boston in 1731. In this message,

titled “God Glorified in Man’s Dependence,” Jonathan took a strong and forceful stance for the Calvinist doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God in the salvation of lost sinners. Here he directly took on the Arminianism which was beginning to gain somewhat of a foothold in erstwhile Calvinistic churches. The Boston clergy was so well-pleased with the sermon/lecture, that they saw that it was published. This marked a turning point in young Edwards’ career, as he now had achieved international recognition.

Edwards’ “popularity” increased as he continued his ministry at Northampton. As he preached the Word of God and ministered to his people, slowly he began to see the tide of the members of the congregation shifting from a state of spiritual lethargy (what the Puritans called a “sottish” state) to one of genuine concern over their spiritual condition. Then in 1734–1735, the first “awakening” occurred. Concerned over the dual threat of Arminianism and antinomianism, Edwards preached a series of sermons on “Justification by Faith Alone,” which triggered this awakening. Many souls were converted during this time, but there were (as always) numerous “counterfeit” conversions as well. Two years later the Puritan pastor had his first book published, his own personal documentary of the first awakening: *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton and the Neighboring Towns and Villages*. Once again, Edwards, and the success of the Northampton ministry, reached international acclaim.

The revival that began in 1734 began to peter out shortly after 1735. One of Satan’s devices for bringing this work of God to an end was that of convincing Edwards’ uncle Joseph Hawley II (a somewhat mentally unstable man, prone to states of depression) that he should commit suicide by cutting his throat. By 1737 Edwards recognized that it was clear that many of the Northampton parishioners were returning to their old ways. In response, over the next several years he preached three lengthy sermon series attempting to change the direction of his congregation. The first was a nineteen-unit sermon series on Matthew 25:1–12 (“The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins”), the second was a twenty-one-unit sermon series on 1 Corinthians 13:1–8 (published posthumously as *Charity and Its Fruits*), and the third was a thirty-unit sermon series on Isaiah 51:8 (later published as *A History of the Work of Redemption*), wherein he set forth God’s “grand design,” wherein “Christ’s redemptive love” is shown to be “the key to all history” (193)—this was the first truly Christian philosophy of history since Augustine’s *City of God*. As expertly preached as the sermons were, however, the tide was not turned. Much to the dismay of its pastor, the Northampton church was back in its sottish state. It was five years after the fires of the first awakening occurred that the second awakening, the “great” awakening began.

When Edwards heard that the Anglican George Whitefield (called “The Grand Itinerant”) was preaching in New England, he asked him to preach at Northampton. The itinerate preacher arrived in October of 1740 and preached several times to this congregation. Apart from his concerns for various “spiritual excesses” of the Anglican, Edwards was impressed with the guest speaker, and even “wept during the whole time” of one of Whitefield’s Sabbath morning sermons. The result was that “joyful tidings” spread to many, who were “savingly brought home to Christ” (207). The “great awakening” had begun, and it lasted until 1742. While in Northampton, Whitefield stayed at the home of Edwards, spoke with his children (at the request of their father), and was very much impressed with the solidarity found in this family.

In this second awakening, besides Whitefield, there were other itinerant preachers involved (e.g., the Presbyterian evangelist Gilbert Tennent). Edwards himself itinerated during this time. He was very “much in demand,” writes Marsden, “as the revival fires continued to blaze all over New England” (239). It was on July 8, 1741, that he preached his famous “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” sermon at Enfield, Connecticut, in which he portrayed, not only the awful wrath of God, but also His mercy to lost sinners who will put their faith in Christ. Apparently, a number of souls were won to Christ through this message. What is not as widely known is that the month before he had preached to same sermon to his own congregation without nearly the same effect.

Jonathan Edwards wrote about this second awakening in his *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England*. He also delivered the Yale commencement address in 1741, wherein in opposition to the gainsayers, he strongly supported the ongoing revival. This address was later enlarged and printed as *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, in which the author offers five marks by which we should “test the spirits” to see if a spiritual work is truly from the Holy Spirit or the spirit of error; the most eminent and conclusive mark being a spirit of love. It was also during this time that he preached a series of sermons, which were later published in book form under the title of *Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections*. This latter work, which “remains the most widely read and admired of his theological works” (285), is generally considered to be one of the author’s two finest volumes (the other being *Freedom of the Will*). In it he gives us a penetrating analysis of the Christian life and the difference between genuine and spurious Christian experience. “True religion, in part,” said Edwards, “consists in holy affections” (285).

In the spring of 1747, David Brainerd, the young missionary to the Indians, was dying of tuberculosis and came to live in the Edwards’ home. Edwards had met him in 1743, and was impressed with the fact that Brainerd possessed an

indefatigable zeal for Christ, as Edwards himself did. There was an immediate bond established between the two evangelists. In the Edwards' home, Brainerd was cared for by the seventeen year old daughter of Edwards, Jerusha. (It is sometimes suggested that these two were engaged to be married, but there is no real evidence for this.) The young missionary died in the fall of that year at the age of twenty-nine, and Edwards preached his funeral service. The sermon was titled "True Saints When Absent From the Body are Present with the Lord." Jerusha died some five months later and was buried next to Brainerd.

At this time, Jonathan Edwards set aside some of his other intended projects to write *The Life of David Brainerd*, the substance of which is Edwards' editing of the missionary's diaries. Marsden agrees with those who see this magnificent work "as in part a spiritual autobiography," written as somewhat of a companion piece to his *Religious Affections*, portraying "all the traits of the model Christian." The missionary's whole life was lived under the rubric of "Thy will be done." Nonetheless, *The Life of David Brainerd* turned out to be Edwards' "most popular work and one of the most influential missionary accounts of all time" (331, 333).

An earlier incident, referred to as the "bad book" case or the "young folks' Bible" fiasco, was likely behind a good deal of the animosity against the Northampton pastor. In this occurrence, there were a number of young men (between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-nine) who had come across some midwifery books and were making erotic use of them to taunt the young ladies in town. As this fiasco continued, Edwards knew that this was a matter that must be dealt with, even in discipline if not repented of. But in his zeal to correct the sinful behavior of the young men, the pastor unintentionally raised questions about some young men who had not done anything wrong. Apparently some of the members of the congregation (perhaps vengefully) used this against their pastor later, and it eventuated in his dismissal. As Marsden explains: "Edwards himself later referred to it as that which gave so great offense, and by which I became so obnoxious" (301).

As noted, Solomon Stoddard had introduced the Lord's supper as a "converting ordinance," teaching that those who lived upright lives, even though they could not give claim to a genuine conversion, should be allowed to the sacrament. It may well lead to their conversion. Edwards had from his arrival at Northampton adopted his grandfather's view, but with reservations. Progressively, however, he became more and more convinced that the only persons who should come to the Lord's supper were those who could give a credible profession of faith. Yet he realized that if he proceeded in this direction he would likely lose his job. Nevertheless, his biblical beliefs and his adherence to the principle of *sola Scriptura* would not allow him to waiver from his convictions. And as Marsden

points out, "that Edwards was willing to sail the foundering ship of his pastorate into the teeth of the storm, knowing well that he and his family were likely to go down, tells us much about his character ... he was irremediably a man of principle." He "was willing to give up his own and his family's worldly security for the cause of eternal souls" (349, 370).

In 1749 he wrote *An Humble Inquiry into the Rules of the Word of God Concerning the Qualifications Requisite to a Complete Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Christian Church*, with the purpose of explaining his view. Being opposed to their pastor's position, the majority of the congregation was not even willing to read the treatise, and in 1750 the male members of the congregation voted ten to one to dismiss Jonathan Edwards. Perhaps the "vengeful" members of the congregation had accomplished their task. The trouble maker of the "bad book" case was gone. Later, there was a small bit of vindication for the Northampton Puritan. One of the members of the opposition, Edwards' cousin Joseph Hawley III, repented of his role in the affair, and published of his severe and uncharitable deeds.

In his farewell sermon the pastor reminded his congregation that he had faithfully served them for a period of twenty-three years. He addressed the various groups among his people, and appropriate words were spoken to each group. He told them that although they would be separated for now in this earthly state, they would all meet again at the last day, where every right would be rewarded and every wrong brought into judgment. At the time Jonathan was forty-six years old, and he and Sarah still had nine children living at home. He lamented that he was now "thrown upon the wide ocean of the world," knowing full well that "I am fitted for no other business but study" (362). Edwards, however, knew well that he was in the hands of God, and that in the end all would be to His glory.

After Edwards' dismissal, one of his cousins (Solomon Williams), who was a Stoddard devotee, published a response to Edwards' *Humble Inquiry*, and Edwards responded in kind with his *Misrepresentations Corrected and the Truth Vindicated*. Also, interestingly, during this time while the Northampton congregation was without a pastor, on various occasions Edwards was requested to do the work of "pulpit supply." He did so, with reluctance, but only a week at a time. During this time several offers for pastoral ministry were made for Edwards to consider. One of these was from Scotland; another was from some of the families in Northampton who had sided with their pastor in the controversy over the Lord's supper who were willing to start a new church in town. Edwards kindly refused.

Then in December of 1750, the church members in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, asked him to become their pastor. At the same time he was asked by the Society in London for

Propagating the Gospel in New England, to evangelize the Housatonic Indians at Stockbridge. Stockbridge was a frontier village on the outskirts of New England. The congregation consisted of some white settlers and a number of Indians. Edwards spent the winter in Stockbridge and accepted the call in the summer of 1751. His family moved to Stockbridge at this time.

There in the outskirts of New England, Edwards once again faithfully gave himself to the ministry. He pastored his congregation, preached each Lord's Day, often through an interpreter, and helped in the overall education of the Indians, especially in their study of the English language, which he thought was better suited to the propagation of the gospel. He also taught the Indians to sing "sacred music." "Music," he wrote, "especially sacred music, has a powerful efficacy to soften the heart into tenderness, to harmonize the affections, and to give the mind a relish for objects of a superior character" (390).

During this time problems arose. In 1754 Edwards once again became seriously ill for a period of seven months, but God spared his life. Further, there was much strife between Edwards and another family over Indian rights, Indian schools, parcels of land for use with the Indians, etc., which threatened to destroy the mission work. Some Indians even left over such matters. On top of this there was the concern over vulnerability of Indian attack. Through it all, however, Edwards stood on his biblically based grounds, and, by God's grace, won out in the end. Then too, while in this frontier town, Edwards completed a work he had begun earlier: *A History of the Work of Redemption*. He also wrote four of his major treatises: *Freedom of the Will*, *The Great Doctrine of Original Sin*, and the "two dissertations": *The End For Which God Created the World*, and *The Nature of True Virtue*.

The first of these voluminous works, *Freedom of the Will*, functions as a Calvinist apologetic against the onslaught of the "almost inconceivably pernicious" Arminian thought that mankind, since the Fall, is still able to please God through his choices. Such thinking denies the fact that the doctrine of man's state of moral depravity ("total depravity"), is essential to our understanding that man is unable to do anything pleasing to God. Edwards supports the two-fold doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God and (at the same time) the responsibility of mankind. *Original Sin* supports the Calvinistic teaching (contra modernist thinking) on the doctrine of original sin, i.e., that because of the Fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden, all humans are found guilty in Adam (imputed sin) their federal head, and inherit their corrupt nature from him. This is due to the "constituted" union that God has established between Adam and all of his posterity. Man is culpable, and God is not the author of sin.

The first of the two dissertations, *The End For Which God*

Created the World, which is to glorify Himself," functions as "sort of a prolegomena to all of [Edwards'] work...it might be seen as the logical starting point for all of his thinking." The "highest end of creation is 'the glory of God.'" God does not create the world to remedy some lack in Himself. Rather, He glorifies Himself by communicating Himself to elect men that they may participate in the blessings of God throughout eternity. "The beams of glory come from God, and are something of God, and are refunded back again to their original. So that the whole is of God, and in God, and to God; and God is the beginning, middle, and end of this affair" (460, 462-463). *The Nature of True Virtue* is a corollary to the first "dissertation." "Nothing is of the nature of true virtue in which God is not the first and the last." Further, true virtue is only possible "if one's heart is united to God, who is love and beauty and the source of all love and beauty" (467-468). As Marsden explains: "Characteristically, Edwards was insisting that the only important question in life is whether one is united to God or in rebellion against God." If it is the former, "then one will learn to love all that God loves—which includes benevolence and justice toward others. God's happiness will be our happiness" (470).

In 1757, Aaron Burr, Edwards' son-in-law and president of Princeton College, died. Edwards was chosen to succeed Burr. He was reluctant to accept the position, believing that he could be of better service in Christ's kingdom by remaining in Stockbridge, pastoring the flock, and completing some major writing projects which he had in mind. As to the latter, Marsden comments "that his heart was most often in his work as a writer ... the center of Edwards' life was his devotion to God expressed with pen and ink" (432). Nevertheless, Edwards agreed to seek counsel on the matter, and when the council concluded that he should accept the call to Princeton, Edwards did so, even with tears. He moved to Princeton, New Jersey, in January of 1758, intending to bring his family there in the spring of the following year. Little did he know that it would be the final year of his earthly life.

Marsden tells us that Edwards' planned, yet never completed "unfinished masterworks" of which he wrote about to the board, were "A History of the Work of Redemption" (which would be a substantial expansion of his earlier work by the same name) and "The Harmony of the Old and New Testaments." The "Harmony" was to consist of three parts: a compilation of the prophecies of the Messiah and their fulfillment; a study of "the types of the Messiah"; and "the harmony of the Old and New Testament, as to doctrine and practice" (473-475).

The "History," on the other hand, was to be "a body of divinity in an entire new method, being thrown into the form of an history, considering the affair of Christian theology, as the whole of it, in each part, stands in reference to the great

work of redemption by Jesus Christ; which I suppose is to be the grand design of all God's designs, and the *summum* and *ultimum* of all the divine operations and decrees; particularly considering all parts in the grand scheme in their historical order" (482). Edwards intent, it seems, was to write a systematic theology, what he called "A Rational Account of the Main Doctrines of the Christian Religion," and work it into an historical form. This would have been a monumental work indeed.

Marsden begins the final chapter of *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* ("The Transitory and the Enduring") with the following words: "Edwards spent the whole of his life preparing to die" (490). This is what his whole life was about. He knew that life was transitory, but he was ready to die. He knew Christ savingly, and he practiced what he preached: *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, *sola Scriptura*, and *solus Christus*. Jonathan Edwards, who, as we have seen, had experienced health problems throughout his life, championed scientific exploration. Thus, he favored the medical practice of inoculation. There were risks involved, but such practice might prevent an epidemic. One month after assuming the presidency of the school, Jonathan Edwards was inoculated for smallpox. The results were fatal. The pustules in his throat were swollen to the point where he was not able to take the medicine which would fight the fever. Jonathan Edwards died on March 22, 1758. On his death bed he called his daughter Lucy, who was attending her father, and said to her: "Dear Lucy, it seems to me to be the will of God that I must shortly leave you; therefore give my kindest love to my dear wife, and tell her, that the uncommon union, which has so long subsisted between us, has been of such a nature, as I trust is spiritual, and therefore will continue forever: and I hope she will be supported under so great a trial, and submit cheerfully to the will of God. And as to my children, you are now like to be left fatherless, which I hope will be an inducement to you all to seek a Father, who will never fail you" (494). Sarah, with whom Jonathan shared this "uncommon union," died some six months after her husband, on October 2, 1758. She was forty-eight years old.

Jonathan Edwards the man is dead. His life was transitory. But his legacy is enduring. He continues to live on for us in his numerous writings. In these volumes one can study the Puritan for himself. There one will come into contact with a man who was equally devoted to the truth as set forth for us in the Word of God, and to the God who set forth this truth for us in His Word. One may begin by reading about the life and thought of this great Puritan divine in George Marsden's "definitive" life of Jonathan Edwards. Pick up and read; it is worth the effort to do so. In the words of Samuel Storms, "Marsden is unparalleled among Edwardsean biographers."¹⁰ ■

REVIEW: Lewis Bevens Schenck, *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R 2003). Large Paperback, xx + 188 pages. \$15.99. Reviewed by Rev. Dr. Rowland S. Ward, minister of Knox Presbyterian Church, Melbourne, Australia.

The republication of this historical study of the significance of infant baptism in the Presbyterian Church should be welcomed by conservative Presbyterians even if they find cause to disagree with some of the author's arguments, and are less than satisfied by aspects of his historical reconstruction and arrangement. The modern introduction by Frank A. James III enhances the volume, and there is a useful bibliography and an index.

Dr Lewis Bevens Schenck (1898–1985) was a North Carolina man descended from German stock and brought up in an Episcopal home. He joined the Presbyterian Church as a young man, trained for the ministry at Union Seminary, Virginia, was ordained in 1924 and served in West Virginia as an assistant pastor. Realising his call to teach rather than pastor, he earned a Th.M. from Princeton in 1926, and taught at Davidson College, North Carolina 1927–66. The book now reviewed was first published in 1940 as a revised form of his 1938 Yale doctoral dissertation.

Schenck held that the place of children in the Presbyterian Church had become confused through the impact of revivalism so that the key role of the nurture of the church and family was neglected because of the excessive emphasis on a conscious conversion experience. I would imagine that Dr Schenck may have been influenced by neo-orthodoxy in his overall teaching career, but his book draws almost exclusively on orthodox Presbyterian theologians to illustrate its thesis, and should be judged on its merits.

The first chapter is foundational (3–52), for it seeks to answer the question, "What is the historic doctrine of the Presbyterian Church concerning children in the covenant?" Schenck shows that Calvin taught that (1) the Abrahamic promise—"I will be God to you and to your seed after you"—was a spiritual covenant including the promise of eternal life; (2) baptism for both adults and children had the significance of a seal of purification and forgiveness of sins as well as a seal of 'regeneration,' by which term Calvin meant not only the inception of new life but its outworking in sanctification throughout life; (3) children are not baptised to make them children of the covenant but because they are already in covenant according to God's promise; (4) as Jesus embraced the little children brought to him, we would need a good reason to refuse to admit children of believers to baptism, since baptism

10. Samuel Storms, "Books released in conjunction with the 300th Anniversary of the birth of Jonathan Edwards," <http://www.enjoyinggodministries.com/article.asp?id=357>.

is a symbol of our communion and association with Christ; (5) admission to church membership is always on the basis of a credible profession of faith on the part of older persons but their children also have the right of church membership by virtue of God's promise; both classes are presumptively Christians in the judgment of charity, and should be treated accordingly so as to grow and develop in Christian character; (6) baptism is not a mere empty sign, nor does it automatically convey grace; rather, it confirms and seals what is already true in the promise of God; (7) it is certain some infants are saved and therefore such infants must have been regenerated, and our inability to observe or understand this is no argument against it; indeed, the promise of God assures us that covenant children dying in infancy are saved; (8) against those who say only those able to profess repentance and faith should be admitted to the church, the response must be that only those who are presumptively Christ's children should be admitted, and this includes the children of believers, since the promise of God is a true pledge of adoption to them; further, the entirety of what is represented in baptism need not be present at the time the sign is administered to children, anymore than was the case with circumcision.

Schenck then more briefly reviews the teaching of Zwingli, Bullinger, Knox and the European Reformed Confessions, concluding with the Westminster Standards, and finds them in agreement with Calvin. One could note the Westminster Directory: 'That the promise is made to believers and their seed; and that the seed and posterity of the faithful, born within the Church, have, by their birth, interest in the covenant.' Again, '... they are Christians, and federally holy before baptism, and therefore are they baptised.'

In this lengthy first chapter there are a few matters one would express differently. For example, Schenck's comments on Cocceius are really out of sequence (33–34). Also, in the way common in earlier scholarship, they overstate the role of the German/Dutch theologian in formulating traditional covenant theology. Such was quite mature before Cocceius wrote his first work in 1648, and Schenck unconsciously concedes this in his references to the Puritans on page 43. In reviewing the Westminster Directory for Public Worship no notice is taken of the possible significance of the omission of specified questions for parents presenting their children for baptism from the final text. But these points do not affect Schenck's basic outline, which, to my mind, fairly represents

the historic Reformed doctrine. However, in view of the points developed in Schenck's next chapter some elaboration of the early Reformed position would have been appropriate.

In his second chapter (53–79), Schenck considers the development of revivalism. His essential argument is that modifications of the traditional doctrine encouraged formalism and in reaction produced a stress on conscious crisis conversion as the only true evidence of salvation, an experience also demanded of children.

Strikingly enough, Schenck begins with Samuel Rutherford (1600–61) who advocated baptism of the children of all who would seriously attend on the preaching of the word irrespective of whether they professed saving faith.¹ One has some question as to the appropriateness of the citation of Rutherford in this connection. (1) As one of the Scottish Commissioners at the Westminster Assembly, it should hardly be supposed without adducing argument that Rutherford varied from the Westminster Standards with whose formulation he had had so much to do. (2) Schenck does not seem to have read Rutherford except through his secondary source, John Macpherson's fine work, *The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology* (Edinburgh, 1903). Schenck even overlooks Macpherson's references to many other writers (MacPherson, 86), whom Boston sought to confute, who held similar views to Rutherford, nor does he consider that assertion of a principle, as in Calvin and the Confessions, need not exclude some modifications found needful in the complexity of practical application. For example, in 1570, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland decided that children of excommunicated persons might be baptised if presented by a faithful member of the church.² As for other writers, William Bucan (d. 1605) of Lausanne argued for the baptism of the infants of the faithful and those born of baptised parents, even those who are unfaithful, since the sins of the fathers should not be visited upon the children and their seed is contained in the covenant promise. He adds, 'Neither is the piety of the next parents to be considered so much as the piety of the church in which they are born, and which is, as it were, their mother; as likewise their ancestors who lived godly.' He cites Romans 11:16, 'if the root be holy,' that is, the first parents, 'so are the branches,' and supports the baptism of the children of the excommunicated and also of the children of Papists, noting that the children of unbelieving Jews were still circumcised.³ So Rutherford was not quite the innovator Schenck suggests.

When we further consider the careful discrimination of the old Reformed in their insistence that the distinction between the visible and invisible church must be consistently maintained, and thus only visible profession is essential for the one and invisible grace for the other, we can understand better where Rutherford and others are coming from. However, this is not to deny that there was formalism in the church of

1. See Samuel Rutherford, *A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Paul's Presbyterie in Scotland* (London 1642) 164ff.

2. William McMillan, *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church 1560–1638* (London: James Clarke, 1931) 251.

3. Guillaume Bucanus, *Institutiones Theologicae* [Bremen 1605] translated by Robert Hill as *Institutions of Christian Religion* (London 1606) 711–714.

the early 18th century, but the reason I think is more related to the greater laxity in practical oversight when compared to Rutherford's day, although this is not to say that Rutherford's view, shared by people like Richard Baxter, is beyond criticism. MacPherson suggests (MacPherson, 90) that Rutherford's concern was for the salvation of sinners, that many were called to the privilege of hearing, and should be encouraged so that they might become of the elect. On the other hand, in the early 18th century Thomas Boston opposed Rutherford's position, without naming him, out of the same concern for the salvation of sinners. He saw in the formalism and false peace of his day a hindrance to salvation. It's probably fair to say that Rutherford at least tested the boundaries of Westminster doctrine in some respects, whereas Boston made some excellent points but ran the risk of advocating a visible profession that required a man to be a believer rather than a credible professor. Schenck seems to think Boston was a reversion to the original doctrine (54), and that people like Bowles and Baxter agreed with him. Here he misreads MacPherson who says the very opposite (86). In the sense that looking for marks of grace to qualify for church membership was characteristic of revivalism, we might look more to Boston for a precursor.

Schenck is on somewhat better ground in his references to the Half-Way Covenant in New England, although even here he does not trace the relevant matter of the interest in felt experience to its New England origins. The story is well known. In 1662 some Massachusetts Puritans agreed to a half-way membership status for those who had been baptised as infants but were not able to testify to a conversion experience. Such could still have their children baptised if they acknowledged God's claims on their lives and accepted the church's discipline despite their unwillingness to profess faith in Christ. A further step was taken in 1707 by Solomon Stoddard. He treated the Lord's Supper as a converting ordinance and allowed the unconverted to partake. Much coldness and formality became characteristic of the churches of New England leading to eventual reaction.

My take on revivalism is to indeed recognise the impact of formalism, which was widespread, to note that the earnestness of the mid 17th century was missing in the early 18th century, and that to some degree the wrong use of the visible/invisible church distinction was to blame. But the inevitable reaction did not revert to the Westminster and early Calvinist doctrine, but to an emphasis on religious experience. Why so? In part it can be seen as a pendulum swing, somewhat like the rise of Pentecostalism in the face of 20th century liberalism. But it also can be seen as taking up the separatist idea of the church as comprised of a regenerate membership. The early Puritans had not required such a test of conversion. Edmund S. Morgan argues that this practice originated in Massachusetts, spread to Plymouth,⁴ New Haven and Connecticut and back

to England. This is surely relevant in assessing the historical development, but Schenck does not refer to it.

In the 1730s and 1740s the first Great Awakening found fertile soil in the formal worship in many churches and among the many unchurched on the frontier. The emphasis on experience, and the revivalistic emphasis fostered at the Tennents' Log College, impacted on Presbyterians. The reaction to formalism produced a stress on conscious, crisis conversion as the only true evidence of salvation, an experience also demanded of children. Thus the only way to God was popularly seen as involving terror and misery arising from conviction of sin preparatory to the experience of God's love and peace. The 1741–58 Old Side/New Side division of Presbyterians resulted. After reunion there was a period of indifference until the Great Revival of 1800, which saw a renewed and rather lasting emphasis on revivalism. Schenck (78) quotes Dr Samuel Miller writing in 1832: 'I confess I deeply regret that the use of camp meetings should be resumed in our body. To say nothing of the irregularities and abuses ... they have always appeared to me adapted to make religion more an affair of display, of impulse, of noise, and of animal sympathy, than of the understanding, the conscience, and the heart....'

Schenck begins his 3rd chapter—The Threat of Revivalism (80–103)—by writing: 'The disproportionate reliance upon revivals as the only hope of the church and the proclamation of the Gospel from the pulpit as almost the only means of conversion, amounted to a practical subversion of Presbyterian doctrine, an overshadowing of God's covenant promise.' He traces the neglect of infant baptism in Presbyterian churches in the 19th century, citing Charles Hodge's survey (84). This showed that in 1807 there was one child baptised for every five members but a steady decline had reduced the ratio to one for every twenty members in 1855. He cites the pleas of leaders such as Ashbel Green, Samuel Miller and J.W. Alexander, who sought proper care for baptised members, rather than that they be left without care as if they were not members of the church and had no obligations by virtue of God's covenant.

Confusion in American Presbyterian thought is illustrated by a number of examples. Some took up essentially the notion involved in the half-way covenant. They distinguished two aspects to the covenant, one merely outward, ecclesiastical and legal, and the other spiritual, in a rather dualistic fashion so that the external covenant was not seen as 'interpenetrated by the internal covenant,' to quote Louis Berkhof. Schenck asserts (86) that Dr Stuart Robinson even took the position that the Abrahamic covenant was actually not the covenant of grace at all, and T.E. Peck likewise. Thornwell and Dabney taught

4. Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (New York: New York University Press, 1963).

that baptism made a child a child of the covenant, meaning an ecclesiastical covenant by which the child had the right to instruction. Until they showed a new heart they were to be treated as unregenerate baptised children. The seal of God's covenant was only a symbol until they had faith.

The differences came to a head in the debate on revision of the Book of Discipline at the General Assembly of 1859. Some, such as Charles Hodge, wished to retain the wording that said all baptised persons 'are members of the church, are subject to government and discipline' and when adult 'are bound to perform all the duties of church members.' Others, such as Thornwell, wanted to state that all baptised persons are under the church's 'government and training' and to add that only those, however, who have made a profession of faith in Christ are proper subjects of judicial prosecution.' With the Civil War, the church was divided. In 1863 the Northern Church adopted without dissent the disputed part as it was in the original book, while in 1879 the Southern Church adopted without controversy Thornwell's draft. Thus a change had occurred from the historic Reformed doctrine, a change that in many respects adopted Baptist ground so far as the baptism of infants was concerned. Interestingly, in 1934 the Northern Church made a modification in line with the South without exciting any controversy, but Schenck does not mention this.

The Defence of the Doctrine forms the subject of the fourth chapter (104–147). This does not seem entirely aptly named as the first part is spent demonstrating that the rise of the New England Divinity (which divided the church 1838–1869) impacted on the doctrine of redemption and regeneration, and therefore on the doctrine of baptism, because of its different doctrine of original sin. But as it proceeds we do come to read a positive exposition of the Reformed doctrine of infant baptism as held by the Old School. Schenck writes, "The theological system of Princeton Seminary was essentially that of John Calvin, received through the medium of Francisco Turretin and the Westminster Standards' (132). He concludes that, over against the crisis conversion idea of revivalism, which tended to regard infants as unconverted pagans, Christian nurture was 'the appointed, the natural, the normal, and the ordinary means by which the children of believers were made truly the children of God' not, of course apart from 'the regenerative act and effectual cooperation of the Holy Spirit' (145).

A short chapter, The Resultant Confusion, completes Schenck's book (148–158), although it does not take the history beyond the 19th century. This would have been the ideal point at which to summarise his conclusions and lay out a

charter for reform. As this is not done effectively, the ending is a bit limp. Having said this, don't think this book is not of real worth. It deals with an issue of perennial importance and its concern to recover the emphasis on the promise of God sealed in baptism, and the corresponding obligations of the baptised, are issues of great practical significance.

Given the controversy over Abraham Kuyper's presumptive regeneration position, one might well be rather discriminating in one's language when speaking of the basis of Christian baptism. It seems better to emphasise the promise of God in his covenant as the warrant to baptise rather than presumed regeneration. Of course in the West today we do not face the high infant mortality of an earlier age. But an earlier age did place their confidence in family and Christian nurture in dependence on God's Spirit, not in spurts of evangelical fads and fashions or spasmodic revival efforts. The promise of God gave incentive, and encouragement. In our individualistic age we need to recover the older Reformed doctrine. If Schenck's work helps to stimulate a fresh treatment of the theme, brought up to date and dealing with some more recent aberrations, or if it otherwise stimulates a return to a more Biblical position, it will be well worthwhile. ■

REVIEW: Guy Prentiss Waters, *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul: A Review and Response* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 2004). Paperback. 273 pages. \$16.99. Reviewed by Dr. J. V. Fesko, Pastor of Geneva Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Marietta, Georgia, and adjunct professor of theology at Reformed Theological Seminary—Atlanta.

In the field of New Testament (NT) studies the new perspective on Paul (NPP) has occupied scholars for approximately the last thirty years. Unlike theological movements of the past, which were once confined to the academy and took generations to trickle into the pew, the NPP has moved through the church with lightening speed as information has disseminated through the Internet. Previously, the Reformed community has been engaged in internecine controversies such as the worship wars, and the days of creation, and has not, until quite recently, noticed the encroaching influence of the NPP. Though a few Reformed scholars, such as Moisés Silva, formerly a professor of NT at Westminster Theological Seminary, and his colleague, Richard B. Gaffin Jr., professor of biblical and systematic theology, have engaged scholars associated with the NPP, there has not been a monograph from the Reformed perspective devoted to the subject, until now.¹

Guy Prentiss Waters, a professor of biblical studies at Belhaven College, Jackson, Miss., has offered the first book-length engagement of the NPP from a distinctively Reformed confessional perspective. What makes Waters well qualified to

1. See Moisés Silva, "The Law and Christianity: Dunn's New Synthesis," *Westminster Theological Journal* 53 (1991) 339–353; and Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., "Paul the Theologian," *Westminster Theological Journal* 62 (2000) 121–141.

write such a book is that he studied at Duke University under Richard B. Hays and E. P. Sanders, two scholars who share NPP concerns. Waters divides his book into nine chapters and covers: the antecedent history leading to the development of the NPP, leading scholars who share NPP concerns, such as Sanders, James D. G. Dunn, and N. T. Wright, a critique of the NPP, and the significance of the NPP for the Reformed community. The book closes with an annotated bibliography that is worth the price of the book alone.

The initial chapters covering the antecedent history are quite helpful for one coming to the subject anew. Few in the Reformed community are intimately familiar with the authors with which Waters interacts, F. C. Baur, Albert Schweitzer, or Ernst Käsemann (3–22). In surveying the NPP antecedent history, Waters is able to show how the field of NT studies became ripe for the work of Sanders, who called for a reevaluation of the common portrait of Judaism found in 20th century NT studies (35–90). It was Sanders' watershed work that set the stage for the work of two of the most prolific authors with NPP concerns, James Dunn (96–117) and N. T. Wright (119–49). It is critical for anyone who wants to understand the NPP to see how it developed. Many do not realize that NPP authors such as Wright primarily engage the likes of Rudolf Bultmann, whom Wright understands to represent a common "Lutheran" understanding of Paul.² In this area, then, Waters excels in his treatment and critique.

In Waters' critique of the NPP (151–90) he identifies key weaknesses such as Wright's questionable proposition that first century Jews saw themselves being in exile because they lived under Roman occupation in the promised land. Waters also demonstrates the problems with using the literature of second temple Judaism to interpret the NT making the important point that if one is to understand truly the NT, at least according to scholars with NPP concerns, then one would have to become an expert in the literature of inter-testamental Judaism (155–56). He also identifies the key presupposition of many scholars with NPP concerns, who do not distinguish between the writings of the OT and second temple Judaism—in other words, they fail to recognize the inspired nature of the Scriptures (156–57). What is especially helpful, however, is that Waters engages the exegesis of those with NPP concerns covering texts such as Romans 11:5–6 (159), 3:20 (159–61), 4:4–5 (161–62), and 9:30–32a (162–64), to name just a few. On the whole, Waters' exegetical work is first-rate. A recent review of Waters' book, however, has been critical of his work on some of these very points.

Recently James Meek has argued that there are weaknesses in Waters' book, including his claims that: Wright is not unconcerned with linear, logical thinking; the NPP has not imposed a priesthood of scholars, a new magisterium for the church; Wright's present and future justification is like that

of Herman Ridderbos, Geerhardus Vos, and George Eldon Ladd; and Waters' tone is often harsh and disparaging.³ While I cannot engage at length each of these supposed weaknesses, I can nonetheless make a few observations.

First, Waters writes that in Wright's works there is "an inherent bias against doctrinal formulation and linear, logical reasoning, a predisposition against conceiving of the relationship of God and man in *vertical terms*" (121). Meek, reacting against this statement, argues that "one only has to read Wright, however, to know that he consistently employs 'linear, logical reasoning' in his writing, as well as 'doctrinal formulation' (which Waters catalogs and with which he disagrees). Waters does not explain how story undermines a 'vertical' dimension in our relationship to God" (Meek, 654). One must wonder whether Meek has understood Waters' criticism of Wright. Waters' statement comes from his section on "Theology (Proper) in N. T. Wright." Theology (Proper) deals with, among several other things, one's understanding of Scripture and revelation. That Wright understands the NT as a historical phenomenon is uncontested. That he understands the NT as divine revelation, inspired, inerrant, and infallible, is something that is totally absent from Wright's prolegomena where he lays out his theological presuppositions, what we can call the *vertical element*.⁴ In this regard, Wright is quite hostile to the concept of systematic theology and instead employs narrative theology. One can read thousands of pages of material and never once find anything resembling, for example, an *ordo salutis*, which is a common way to express the believer's relationship to God.

Second, is Waters correct to argue that the NPP has erected a new academic magisterium? Meek believes, no. Meek argues, "Many readers of this *Journal*, however, would affirm the importance of historical and other knowledge for (historical-grammatical) biblical interpretation without believing that they thereby establish a scholarly tyranny" (Meek, 654). Meek, however, seems to forget two things: (1) the intention of the book; and (2) the role that those with NPP concerns often give the literature of second temple Judaism. From the perspective of one in the pew, the audience for whom Waters' writes, a fact acknowledged by Meek himself (653), the claim that one cannot understand the NT apart from the literature of the second temple does, in effect, establish a new magisterium. Tell a person in the pew or an elder that he must first read the apocrypha, Josephus, rabbinic writings, but only those prior to

2. See e.g., N. T. Wright, "On Becoming the Righteousness of God: 2 Cor 5.21," in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 2, 1 and 2 Corinthians (Atlanta: SBL, 2002) 203 n6.

3. James A. Meek, "Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul: A Review and Response," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48/3 (2005) 654–655.

4. See N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 29–144.

70 AD, and the Dead Sea Scrolls to have a proper understanding of Paul, and then say there is not a new barrier between the believer and his Bible. Moreover, Wright has claimed that “we cannot escape the constant task, important in the study of second-temple Judaism as much as anywhere else, of reconstructing the worldview which informed and underlay not only this or that particular writing but the society as a whole” in order to understand the NT (*People of God*, 119). In the light of this statement, it certainly does not appear that the Bible is self-interpreting as we have historically understood it (WCF 1.7, 9). For example, a person in the pew reads that a person “is justified apart from the works of the law” (Rom 3:28). He then goes to Ephesians and reads, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works” (2:8–9). It seems simple, one’s moral effort is excluded in his justification, as the church has historically understood these statements for nearly two millennia. But in actuality, because the person in the pew has not read Wright and Dunn, he does not know that “justification” is the Jewish desire to be vindicated before their Roman overlords and Jewish sectarian groups like the Essenes and Zealots, that “works of the law” are not one’s moral effort but only circumcision, Sabbath, and dietary food laws, and that we cannot necessarily appeal to Ephesians 2:8–9 to help us understand Romans 3:28 because Paul may not have written Ephesians (*People of God*, 147–214).⁵ One wonders whether Meek has carefully thought through such a scenario before he dismissed Waters’ argument.

Third, Meek observes that Waters’ is critical of Wright’s “two-staged” understanding of justification (655; cf. *Perspectives on Paul*, 131, 33), and then claims that Vos, Ridderbos, and Ladd have similar views. Let us begin with Ladd. Seeing that Waters has written for the confessional Reformed community, again, a fact that Meek recognizes, then can one appeal to Ladd as a confessional Reformed theologian? Yes, Ladd is evangelical, but something that many from within

the Reformed community forget, is that Reformed theology is evangelical, but not all evangelical theology is Reformed. If one appeals to broader evangelicalism for the legitimacy of a belief, then one has to contend with Arminianism or Open Theism, for example, theological views well outside the bounds of Reformed confessional theology. Furthermore, to argue that Vos and Ridderbos have similar views is simply irresponsible. Wright is quite clear that the ground of one’s present justification is faith and that final justification is based upon the believer’s Spirit-produced works.⁶ This construction is completely at odds with those of Ridderbos and Vos. Ridderbos is very careful to say that faith and works are synecdochical: “Faith is involved in justification by the grace of God and by nothing else, even so work emanates from this same faith; as faith cannot remain empty and work-less, but becomes known as faith precisely in works.”⁷ Here Ridderbos says that faith is involved in justification, and nothing else, which means that he preserves the ground of justification, the obedience of Christ, both in the present, and however justification may be related to the final judgment. Likewise, Vos states throughout his writings that our justification is based upon Christ’s merit, his active and passive obedience, and comes through faith alone.⁸ To say that Vos and Ridderbos cast justification with careful attention to eschatology, which supposedly makes their views similar to Wright’s, means that one must ignore all of the details, which is simply sloppy scholarship.

Fourth, Meek claims that Waters “is often harsh and disparaging” (Meek, 655). Yet, he only cites one example. To substantiate this claim, other references should have been provided. The one example that Meek cites is the following statement: “Wright has been found attractive to Reformed men because of the latter’s ignorance of historical and systematic theology ... since charity forbids us from attributing this failure to malicious duplicity” (Waters, 204). I must admit that I find such a statement difficult to label as harsh or disparaging. Waters specifically does not attribute malicious motives to those who favorably cite Wright. Moreover, this is not a blanket statement against all Reformed theologians who positively cite Wright but from within the context, one can easily see that it is those associated with the Federal Vision (FV) that are in view. To say that someone is ignorant, simply means that they are without knowledge, or that they are unaware or uninformed. To say that Wright’s and the historic Reformed, even Protestant, understandings of justification are compatible does seem to point in the direction of ignorance. Can one who is knowledgeable of Reformed historical and systematic theology truly argue this case without having to redefine radically many of the terms and concepts of Reformed theology? As Alister McGrath has noted, one very knowledgeable with historical and systematic theology, “If Sanders or Wright is correct, Martin Luther is wrong.”⁹ So,

5. See James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 13–139; idem, “The New Perspective on Paul,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 65 (1983) 95–122. Wright does affirm the Pauline authorship of Ephesians (N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection and the Son of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003] 236).

6. See N. T. Wright, *Romans*, NIB, vol. 10 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002) 580.

7. Hermann Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard de Witt (1975; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 180, emphasis added.

8. See Danny E. Olinger, ed., *A Geerhardus Vos Anthology: Biblical and Theological Insights Alphabetically Arranged* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 2005) 163–165.

9. Alister E. McGrath, “Reality, Symbol and History: Theological Reflections on N. T. Wright’s Portrayal of Jesus,” in *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel: A Critical Assessment of N. T. Wright’s Jesus*

it appears that these criticisms, upon further investigation, are lacking. Waters' analysis, contrary to these criticisms, is accurate. This does not mean, however, that there is nothing that one might critique. It is in Waters' final chapter where some readers will likely cry foul.

Waters' final chapter deals with the significance of the NPP for the confessional Reformed community. In this chapter Waters tours various doctrines such as justification, regeneration, assurance of salvation, and baptism (191–98), which, again, is valuable. Where some will take issue, however, is when Waters critiques the Auburn Avenue Pastor's Conference, or FV, as well as the theological formulations of former Westminster Theological Seminary professor Norman Shepherd. To be sure, Waters is careful to caveat that those associated with the FV do not arise out of the same antecedent history as the NPP. He points out, nonetheless, that those associated with the NPP and the FV share parallel affinities: an aversion to systematic theology, the need for inherent righteousness for justification, and their understanding(s) of baptism. Some will argue that it is out of place for Waters to include a section on the FV and Norman Shepherd in a book devoted to the NPP. Such an objection has, perhaps, some validity at first glance. Upon closer examination, however, there are legitimate reasons to include a critique of those associated with the FV.

When one considers that several of the authors associated with the FV have favorably cited N. T. Wright, even embracing some of Wright's definitions and categories, then it is fair to place them under the microscope for scrutiny and critique.¹⁰ This portion of Waters' book is therefore helpful, identifying where and how the NPP has found an entry point to the Reformed community. So, while it is legitimate to critique the FV in this respect, Waters could have improved his critique by citing specific examples where those associated with the FV favorably cite Wright. Where some of Waters' critique is possibly questionable, however, is in critiquing the formulations of Norman Shepherd. While parallels certainly exist between the theology of Shepherd and the NPP, there is no documented paper trail, to my knowledge, that shows an explicit connection between the NPP and Shepherd. One wonders if the closing pages of a book devoted to the NPP is the place, therefore, for such a critique. Though, perhaps Waters legitimately includes Shepherd in his critique given the title of his book, *Justification and the New Perspectives* [note the plural] *on Paul*. In other words, the title casts a broad umbrella under which Waters could engage any perspective of recent origin, whether the views of Sanders, Dunn, or Wright, those associated with the FV, or even Norman Shepherd.

Guy Waters has done the Reformed community a great service in engaging the NPP. Waters swiftly navigates through the historical, exegetical, and theological terrain with skill and clarity. Though N. T. Wright publicly repudiated Waters' treat-

ment of his work at the 2005 Auburn Avenue Pastor's Conference, one would do well to recall Karl Barth's similar rejection of Cornelius Van Til's critique of his thought. The confessional Reformed community would undoubtedly side with Van Til. Scholars, ministers, elders, and astute laymen would do well to study Waters' monograph and the issues set forth therein. Waters' book, therefore, is highly recommended.

REPLY TO Dr. John V. Fesko, Review of *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul*. By Guy Prentiss Waters.

I wish to extend my thanks to the editor of the *Confessional Presbyterian*, Mr. Coldwell. He has kindly invited me to respond to Dr. Fesko's review of *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul*, and to James A. Meek's recent review of *J&NPP* in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. I am also grateful to Dr. Fesko for his willingness to participate in this exchange. I present this reply in the hopes that it will facilitate a continuing dialogue within Presbyterian and Reformed circles. May God be pleased to grant that this conversation result in its participants "being of the same mind" (Phil. 2:2) on these important matters.

Students of the New Perspective(s) on Paul (NPP) are likely aware of the zeal with which some of its Reformed sympathizers have been promoting the idea that the NPP is compatible with our theological and confessional commitments. For this reason, it has been encouraging to see a growing number of Reformed ministers and teachers reaffirming our common confessional commitment to the doctrines of grace in the face of the challenges that the NPP pose to them. I am grateful that we may count Fesko and the *Confessional Presbyterian* among this number.

Fesko's review manifests a great deal of sympathy for the arguments and conclusions presented in *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul* (*J&NPP*). His assessment of the work seems to me to be, on the whole, positive. Towards the end of his review, Fesko poses two questions that merit comment and reflection. Is it appropriate to include in *J&NPP* a critique of aspects of the theology of Norman Shepherd? Does the inclusion of this critique reflect the author's persuasion that Shepherd may rightly be counted a proponent of the NPP?

and the Victory of God, ed. Carey C. Newman (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity, 1999) 169.

10. See, e.g., Rich Lusk, "A Response to 'The Biblical Plan of Salvation,'" in *The Auburn Avenue Theology: Pros & Cons*, ed. E. Calvin Beisner (Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.: Knox Theological Seminary, 2004) 135–36; Ralph Smith, *Eternal Covenant* (Moscow, Idaho: Canon, 2003) 64, nn. 6–7; Peter J. Leithart, *Against Christianity* (Moscow, Idaho: Canon, 2003) 29 n11; p. 52, n. 11; Douglas Wilson, *'Reformed' Is Not Enough: Rediscovering the Objectivity of the Covenant* (Moscow, Idaho: Canon, 2002) 204.

First, let us take up the second question. Does the inclusion of this critique reflect the author's persuasion that Shepherd may rightly be counted a proponent of the NPP? I think that it would be an injustice to Norman Shepherd to claim that he is a proponent of the NPP. I stated in *J&NPP* that I did not include the critique of Shepherd because I thought that there was an organic connection between the NPP and Shepherd's theology. In *J&NPP*, I claimed that Shepherd had not "arrived at [his] conclusions or support[ed his] conclusions through a concerted study of the NPP" (204). I also wrote that Shepherd would not be "necessarily supportive of all aspects of NPP scholarship" (205). I clarified this latter point in a footnote:

These comments are all the more important in view of a not infrequent tendency within the church to apply the label "New Perspective" to the teachings of Norman Shepherd and the theology of the Federal Vision. While Shepherd and the Federal Vision share some of the concerns expressed by the NPP, it is inaccurate to categorize them as a single movement (261n.15).

In summary, it is inaccurate to identify Professor Shepherd as a NPP proponent. The label "New Perspective(s) on Paul" properly belongs to such scholars as E. P. Sanders, James D. G. Dunn, N. T. Wright and their immediate advocates and sympathizers.

Let us now take up the first question. Is it appropriate to include a critique of aspects of the theology of Norman Shepherd in a book analyzing the New Perspective(s) on Paul? The answer is that, in certain conservative Reformed circles, the NPP, the theology of Norman Shepherd, and what has been termed the Federal Vision, have come to share a common theological life. Some individuals find "certain actual affinities" among these three distinct theological entities (205). To confirm this judgment, one need only peruse selected "weblogs" of individuals associated with the conservative Presbyterian and Reformed church. It was my intention in the closing chapter of *J&NPP* to observe that "certain issues that we have raised in our study of the NPP find parallels in the writings of the above-mentioned individuals [i.e. Norman Shepherd and the session of the AAPC]," and that "individuals who have interest in NPP, e.g., might and do (rightly) take interest in Shepherd and the AAPC theology because of certain actual affinities between them (and vice versa)" (205). *J&NPP* argued that there were three such areas of affinity: the "'allergy' to the vertical issues pertaining to God and the individual soul ... [and] a form of dichotomization of heart and history;" "functional adherence ... to a justifying inherent righteousness;" and the doctrine of baptism (205, 209, 211). Since the purpose of this chapter was to explore the impact that the NPP is having

in the Reformed churches, it seemed fitting to explore why advocates of Shepherd's theology and of the Federal Vision might have interest in the NPP.

I agree with Fesko that *J&NPP* would have benefited from extensive documentation of FV proponents' sympathy with the NPP. He has helpfully provided such references in his review. The precise nature and documentation of the tangled relationship that the NPP, the theology of Norman Shepherd, and the Federal Vision have come to assume in our churches is a matter that my forthcoming book on the Federal Vision will pursue in some detail (*The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology* [Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, forthcoming 2006]). In this respect, I am hopeful that it will both complement and continue the effort of the last chapter of *J&NPP*.

Fesko included in his review a helpful analysis of James A. Meek's recent review of *J&NPP* in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. It would therefore be appropriate to include in this reply to Fesko's review a few reflections on Dr. Meek's criticisms of *J&NPP*. Meek charges *J&NPP* with "misrepresent[ing] the views of 'new perspective' writers" (654). Whereas *J&NPP* claims that there is in Wright "an inherent bias against doctrinal formulation and linear, logical reasoning, a predisposition against conceiving of the relationship of God and man in vertical terms," Wright, Meek asserts, "consistently employs 'linear logical reasoning' in his writing, as well as 'doctrinal formulation' (which Waters catalogs and with which he disagrees). Waters does not explain how story undermines a 'vertical' dimension in our relationship to God" (654). Meek has misunderstood the concern. *J&NPP* does not question Wright's use of argumentative logic or doctrinal formulation in his writings. *J&NPP* argues that Wright's particular narrative epistemology undermines argumentative logic and doctrinal formulation and promotes an unbalanced view of the Christian life (200–202).

Second, Meek claims that "Waters' argumentation is often weak." He offers two examples in support of this claim. First, "at times it appears that his primary concern is that 'new perspective' views differ from traditional formulations." This, Meek says, is "not an argument, much less an adequate response to scholars who are asking us to reexamine our views in the light of Scripture" (654). We should observe that Meek offers no specific examples to support his criticism. His qualifying phrase "at times" lends the reader no assistance in finding instances of this transgression. *J&NPP*, however, offers a number of exegetical arguments concerning matters that *J&NPP* argued to be at the core of the debate (158–185). These exegetical arguments were part of a critique that was hermeneutical, exegetical, and theological in nature. Meek simply needs to be clearer about his concern if we are to grant it credence.

Meek offers a second example. *J&NPP* is said to "over-

reach” when it maintains that the NPP is in effect “proposing ‘a priesthood of scholars be established in the church’ that puts ordinary believers ‘at the mercy of an academic elite’ and of an ‘academic magisterium’” (654, quoting *J&NPP* 155–156, 203). I agree with Fesko’s observation that “from the perspective of one in the pew ... the claim that one cannot understand the NT apart from the literature of the second temple does, in effect, establish a new magisterium.” As Fesko points out, non-specialists of Second Temple Judaism are being asked to accept a radical rereading of the doctrine of justification. They are not, however, in a position to evaluate that rereading. This goes far beyond what Meek says is the “importance of historical (and other) knowledge for (historical-grammatical) biblical interpretation” (654). At issue is whether Christians are in a position, “in a due use of the ordinary means” (WCF 1.7), to understand the Bible’s teaching on justification.

Third, Meek claims that Wright’s “two-staged” doctrine of justification is not objectionable because such writers as Geerhardus Vos, Herman Ridderbos, and George E. Ladd have argued for a similar “two-staged” doctrine. Meek misunderstands the concern that *J&NPP* raised regarding Wright’s doctrine of justification. It is not that Wright conceives justification to be a “two-staged event” *simpliciter*. The issue is that Wright conceives what he terms “final justification” within that two-staged event to be grounded, in part, on the believer’s obedience (133). No Protestant, consistent with his Protestantism, can assert such a doctrine.

Fourth, “Waters attributes to ‘new perspective’ authors formulations not found in their writings, that is, that Sanders, Dunn, and Wright ‘agree with Rome that the believer is never justified but by infused grace.’” (655). *J&NPP* argues that Sanders, Dunn, and Wright have rejected the doctrine of imputed righteousness in justification. All point to the work of God *in* the believer as constituting at least part of the ground upon which he is justified. In classical terms, this is a doctrine of justification by infused grace. Why is it necessary that NPP proponents themselves use such language in order to warrant this language as an appropriate description of their doctrine?

Finally, Meek claims that the “tone” of *J&NPP* is “often harsh and disparaging.” In support, Meek cites only one example: “[Waters] can only imagine that those in the Reformed camp who have accepted some ‘new perspective’ teachings have done so out of ‘ignorance of what their [denomination’s] standards teach, since charity forbids us from attributing this failure to malicious duplicity.’” I am pleased to see that Fesko “finds such a statement difficult to label as harsh or disparaging.” This statement cites neither malice nor incompetence on the part of Reformed individuals who are sympathetic to the soteriological claims of the NPP. As Fesko observes, it endeavors in charity to attribute that inconsistency to a lack

of awareness of what the Westminster Standards say on the points in question.

In conclusion, let me again extend my appreciation both to Editor and to Dr. Fesko for permitting me to participate in this dialogue. May the God of all grace bless this exchange to the edification of the church and to the glory of his name. ■

Review: The “Prince of the Federal Theologians” and *The Covenant of Life Opened: A Review of Samuel Rutherford’s The Covenant of Life Opened*, edited by C. Matthew McMahon (New Lenox, Ill.: Puritan Publications, 2005).¹ 515 pages. Large perfect-bound paperback. \$39.99. Reviewed by Guy M. Richard, senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church (PCA), Gulfport, Miss.. Pastor Richard is a Ph.D. candidate in Systematic and Historical Theology at the University of Edinburgh, New College, in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Samuel Rutherford (1600–1661) is a towering figure in Scottish theology. Among seventeenth-century Scots theologians, he is, as James Walker says, “perhaps ... the greatest” of all.² In his lifetime, he published thirteen major theological treatises, amounting to just over 7,000 pages of text, not to mention other works, including sermons, letters, an in-depth catechism (equaling 562 questions and answers—over five times the number in the Westminster Shorter Catechism), and a myriad of political writings, all of which add nearly 3,000 pages to the total. In order to give a frame of reference for the magnitude of Rutherford’s literary output, it should be noted that the sixteen volumes of John Owen’s *Works* account for only about 9,200 pages.³ When we add to Rutherford’s total a commentary on Isaiah, which has tragically been lost, and several unpublished manuscripts and sermons, we have a literary production that clearly rivals that of Owen. And yet Rutherford has received comparatively little attention in the scholarship of this period, especially in relation to John Owen.

Rutherford is perhaps best known today among evangelical Christians for his *Letters* (365 of them, written to colleagues and parishioners), which have been in print ever since their original publication in 1664.⁴ They have passed through

1. The moniker “prince of the federal theologians” is one used by M. Charles Bell in his *Calvin and Scottish Theology: The Doctrine of Assurance* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1985) 70.

2. *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland, 1560–1750* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1982) 8.

3. *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William Goold, 16 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965).

4. For the original edition of the letters, see *Joshua redivivus, or Mr. Rutherford’s Letters* (Rotterdam?, 1664); for the standard edition, see *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, ed. Andrew Bonar (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1891).

something like one hundred editions and been translated into at least four other languages. The great Charles Spurgeon once said of the *Letters*: “When we are dead and gone let the world know that Spurgeon held Rutherford’s letters to be the nearest thing to inspiration which can be found in all the writings of mere men.” The Puritan Richard Baxter expressed similar sentiments: “Hold off the Bible,” he said, “such a book the world never saw.”⁵

Among historians and conservative Presbyterians, Rutherford is possibly best known today for his political treatise *Lex, Rex, or the Law and the Prince* (1644). John Coffey, whose work on Rutherford is the finest thing yet published, cites no fewer than nine histories of the early modern period that discuss *Lex, Rex* and its implications for political thought.⁶ Others among Rutherford’s biographers claim that this treatise is “the constitutional inheritance of all countries in modern times” and that it represents “one of the most valuable contributions to political science” in any period.⁷ Still others, coming out of conservative Presbyterian circles, consider *Lex, Rex* to be “[o]ne of the greatest works on Government, the Civil Magistrate, Church and State ever written,” because it treats these subjects from an explicitly biblical perspective.⁸

5. Spurgeon, *The Sword & Trowel*, June 1891; Bonar, “Sketch of Samuel Rutherford,” in *Letters*, 25.

6. *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997) 146.

7. A.T. Innes, “Samuel Rutherford,” in *Studies in Scottish Church History, Chiefly Ecclesiastical* (London, 1892) 5.

8. C. Matthew McMahon, “Lex Rex,” www.apuritansmind.com/SamuelRutherford/SamuelRutherfordLexRex.

9. Richard Gunn, a lecturer at the University of Edinburgh, currently teaches a course (course number, PO 0044), entitled “Scottish Political Thought,” which examines *Lex, Rex* in considerable detail.

10. The current author hopes to fill this *lacuna* with his Ph.D. dissertation that examines the theology of Samuel Rutherford.

11. See, e.g., Walker, *Theology and Theologians of Scotland*, 8–13; John Macleod, *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History Since the Reformation* (Edinburgh: Publications Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, 1943) 68–78; Bell, *Calvin and Scottish Theology*, 70–91; T.F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996) 93–111; and Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions*, 114–45.

12. *Exercitationes apologeticae pro divina gratia* (Amsterdam, 1636); *Disputatio scholastica de divina providentia* (Edinburgh, 1649); and *Examen Arminianismi* (Utrecht, 1668). The current author’s Ph.D. dissertation includes translation work on the last of these. As far as he knows, there is another project underway to translate the second of these treatises as well.

13. *The Trial and Triumph of Faith* (1645; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2001).

14. The current author stopped comparing the new edition to the original text after the third chapter; a pattern had already been established. Every page in the preface and first three chapters, except for page 34, contains at least one serious error or omission. Even if it is true that this pattern stops after chapter three and the rest of the book

Whether or not one agrees with these assessments of *Lex, Rex* is beside the point. The treatise is without doubt an important one in the realm of political science for Christian and non-Christian alike, and the University of Edinburgh confirms this by still, to this day, offering a course in which students read and interact with the central tenets of *Lex, Rex*.⁹

In light of Rutherford’s importance, it is surprising that so little attention has been paid to his theology. Currently, there exists no published, book-length treatment of it.¹⁰ There are only cursory, chapter-length surveys discussing one aspect or another of Rutherford’s theology but without examining it as a whole.¹¹ One problem preventing the study of Rutherford’s theology is the inaccessibility of his works. Three of his treatises remain untranslated from the original Latin;¹² and many that are available in English have never been republished since the seventeenth century. Only one of Rutherford’s main theological works has been published in modern times.¹³

That is why the republication of Rutherford’s *The Covenant of Life Opened* (1655) by Puritan Publications is such a significant event. Finally someone is attempting to get the writings of this important Second-Reformation Scots theologian into the hands of a wider reading audience. Their effort is laudable. Their motivation is also laudable. Unfortunately, their end product falls somewhat short of achieving this same standard, at least as it is in its current condition. Before turning to discuss the concerns I have with this new edition, however, let me first say that I especially like the fact that it is a *readable* edition. It is not a photocopy of a PDF download or even of the original hardcopy. It is an actual reprinting and reformatting of the text. This means that the tell-tale smudges and illegibilities that accompany photo-reprints and make them exceedingly tedious to read are not a part of this new edition. (Inevitably, it seems, photo-reprints always have at least one such smudge over the portion of text that the reader particularly wants or needs to see!) It also means that many of the typical early-modern textual difficulties that previously required sustained concentration in order to decipher—e.g., the use of “f” in the place of “s,” as in “wife” for “wise,” and the archaic spellings of the seventeenth century—are also not a part of this edition. The text is clear and plain for all to read, although, it must be said, that a different font style from the one the publishers selected for the headings in the book would have made the headings just as easy to read as the main body of text.

The chief concerns that I have with this edition, in a nutshell, pertain to the errors and omissions it contains when compared with the original. In the preface and first three chapters, for example, there is at least one (and sometimes more than one) serious error or omission *on every page*.¹⁴ The errors range from transcribing mistakes, like wrongly

substituting “is” for “as,” or “state” for “stage;”¹⁵ to inaccuracies, like incorrectly substituting “day of safety” for “day of assize” or using an artificial subtitle for a subsection of chapter two that masks the original intent and flow of the chapter.¹⁶ Granted, some of these errors affect the intended meaning of the text only slightly; but others of them alter it quite significantly.

The omissions, too, range from the serious to the not-serious. An example of the latter is the editor’s failure to put many of Rutherford’s biblical citations in italics, as Rutherford himself does, and as he expressly states he is going to do in the introduction.¹⁷ Placing these verses in italics, while not essential to understanding the text, would have made the new edition easier to follow in several places by demonstrating that the otherwise obtuse language that Rutherford employs is chosen by him over language that may have been less obtuse, simply because it is the language of Scripture. An example of the former, a serious omission, occurs in chapter one, where Rutherford, in the original, lists four “Particulars of the Treatise,” and then says the following: “Of the latter, especially of the last, not much hath been spoken by any in a practical way.”¹⁸ But the new edition lists only the first three of these “Particulars,” omitting the fourth, and then concludes with the same statement making reference to the “latter” or “last” one (which would then be referring to the third instead of the fourth, as Rutherford intends).¹⁹ Furthermore, on at least two other occasions in the first three chapters, words from the original text are omitted in the new edition.²⁰ In each case, the word omitted is fairly insignificant, insofar as the omission does not alter the sense of the sentence in which it occurs. But the point remains: *any* omission is a serious matter. It may have been a “the” or “a” in the first three chapters, but it could be something much more significant in the others.

The end result of the errors and omissions is to call the accuracy and reliability of the new edition into question. And this is unfortunate, to say the least, because *The Covenant of Life Opened* (hereafter, *COL*) is an important work. If Charles Bell is right in ascribing to Rutherford the title “prince of the federal theologians,” then *COL* is, indeed, an important work, because it contains the most complete and most mature expression of Rutherford’s covenant theology.²¹ None of his other treatises presents his thinking on the covenants in the breadth or depth that *COL* does. What is more, because *COL* was published near the end of Rutherford’s lifetime, it contains the most mature expression of his views of federal theology. Readers can be certain that what they see in this treatise is not an early viewpoint that was later discarded or refined but one that represents the culmination of a lifetime of study and reflection on the covenant idea.

In what remains of this essay, I would like briefly to summarize the content of this important treatise. My aim is not

to address every topic under consideration in the treatise, nor is it to cover any particular topic comprehensively, but it is simply to whet one’s appetite and to encourage one to take and read (*tolle, lege!*) the book for oneself. In this treatise, Rutherford advances a three-covenant view of federal theology, which includes the pre-temporal Covenant of Redemption—or, as Rutherford also calls it, the Covenant of Suretyship—and the temporal Covenant of Works and Covenant of Grace. Rutherford begins the treatise by exploring the nature of Adam’s original state and the Covenant of Works. In this original state, he says, life was held out to Adam, and to his posterity, upon the condition of his obedience. But Rutherford is quick to point out that Adam was not thus predestined to eternal life by a “law glory,” i.e., by keeping the law of God as a “publick

contains no such errors and omissions (which is itself doubtful), those found in the first three chapters are enough to cause grave concern.

15. Transcribing mistakes occur on pages 17, 18, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38.

16. See page 29. The second subsection in the new edition, entitled “Adam was Predestined to Eternal Life in Christ, and How,” which is found on page 28, is placed in the middle of the propositions that should, according to the original text, form part of the first subsection “Propositions Touching Adam’s Covenant State.” Rutherford gives six such propositions in the original text. In this new edition, however, only two of them occur under the (artificial) subsection entitled “Propositions Touching Adam’s Covenant State” and four occur under the second (artificial) subsection entitled “Adam was Predestined to Eternal Life in Christ.” The problem is that Rutherford’s original table of contents is actually more like what we would consider an index. The editor to the new edition would perhaps have been better served by simply translating Rutherford’s detailed table of contents into an index and then composing a new and simplified table of contents of his own.

17. See, e.g., pages 27–8, 31, 34, 35, 37. On page 21 of the introduction, the editor states: “Also, Scripture references are not in quotations, but, as in the original, are in italics.” Unfortunately, many of the references that occur in the first three chapters are neither in quotation marks nor in italics.

18. Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened* (Edinburgh: Andro Anderson, 1655) 1. The editor cites a publication date of 1654 for the original. This mistake is probably due to a notation on the title page of the copy in the Early English Books series which is a facsimile of the copy in the Thomason collection (*Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers, and Manuscripts Relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and Restoration collected by George Thomason, 1640–1661, Volume 2 Part 1* [London: British Museum, 1908] 102). George Thomason would often write the date he acquired a publication on the title page (in this case Feb. 20), and since England was still on the Julian calendar (wherein March 25th was the first of the new year), and Scotland on the now ubiquitous Gregorian, this would explain his marking through 1655 and writing 1654. The compilers of the *Catalogue* follow the Gregorian in their index and thus *COL* is under the year 1655.

19. See page 25.

20. E.g., such occurs on pages 35 and 37.

21. Bell is arguably right, especially as far as Scotland is concerned. Among Scots, perhaps only David Dickson would challenge for this

person representing all his sons.” In his public capacity, Adam fell, and, when he fell, his posterity fell with him. But Adam was predestined to eternal life, “as a single [and private] person, as *Abraham*, or *Jacob*,” through Jesus Christ. Following the general tendency among the post-Reformation orthodox, Rutherford states that the Covenant of Works and the whole “Law-dispensation” was never intended by God to be an end in itself but to be a means whereby God would “set up a Theatre and stage of free grace.” The Lord had

an aime that works and nature should be a transient, but no standing Court for righteousness: Hence it is now the reliques of an old standing Court, and the Law, is a day of assise, for condemning of malefactors, who will acknowledge no Tribunal of grace, but only of works: And it is a just Court to terrifie robbers, to awe borderers and loose men, but to beleevers it is now a Court for a far other end.²²

Rutherford devotes considerable space to discussing matters pertaining to the Covenant of Grace in *COL*. He examines the nature of grace, faith and obedience, and the work of Christ within this covenant in great detail, devoting over 200 pages to such soteriological issues as saving faith, justification, the role of good works, and the atonement of Christ. With respect to the number of the covenants, Rutherford argues against the view that sees three (or more) temporal covenants between God and man by proving from Scripture that the covenant made with Israel was “a darker dispensation of Grace” and not a separate Covenant of Works (*COL*, 57–65). He helpfully distinguishes between “externall, visible, professed, [and] conditional” covenanting, on the one hand, and “internall, invisible, reall, [and] absolute” covenanting, on the other (*COL*, chapter 13). And he uses this distinction

title, and his writings are nowhere near as influential or as voluminous as Rutherford’s own (nor was his prominence within the church what Rutherford’s was). Along with the Dutchman, Johannes Cocceius, Rutherford stands head and shoulders above others of the post-Reformation period in terms of both influence and prominence.

22. *COL* (1655), 2–3.

23. See *COL*, chapters 13–14. See also Rutherford, *Quaint Sermons* (1885; Morgan, Pa.: Soli Deo Gloria, reprint, 1999) 61, 92–3, where Rutherford laments that many who signed the National Covenant were only external covenanters and not “heart-covenanters.”

24. The differences between Rutherford and Boston in regard to this covenant ought not to be overly exaggerated. For one thing, much of what Rutherford considers in the third covenant, Boston sees as part and parcel of the Covenant of Grace. For another thing, Rutherford plainly acknowledges Boston’s point that the Covenant of Grace is made with both Christ and men. It is made “principally with Christ ... but personally, with believers” [see, Rutherford, *The Tryal & Triumph of Faith* (London, 1645) 81].

25. *COL*, 290–302. Rutherford adds a twelfth proof on 302–8 and a thirteenth on 316–39.

as the basis for his view of the church and, thus, of baptism as well. While the theology that lies behind his doctrine of the church, and of baptism, is nothing unusual for a covenant theologian in any period, the particular situation of seventeenth-century Scotland ensures that it will be applied in an unusual way in his thinking in regard to baptism. Because the Scotland of Rutherford’s day was a covenanting nation, and because merely signing the National Covenant of 1638 was tantamount to making a public profession of faith, baptism, according to Rutherford, was rightly to be applied to every infant who was born within the bounds of Scotland, whether or not the specific parent(s) had professed faith. It is important to point out, however, that this is not so much because of a peculiar theological belief as a perception that the visible church of his day in Scotland was co-extensive with the nation itself.²³

In contrast to the later prominent Scottish federal theologian, Thomas Boston, Rutherford advocates a third covenant, in addition to the above-mentioned two, the Covenant of Redemption.²⁴ The primary reason for his doing so is because he believes that Christ’s relationship with God on earth cannot be subsumed under the Covenant of Grace, as ours can be. Rutherford goes on, in what is clearly a significant chapter in *COL*, to offer eleven proofs from Scripture to substantiate this claim and, thus, the existence of a separate Covenant of Redemption or Suretyship.²⁵ But even though Rutherford considers the Covenant of Redemption to be distinct from the Covenant of Grace, he does indisputably link the two in an indissoluble bond. The latter covenant “cannot be separated” from and is wholly founded upon the former (*COL*, 311–12). Rutherford then concludes the treatise with a discussion of the nature of this pre-temporal covenant and with helpful comparisons of it to each of the two temporal covenants.

In the end, there can be no doubt but that *COL* is an important work written by an important individual from an important period of time in church history. It contains the most complete and most mature expressions of the covenant theology of the so-called “prince of the federal theologians.” By all means, we welcome its republication—as we would welcome the republication of any of Rutherford’s theological treatises—but only if the new edition(s) can accurately reflect the thinking of the man represented. Our regard for Rutherford, his theology, and his desire to do all for the glory of God, should prompt us to strive for nothing less. ■

[Editor’s Note: The editor contacted Puritan Publications regarding the errors noted in the text by the reviewer, and they indicated that as they find or are notified of problems such as these they will update the text of the book, which is a Print on Demand (POD) publication (i.e. only one copy is made at a time). It thus can be quickly updated for subsequent copies.] ■

Review: Tim Gallant, *Feed My Lambs* (Paetum Reformanda Publishing, Grand Prairie, AB, Can., 2002). Paperback, 220 pages. \$15.95. Reviewed by Dr. Leonard J. Coppes, Pastor of Providence Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Denver, Colo.

Mr. Gallant is a 2000 graduate of Mid-America Reformed Seminary, and is currently serving as the pastor of Conrad Christian Reformed Church of North America in Conrad, Canada. In the course of his work, he remarks that no one has yet gathered all the arguments in support of paedocommunion and offers this work to help fill the gap. His work is written in good style and a minimum of technical theological jargon.

The body of the book offers three primary arguments supporting the practice of paedocommunion. First, the general teaching throughout the Bible (especially in the New Testament) is that under the new covenant infants by virtue of their birth and/or baptism, are members the covenant community (the church, 29) and, as such, have a right to the meal acknowledging and including their covenantal community membership. Second, all the OT meals (except the covenant initiating meal on Mt. Sinai), and especially the Passover, admitted children by virtue of their inclusion in the covenant community, and since the Lord's Supper is a principal continuation of those meals (and especially of the Passover), it, too, admits infants and children. Finally, Paul's discussion of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians, admits children insofar as he teaches that the Lord's Supper is rightly enjoyed by all who are members of the body of Christ—and children of believers, by virtue of their birth and/or baptism, are members of that body. These biblically based arguments supporting paedocommunion, are followed by a chapter on the history of this practice and another chapter responding to objections that may be raised. The book includes three appendices entitled: "Covenant of Grace and its Children," "Consideration of Practical Issues," and "Brief Theses on Communion and Covenant Children." Mr. Gallant also appends an extensive bibliography on this issue. The book is an effort to set forth briefly and in clear terms all the arguments currently being offered in support of paedocommunion. The author acknowledges that his work is not exhaustive in depth of treatment.

In the introduction, Mr. Gallant argues that the Church has not yet considered this issue carefully. This is not the case, at least, in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The Confession and other secondary standards are clear on the matter, teaching that those who are unable to make a profession of faith are barred from the table (e.g., WLC 171, 173, 174, 177). This has been the position of the Presbyterian Church since before the Standards were adopted. Why is this such an immovable conclusion? It is immovable because the Scripture is very clear on the matter in passages such as 1 Corinthians

11. Indeed, it is clear in the many other texts which deal with related issues, e.g., the visible and invisible church, the structure and discipline of the church, the nature and use of the outward benefits of the covenant, the nature and observance of the Lord's Supper, etc. Moreover, it should be noted that historically speaking, the paedocommunion position has been a moving target since its reappearance in the modern world. The supporting arguments continue to grow and shift. Hence, the church is wiser to respond positively in defense of its historic position—and it has done so in retaining and affirming the Westminster Standards. Also, its scholars, both past and present, have carefully and repeatedly expounded biblical passages such as 1 Corinthians 11 demonstrating that the Confessional position is biblical.

ARGUMENT 1: THE REDEPTIVE-HISTORICAL SHIFT FROM OLD TO NEW COVENANT.

The first argument offered by Mr. Gallant in defense of infant communion is that the Bible teaches that the "redemptive-historical shift from old covenant to new is in the direction of universalization of [covenantal] benefits" (71). This way of expressing the point is somewhat difficult to follow because "benefits" is not clearly defined, "universalization" is used in a strange way, and because he repeatedly appears to shift between the ideas that these benefits come as a result of regeneration (they are received and enjoyed by virtue of the act of God) and that these benefits amount to rights (that they may be received and enjoyed as a result of some act or action on man's part, i.e., baptism).

One of the key passages used to explain the universalization argument is Jeremiah 31:31–34 (*Feed My Lambs*, 27–28). He argues that all of the benefits set forth in this passage (plus the Lord's Supper) accrue to all who are members of the new covenant community—the benefits are universalized. According to Jeremiah 31, not only will the Law be written in the minds and hearts of all new covenant members, but also God will forgive their iniquity and remember their sins no more. If this means that all the members of the new covenant will be regenerated, then, following Mr. Gallant's universalization position, it implies that children, by virtue of their being born into a Christian home, are regenerated (cf., 1 Cor. 7:14; *Feed My Lambs*, 34–36). But if they are envisioned as regenerated, it is a strange regeneration insofar as Mr. Gallant says that some of these (and other) regenerated members of the new covenant may apostatize. Hence, there is an eternal life (resulting from regeneration) that may not be eternal in duration—one may have and then lose eternal life. On the other hand, if he chooses to deny that Jeremiah 31 is speaking about those who are forgiven forever (*à la* the Federal vision position), then he holds that God forgives their sin never to remember it, but subsequently may reject them

on the basis of sin committed since their baptism (or birth). In either case, his argument entails a status wherein the new covenant member may have all his sin forgiven (and never to be remembered) but from which he may fall (he may lose this new covenant status).

Also, Mr. Gallant is unclear as to what brings upon children this new covenant membership and its universalized benefits. Is it birth or baptism? If it is birth (as argued in the last paragraph on page 28) then, following his logic, children do not have to be baptized to be admitted to the table. So, if babies are members of the covenant community because they are members of a covenant family, and if because of this, they are to be admitted to the table, then they do not need to be baptized to be admitted. The significance of this matter becomes clearer, perhaps, if one considers the children of Baptists. Are not these children of the covenant? They belong to a covenantal family but are not baptized. Should they be admitted to the Lord's table by virtue of their membership in the covenant (by birth)? For example, if they and their parents attend a paedocommunion church should they be allowed to partake? If they should be admitted, then it is evident that baptism is not required for admission to the table. The problem with this alternative is that circumcision was required (as Mr. Gallant points out) for participation in the OT sacramental meals. So, if Baptists' children should not be admitted, then it is clear that something more than regeneration (birth) is required for admission and it is not true that all the benefits of the new covenant (including admission to the Lord's Supper) accrue to all its members (as Mr. Gallant argues on the basis of Jeremiah 31). If one argues that admission to the table requires birth plus baptism (conceived as a necessarily conjoined unit, see page 29), then it is clear that more is required than being a member of the covenantal community (the body of Christ)—just as it was in the OT. One cannot have it both ways, i.e., (a) all that God requires in Jeremiah 31 for inclusion in the new covenant community is regeneration (or the law being written in one's heart and mind, and having one's sins forgiven and remembered no more) and (b) that God requires one to be baptized as well as being a member of the covenantal community—that, for inclusion, He requires more than regeneration, viz., covenantal faithfulness (to some extent).¹

One may also ask just how the Lord's Supper is included in the benefits listed in Jeremiah 31. Mr. Gallant seems to answer this question by granting that Jeremiah does not speak to this question but implies that all members of the new covenant

have a right to the meal that, biblically speaking, includes all such members. Again, either Jeremiah 31 sets forth the basis of admission to all the “universalized” benefits of the covenant or it does not. Also, if in the case of infants, nothing beyond birth and baptism are required for admission, then with other converts should it not be that nothing beyond the (new) birth and baptism are required? After all, Jeremiah 31 speaks of all members of the new covenant, not just of infants and children. One might reply that since we do not know that someone has been converted unless he tells us, he must make a credible profession of faith—lest the church and the table be profaned by admitting the non-covenantal. But this entails two further problems. First, this adds another requirement beyond what Jeremiah 31 sets forth, and one does not become a participant in all the benefits of the new covenant simply by virtue of their regeneration. The convert must also make a profession of faith to be formally admitted to the fellowship (a benefit of the covenant). Second, if one grants that members under the new covenant must make a profession of faith to be admitted to the Lord's Supper (and other covenant benefits) so we can discern their standing spiritually lest the body be defiled, why, on the same grounds, are children exempt from making such a profession of faith upon reaching sufficient maturity?

Indeed, Mr. Gallant's discussion lacks a clear, and necessary, distinction between those blessings that come with regeneration without additional qualifying requirements (its benefits), and those benefits which come with further qualifying requirements—its rights (e.g., baptism, the Lord's Supper, etc.). Note the seeming confusion in the following (28–29, italic emphasis original):

[1] *The new covenant norm is effectual divine blessing upon our children from day one.*

This virtually universal spread of covenant benefits is not to be seen as a phenomenon unique to a restored ethnic Israel.²

[2] In context, the passage [Gal. 3:27–28] is articulating the sufficiency of baptism into Christ to qualify one for full membership in the people of God, with its attendant privileges.... In response, Paul explains that Christ is the One to whom all the promises belong (3:16), and therefore, when one has been incorporated into Him (namely, via baptism, 3:27), one has thereby been identified with His full rights of inheritance (3:29). These rights include table fellowship, as is implied by the prior context (see 2:11–13).

The conclusion that this passage sets forth the “universalization” (universal reception) of all the benefits of the new covenant is not true because this either denies that the passage speaks of regeneration, or affirms that there is a “regenera-

1. We raise the problem between birth or regeneration as a requirement for admission, because Mr. Gallant does not sufficiently distinguish between these matters.

2. Cf. above. This is the same conclusion he offers for his discussion of Jeremiah 31.

tion” that may be lost, or affirms that enjoying the benefits described in the passage (the universalized benefits—including admission to the Lord’s Supper) does not require baptism. Moreover, the interpretation is wrong because it requires that with infants, only birth and baptism are prerequisites for participation of all benefits envisioned (full participation), but with older “converts” both a prior profession and baptism are mandated.

By now, it should be clear that the problem is in an improper definition of the church (the covenantal community). Mr. Gallant does not properly distinguish between the visible and invisible church—that not all Israel is Israel. Therefore, his position is unable to distinguish properly between the requirements for participation in the outward and the inward benefits of the church—between the visible and non-visible church. The visible church consists of all professing believers and their seed while the invisible church consists of all the regenerate. Hence, there are individuals who are regenerate but who are *not* members of the visible church and who, consequently, do *not* enjoy the all the benefits of the visible church, e.g., participation in the Lord’s Supper, voting in congregational meetings, the discipline of the visible church, teaching in the church, holding church office, etc. There are some members of the visible church who may *not* enjoy all its benefits (all the benefits of the new covenant) because of their immaturity: e.g., learning from the teaching ministry, entering spiritually into the worship of our Lord, laying aside the sin that so easily ensnares them, and participation in the Lord’s Supper, etc. Hence, there is not a divine teaching that all who are truly regenerate are, or should be, automatically admitted to all the universalized outward benefits of the covenant, nor is it taught that all babies should be presumed to be regenerate (that their sins are forgiven forever). Although Mr. Gallant writes that the church has not yet considered the paedocommunion arguments carefully, it is hardly true that the church has not yet carefully considered the biblical distinction between the visible and invisible church.

ARGUMENT 2: CHILDREN WERE ADMITTED TO SACRAMENTAL MEALS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The second chapter holds that children should be admitted to the Lord’s Supper because all of the sacramental meals of the OT admitted children (except the meal on Mt. Sinai) and the Lord’s Supper is patterned after, or is a continuation of, those meals. He does not properly accept or evaluate the thesis that the OT meals were divinely ordered with ever increasing admittance limitations until the last meal in the sequence, eaten immediately before God (e.g., on Mt. Sinai) or sacrifice immediately before God (great atonement), excluded almost all Israel. His argument, also, does not properly accept or evaluate the fact that the OT meals and sacrifices are not

all of one level. Hence, while all the blood sacrifices are truly atoning (typologically), God distinguishes between them in accordance with where the blood of the sacrifice in view was to be applied. There were five levels or degrees of sacrifice. In the highest degree (the first level), the blood was applied to the top of the altar in the most holy place. In the next four degrees the blood was applied respectively to the horns of the altar of incense in the holy place, the horns and top portion of the great altar outside the sanctuary proper, the bottom portion of the great altar, and on the ground around the base of the great altar. The various OT sacramental meals under the Mosaic institution are not all attached to the same level of sacrifice. Consequently, the meals, like the sacrifices on which they rested most immediately, carried various levels of admission. Mr. Gallant denies that this is the case (note: he does grant that there were admission restrictions with respect to the priestly meals and the Mt. Sinai meal). The arguments involved here are too complex to present at this point, but some examples of his argumentation might illustrate some of the problems it poses.

First, Mr. Gallant argues that the meals limited to priestly participation (the guilt offering) admitted the male children of the priest (55):

“Priestly families, including children, partook in various priestly meals, and these meals required a state of cleanness (see the requirements of Lev. 22:4ff.). One who was born in the priestly household had the privilege of eating the priestly food (Lev. 10:14; 22:11–cf. 2 Chron. 31:18). Since the priestly food was provided, strictly speaking, from the holy things (including, apparently, the trespass [or guilt, LJC] offering: Lev. 22:16), and since this food was for both them and their households, it is inescapable that the requirement for cleanness does not bar the participation of small children.”

The Scripture references to which he alludes argue for the admission of women and children (indeed, even small children) into the court of the priests. Specifically, Lev. 6:16 specifies that the meal associated with the guilt offering was to be eaten in the priestly court of the tabernacle. Leviticus 22:11 says that the priestly food there referenced was to be eaten by the priest’s household—this included his servant, one born in his household (11) and his daughter (12–13). By necessary implication, these verses also admit his wife—as a member of his household. Therefore, if no distinction is drawn between the meals referenced in Leviticus 6 and 22, then Mr. Gallant argues that the Lord commanded that not only male children but also the female children and the women of the household were to be admitted to the court of the priests. It should be apparent that the general regulations of Leviticus 22 do not apply to the meal associated with the guilt offering

described in Leviticus 6. In the Temple, women and children were as a general rule barred from going beyond the court of the women and could not enter either the court of Israel or the court of the priests. On rare occasions, women might enter the court of Israel, as far as entering the Gate of Nicanor, for purposes specified in God's law, but as Alfred Edersheim implies,³ they were not allowed to tarry or sit down. Similarly, men might bring their offerings far enough to allow the offerer's hands to be laid on the sacrifice, but they could not tarry or sit in the court of the priests. Moreover, the penalty for the non-ordained coming into the court of the priests was death (Num. 17:12–13–18:1–7). Therefore, it is biblically inconceivable that a priest's sons, daughters, or wife would sit (or stand) at a meal in the priestly court since they were not, and could not be, ordinates.

A second argument offered by Mr. Gallant to contradict the thesis that the OT meals were divinely arranged in increasing narrowness of admission (for the full argument see below), is his denial that the uncircumcised non-Israelite was admitted to the meals associated with the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. It is an interesting turn of exegesis that sees in the specification regulating the Passover (Exod. 12) the commandment that non-Israelites must convert to Judaism by circumcision as a pre-condition of participation, while arguing that the absence of such a commandment in the other feast meals teaches their admission. Moreover, the regulations attached to these other meals list the non-Israelite among those who were also in some sense disenfranchised (i.e., not enjoying some of the privileges of full covenantal participation). Thus, they are allowed participation in the Pentecost and Tabernacles meals. For a list of the disenfranchised see Exodus 22:21–22. The Israelites as members of the assembly (church) and non-Israelite non-member strangers are contrasted in Leviticus 18:26 and Numbers 15:15. The admission of non-Israelite, non-member disenfranchised strangers to the Pentecost and Tabernacle meals is mentioned specifically in Deuteronomy 16:10–11, 13–14. It seems clear that the point of the admission of the stranger was that of exception. Were he to become a full member of the assembly through circumcision, then he would no longer be disenfranchised, or an exception—he would be among those addressed in these verses as “you.”⁴

Note that even if one removes the gradation in the sacramental meals (with reference to terms of admission), there remain the distinctions in the gradation of the courts with the corollary of a gradation in the terms of admission. The Gentiles

could go no further the court of the Gentiles, the women could go no further than the court of the women, the men could go no further than the court of Israel, and only the priests could fully enter the court of the priests. There is an increasing limitation on admission to the parts of the Temple (tabernacle) until only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place—the place where the Lord's Supper, figuratively speaking, is eaten (Heb. 13:10). The Lord's Supper is eaten in the most Holy Place, in which, moreover, the censure on unholy entry into the Most Holy Place persists (1 Cor. 11:28–32).

Third, Mr. Gallant maintains that the only OT Mosaic meals with restrictions are the priestly meals, and since there are no longer priests, there are no longer OT restrictions. Thus, he maintains, there are no restrictions on admission to the NT meal beyond covenantal membership. However, while the typological mediatorial role of the priesthood has been discontinued, some “priestly” restrictions continue. For example, the distinction between those who are divinely designated as worship leaders and others is not removed. Hence, the church continues to have ministers who uniquely are ordained to preach and lead in public worship (and paid for their ministry from the tithe). And in this regard, even though in the new covenant there is no longer a distinction between male and female (Gal. 3:28), nonetheless, the NT bars women—they are neither to lead in public worship nor to preach. Next, even more to the point is the fact that the Lord's Supper still bears the sanctions of sickness & death (1 Cor. 11:29–31). In the OT approaching the Lord in worship required one to honor and respect God's holiness, and this requirement was sanctioned by sickness and death (Num. 17:1–18:32, cf., Exod. 19:12–13, 21–22). In the OT, entering God's immediate presence (coming “before the Lord”) was not only sanctioned by sickness and death but it required all those admitted to His presence to examine themselves carefully as to their state and practice of holiness. Even so, in the NT we are called to examine ourselves as to our state and practice of holiness as we approach the Lord in communion. The humility of the incarnate Son of God has been replaced by the glory of the enthroned King of glory. Divine holiness still requires a thoroughgoing self-examination. Thus, the historical consensus of the reformed church meets the data of Scripture, “let a man [communicant] examine himself.” Just as in the OT, so today, the Lord protects children from the judgment that comes upon all who “come before the Lord” without examining themselves. Thus, the OT restrictions or regulations are not entirely removed but are, in principle, repeated in the NT. The OT distinction between the outward and spiritual benefits of the covenant has been somewhat reformulated in the NT, but it has not been obliterated.

Not only does Mr. Gallant miss the biblical restrictions arising from the holiness of God, but he also misses the

3. Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple Its Ministry And Service* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994) 25, 27, 37, 40.

4. The social and religious position of the stranger is discussed in Roland DeVaux, *Ancient Israel* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965) 74–76.

biblical differences between the Passover and the other OT meals. The Passover admitted only the circumcised but the wilderness meals (which were sacramental, 1 Cor. 10:1ff.) admitted animals (they drank the water God provided—but not as sacramental water) and the uncircumcised (many of the Jews were not circumcised yet, and Jethro seems to have remained uncircumcised although he ate before God, Exod. 18:12). Also, the Bible is rather clear in stipulating that no uncircumcised male should be admitted to the Passover (the circumcised alien was no longer an alien, but was a convert), but this requirement is not stipulated with reference to the feasts of Tabernacles and Weeks. God structured the sacrificial system so that the closer one came to the most holy place (the outward “presence” of God), the more restrictive the admission. The Passover was not the closest meal to God’s presence; the guilt and sin offering meals and the Mt. Sinai meal were closer. The blood of the Passover was sprinkled at the base of the great altar. Hence, the sacrificial typology of this offering was five degrees away from the highest offering. The highest level (first degree) of sacrifice was made in the most holy place on the Day of Atonement. There was no meal attached to it, yet, in the book of Hebrews the Lord’s Supper is attached directly to the great atonement worked by our Lord (Heb. 13:10). It is important to note that while all of the blood sacrifices were atoning, God Himself made distinctions between them. Hence, it is appropriate to seek the typological and spiritual truths taught by these distinctions.

Mr. Gallant argues that the Lord’s Supper is more closely tied to the Passover than to other OT sacramental meals, but this is hardly the case. While it is especially tied to the Passover (resting on a sacrifice of the fifth degree), it is also especially and directly tied to the covenant initiating meal on Sinai insofar as at the first Lord’s Supper our Lord cited the words of that Mt. Sinai meal (Ex. 24:8). Moreover, it is especially and directly tied to the guilt offering (resting on a sacrifice of the fourth degree) by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 where he uses that pattern (and not the Passover pattern!) in presenting the Lord’s Supper. It is especially attached to the meals during the wilderness wandering (1 Cor. 10:1ff.). Also, as pointed out above, it is especially and directly tied to the great atonement by the writer of Hebrews, who specifically alludes to the Lord’s Supper as a meal attached to the great altar in heaven (it rests on a sacrifice of the highest degree). The obvious implication of this is that the Lord’s Supper carries with it the sanctity of directly approaching God in the most Holy Place. This implication is confirmed in Paul’s report that God carried over into the NT observance of the Lord’s Supper, the sanctions of sickness and death (1 Cor. 11:30).

ARGUMENT 3: GALLANT’S EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 11.
In the third chapter, Mr. Gallant presents his exegesis of

1 Corinthians 11. Again, he argues from various texts for the universalization of the benefits of the new covenant. This exegesis entails the same conclusion and shortcomings of his exegesis of Jeremiah 31. With reference to 1 Corinthians 11 he argues that since children were admitted to all the OT meals, meals which required sanctification (self-examination), and were not barred because of their age or inability, they should be admitted to the Lord’s Supper. The weaknesses of this argument have already been outlined above.

In verse 25 Paul cites Christ’s words at the first Lord’s Supper describing the cup as the new covenant in His blood, and commanding that the rite be done in remembrance of Him. Mr. Gallant understands the remembrance in terms of participation in a memorial rite similar to the many OT memorial rites in which children were allowed to participate, e.g., the Passover. But Christ’s command involves a unique and carefully worded statement. He used a Greek word (rendered) “remembrance” that entails a self-conscious activity on the part of the participant. The Greek OT (the Septuagint) used so much by the Apostle Paul, uses a word built on the same Greek root to signify a memorial (cf., Exod. 3:15, 12:15) but Jesus (and Paul) chose another word to describe what is involved in the Lord’s Supper. He uses the word entailing an active remembering (*anamnesis*). Bruce Metzger says that this *-sis* ending indicates an action.⁵ More precisely, he wrote that it “produces the abstract name of an action.” Johannes Behm remarks, “Christians are to enact the whole action of the Lord’s Supper—this is the reference of the twofold τοῦτο—in recollection of Jesus, and this not merely in such sort that they simply remember, but rather, in accordance with the active sense of ἀνάμνησις.”⁶ In other words, they imply that Mr. Gallant’s exegesis is in error in this very important point. The word envisions an active intellectual action during the eating and drinking, and not just a passive presence at a memorial ceremony. This understanding is reinforced in the tense of the Greek words used in this verse for “do” and “drink.” The first is in the present tense envisioning each of the many future acts as a single ongoing action. This act is not conceived statically as if there were no process within it as is reinforced by the use of the present tense in the word translated “drink.” The drinking is viewed as an ongoing activity and the corollary ongoing activity is caught in the word “remembrance.” Both the drinking and the remembering entail an active participation by the one doing the observance. Children can actively drink a liquid, but they cannot actively drink of Christ unless the sacrament acts *ex opere operato*, and this is explicitly

5. Bruce Metzger, *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek* (Princeton, N.J.: Published by the Author, 1960) 55.

6. Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, third printing, February 1968) 1:349.

denied by Christ in John 6:63. Also, if the remembering the significance of a sacrifice is considered against the Old Testament parallels, children cannot actively “remember” the significance of Christ’s sacrifice. What 1 Corinthians 11:25 says is especially relevant to Mr. Gallant’s argument, because he says that little children such as those brought (carried) to Jesus are, in principle, admitted to the table (26).

This active sense of remembrance is further supported by what is recorded in verse 26. The eating, drinking and proclaiming are all present tense verbs. The first two are in a dependent clause and in the subjunctive mood. The present subjunctive (of the first two verbs), in contrast to the Aorist subjunctive, which envisions a matter puntiliarly, envisions an on-going act. If a memorial act were envisioned then the Aorist tense would have communicated this idea better, but a present tense is used. So, how does one proclaim the death of the Lord? He proclaims it by eating and drinking. If the proclaiming means no more than eating and drinking, a little child might do this, but he cannot do it as personal actions involving “remembering.”

Verse 27 moves along the same line of reasoning but it is made more clear that every participant/communicant (whoever eats and drinks) who eats and drinks unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Verse 29 makes the matter clearer yet when, in summary, Paul states that “he (everyone who participates/communicates) who eats (an action conceived as a process) and drinks (also an action conceived as a process).” The idea might be better understood in the translation, “he who is eating” and “drinking”—while the “eating” and “drinking” are occurring—are “eating and drinking” judgment to himself. Little children can eat and drink and simultaneously eat and drink judgment to themselves, but they cannot do this while actively remembering Christ’s body and blood. Now, one might cringe at the thought that this necessarily involves more than a mere surface (childish) remembering of the body and blood of Christ, but that a relatively adult understanding is involved is clearly implied. Indeed, those adults who polluted the Lord’s table surely had not only a childish but maybe even a very mature idea of the body and blood of Christ. Their problem was that they did not see the necessary connection between the facts themselves and the application of those fact to Christian living. They polluted not only the body which is the church, but, more significantly, the body which is Christ Himself and that not merely as the crucified body and blood, but as the triumphant and kingly body and blood. As seen below, they faced the judgment of the King of the church.

7. “Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.” (NKJV)

Verse 30 reports that the result of not examining oneself properly is sickness and death. As already said above, these judgments evidence how God attaches the same sanction to the Lord’s Supper as He did to Mt. Sinai and entering the Most Holy Place. Thus, He identifies the Lord’s Supper as a meal attached to a sacrifice of the first degree. So, in the outward worship of the new covenant church, as in the outward worship of the Old Testament church, death is attached to those rites closest to God’s presence. Consequently, holiness must also be attached to both. Also, in the OT, this holiness embraced the entire lives of those who approached God. Israel’s ever-present problem was their rejection of “holistic holiness.” They had only the outward form of true religion but not its power. Certainly, the NT is not a step backwards from that OT pattern. In the Lord’s Supper God requires both outward and inward holiness—holistic holiness.

Mr. Gallant seems to argue that the self-examination envisioned here had to do with one’s role in the community and did not involve a careful self-examination with regard to personal holiness. The two points are not clearly distinguished in the discussion—making that discussion somewhat difficult to follow, if not self-contradictory. He provides a rather detailed exegesis of the concept (summarized in the quotation below) represented in the phrase “let a man examine himself” (94):

The concern of *examine* (*put yourself to proof*) is not, then, whether I am producing the right feelings toward the elements, or know enough theology, or anything of the sort. It is rather, as the relation between the words (*dokimos* and *dokimos/adokimos*) attests, to ascertain whether I am approved (*dokimos*), whether I am in the faith (as is made clear in 2 Cor. 13:5). It has to do with whether I have *broken faith with Christ* (whether by provoking Him to jealousy through idolatry, as in ch. 10, or by rending His body, as in ch. 11).

Where does the Bible call into question whether covenant children are approved (*dokimoi*)? Where are we taught to assume that they have broken faith with Christ?

It should be evident that Mr. Gallant again approaches the position of the Monroe theology in which being in the faith is equated with faithfulness (keeping faith with Christ)—an equation that is overly simplistic. This, in turn, is cradled by the position that those who are in the faith are forgiven of their sin, etc., as discussed above in connection with Jeremiah 31. In other words, again there is a confusion between the work of God in regeneration and the work of man in sanctification. It is interesting that he offers 2 Corinthians 13:5 to make his point clear because this passage appears to contrast Christ being in one⁷ (regeneration—a spiritual state), and failing

to meet the test or being disqualified—a work of man⁸ (*adokmos*)—according to Mr. Gallant’s exegesis. Indeed, the examination (*perazete*) is of oneself and that not as to one’s faithfulness to the covenant, but as to one’s faith, i.e., whether Christ dwells in him, whether he is truly regenerate. Paul is defending the authenticity of his ministry (2 Cor. 13:3). The proof that Christ is speaking in him, of the validity of his ministry, is the working of Christ in them, not their working for Christ. Just as Paul lives by the power of God, so they are to examine their inner selves to see if Christ lives in them. Is the power of God displayed in them because they are holding to the faith? If they are holding to the faith in spite of their weakness, this evidences that Jesus Christ is in them. If they are not holding to the faith, they have failed the test (cf., Calvin’s comments). This is paralleled by what Paul teaches in Romans 7 and 8. In Romans 7:28 he affirms that he loves the law of God in his heart (he is in the faith, he is holding to the faith), he delights in the law of God (22), even though he finds this inconsistent with his actions (his keeping the faith with Christ). In contrast, the mind (heart) of the ungodly is hostile to God and his law (Rom. 8:7).

So, although Mr. Gallant uses the OT background extensively throughout the book, he misses the obvious in his discussion of “examine.” There is no doubt that Paul rebukes them for violating the table with their sin (especially, the sin of the rich lording it over the poor)—for breaking the faith with Christ. Also, it is equally clear that much more is involved, viz., desecrating the body and blood of Christ with other scandalous sins. But, to suggest that Paul is talking only about outward and serious violations of covenantal commands—sins that only the adults could perpetrate, is to significantly miss the point. Indeed, with reference to the adults Paul is not only talking about scandalous sins, but about all sin. The preaching of Jesus has transformed the understanding of God’s requirements—at least, it transformed the understanding of many Jews. The foundation of fellowship is both the outward and inward. We should not only wash the cup on the outside but we should, above all, cleanse the heart (the inside of the cup). This is exactly what Jesus came to accomplish. This is exactly what the body and blood of Christ mean to our experience. True observance of the Lord’s Supper requires regeneration and sanctification. The Corinthians lack the second but need also to examine the root cause of their outward sin. Truly cleaning the cup (“cleaning up one’s act”) involves working on the inner man. Thus, preparation for the Lord’s Supper involves “examination” of both the outward and inward parts of the “cup.” And the imperative to do this extends to all who participate. So, as the death censure on approaching Mt. Sinai applied to whomever would transgress (including the smallest children), so God applies the censure on the Lord’s Table to whomever might eat and drink. Finally, true examination in

both the OT and NT requires looking not only to the state of the heart but to both active and passive obedience. Small children may do well on passive obedience, but since they are conceived in sin and go forth from the womb in estrangement from God, from birth they do not meet the standard of active obedience. They fail to worship God according to His commandments, to love Him with their entire heart, soul, and mind, etc.

RESPONSE: “A Response to Leonard Coppes Regarding *Feed My Lambs*.” By Tim Gallant.

Dr Leonard Coppes has provided us a rather lengthy interaction with my book, *Feed My Lambs: Why the Lord’s Table Should Be Restored to Covenant Children*. Although this review is quite irenic, it is rather curious in nature. Despite the fact that Coppes clearly wishes to rebut my thesis, for the most part, he ends up focusing on relatively minor points for much of the review, and elsewhere he simply ignores the fact that I have anticipated and answered his arguments.

Coppes’s piece falls into four major sections: an introduction; interaction with my view regarding the redemptive-historical shift from old to new covenant; interaction with my view that children were admitted to old covenant sacramental meals; and discussion of 1 Corinthians 11. We will take up these areas in order, and then move on to discuss more overarching issues.

1. INTRODUCTION

Coppes begins by quarreling with my introduction, where I suggest that the case for paedocommunion has not been carefully examined by the Reformed churches. Coppes responds by acting as if the case against paedocommunion is simply obvious, on the basis of a handful of confessional data. But the issue is not how clear the confessional standards are.¹ The issue is whether the biblical arguments have been weighed in a careful and responsible matter.

Coppes then goes on to say that the anti-paedocommunion position is immovable, because “Scripture is very clear on the matter in passages such as 1 Corinthians 11” as well as “many other texts which deal with related issues, e.g., the

8. Sanctification is also the work of God. God the Holy Spirit is the strength; man is the one doing the action.

1. This is also quite aside from the question of whether the standards have an inner tension that could lead us either toward paedocommunion or away from it. See e.g. the *Belgic Confession*’s assertion that children “ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that which Christ has done for them.” While in context, that argument is used in defense of infant baptism, it could just as easily be used to defend paedocommunion.

visible and invisible church, the structure and discipline of the church, the nature and use of the outward benefits of the covenant, the nature and observance of the Lord's Supper, etc." Coppes, however, never exegetes most of these texts nor shows specifically how many of them relate to the matter at hand. (One exception is 1 Corinthians 11, which we will examine further below.)

Perhaps most curious of all is the reviewer's claim that "the paedocommunion position has been a moving target since its reappearance in the modern world. The supporting arguments continue to grow and shift." This is not only incorrect on a fundamental level (a comparison of my book to Christian Keidel's opening 1973 salvo will show remarkable continuity),² it is a rather strange claim, coming from a man who defends the traditional practice by means of rather idiosyncratic arguments. Who else in Reformed history argued the credocommunion position by claiming that the Lord's Supper is principally a continuation of the Day of Atonement ritual? Who but Coppes argues on the basis of tiered membership in the new covenant, as if the children of believers had less stake in Christ and His Church?³ If anything, it is Coppes who appears to be scrambling for arguments in support of his position. (Even apart from Coppes, those opposed to paedocommunion have historically not been able to agree on even as basic a point as whether children partook of Passover.)

Coppes then claims that the church's (presumably, "the Presbyterian Church") scholars "both past and present, have carefully and repeatedly expounded biblical passages such as 1 Corinthians 11 demonstrating that the Confessional position is biblical." Coppes adduces no evidence for this claim, and my own investigation of Presbyterian and Reformed commentaries gives me little reason to grant it. From the beginning, going all the way back to Calvin, the Reformed have failed to take into full account the Old Testament background to the language and concepts of matters in 1 Corinthians 11, such as "remembrance" and self-examination. (More on this passage below.) The careful exposition amounting to demonstration of the validity of the traditional position is simply lacking.⁴

2. Keidel, "Is the Lord's Supper for Children?" *WTJ* 37, 301–341 (1975). Something similar could be said regarding any major treatment of the subject by a Reformed advocate, such as Keidel's initial essay, Rayburn's PCA report, the OPC majority report, my book, and numerous other articles.

3. Contrast to e.g. *Belgic Confession* Art. 34, partially cited above: "Christ shed His blood no less for the washing of the children of believers than for adult persons; and therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that which Christ has done for them."

4. On the point of historical examination of the issue, see especially the overview provided in Robert Rayburn's minority report to the PCA.

5. Coppes does also refer to my discussion of Galatians 3:27–28, but does not interact with my argument. The chapter as a whole runs some twenty pages (22–42).

2. REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL SHIFT FROM OLD TO NEW COVENANT

In connection with my pivotal first chapter, it is interesting that Coppes focuses nearly exclusively upon my reading of Jeremiah 31, calling this "one of the key passages" in my "universalization argument." In truth, Jeremiah 31 is a second-order text, and Coppes has fundamentally misread the purpose of my initial chapter in *Feed My Lambs*. He identifies the *shift* between covenants as "Argument 1," as if this were the focus of the chapter. And yet, in the book I spent less than two and a half pages on the section called "New Covenant Anticipation: The Impulse of Universalization" (*Feed My Lambs*, 26–28).⁵ By keying on one small part of the argument, Coppes ignores the single strongest argument for paedocommunion, and also disconnects the later argument regarding 1 Corinthians 11 from its context. (More on both these points below.)

What, then, of Coppes's quarrel with my reading of Jeremiah 31? In *Feed My Lambs*, I suggested that this chapter promises new power to the covenant, so that covenant-breaking will be an anomaly. "Taken as a whole, the new covenant will bring real spiritual benefit to its whole constituency" (*Feed My Lambs*, 28).

In response, Coppes introduces the subject of regeneration; supposedly, my position entails "that children, by virtue of their being born into a Christian home, are regenerated"—language I have assiduously avoided. But then this is a "strange regeneration," since some may apostatize. Coppes then castigates my position because it "entails a status wherein the new covenant member may have all his sin forgiven (and never to be remembered) but from which he may fall (he may lose this new covenant status)."

Coppes, however, fails to note what I drew attention to: that Hebrews, which draws explicitly upon the Jeremiah passage in the immediate context (Heb. 10:15–18), envisions precisely the scenario I provided. Members of the new covenant may indeed fall away, which is why I cited Hebrews 10:29: "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy, who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted *the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified* a common thing, and insulted *the Spirit of grace*" (*Feed My Lambs*, 27)? What covenant other than the new covenant promised in the passage just referenced can possibly be in view here? What "Spirit of grace" but the one promised could this be? The passage clearly parallels the old covenant and the new on the point of apostasy, by way of a "how much more" argument (see the transition between verse 28 and 29). If that scenario does not suit Coppes's theology, then let him provide a refutation of that reading of Hebrews 10:29, which is a rather standard one—and also rather hard to avoid.

Coppes apparently supposes that new covenant membership equals membership in the invisible church (another

category he introduces into the discussion). But this will not work, for several reasons: 1) Most of the biblical data (e.g. Rom. 2:27–29; 9:6ff) undergirding the concept of the invisible church refers already to the old covenant situation. But that means that Jeremiah 31's anticipation of the new covenant cannot be used to introduce such a notion. 2) Such a reading reverses Jeremiah 31 from promise ("these are the blessings to anticipate") to a threat ("membership in the covenant will be shrunken"). 3) Coppes's reading flies in the face of the usage made of the passage in Hebrews 10, as noted above. Whatever nuances may be applied to my reading, it is simply not possible to refer Jeremiah 31 to the invisible church and be done with it.

Further, Coppes claims I am unclear regarding whether children are partakers of the benefits by birth or by baptism. But is this so? The warrant for baptism is the promises made to covenant parents.⁶ Thus baptism is the sealing of the promise already made, and it is pointless to pit the warranting promise and the sacrament. Nor is it germane to raise the case of children of Baptists, as Coppes does. The failure of Baptists to provide the sacraments to their children is an anomaly which Scripture does not direct its attention to—any more than under the old covenant, God generated principles regarding what to do with males that were not circumcised who belonged to faithful covenant homes. It was not an envisioned scenario; failure to circumcise was normally predicated upon a rejection of the covenant itself (see Gen. 17:14).

3. OLD COVENANT SACRAMENTAL MEALS

In much of the next section, Coppes focuses upon a passing remark in *Feed My Lambs*, namely my parenthetical statement that the trespass offering was apparently included in the food eaten by priestly households. I placed absolutely no weight on this remark (the context was dealing more generally with the issue of ritual cleanness), but Coppes places a great deal on this point. Why? Because he is going to claim that the Lord's Supper has direct ties to the guilt offering.

I have no interest in arguing with Coppes whether children partook of the food of the trespass offering, although I consider much of his line of argument questionable.⁷

Nor do I debate the matter of the Passover being unique among the major feasts in that it required circumcision. At the time I wrote *Feed My Lambs*, I probably placed too much weight upon the choice of the Septuagint (LXX) to translate "stranger" as "proselyte." (In later Judaism, "proselyte" was, in the case of males, at least, a technical term for a circumcised convert.) Thus I am willing to concede that, unlike Passover, uncircumcised Gentiles were probably admitted to the Feasts of Weeks and Tabernacles.

Nonetheless, I do not concede what Coppes claimed in his *Daddy, May I Take Communion?*—namely, that pagans were

admitted to these feasts. Pagans were not to be allowed to remain in the land, much less participate in Israel's religious festivals (Exod. 23:33). On that level, God expected that such rites be holy, even when non-Israelites were involved. It must not be forgotten that, while salvation focused upon Israel under the old covenant, they were not the only believers in the world. Naaman, for example, converted without becoming circumcised and joining Israel (see 2 Kings 5:15–19). So while Passover focused upon Israel as a priestly nation (and thus required circumcision), the other two major feasts admitted "strangers"—Gentiles sojourning in the land who worshipped the one true God. This was an anticipation of the new covenant, which is why Zechariah 14:16 describes the united worship of Gentile and Jew under the new covenant in terms of the Feast of Tabernacles. Certainly, that prophecy is not talking about pagan Gentiles worshipping with Jews.

None of this does damage to the paedocommunion position. Children partook of all three major feasts, as Coppes himself admits.

In *Feed My Lambs*, I was clear on two things: 1) the general pattern of the covenantal meals of the old covenant included children; and 2) there is a *particular*, but *not exclusive* connection between Passover and the Lord's Supper.⁸ In response, Coppes says that it "is hardly the case" that "the Lord's Supper is more closely tied to the Passover than to other OT sacramental meals."⁹ Let us examine how he supports this:

1) "While [the Lord's Supper] is especially tied to the Passover (resting on a sacrifice to the fifth degree), it is also especially and directly tied to the covenant initiating meal on Sinai insofar as at the first Lord's Supper our Lord cited the words of that Mt. Sinai meal (Exod. 24:8)." It is interesting that Coppes completely bypasses my discussion of Jesus'

6. Cf. the warrant for circumcision in Genesis 17; the context of the giving of the rite in 17:9ff is the establishment of the covenant "between Me and you and your descendants after you" (17:7).

7. For extensive interaction with the sorts of arguments Coppes is disposed to make regarding old covenant offerings, see especially Peter J. Leithart, *Daddy, Why Was I Excommunicated? An Examination of Leonard J. Coppes, Daddy, May I Take Communion?* (Niceville, Fla.: Transfiguration Press, 1998 [1992]).

8. I would add that the Passover is a particularized case of the peace offering. An important recent article on the connection between the Lord's Supper and the peace offering is C. John Collins, "The Eucharist as Christian Sacrifice: How Patristic Authors Can Help Us Read the Bible" (*WTJ* 66 [2004] 1–23). Incidentally, this article too points out the positive implications for paedocommunion.

9. Coppes's "hardly the case" language is surely insupportable, even were he correct on the points he brings up. In each case I discuss here, he can cite only one questionable reference, whereas the tie between the Supper and Passover can be found in each of the Synoptics, and almost certainly 1 Corinthians 5, as well, quite aside from further allusions (e.g. John 6). I never made Passover the *exclusive* antecedent to the Supper, and Coppes comes nowhere close to disproving my argument that it is the *principal* antecedent.

use of Exodus 24:8.¹⁰ So let me summarize here: the actual quotation refers, not to the covenant initiating meal on Sinai (of which only the leaders of Israel partook), but to the prior sprinkling of the blood *upon the whole congregation*.¹¹ Thus this citation does nothing for Coppes's case; rather, it supports my contention that the Supper is for the whole people of God.

2) "Moreover, [the Lord's Supper] is especially and directly tied to the guilt offering (resting on a sacrifice of the fourth degree) by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 where he uses that pattern (and not the Passover pattern!) in presenting the Lord's Supper." Once again, Coppes ignores my extensive treatment of the context of 1 Corinthians 11 and imposes the guilt offering upon the passage without demonstration. But a more responsible reading is to recognize that throughout 1 Corinthians 9:24–10:22, Paul has already established the pattern of sin and judgment in a sacramental context. If there is an Old Testament backdrop to 1 Corinthians 11, it is not the guilt offering (certainly not "especially and directly," as Coppes suggests), but primarily the wilderness manna and water from the rock, referred to by Paul in 10:2–4. This is reinforced (as I argued in *Feed My Lambs*) by the shared terminology of 9:27 (*adokimos*, disqualified) and 11:28 (*dokimazo*—examine, prove). But of course the wilderness meals admitted children, so they do not assist Coppes's case; hence he mentions them only in passing without elaboration.

3) "Also, as pointed out above, it is especially and directly tied to the great atonement by the writer of Hebrews, who specifically alludes to the Lord's Supper as a meal attached to the great altar in heaven (it rests on a sacrifice of the highest degree)." This supposed "direct tie" between the Supper and the great atonement was dealt with extensively in my book. Does Coppes interact? Once again, no. As I pointed out, Coppes minimizes everything else in order to make the most direct link between the Supper and an event that had no meal attached at all. But now he produces as evidence for his "direct tie" one verse: Hebrews 13:10. "We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat."

But let us note well: Coppes's entire case throughout is ex-

plicitly built upon the continuity from old covenant to new of *tiered access* to God. Meanwhile, Hebrews itself inverts things, because this "most holy place" is off limits, not because it is hidden away in some "nth" degree of holiness, but precisely because this altar is "outside the camp," just as Christ suffered "outside the gate" (Heb. 13:11–12). The writer's point in 13:10 is that those who serve the tabernacle are, ironically, trapped by the law's own holiness code, so that there is no fellowship with God in Christ. That is why we are to go forth outside the gate to Jesus, because here we have no continuing city (13:13–14). If we are to tie the Lord's Supper to the work of Christ which fulfilled the Day of Atonement (to which I have no objection, since in one way or another, the Supper relates to all of Christ's work), there is nonetheless no lesson to be learned regarding the supposed extra sanctity required that would bar "lower-level" or "immature" Christians. The opposite is the case. Throughout Hebrews, the writer has been calling upon us to *come boldly* to the throne of grace, because our forerunner-High Priest has shared our *weaknesses* (Heb. 4:15–16). He has broken down the dividing walls, and indeed, His own flesh has become the torn veil through which we enter the Most Holy Place (Heb. 10:20). There is therefore no room for Coppes's rules of gradation. If we are in Christ (and that is the testimony of the New Testament regarding all believers, not just mature ones), then we have full access to the Most Holy Place. The Protestant position is the priesthood of *all* believers.¹²

4. 1 CORINTHIANS 11

In *Feed My Lambs*, I demonstrated the conceptual continuity that runs between 1 Corinthians 9:24–10:22 and the key passage in 1 Corinthians 11. As noted above, the backdrop to the judgment in 1 Corinthians 11 is the judgments of Israel in the wilderness, and the key idea of *dokimazo* (rendered by many modern translations as "examine") is borrowed from the *adokimos* ("unapproved") language of 9:27, which in turn plays out in the example of Israel in 10:1ff.

Does Coppes interact with this? No. He isolates 1 Corinthians 11 from its context and attempts to impose a more convenient conceptual context upon it.

First, Coppes appeals to a lexical argument: the term *anamnesis* ("remembrance") "entails a self-conscious activity on the part of the participant." He appeals to one Greek authority: Bruce Metzger says that the Greek *-sis* ending "indicates an action;" it "produces the abstract name of an action." Nobody disagrees with that; yet, Coppes appears to suppose he has demonstrated something important. He then quotes Behm's claim that Christians are to engage in a "recollection of Jesus ... in accordance with the active sense of ἀνάμνησις." But of course, Behm is simply making an interpretive assertion which Coppes follows.

10. See *Feed My Lambs*, 87–88; cf. 143.

11. I also showed the parallel between the covenant-initiating meal on Sinai and the Last Supper. Neither provide the ongoing pattern for who participates, since in both cases, the participants are representative of the whole people of God in an initiatory meal. Otherwise, the Exodus 24 meal would set a precedent that only elders and ecclesiastical leaders could partake, and the Last Supper would set a precedent that only apostles could partake. Again, see *Feed My Lambs*, 87–88.

12. On baptism as priestly ordination, see e.g. Peter J. Leithart, *The Priesthood of the Plebs: A Theology of Baptism* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2003) and my own "Pentecostal Ordination: The Newness of Christian Baptism" (2004, <http://www.biblicalstudiescenter.org/ecclesiology/pentecostalordination.htm>).

However, as I noted in *Feed My Lambs*, there is a pervasive Old Testament backdrop to the remembrance/memorial theme (see esp. 83–87). And notwithstanding Coppes’s appeal to the supposed uniqueness of ἀνάμνησις,¹³ I noted that *this very word* is employed at least twice (in the LXX) in connection with old covenant ritual, and in neither instance is Coppes’s reading appropriate. The trumpets at Israel’s feasts were to be for an *anamnesis* (Num. 10:10), but it can scarcely be thought that they were engaging in some sort of active recollection. Even more striking in resemblance to 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25 is Leviticus 24:7 (LXX), which includes the same preposition and noun construction (*eis anamnesis*—“unto a memorial”). The bottom line is that in the Old Testament sacramental and ritual context, *anamnesis* does not fundamentally differ in usage from the related terms for remembrance and memorial. Trying to impose such a differentiated meaning in 1 Corinthians 11 is special pleading.

Beyond all this, Coppes completely skirts the issue of the acting subject doing the remembering. Throughout the old covenant, beginning all the way back with the rainbow in Genesis 9:12–17, memorials had first reference to God’s remembering (see Gen 9:15), and then called for a secondary echo of remembrance from His people. And the construction in 1 Corinthians 11 calls into serious question the presupposition that *eis anamnesin* refers to the subjective remembrance of the people at all. Contrary to the usual English rendering, the text does not say, “Do this in remembrance of Me,” but “Do this unto My remembrance” (or, on the analogy of Leviticus 24:7, noted above, “unto My memorial”). The sacraments and signs are first of all covenantal reminders to God, and whether we see Jesus as the one remembering,¹⁴ or as the one remembered by the Father, we do not have a clear-cut case of subjective earthly human remembrance in any case, no matter what precise meaning we attribute to *anamnesis*. Therefore, Coppes’s appeal to this term fails on two crucial counts, all while isolating the text from its conceptual roots in old covenant ritual terminology.

But if the appeal to *anamnesis* is a weak lexical argument, Coppes’s next move is downright curious: he suggests that the “active sense of remembrance is further supported by what is recorded in verse 26”—namely, the fact that “eating, drinking, and proclaiming are all present tense verbs.” Supposedly, an aorist would be more suitable if a memorial action were in view. Just why that is so is not clear.

Coppes then goes on briefly to discuss the following verses, placing stress upon the eating and drinking of judgment. He adds nothing to his argument here; nor does he interact with my extensive discussion in *Feed My Lambs*.

But perhaps most telling is this analysis of verse 30: “the result of not examining oneself properly is sickness and death.” *But that is not what Paul says.* Paul attributes judgment to

eating and drinking in an unworthy manner (read 27–30 in order). Coppes seems to equate that “unworthy manner” itself with failure to examine oneself.¹⁵ “Just as in the OT, so today, the Lord protects children from the judgment that comes upon all who ‘come before the Lord’ without examining themselves.”

But clearly, the context throughout this chapter, and the epistle as a whole, tells us otherwise. No matter how robust the spin we put on *dokimazo*, it is nothing more than a *preventative measure*. The most soul-searching “self-examination” is with the goal of repenting if necessary. But the “proving of oneself” is in no sense constitutive of the sacrament. Otherwise, this command would not appear in 1 Corinthians 11 in reaction to a crisis; it would rather have been part of the original institution.

But Paul has already shown what unworthy participation and consequent judgment looks like. That, after all, is the story of 1 Corinthians 10—a context that, once again, Coppes has studiously ignored. The Israelites ate manna and drank spiritual drink, but rebelled, committed idolatry and fornication, and fell under judgment. So likewise Paul warns the Corinthians not to attempt to “double-dip”—partake of both the Lord’s Supper and the idol feasts, lest they provoke the Lord to jealousy (10:14–22). And so likewise, the divisions at the very table of Christ in 1 Corinthians 11 in themselves constitute unworthy participation. The whole point of *dokimazo* is that those who participate are not disqualified (*adokimoi*; cf 9:27). Even on its strongest reading, self-examination is not itself some sort of entrance exam; it is a means for calling oneself to repentance. And the issue that Coppes only escapes by ignoring 1 Corinthians 10 and my extensive treatment of it is this: *children did not die in the wilderness*. It was the children who possessed the land. They

13. Coppes asserts, “Christ’s command involves a unique and carefully worded statement.”

14. As I suggested on p. 86 of *Feed My Lambs*.

15. That is also the most positive spin I can put on how Coppes closes his review, where he says that while children may “do well” with passive obedience, they “do not meet the standard of active obedience,” since “they fail to worship God according to His commandments, to love Him with their entire heart, soul, and mind, etc.” Presumably (?), Coppes is not claiming that adults manage to love God with their entire heart, soul, and mind, either. So I assume he means that only adults can examine themselves and see their failure on the point. Thus, admittance to the table is contingent upon self-examination as such, and failure to engage such self-examination is itself what provokes judgment. If Coppes means something other than that, his problems are even larger, and the Supper becomes pretty much literally an object merited by good works. But even beyond that, the Bible does not countenance the notion that adults are in a superior position to children regarding their holiness or faithfulness (see e.g. Mt 19:13–14, another key passage in *Feed My Lambs* which Coppes does not address).

were the *dokimoi*, the approved ones. Only by an atomistic, decontextualized reading of 1 Corinthians 11 does Coppes avoid being confronted with the salient fact that in the Old Testament, the only time children perished was in connection with sins of their parents (such as the households of Korah and Achan). The notion that covenant children are in serious danger of eating and drinking judgment to themselves is a cop-out that ignores the total witness of Scripture, not least the context of 1 Corinthians itself.

SOME BASIC PROBLEMS IN COPPES' CRITIQUE

The "invisible Church." Coppes insists in several places that my central problem is that I do not understand or am not accounting for the distinction between the visible and invisible Church. He seems to assume that simple appeal to the invisible Church somehow buttresses his case. But appeal to this distinction only clouds the issue. Both baptism and the Lord's Supper are visible sacraments given to the visible people of God. Even if we could determine that Coppes and I agreed fully upon the doctrine of the invisible Church itself, not a hair would be added to his argument against paedocommunion. The sacraments are given to the Church as a community in the world, and the children of believers are part of that community.¹⁶ That is why Paul, when developing the typology of sacramental participation and connected judgment, appeals, not to invisible concepts, but to the historical people of Israel, identifying their experience as providing a matrix (*tupos*) for ours (1 Cor. 10:6, 11).

The sacraments as a work. The Scriptures present baptism and the Lord's Supper primarily as the self-gift of the Triune God. We are baptized *into* the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). The bread and the cup are *koinonia* in Christ's body and blood. They are God's gracious actions toward us. One of Luther's principal critiques of Rome was that the Roman Church had obscured the sacraments as means of grace. Baptism is principally God's action.¹⁷ Coppes everywhere presupposes the opposite. For him, baptism is

principally an act of "faithfulness" on the part of the believer; the Lord's Supper is something to be earned by "active and passive obedience." This is simply untrue; God Himself is the one who calls the saints into *koinonia* (1 Cor. 1:9).¹⁸ The sacraments are God's gift of Himself.

Tiered citizenship in the Church. The whole point of Coppes's appeal to the levels of holiness in the old covenant is to claim that there is a similar tiered citizenship in the new. To illustrate this, he points to the fact that not all are pastors or elders; indeed, not all are eligible to become such. But this both stands the Lord's Supper on its head and misconstrues the offices. The offices are not membership benefits, but particularized gifts of the Spirit. And Paul explicitly sets those differentiated gifts (1 Cor. 12:1–11), which the Spirit distributes in a particularized way to whom He wills, over against the sacraments, which are the common inheritance of all the people of God ("all the members of that one body," 1 Cor. 12:12–13). The offices have nothing to do with tiered measures of holiness or gradations of citizenship.¹⁹ *There is no such thing in the new covenant.* That is the message that rings again and again in Scripture, particularly Paul's writings. The dividing walls have been broken down; God has made one new man in Christ. Attempting to re-erect the old covenant levels of holiness is a partial vindication of the heresy in Galatia, and is to be resisted.

In contrast to Coppes, and in accord with the historic Reformed position, I affirm that "Christ shed His blood *no less* for the washing of the children of believers than for adult persons; and *therefore* they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that which Christ has done for them."²⁰ In accord with Christ, I believe that it is *adults* who need to become like little children in order to enter the kingdom and thus receive all its benefits (Matt. 18:3),²¹ and not children who need to be adults before they can be "really real" citizens of the kingdom. There is one body, one baptism (Eph. 4:4–5), one calling into the one *koinonia* of Christ (1 Cor. 1:9).

5. THE CENTRAL LINCHPIN IN MY POSITION

Since Coppes has largely sidestepped the main point of the argument, allow me to state it succinctly: *the Lord's Supper is the table of the body*. The fact that chapter one of *Feed My Lambs* is entitled "One Bread, One Body" should surely have alerted the reviewer to the key place of 1 Corinthians 10:16–17. A glance at the index will demonstrate that it is my most frequently cited passage. Yet, amazingly, Coppes fails to refer to that text even once. Moreover, he ignores the extensive work I did in the epistle as a whole, by which I demonstrated a coherent structure to Paul's approach to the Church and the Supper. Here is a small sample:

1) The children of believers are identified as *hagioi* (saints) in 1 Corinthians 7:14 (*Feed My Lambs*, 34–36).

16. Cf. *Heidelberg Catechism* Q/A 74.

17. E.g. *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*: "Hence we ought to understand baptism at human hands just as if Christ Himself, nay God Himself, baptized us with His own hands" (in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, John Dillenberger, ed; [New York: Doubleday, 1962] 296). Note also the contrast between evangelical sacraments and works on pp. 299–300.

18. Cf. 2 Cor. 13:14, where the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit is placed in parallel with God the Father's love and the grace of Christ.

19. The New Testament bars women from the teaching office. Under the new covenant, do women have a lower level of graded holiness than men?

20. *Belgic Confession*, Art. 34.

21. The notion that one can be the "greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:4) but not have access to the basic gift of the communion table is absurd.

2) *Saints* are specifically *called ones* (1 Cor. 1:2) and the stated object of that calling is calling into the *koinonia* of Christ (1 Cor. 1:9; *Feed My Lambs*, 35).

3) The Lord's Supper is the table of that *koinonia* (1 Cor. 10:16), so that the many members are one bread and one body, because they all partake of that one bread (1 Cor. 10:17; *Feed My Lambs*, 31–34; cf. 35–36).

4) Similarly, the two sacraments are set in parallel as common to the whole body again in 1 Cor. 12:12–13 (*Feed My Lambs*, 36).

In 1 Corinthians 10:16–17, Paul writes,

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *koinonia* of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the *koinonia* of the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we being many are one body, for we all from the one bread partake.

Koinonia means partnership, mutual participation. This is the calling of the saints, the gift of Christ to His whole body as one body united by one bread. The Lord's Supper is therefore not a "special attainment;" it is not the final rung for the really and truly sanctified, a final plateau on some pagan ziggurat to heaven; it is the table of Christ for the body of Christ. One bread, one body: that is the message of 1 Corinthians 10:16–17. This very simple thesis was the main thrust of the argument of the Hussites regarding paedocommunion (as I also noted),²² and it is the main thrust of my own argument. And no amount of third-order theological rationalization, as Coppes engages in for most of his review, can overthrow what this text plainly says. The table is for the body.

CONCLUSION

While I appreciate the tone of much of Dr. Coppes's review, I am disturbed that he quietly ignores the case that has been put before him. His readers who have not studied *Feed My Lambs* may suppose that a definitive rebuttal to the paedocommunion case has been provided here, but that is not so. Coppes ignores the main argument and the related careful work which I have provided in terms of demonstrating the coherence of numerous themes related to the sacrament in 1 Corinthians. Whereas I have illustrated the coherence of Paul's discussion, Coppes isolates a few elements in chapter 11 and in effect transforms it into its opposite: namely, a means of institutionalizing divisions at the Lord's table—just what Paul was fighting (1 Cor. 11:17–22).

Those who have regard to the context throughout the epistle, however, will not buy this reading. The apostle is concerned for the integrity of the people of God, and that involves not only a pure table (which Coppes is apparently strong on) but a united one, where the whole body shares *koinonia* with

Christ.²³ The integrity of the table means not only excommunication and judgment for covenant-breakers (as in e.g. 1 Cor. 5, 10); it means a mutual sharing in Christ's self-gift for the rest. In a word, 1 Corinthians is about *solidarity*. And a table that excludes the weakest members of the Church is not a table of solidarity, but of institutionalized schism.

[Dr. Coppes believed that Mr. Gallant's response required a lengthy reply which he declined to undertake for this issue due to time constraints. Lord willing, this topic will be readdressed in a subsequent volume of *The Confessional Presbyterian*.] ■

In Brief: Transcription (see inside back cover): New York, 10 July 1817. Letter from T. & J. Swords to the Rev. Joseph D. Welton, Weston, Connecticut.

[page 1] "Rev Joseph D Welton, New York 10 th July 1817.	
Bought of T. & J. Swords	
50 Society's Prayer Books, May 22—	19.00
30 & — & — this day	11.40
	30.40

Rev. Sir

The 30 Prayer Books mentioned in the above bill have this day been sent? To Bridgeport per packet Lapwing.—to the care of the Rev. Mr. Shelton—We presume they are intended for gratuitous distribution, & have therefore put them at the price stipulated by the Board of Managers of the New York Aux.^{ry} Bible P. Book Society.—The Board expect that all orders of this description will be accompanied by the amount,—the books being put at a very trifling advance above the cost.—You will have the goodness to remit in the amount of the above bill by an early conveyance; and if the Prayer Books which you took on Sale in May have met with purchasers, be pleased also to include [page 2] payment for them in the same remittance. Bill of these is annexed.—If they are not sold, there will be no necessity of your remitting for them unless you find it perfectly convenient so to do.—

Yours very respectfully

T. & J. Swords"

Here follows in another hand, presumably that of Mr Welton (not shown on the inside back cover), a detailing of the books purchased on May 22, 1817 for a total of 38.50.

Continued on Page 255.

22. "Hussite paedocommunion was based in part upon a sacramental reading of John 6, but more particularly, by the communal force of passages such as 1 Corinthians 10:16–17. The sacrament is for the *whole people of God*" (*Feed My Lambs*, 129).

23. This way of putting things, of course, is itself misleading. According to 1 Corinthians 11, disunity is itself a violation of the Church's purity.

PSALLO

Psalm 2:1–12

We begin our second installment of Psallo much as we did the first, with a few notes on the translation and phrasing. The Hebrew is somewhat straightforward, with poetical ellipses as might be expected on occasion. For instance, in verse 2 we have added in italics “and bray” to characterize the bestial character of those who plot against the Lord, where the next phrase is a clear indication of their rebellious hearts, placing these words in their mouths.

As for the translation of certain words, we have rendered the Hebrew דָּבַר (v. 1) as ponder. The word itself denotes muttering, much in the same way as murmur in English sounds an onomatopoeic tone in which one might be engaged when scheming. In verse four, where the Authorized Version (AV) renders the Hebrew לָעַב “shall have them in derision”, we have taken the more literal, “mock” due to the verb meaning at its root to flammer in another’s face as an act of mocking. We see that the Lord’s response to the scheming of the ungodly nations and rulers of this world is to laugh and mock at them. In verse 6, where the AV translates שָׁכַן as “set” and in the margin “anointed” we have adopted the latter, owing to the meaning of the verb being “to pour out,” or consecrate, as in anointing a King.

In verse 7, we have added, in italics, the definitive “only” due to the unique relationship the Son bears to the Father, as evidenced by the emphatic use of the pronoun in the LXX and canonized in Hebrews 1:5 (Scrivener’s TR 1894).

As for the Psalm itself, it must be recognized as thoroughly Messianic. The identity of the Christ, the Son, the King, the Anointed, the LORD (v 11) is not in question, by authority of the New Testament. The Lord Jesus Christ is seen in this Psalm in His office as King of Nations. His authority is unchallenged, and His Person and office is established and vindicated by God Most High. Chapter one of the Epistle to the Hebrews removes all doubt as to the subject of this Psalm, and if we take but a moment, we will see the Lord Jesus Christ exalted for our admiration and worship, as He is displayed in His glory.

However, we also have the Lord Jesus Christ presented as the One against whom the nations scheme, to overthrow His righteous reign. Christ’s Apostles, after certain of their number had been threatened and scourged for preaching in His Name, prayed, using the words of this Psalm, identify-

ing their enemies as those threatened therein, and identifying the Christ of Psalm 2 as their Lord Jesus (Acts 4:24ff). And in so doing, they “strengthened themselves in the Name of the Lord their God.”

This Psalm was also a part of the Apostolic witness to the nations, in their preaching of the Gospel. The Apostle Paul, in the 13th Chapter of Acts (v. 33), referred to the Second Psalm by name, and from it showed the unique nature of the Son, as being the Only-Begotten Son of God, manifested to all as such by His resurrection.

But let us return to Chapter one of the Epistle to the Hebrews. We have, in this great chapter, the display of Christ’s superiority over all creation, and especially there, the Angelic host. We are to understand that Christ is much more than a mighty angel, much more than any creature—He is the Creator Himself. Not only does He bear a message from God, He is the very Word of God—He is that One by which the Transcendent God reveals Himself to men. He is Immanuel, the Immanent One, God with us. Further, He is the One who has purged our sins, and finished that divine work, having sat down at the Right Hand of the Majesty on High. How then, does the inspired author make his case for Christ’s surpassing Person—that He is the Creator, Redeemer, yea, Very God of Very God? Quite simply, elegantly, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the writer shows us that this is the Christ about whom the Church has been singing ever since His Holy Prophets of old have penned the inspired praise for the singing of God’s people. Written to Hebrew Christians, who from their infancy have sung the Psalms exclusively in their holy convocations, the writer opens their minds to understand the things written of Christ in that Psalter from which they have sung, perhaps daily, all their lives. So, in verse 5 he quotes from Psalm 2, proving the uniqueness of Christ, God’s Son. Also in verse 5, he reminds us of the Davidic Covenant, and Christ’s unique place in it, from 2 Samuel 7:14ff and again stated thematically in Psalm 89:20–37. In verse 6, to prove Christ’s superiority over the angels he quotes from Psalm 97:7. In verse 7 and 8, further to prove the point of Christ’s superiority, he quotes from Psalm 104:4, and compares it to Psalm 45:6–7, calling angels ministering spirits, but ascribing absolute Deity to the Lord Jesus Christ. To show that Christ is the Creator, and therefore eternal, he quotes from Psalm 102:25–27. And finally in Chapter 1, to show Christ’s surpassing greatness He quotes from Psalm 110:1 speaking of Christ’s present session with the father in heaven, and calling Him Lord.

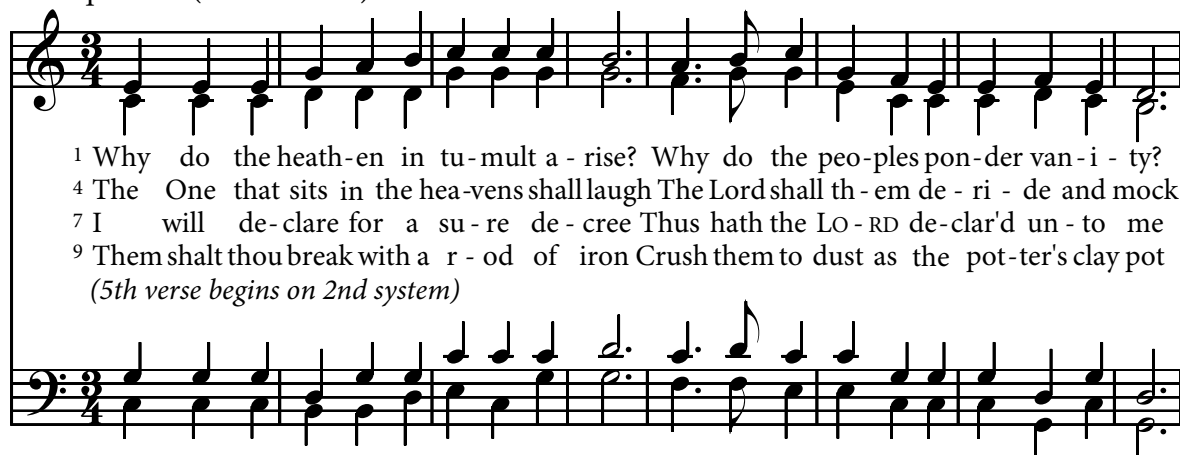
So then, to close, let us see that the Psalter was indeed used in the Apostolic preaching, to witness to Christ’s offices, Person, and work. The Psalter was used in Christ’s preaching, to witness to Himself (Matthew 22:22–46; Luke 24:44–47). The Psalter continues to be used, as it has been for centuries, as

Continued on Page 255.

Psalm 2:1-12

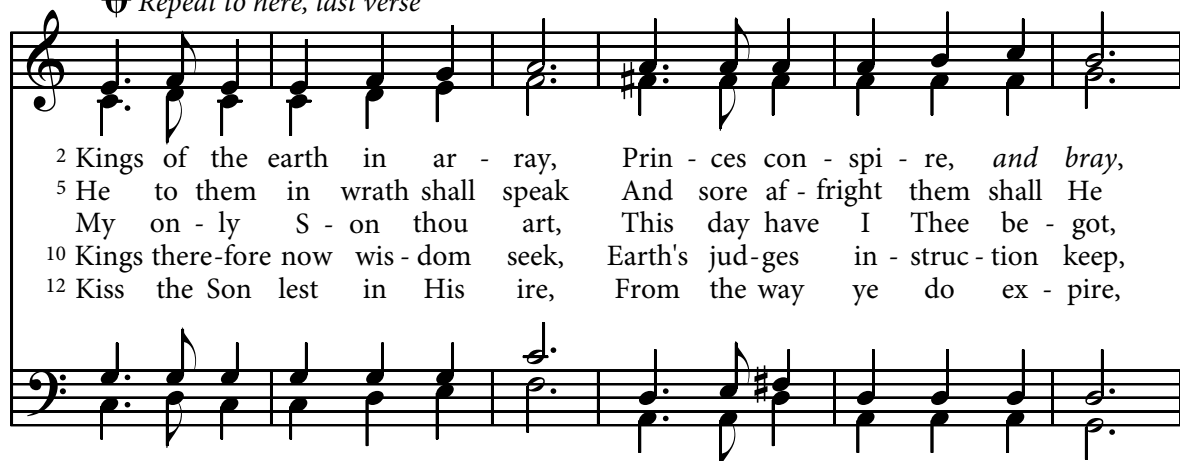
Nashqhu-Bar (Kiss the Son)

Todd L. Ruddell



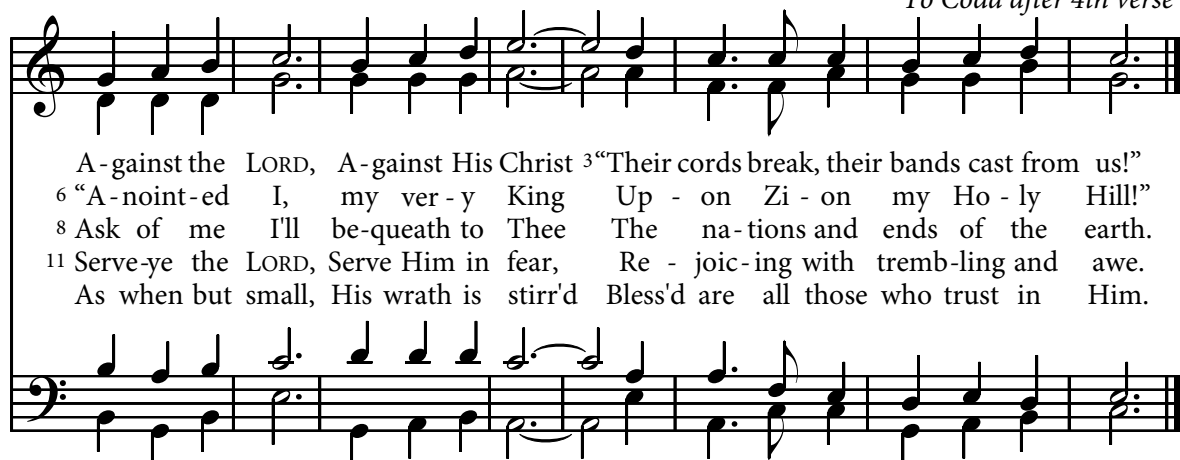
¹ Why do the heath-en in tu-mult a - rise? Why do the peo-ples pon-der van-i - ty?
⁴ The One that sits in the hea-vens shall laugh The Lord shall th - em de - ri - de and mock
⁷ I will de-clare for a su-re de-cree Thus hath the LO-RD de-clar'd un - to me
⁹ Them shalt thou break with a r - od of iron Crush them to dust as the pot-ter's clay pot
 (5th verse begins on 2nd system)

♫ Repeat to here, last verse



² Kings of the earth in ar - ray, Prin - ces con - spi - re, and bray,
⁵ He to them in wrath shall speak And sore af - fright them shall He
 My on - ly S - on thou art, This day have I Thee be - got,
¹⁰ Kings there-fore now wis - dom seek, Earth's jud-ges in - struc - tion keep,
¹² Kiss the Son lest in His ire, From the way ye do ex - pire,

To Coda after 4th verse



A-against the LORD, A-against His Christ ³“Their cords break, their bands cast from us!”
⁶ “A-noint-ed I, my ver-y King Up - on Zi - on my Ho - ly Hill!”
⁸ Ask of me I'll be-queath to Thee The na-tions and ends of the earth.
¹¹ Serve-ye the LORD, Serve Him in fear, Re - joic-ing with tremb-ling and awe.
 As when but small, His wrath is stirr'd Bless'd are all those who trust in Him.

IN TRANSLATIONE

John Brown of Wamphray
The Universal Visible Church
From the Preface to LIBRI DUO

Presented here is a first time translation of a portion of the preface to a Latin work known as *Libri Duo*, by John Brown of Wamphray (c.1610–1679). Brown was a friend and contemporary of Samuel Rutherford, who had “a great love to dear Mr. John Brown because” he thought he saw “Christ in him more than in his brethren.” Rutherford was also a correspondent of Brown’s mother. In 1662 the year following Rutherford’s death, Brown was “imprisoned in Edinburgh for calling some neighbouring ministers ‘perjured knaves and villains’ for acknowledging the newly-appointed Archbishop of Glasgow, but was soon set free on condition of banishment. He accordingly left for Holland early in 1663, where he remained, living mostly in Rotterdam or Utrecht, until his death.”¹

From Holland Brown wrote for the Covenanter cause and published other significant theological works which, according to James Walker, made him “without doubt, the most important [Scottish] theologian” of that time (Lachman, 98). In this preface Brown explains in the rambling and florid style of the day, his reasons for writing first against the Socinian rationalist Ludovicus Wolzogius, and then against the Erastian views of the Dutch physician Lambert Velthuisen. This second work is “perhaps the very best book written by any of our Scottish divines on the ministry, church government and ecclesiastical discipline.”² In addition, Brown devotes the balance of his lengthy preface to addressing in thirty-two succinct paragraphs, the erroneous view of the necessity of separation from corrupt churches. As John MacPherson noted in his work on

JOHN BROWN OF WAMPFRAY (c.1610–1679). The extract presented here is translated from the Preface to *Libri duo: in priori, Wolzogium, in libellis duobus de interprete Scripturarum, causam orthodoxam prodidisse demonstratur. In posteriori, Lamberti Velthusii sententia libertino-Erastiana, in libello vernaculo de idololatria & superstitione naper proposita, detegitur & confutatur* (Amstelodami, 1670). TRANSLATED BY N. E. Barry Hofstetter, Th.M.

1. D. C. Lachman, “Brown, John (of Wamphray),” *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology*, ed. Nigel M. De S. Cameron, David F. Wright, David C. Lachman, and Donald E. Meek (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993) 98. Hereafter Lachman.

2. John MacPherson, *The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology* (Edinburgh: MacNiven & Wallace, 1903) 49–50.

The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology: “In common with all the best Scottish theologians, Brown of Wamphray had a great horror of ecclesiastical divisions...” (MacPherson, 50). Writing of his fellow Scotsmen, MacPherson marked their shared concept of the visible church:

In the doctrine of the church they were not, as we are often told they were, insularly Scotch. National or particular churches; those of Scotland, of England, of France, and so on, were simply provinces of a great empire, the universal visible church of God on earth. They were not regarded as so many species belonging to one genus, but they were parts of an integral whole, *totum integrale*, so that the qualities that were essential in the whole were essential in each part. Hence any ecclesiastical action of a particular or national church was regarded as the action of the universal visible church. Brown of Wamphray sets forth this view with admirable completeness, and with wonderful conciseness, in two small pages of a work already referred to [*Contra Wolzogium et Velthusium. Præfatio*, §23].

To this universal visible church, with the oracles and institutions committed to it, Christ has given the ministry for the purpose of the gathering together and perfecting of the saints from among men, to the end of the world. And as this ministry is one, so also the church is one. It is simply by accident, because all cannot be gathered together in one place, that several particular churches came to be formed. Whosoever, therefore, is a member in any one of these particular churches, in communion with it in the worship of God, is in the communion of the catholic visible church. Rutherford and others of his school linger fondly over this point, and Brown gives more space to the reiteration of this statement than to anything else in the section of his controversial treatise devoted to the subject, evidently impressed with a sense of its practical importance. Members of the visible church catholic or universal, might be members of the Church of Scotland because they were born, and had lived in Scotland. Had they been born in France and lived there, they would have been members of the Church of France. But if a member of that church came to Scotland, he would be recognized as a church member; and a member of the Church of Scotland in France would expect to be received of right as a member there. This shows how far from the principles of our covenanting fathers those have strayed who regard their communion table not as that of the universal or catholic church, not even as that of the national church, but simply as that of their denomination, to which none are to be

received who do not join their particular communion. Brown and Rutherford would have denounced such as sectaries and separatists (93–95).

The “two small pages, admired by MacPherson, which equate to the twenty-third of the thirty-two paragraphs against separatism just noted, round out the following extract from Brown’s Preface to *Libri Duo*, translated here for the first time.

CHRIS COLDWELL

Preface to the Reader

You will perhaps wonder, reader, that I, as a stranger, have involved myself in these controversies. Truly, you will easily perceive, as you consider it, that in my soul I am a Christian, and that in every way, whatever must be expected of faithful Christians, as long as the church is troubled and for the sake of God, that I, when it is for the sake of divine truth (concerning which there ought to be nothing more precious for the followers of Christ) do not hesitate to perform my office according to my own measure. These adversaries, whom I confute in these chapters, are hardly known to me at all, since they have afforded me neither harm nor benefit. Indeed, by no means would I recognize even Velthusius if I met him face to face!³ How I wish that I had never known them by that name by which they have now become known to me. In my opinion, what must be considered concerning the writings of Wolzogius is not the many things that I now will say, but what you have already learned from the public judgments of some of the most famous theologians and ministers concerning this affair, after which I have thought this controversy should have been put to bed at the very least in its own turn. Indeed, from an unexpected report I have come to understand that certain people are expending their labor on testimonies and judgments which approve those writings of Wolzogius, *Concerning the Interpreter of the Scriptures*, attempting to acquit them from every charge of heterodoxy or error. Struck with this report, and recalling those things which particularly were occurring before amidst my reading, and worthy of special note, this thought overtook my soul, whether it was not possible to demonstrate that the earlier evaluation concerning *The Interpreter of the Scriptures*, contended for to this point by the orthodox, has displayed and debunked the writings of Wolzogius.

Therefore, taking up the pen I undertook the risk, and now begun I have progressed rather far, all the more confirmed in my judgment of it. Indisputably in this work (any lack is the responsibility of the writer) I have presented orthodoxy.

Having begun from this work, by no means was I moved in reading the judgments of those others who wished to favor Wolzogius. In fact, on this occasion, my opinion deepened its roots in my soul, because certain of their invectives against others, more than their judgments concerning Wolzogius seemed wild to me. With no support provided but an abundance of inflated words they praised the work in superlative fashion. Thereupon, putting an even wilder and more serious spin upon it, they were able to prove nothing of their censures of others which they had alleged. Nor did I perceive anything additionally which might move me to change my own conclusions.

Therefore, more enlivened and motivated by these obstacles than hindered, I persisted, and with the work very nearly finished, found great profit in the book of the very learned Johann van der Wayen written against Wolzogius. I read it avidly, in fact, devoured it, and clearly saw my conclusions abundantly confirmed. Van der Wayen proves that if even the most astute defender does not support the cause which he alleges to defend from what has been professed, (even Wolzogius!), then he has demonstrated that he has betrayed the cause. So it delighted me that he seemed to have proven the entire point, to the extent that my work which I had undertaken was almost entirely unnecessary. Nevertheless, from the encouragement of others, whom it was certainly better to gratify in affairs such as this, rather than the pursuit of my own goals, I completed the examination. So I entrusted it to the press. Ironically, it has seen the written light of the most genuine Doctor of Philosophy and Minister of the Word Jacob Koelman, which even more clearly overturned Wolzogius’ cause, so that I judged my own examination to be even more useless, but the die was cast, for I had already submitted it for publication, and I was unable to reclaim it once it was so mixed!

In the meantime, there came into my hands that vernacular book, *Concerning Idolatry and Superstition*, of Velthusius. Once I had read the preface, I made many notes, which I determined to add to my own reflection, but having been overtaken by a fever I was not permitted to peruse the main body of the book. Nevertheless, afterwards, once the fever was past, I again read the book itself, and observed more of the same chaff. These things, which look to *An Erastian Opinion by a Libertine*, I excerpted and decided to respond briefly to all of them, something I which hoped more seriously now than I did then, that this work would bring it to light, and would not be imputed to me. If the publisher had stood on his promises, you would have seen these books a year ago, but that worthy was occupied with prior commitments to the works of others.

3. Brown apparently wishes to stress that it is simply zeal for the truth which motivates him, and not some personal grudge that he may have held toward his opponents.

To one typesetter (who did not ever care for this one work) above all he was forced to promise these tracts, whence, as it happened, since the press was delayed, I had the time to add more. These assertions which I have opposed to the thought of Velthusius I have pursued more extensively and confirmed. You are finally free to judge what now I present. Perhaps someone will ascribe it to me as a fault, that by so sharp a pen I find fault, truly, but I hold myself the least to be blamed in that regard, as he will easily judge, whoever carefully weighs how without trembling and impudently he might trample the sacred instructions of Christ, and overturn every divinely instituted order. He is not otherwise able to be drawn.

So that finally you may see that no one calls me Rabbi, nor resigned in any part, but those whom I regard as friends. But all the more do I consider the truth friendly, and it has seemed here that I have written some part of it, which recently D. de Yuon, after the colloquy *Concerning Separation* held with it, which I gave to be shared and read to, among others, the most famous lady Anna Maria Schurman. I was prepared to copy, if it seemed best to God, yet more on this question, to make it of public domain as the occasion demanded. After many reasons, it would be unlawful, on account of the scandals of the members of the Church, or on account of the neglected Ecclesiastical discipline, or discipline not faithfully enough administered, to separate from the church. Here is proof, these theses, whose brevity does not limit to what it here refers.

1. The church of Christ is one on earth. Since there is one God, one faith, one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, one head of the church, it follows necessarily that there is one church. Beza, *Confession* (chapter 5, article 2) "A universal multitude of Christians," Zwingli, "which regards itself as faithful, speaks at the same time of one faith, one people, one church." Hence the one church is called "the Kingdom of God" (Matt. 4:26,30), "the Kingdom of Christ" (Daniel 7:14), "the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 13:24, 31,33,47), "the Kingdom to be handed over to the Father" (1 Cor. 15:24), "One body" (Eph. 4:4-5), "the House of God" (1 Tim. 3:15), "Sheepfold" (John 10:16), "Temple" (2 Thess. 2:4). See also Songs 2:2 and 4:8, 9, 10 and 6:4.

...

22. Particular churches (to the extent that they are considered such by the British [i.e. Westminster] Confession, 25:4-5) are more or less pure. They are more pure when the doctrine of the Gospel is taught and received, divine instructions administered, and public worship celebrated (Rev. 2, 3; 1 Cor. 5:6-7). They are most pure of all when, as churches on earth, they are mixed, but then grow to hate error (1 Cor. 13:12; Rev. 2, 3; Matt. 13:24-30, 47).

23. To the visible catholic church (as intended in and from the beginning), Christ gave the ministry, whether the order

of ministers, oracles and institutes of God, for the saints to be gathered together up to the end of the world and at the same time to be perfected (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11-13; Matt. 28:19-20). All the members of this church are to be regarded as a holy society and communion, in divine worship, and in displaying other spiritual duties, which may be brought to bear on their mutual edification (Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 2:46-47; 1 Cor. 11:20). Since, however, not every member of this church is able to convene together for worshipping God, particular churches, either small or large, are established, as far as convenience and utility may bear. Whoever, therefore, in these particular churches holds communion in celebrating worship of God, professes it with the universal, catholic and visible Church. For, as we said above, there is one church of Christ, just as there is only one King of the church and one Head. Of this Church all churches are particular members, and of this church all members are also members of particular churches. Therefore, even if in distinct and particular meetings the members of that particular meeting hold communion locally among themselves they no less potentially hold communion more remote with all the members of the visible church. In this way all who are invited to the feast, even all who are unable to attend the same banquet, but more conveniently at distinct tables which have been spread out, sitting in various locations, must still be said to have the communion of the feast among themselves, and are all regarded to be and called "guests." Hence it is that when pastors are ordained, they put on a relationship not only to those particular churches over which they preside, but first, by the order of nature, with respect to the church catholic. It therefore follows that when members are received solemnly through baptism that not only are they admitted as members of that particular church, but also as members of the church universal, to which first, by order of nature, they belong as members. Otherwise, they would have to be re-baptized as often as they move from one particular church to another. Therefore they are all called *brothers* not only who are joined to one particular church but who are also members of distinct churches. This may be seen throughout in Acts and the Epistles, also in Matt[hew] 18:15-25. Moreover, all become participants in one and the same general calling. All are received into one and the same external covenant (Acts 2:39). One gospel is announced to all without distinction (Matt. 20:14; Mark 14:9; Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:6; Titus 2:2). Hence also since they are members of one particular church they are able to commune in another congregation, even to participate in the Lord's Supper. Finally, one who is rightly excommunicated from one church is regarded to be excommunicated from the others as well.

TRANSLATED BY N. E. BARRY HOFSTETTER, Th.M. ■

ANTIQUARY

T. & J. Swords.

Part One. Printers During the Federal Period to Doctors, Scientists, Friendly and Calliopean Clubbers, and other New York Literati, as well as High Churchists, and the Occasional Presbyterian.

T. & J. Swords became prominent publishers following the revolutionary war in the early years of the United States,¹

1. See *In Memory of James R. Swords. Notes of a Meeting of the New York Publishers' Association and others connected with the Trade, at Appletons' Building, Broadway.* June 20, [1855] 10; Charles E. Butler, "T. & J. Swords, Publishers," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 58 (1954) 89–90.

2. [Paul Johnston,] "T. & J. Swords, Early New York Printers," *The Book Collector's Packet* 1 (1932) 16–17. The last publications for the firm and its successors would seem to have been in 1859. The succession appears to be: T. & J. Swords (1786–1832); Swords, Stanford & Co. (1832–1842); Stanford & Swords (1843–1855); Thomas N. Stanford (1855–1857); Stanford and Delisser (1858–1859); and finally "Delisser and Procter, successors to Stanford & Swords" (1859). The last published two dozen or more books in 1859 and then apparently nothing further. See Appendix A for more information on the firm and its locations in New York City.

3. "Died on Thursday last Mr. James Swords, the oldest booksellers, publishers, and stationers in New York. They published the first monthly magazine." Philip Hone, *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828–1851. Edited, with an introduction, by Allan Nevins ... in two volumes* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1927) 773. Cited in Butler, 92.

4. Dr. Samuel Miller in his *Brief Retrospect* describes the improvement in American printing at the beginning of the nineteenth century: "At the commencement of the period under review, there were but three or four Printers in the American colonies; and these carried on their business upon a very small scale, and in a very coarse, inelegant manner. But at present the number of Printers in the United States may be considered as near three hundred; and many of these perform their work with a neatness and elegance which are rarely exceeded in Europe. At that time the printing [of] an original American work, even a small pamphlet, was a rare occurrence, and seriously weighed, as an important undertaking; while the reprinting of foreign works was seldom attempted. But now at least one hundred American works, some of which are large and respectable, annually issue from our presses; and the republication of foreign books is carried on in almost every part of our country, and particularly in the capital towns, with a degree of enterprise, and to an extent which would not disgrace some of the most cultivated parts of the European world." Samuel Miller, *A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century. Part the First; in Two Volumes: containing a Sketch of the Revolutions and Improvements in Science, Arts and Literature during that Period.* By Samuel Miller, A.M.,

and continued in business for "more than eighty years."² The founders of the New York firm were brothers Thomas (1764–1843) and James Swords (1765–1846). The siblings produced high quality editions of scientific, medical and literary works, ranking them amongst the most prominent printers of the Federal Period. Their *New-York Magazine; or, Literary Repository*, the first illustrated magazine published in New York, ran from 1790 through 1797, and counted among its first subscribers, the President, Vice President, and Chief Justice of the United States.³ They excelled in printing literary works, published the first American professional novelist, Charles Brockden Brown, and would become "the leading dealers of literary wares in the city" (Butler, 92). And contrary to popular misconception, their work was of very fine quality:⁴

The general belief is that Early American printing, if distinguished by anything at all, is to be discredited with slovenly press work, miserable paper, and bad types.... A few years ago we became interested in the printing of T. & J. Swords, printers and publishers, whose books were attractively done.... But T. & J. Swords, though they depended to a great extent upon religious, college, and state, printing for their bread and butter, were far from inactive in the production of such literary and poetical works as the budding Town had to offer. And it is in these literary works that they have produced their most attractive books (Johnston, 16).

The Swords were also dedicated Episcopalians, and their bookstore was after a fashion the unofficial headquarters for the Protestant Episcopal Church in New York, and operated as that denomination's printing house in the city. However, for a few years at least, this commitment and position did not keep the Swords from publishing the occasional title by the city's most prominent Reformed and Presbyterian ministers. Sadly, the relatively peaceful relations that had existed between the Episcopalian and these other churches since the end of the Revolutionary War were strained when a controversy erupted in the press over "high churchism," and the latter took their work to other presses.

A LOYALIST FAMILY

The father of the Swords brothers, Lieutenant Thomas Swords, an Irishman, came to the colonies in 1756, serving under General Abercrombie. He continued in service to the British Army until 1766, when he resigned. At the time, the British government was encouraging reduction of troops in the colonies to save money, offering land and half wages as

incentives. The Swords settled in Saratoga County, New York and took up farming.⁵

The Swords were loyalists and attempted to remain neutral at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War; but Thomas Swords was arrested in May of 1776 for refusing to command colonial forces. He was atypically granted a release to return to his family after eight months in prison. When and where he rejoined his family is unclear as his wife Mary had fled the family farm with the children, probably during July 1777 at the retreat of the American forces.⁶ On September 17–19, 1777, General Burgoyne's army was encamped by the

one of the Ministers of the United Presbyterian Churches in the City of New York, member of the American Philosophical Society, and Corresponding Member of the Historical Society of Massachusetts (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1803) 2,386.

5. Polly Hoppin, "The Thomas Swords Family: A Perspective on The Loyalists Of The American Revolution" (1976). <http://www.rootsweb.com/~nysarato/swords.htm>. Other sources say 1776 instead of 1766, but that apparently is incorrect. See *Prominent Families of New York*. Revised Edition (New York City: The Historical Company, 1898) 545. Butler, 89.

6. It would seem that the statement that Thomas and James Swords "came to Halifax in 1776" is incorrect. Marie Tremaine, *A Bibliography of Canadian Imprints 1751–1800* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1952) 615.

7. Charles W. Snell, *Saratoga National Historical Park New York: National Park Service Handbook Series No. 4* (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, n.d. [1961?]) 13–14.

8. Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America* (New York: B. Franklin, 1964?; repr. of 1874 ed.) 1.192–193, 313; 2.91–92, 120, 126–127.

9. While Hoppin gives the year as 1779, the Swords' broadside places the year of death as 1780.

10. *Thomas Swords, born at Marybarrow, (Queen's County,) Ireland, on Sunday, June 19, 1738:—Died at New-York, on Sunday, January 16, 1780* (New-York: Printed by Thomas and James Swords, 1782). The American Antiquarian Society owns an electrostatic copy of a privately owned original of this title: "Genealogical record of the Swords family, taken from the family Bible. Apparently printed during the Swords' apprenticeship; the firm of T. & J. Swords was established in 1786." *American Antiquarian Society Online Card Catalog*, <http://catalog.mwa.org/webvoy.htm>. Hereafter AASOCC. This was printed the year before Thomas and James went to Shelbourne in 1783. In 1782 the brothers were respectively about eighteen and seventeen years old. They returned to New York in 1786.

11. "The Port-Roseway Gazetteer and the Shelburne Advertiser. Printed at Shelburne, N.S., by James Robertson, Junior, and T. & J. Swords, 1784–1785, or later." Tremaine, 614. "The *Port-Roseway gazetteer* was printed in the same office and from the same fonts of type as the *Royal American gazette*. And while distinct from the older paper in title, numbering, and apparently in ownership, it served as a second weekly edition issued on Thursdays, of the *Gazette*, issued on Mondays. Some of the repetitive matter, e.g. advertisements, was printed from the same setting of type in both papers. In other matters they complement each other, reprinting different items from the same exchange paper, the *Gazette*, reprinting official publications and news, the *Gazetteer*, the more 'literary' items" (Tremaine, 615). Italics original.

Swords' farmhouse prior to the Battle of Saratoga (Hoppin, "The Thomas Swords Family"), and the house served as the general's headquarters.⁷

Although unsuccessful in obtaining a flag of safe passage to Canada, the elder Swords was granted one under which the whole family traveled to New York City. Most significantly for the Swords brothers, upon their arrival in New York, "Thomas and James, then thirteen and twelve, were apprenticed to James Robertson, renowned printer of Tory propaganda," who had come from Norwich, Connecticut, to New York after its capture by the British Army (Hoppin).

Robertson with his brother Alexander had come to the colonies from Edinburgh, and first printed in New York in 1768. After two years they moved to Albany where they printed until 1775. Robertson began a second operation in partnership with John Trumbull at Norwich, Connecticut, in 1773. In 1775 he ceased the Albany business and moved to Norwich when detected printing in favor of the royalist cause. Before coming to New York, Robertson published *The Royal Gazette* for a short time at Philadelphia.⁸

Sadly, possibly due to the ill affects of his imprisonment, Lieutenant Swords died in New York City, January 16, 1780, and the family separated. Mrs. Swords and the other children moved to Bergen, New Jersey, while the two boys remained with the Robertsons (Hoppin). In New York the Robertsons were printers of *The Royal Gazette*, and then *The Royal American Gazette*, which ran from 1777 to 1783. In 1782 the apprentices issued their first publication, a one page broadside: *Thomas Swords, born at Marybarrow, (Queen's County,) Ireland, on Sunday, June 19, 1738:—Died at New-York, on Sunday, January 16, 1780.*⁹ This was a family genealogy, which was no doubt a type of honor to their late father, as well as an exhibition of the young brothers' printing skill.¹⁰

In April of 1783, the Robertsons and their two apprentices along with other loyalists traveled in the first group of thirteen ships to settle a colony at Shelburne, Nova Scotia. The printers there resumed *The Royal American Gazette*, which ran until 1786 (Tremaine, 616). In 1784, the "establishment of *The Port Roseway Gazetteer and the Shelburne Advertiser*, printed by Thomas Jr. and James Swords with James Robertson, Jr. heralded the commencement of the magnificent career which lay ahead for the young brothers" (Hoppin).¹¹

In 1786 Mrs. Swords and the rest of the family joined the brothers at Shelburne. Mary Swords had left New York in the late summer of 1783 for London, where she spent some years attempting to gain compensation for the loss of the farm and for provisions supplied to General Burgoyne. She was granted a £40 annual pension, and after another trip in 1788 and more pleading, received a warrant of survey "in favor of the Widow Swords and her five children for six thousand two hundred acres of land in the Township of Chapham". Whether

this had any actual value as an executable land warrant is not clear (Hoppin).

Life in Shelbourne was evidently as miserable as life had been in America for the loyalists (Hoppin). In 1786 the Swords brothers returned to New York where they established their printing firm, T. & J. Swords. The family was reunited at some point, with Mrs. Swords following the brothers to New York in 1789 or thereafter. She died in 1798, age 55, during the yellow fever outbreak of that year (Butler, 90).

T. & J. SWORDS: NEW YORK

The new country to which the Swords returned, while holding great promise, was not known for, and was in great need of, progress on the cultural and intellectual front. "Little advance had been made throughout the country in transportation, in sanitation or in education since the colonial period. The United States still lacked a cultivated social group to occupy the responsible positions in government, to form the taste in letters and the other arts, to fill the ranks of the professions and to carry into higher spheres the education of the youth." As for the Swords' city of business, while it was "a rapidly growing and busy commercial city," it "differed from the rest of the nation only in degree of crudity." This "busy but uncultivated city" had no school system; Columbia College was small and struggling; and the "partisan newspapers" had little "literary value."¹² New York was

populous, but unsanitary; prosperous, but badly lighted; there was a small cultured class, but the entire population was helpless before the frequent epidemics of disease and was served with a very bad marketing system and an unclean water supply. Few people in the town had any great reverence for wisdom or had any keen desire to improve cultural, social, or sanitary conditions. In other words, New York and almost all American communities had achieved some success in gaining wealth, size, and commercial importance, but, having made these material beginnings, were unwilling to apply their energies or their resources in the more vital domain of the spirit (Hall, 6).

This condition of the new county would begin to change.¹³ While small, the educated and cultured class was highly motivated, perhaps obsessively so, to see their nation improve itself.¹⁴ It was a time of big ideas (as exhibited in the country's founding documents), and there was a great deal of activity with many gathering together formally and informally to read, discuss and debate. They formed private and public libraries, quickly formed societies to preserve documents important to the history of the fledging republic, and generally sought

self as well as national improvement.¹⁵ T. & J. Swords would participate in this general current of activity, and come to be one of the most noted publishers of that day.

Apparently the brothers Swords labored in the city for several years at trade printing before venturing out into publishing. In 1789 T. & J. Swords issued their first title, which was a reprint of a London edition of *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, a small work of just over seventy pages.¹⁶ The

12. Robert Courtney Hall, *A Scientist in the Early Republic, Samuel Latham Mitchill 1764–1831* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934) [6]–7.

13. See Thomas Bender's *New York Intellectual*. See Appendix B.

14. Many of the educated class in the new republic perhaps had an inferiority complex. Writing of Elihu Hubbard Smith's diary entries for the period, James E. Cronin notes: "It is quite evident from the diary that one of the strongest factors in directing his thoughts and those of his friends was what might be called 'chronic colonialitis.' This state of mind, a resentment that their lives and culture were neither understood nor appreciated in England (coupled with an occasional uneasy suspicion that the English might be right in ignoring them), accounted for much of their intellectual tension and continued effort to prove and improve themselves." James E. Cronin, "Elihu Hubbard Smith and the New York Friendly Club, 1795–1798," *PLMA* 64 (1949) 472. Another example of this is in Samuel Miller's *Brief Retrospect*. In an eighty page notice of his own country in "Nations lately become Literary" in the closing pages of that work, he apologetically begins: "The annals of American literature are short and simple. The history of poverty is usually neither very various, nor very interesting." And at the end of the section, he gives the causes, happily gradually declining, why the United States lagged behind European authors who were more 'learned, instructive, and elegant.' *Brief Retrospect*, 2.330; 404–409.

15. "The establishment of the Federal Government, in 1789, may be considered as the last grand epocha in the progress of knowledge in America. From this period public tranquility and confidence began to rest on a foundation more solid than before; wealth flowed in on every side; the extension of our intercourse with Europe, the great seat of civilization, refinement and literature, rendered us every day more familiar with trans-atlantic productions and improvements; and a sense of national dignity and independence becoming gradually more strong and general, all conspired to furnish the means, and to excite an ambition for enriching our own country with the treasures of knowledge. From this time till the end of the century, literary institutions of various kinds were multiplied with astonishing rapidity in the United States. Besides Colleges, Academies, and subordinate Schools, Scientific Associations were formed; Libraries began to be established in the most remote parts of the country; Printing Presses and Bookstores appeared in great numbers where they were never before known; Newspapers became numerous to a degree beyond all precedent; and the rewards of literary labour, though still small, were considerably augmented" (Miller, *Brief Retrospect*, 2.384–385).

16. AASOCC lists this one title from 1789, which appears to be the first published by T. & J. Swords: *A narrative of the expedition to Botany Bay* (New York: Reprinted by T and J Swords, 1789). Evans 22176. Charles Evans, *American Bibliography: A Chronological Dictionary of all Books, Pamphlets, and Periodical Publications Printed in the United States of America from ... 1639 Down to ... 1820, with Bibliographical and Biographical Notes* (Chicago: [Blakely Press], 1903–1934; repr. New York: Peter Smith, 1941–1962).

title page notes the work as “London: Printed for J. Debrett. New-York: Re-Printed by T. and J. Swords, And Sold By All The Book-Sellers in the City.”¹⁷ Copies of this work complete with Booksellers’ advertising are rare, but an example owned by the University of Virginia has two pages attached to the end of the work, containing notices by the two booksellers,

17. While in the beginning it appears they were only a printing shop, T. & J. Swords were clearly selling other titles as well as their own by 1794, and so they may have functioned as a bookseller prior to that date. They dabbled for a time, or perhaps even continued to sell other merchandise. In 1798 they advertised that they carried in addition to books and stationery, an assortment of jewelry and plated ware, as well as “a number of Elegant Prints.” William Dunlap, *André; a tragedy in five acts* (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1798) [bookseller’s advertisement] 112. Evans 33652. One mid 19th century writer, in a piece on New York publishing houses, notes that at the close of the Revolutionary War, the brothers “established themselves as printers, booksellers and publishers” at their first address, “No 43 Crown Street.” “The Book Trade. Publishers and Publishing in New York,” *Norton’s Literary Gazette and Publishers’ Circular*, New Series, volume 1 (April 1, 1854) 165.

18. It is difficult to imagine that this is a typographical mistake. The Swords either moved or had space at 43 and 44 Crown Street. It appears throughout their early career that the brothers often had two addresses simultaneously, perhaps one serving as a bookshop, the other as a printshop?

19. [Bookseller’s Advertisement], *A narrative of the expedition to Botany Bay* (New York: Reprinted by T and J Swords, 1789). The author here thanks the University of Virginia, Special Collections, for providing a copy of the text of this rare, and possibly earliest, advertisement by T. & J. Swords. In this example, still in its unprinted pale blue wrapper, the advertising is appended at the back (Special Collection Call Number AC901.M33 v. 40 no. 4). The AASOCC/Early American Imprints copy lacks the two pages of Bookseller’s notices (*Early American Imprints, 1639–1800* [New York: Readex Microprint Corp., 1955–1969]).

20. Actually the firm published this directory from 1791 through 1798. A *New-York Directory* by David C. Franks was published by Shepard Kollock in 1786 and 1787, and a *New York Directory, and Register, Illustrated with an Accurate and Elegant Plan of the City of New-York* was published in 1789 and 1790 by Hodge, Allen, and Campbell. A new production by William Duncan was published by the Swords from 1791 until 1795, and evidently this was replaced by Longworth’s *American Almanack, New-York Register, and City Directory*, which the Swords published from 1796 through 1798.

21. See Appendix C.

22. Given the close relationship of Trinity Church and Columbia College, it is not surprising to see an increase in the number of publications for both the college and the Protestant Episcopal Church around the same period of time.

23. These works were for the aforementioned merchant Berry and Rogers, booksellers and sellers of hardware, medicines and other merchandise. They were *Concise observations on the nature of our common food*, a reprint of a short work published in London in 1787; a translation of a work by John Caspar Lavater, *Aphorisms on man*, which was a work of about 118 pages; and apparently, *An interesting narrative of the travels of James Bruce, Esq. into Abyssinia, to discover the source of the Nile. Abridged from the original work. By Samuel Shaw, Esq.*, a work of over 380 pages (Evans 22563, 22609

Hodge, Allen & Campbell, and Berry and Rogers, as well as a notice which reads:

T. and J. Swords, Printers, Respectfully inform their Friends and the Public, that, having established a PRINTING-OFFICE in this City, they intend prosecuting their Business in all its Branches, with Elegance and Propriety: They hope for a Share of the Public Countenance, and flatter themselves they will be able to give general Satisfaction.

All Favours will be thankfully received, and duly executed, at their Office, No. 44,¹⁸ Crown-Street; where HandBills, Cards, &c. with or without elegant Vinnet Borders, may be had at the shortest Notice, and on the most reasonable Terms.¹⁹

Over the next several years the output of the firm would increase as they formed several important relationships. “We are sure, from what we have seen, that Thomas and James Swords were not long in gaining political favor in New York for they were printers of the *New York Directory* from 1794 [sic 1791] onwards.”²⁰ They also had a strong following at Columbia University, printing an amazing number of *Inaugural Addresses and Dissertations* for the members” (Johnston, 17).

The longest and dearest relationship the Swords formed was with the Protestant Episcopal Church. “Thomas Swords was for thirty years an active member of the vestry of Trinity Church” in New York (Butler, 91). In 1791, the same year they began printing the *New York Directory*, the firm published their first work for the denomination, a sermon delivered in Trinity Church before the convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church. The next year among several titles they published a piece by David Hosack, M.D., who became professor of Botany at Columbia College in 1795, and two medical dissertations.²¹ In 1793, perhaps building upon the connections made producing these publications, the Swords began their long relationship with Columbia College, publishing an “amazing number” of dissertations and addresses, becoming in 1795 “Printers to the faculty of Physic” (i.e. Medicine), which name they retained through 1812, though they continued publishing for the college through 1827.²²

THE SWORDS’ NEW YORK MAGAZINE

While these relationships were important to the Swords’ growth and success as publishers, the work they did in 1790 no doubt founded a reputation for fine craftsmanship, as well as a literary reputation, which would be necessary to attract and continue important publishing projects. That year the firm printed two or three works for another client,²³ but failed to

interest enough subscribers in an offering of their own.²⁴ However, another work, which they must have begun planning in 1789,²⁵ proved to be at least a critical success, and probably is the work which put them on the map as serious printers of quality work and led to their swift rise to become, by the beginning of the next century, “eminent printers and booksellers at New-York.”²⁶

In January 1790, T. & J. Swords began publishing a monthly serial, *The New-York Magazine; or, Literary Repository*.²⁷ The magazine would continue through December 1797, and become the longest-running magazine in the country during the eighteenth century. Among the inaugural subscribers were George Washington, John Adams, John Jay, and John Pintard. The periodical was the first illustrated magazine published in New York City, and no doubt quickly earned them a good reputation and additional work.²⁸ And while one has speculated this publication and other serial endeavors could not have been financially significant to their business, the fact that the brothers would continue and attempt several serials over the years would at least indicate the work was worthwhile, and points to their sharing in the period’s thirst for self improvement.²⁹ Indeed one can see this in the published objectives for the new magazine wherein “the Swords brothers articulated an understanding of the purposes of a magazine that was shared” by the literati of the day.³⁰

The magazine was not undertaken, they averred, out of any ‘pecuniary motives,’ nor was the motive the ‘ambition of acquiring literary reputation,’ for, as they explained, ‘it will be our studied endeavor to remain unknown.’ ‘We plead,’ they wrote, ‘the cause of science.’ The pursuit of science, by which they meant the disciplined pursuit of general cultural interests, would, they reflected, give to their minds and to the minds of their readers ‘a certain refinement and delicacy of character.’ And they hoped to advance the cause of intellectual life in New York: ‘A well conducted magazine, we conceive must ... contribute greatly to diffuse knowledge throughout a community and to create in that community a taste for literature’ (Bender, 32–33).

The *New York Magazine* evidences at least the cultural and literary, if not “political,” connections the Swords were making, and how these were cooperating toward expanding the cultural and intellectual horizons of the new republic.

A NURSERY FOR THE SWORDS’ SUCCESS: LIBRARIES, BOOKSELLERS, AND LITERARY CLUBS

As already noted, the cultural and intellectual class of the

new nation was relatively small at this time. In New York in 1790, this would have included the politicians (most of the national government was then located in New York), the doctors, lawyers, ministers and other educated men of the city. However, again, while small, there was a great deal of activity and interest focused on improving the intellectual state of the city and nation. David Shields describes in detail the importance as well as the relationship between the booksellers, budding authors, and the libraries and literary societies that were formed at this time:

The complexity of the relationships between print, manuscript, and oral communication during the early Republic is fascinating. Consider how both the production and reception of print are tied to institutions of private society. Many newspapers and most

and 23228). The last may have been the Swords’ first work for Berry and Rogers. It lacks attribution to them as the printers, only reading “printed for Berry and Rogers...” But it would seem to have been their work nevertheless, as several years later the Swords list this title in a bookseller’s advertisement for their store appended at the end of their edition of *The Life of Benjamin Franklin* (1794, p. 216), under the heading, “The following Books Printed by T. and J. Swords, with a new type and on fine paper, may be had at their Printing-office, No 167 William-Street.” (Evans 27006).

24. The failed project is evidenced by a broadside for a work that was apparently never published: *New-York, July 5, 1790. Proposals for printing by subscription, in twelve volumes, sixteens, The children’s friend. Translated from the French of the celebrated Mr. Berquin* (Evans 22920). As broadsides are ephemera, it is possible there were other proposals which failed to garner a sufficient number of subscriptions to proceed.

25. It is certainly possible that the coming of the federal government to New York in 1789 spurred the Swords to venture out with these books, and particularly their magazine, to take advantage of the presence of most of the intellectual leaders of the day who had come to the city. It was anticipated that the government had a high probability of locating in the city, before a fight between New York and Philadelphia resulted in the carving out of the District of Columbia.

26. John Davis, *Travels of four years and a half in the United States of America: during 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802* (London, Sold by T. Ostell [etc.] and H. Caritat, New-York, for R. Edwards, printer, Bristol, 1803) 199.

27. Some have claimed that Noah Webster was the initial editor of *The New York Magazine*. This is likely a mistake; see Appendix D.

28. See Appendix E.

29. “In spite of the fact that none of their magazines—*The Christian Journal and Literary Register*, *The United States Christian Magazine*, *The New-York Magazine*, etc.—could possibly have brought them more than the most moderate income, the firm was highly successful, and from later mention of them it must be concluded that they prospered exceedingly.” Butler, 90. Some facts regarding the *United States Christian Magazine* are noted at the end of this article.

30. Bender connected this shared purpose specifically to Elihu Smith and the Friendly Club. He draws this connection by following the mistaken notion of earlier writers who have confused the Friendly Club with the Drone Club. See below and Appendix D.

magazines were edited and composed by “a society of gentlemen.” On the reception end, private corporations, styled “social libraries,” selected, collected, and maintained collections of books and periodicals. In Albany, Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Newport, and Charleston, library societies had formed before the Revolution. In the post-Revolutionary era these private corporations were supplemented by an array of “public” libraries in the 1790s maintained by municipalities. Around these institutions subsidiary constellations of reading circles and debating societies formed in ever increasing numbers from the 1790s through the 1830s. As Mary Kelley³¹ has shown, reading was often a profoundly social activity. The post-Revolutionary era also saw the coalescence of writers and readers in the society of the bookstore. In Philadelphia, for instance, Bell’s bookstore became the favorite haunt of printers, writers, and book purchasers.

Sometime during the 1790s, Asbury Dickens’s bookshop on Second Street eclipsed Bell’s as the center of Philadelphia’s literary firmament.³² Dickens’s shop became the haunt of poets John Blair Linn and Samuel Ewing, playwright Charles Jared Ingersoll, novelist Charles Brockden Brown, and the editor of the *Port Folio*, Joseph Dennie.³³

The Swords’ store in New York functioned in much the same way as the two Philadelphia stores. As one author recounted years later, the “store for a number of years was a rendezvous for professional men of different callings—divines, physicians, lawyers, with a sprinkling of the professed authors of those times...”³⁴ In fact, among the sprinkling of authors, the Swords shared at least one writer in common with Dickens—they would publish the first novel by Charles Brockden

Brown, who is styled America’s first professional novelist. A British traveler to New York, John Davis, who also supposedly met Brockden Brown, notes that he stopped in at the Swords’ store in 1801: “On coming to town, my first care was to discharge a bill I had incurred at *Swords*, [Eminent printers and booksellers at *New-York*] for magazines and reviews. Here I encountered the great Doctor Phlogiston, a gentleman of easy address, good habit of body, and a countenance that indicated the stoicism of a chymist.”³⁵ Another writes:

The old establishment of Messrs. Swords, at No. 160 Pearl Street, was for long time a sort of literary exchange, as the store of Ticknor, Reed & Fields in Boston is now. Bishops Seabury and Moore, Dr. Samuel Miller, Dr. Linn, Dr. Abeel, Dr. Bowden, Dr. Stanford (the estimable father of the head of the present house), John Pintard, and nearly all the cotemporary philosophers, artists and men of letters in town, were in the habit of meeting at “Swords’s,” which was one of the recognized, characteristic and most indispensable New York “institutions.”³⁶

Shields goes on to describe the importance of the literary club to this climate of self-improvement:

One peculiarity of the bookstore community was that it never fully served the imperatives to sociability that the literati felt. Perhaps the competitive ethos of the marketplace could not be escaped in a commercial setting. Whatever the case, these companies tended to formalize their intercourse into clubs that met elsewhere. The Dickens bookshop group formed the nucleus of Philadelphia’s Tuesday Club.³⁷ Brown and Linn, when they were in New York, participated in the Friendly Club. These aggregations of authors and booktrade people became fixtures of nineteenth-century cultural life, with Washington Irving’s Cheshire Cheese and Oliver Wendell Holmes’s Saturday Clubs being the most conspicuous of a dozen or so such assemblies. What service did they perform in the world of letters? They provided a nonconfrontational place to work out problems of aesthetics, politics, and commerce affecting those interested in the production of literature. In print, the rhetoric of crisis or boosterism suffused criticism. Among members of a literary fraternity, one could dispense with adversarial or partisan posturing and collaborate on common problems and concerns. The diary of Elihu Hubbard Smith, a member of the Friendly Club, records the activity of his literary fraternity. Manuscripts of plays, novels, poems, and essays circulated among the membership

31. The author is referring to Mary Kelley, *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford, 1984).

32. The author cites John Davis, *Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America during 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802* (New York, 1909; Rpt of 1803 edition) 204.

33. David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1997) 322–323.

34. John W. Francis, M.D., LL.D., “Reminiscences of Printers, Authors, and Booksellers in New-York,” *International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science and Art* 5.2 (1852) 262.

35. Davis, *Travels of four years and a half in the United States*, 199. See Appendix F.

36. “The Book Trade. Publishers and Publishing in New York,” *Norton’s Literary Gazette*, 165.

37. Shields here cites Lewis Leary, “John Blair Linn, 1777–1805,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 4 (1947) 162.

for evaluation. New books were read in common and subjected to analysis. Debates about issues of the day took place ... (Shields, 323–324).

Of particular interest Shields writes:

Somewhere between amateurism and professionalism was the peculiar self-consciousness projected in print by the circle of writers who formed the New York Calliopean Society during the 1780s. The group provided the impetus for the *New York Magazine*; or, *Literary Repository*, which published from 1792 to 1796 [sic 1790–1797]. In each issue they supplied contents for a column titled “The Drone.” The offerings were the cream of belles lettres prepared to be read during the weekly dinner meetings of the club (324).

THE CALLIOPEAN SOCIETY

The Calliopean Society, with the Friendly Club, were the two most important of the literary societies in New York at this time. T. & J. Swords had a direct link to the first. One finds that James Swords was a member of the Calliopean, founded in 1788, and this relationship apparently was useful as a muse for the *New York Magazine*. The MSS minutes record that James Swords was proposed for membership on Tuesday, May 31, 1791. He was very active for a few years but his name becomes less prominent in 1793 and its final mention would appear to be at the meeting of October 8, 1793.³⁸ James’ involvement evidences that the Swords were plugged into the self-improvement milieu of the day. Such connections may have played a more significant role in expanding their business, than so called “political connections.” James Swords membership and activity at this time did result in material which was run in the *New York Magazine*. Eleanor Bryce Scott describes this society in some detail:³⁹

According to available information, the Calliopean, a union of “the former Juventor Society” and “the former Calliopean Society,” holds the unique and enviable record of fairly continuous activity for at least forty-three years. The manuscript minutes of its meetings from its founding on November 20, 1788, to March 10, 1795, are preserved in the New York Historical Society Library; Columbia University has a copy of the Constitution and By-laws printed in New York in 1829, with lists of officers and new members from 1811 through 1829 and pencil corrections through 1831, including the names of officers elected in that year. William Irving, during the early period, was a leading spirit in

the organization, and his home was said to be the “genial resort” of this “knot of wits and humorists.” ... Peter Irving served as vice-president more than once—also as anniversary speaker and librarian. William Paulding, older brother of J. K. Paulding, was also prominent as censor, orator, vice-president, and president. Woodcarver, poet and essayist, the eccentric Richard B Davis was the first secretary of the society, donor of its bookplate, originator of the club signature, “The Drone.” He and Peter Irving also worked on the committee of publication. The Rev. Benjamin Moore was later president of Columbia College. David Hosack became widely known as an eminent physician, founder of the Elgin Botanical Garden, patron of literature and the other fine arts. Among later members might be mentioned Lindley Murray the grammarian, S. L. Mitchill, Jr., William Kent....

What is clear from examining these names is that T. & J. Swords published a number of items by members of the Society. Of those members mentioned by Eleanor Bryce Scott, the Swords published the previously mentioned sermon preached in Trinity Church where Benjamin Moore served, and the paper on drowning by Dr. David Hosack. They would subsequently publish several more items by Dr. Hosack, and of course many titles for the Protestant Episcopal Church, including five or six pieces by Moore. Among other members noted in the description of the manuscript, the Swords published *Inaugural Dissertations* for the degree of Doctor of Physic from Columbia College, for Peter Irving (1794),

38. This information is based upon copies of several pages of the MSS minutes of the “Proceedings of the Calliopean Society, Founded for the express purpose of improving Education.” Copies were provided by Ana Djordjevic, Manuscript Department, Library, New-York Historical Society, who gives the opinion in a cover letter that it appears James Swords became inactive after the October 8, 1793 meeting. Correspondence from Ana Djordjevic to Chris Coldwell, 2 March 2006. However, no doubt a thorough examination of the minutes is warranted to make a final determination as to the exact period of Swords’ involvement. The MSS minutes end with entries for March 1795. A “Mr. Miller” is noted as present at the October 8, 1793 meeting, but more work with the MSS beyond the few pages sent the author is needed to determine if this is “Samuel” Miller or some other. The MSS collection of the society is described as containing: “Minutes of meetings from its founding in November, 1788 to March, 1795. Included are: titles of the society’s debates; decisions; names of books purchased; administrative matters; names of members, et al. The Society was founded ‘for the express purpose of improving education.’” Arthur J. Breton, *A Guide to the Manuscript Collections of The New-York Historical Society*, “1222. CALLIOPEAN SOCIETY, New York City” (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972) 1.204.

39. Eleanor Bryce Scott, “Early Literary Clubs in New York City,” *American Literature* 5 (March, 1933) 12–13.

Charles Buxton (1793), Jotham Poſt (1793), and Joseph Youle (1793). As for Mitchill and Kent, they will be noticed in their connection to the Friendly Club.

Scott continued describing the Society, and the Drone Club, a subset of writers within the group which contributed material to the Swords' *New York Magazine* ("Early Literary Clubs," 13–15):

The Calliopean, something of a secret society, by the way, was a very businesslike organization, with initiation fee, annual dues, system of fines; a seal, club stationery, ballot box with white balls and black; and more important than these, a library for which each member was taxed a shilling a quarter and which by February, 1793, contained two hundred and twelve volumes. Originally, meetings were held weekly throughout the year at six o'clock on Tuesday evenings; later the club indulged in a summer recess. Membership, according to the printed constitution, was limited to sixty.

Founded "for the express purpose of improving education," the Society devoted its programs to original compositions, recitations, orations, and the "disputing" of some scientific or literary question. Controversial subjects in theology and politics were strictly barred....

Reference has already been made to the club signature adopted on March 13, 1792, "The Drone." The manuscript record books seem to me to clear up the matter of the so-called "Drone club," which, accordingly, was not a separate organization, as is usually stated, or a society founded by former members of the Friendly

Club,...⁴⁰ but merely a group within the Calliopean Society who contributed for several years to *The New York Magazine*. In July, 1792, the publication committee presented resolutions as follows: that all compositions selected bear a general signature to distinguish them as the work of the Society; that each member adopt a particular mark—a letter or typographical character—to distinguish his own work; that the committee be empowered to look through the books of the recorder and librarian and choose suitable material.

The work of this little writing club appeared in *The New York Magazine* from 1792 through 1796, volumes three through seven, twenty-nine papers in all.... Particularly pleased one evening with the talk on fashionable amusements, Mr. Martlett [R. B. Davis] had proposed that their observations be collected and published. The outcome was the first paper in the Drone series, an essay on the moderate use of amusements, signed "Z." A secretary, chosen at each meeting, took notes and later wrote them up in his own manner. Though some members worked independently, most of the contributions grew thus out of club discussions.

So it appears the Calliopean Society may have played some part in the growing number of titles published by T. & J. Swords, and perhaps connections made within the society laid the foundation for their later success. Of course it is difficult to say which relationships were primary. Benjamin Moore was the assistant pastor of Trinity Church from 1775 until 1800, when he became rector, and as already noted Thomas Swords was for many years connected to that church. Indeed, the small cultured class of the city could not help but cross paths in many different connections.

THE SMALL WORLD OF THE NEW YORK INTELLIGENTSIA

For instance, one important point of intersection was the New York Society Library. Formed in the mid eighteenth century, but decimated by the end of the Revolutionary War, the library reopened in 1789 in Old City Hall. That year *The Charter, Bye-laws, and Names of the Members of the New-York Society Library* was published to re-establish the charter and rights of the library which had been granted previously by the King of England.⁴¹ Among the prominent members listed are Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, and of significance to this study, William Linn, Robert R. Livingston, Benjamin Moore, and John Pintard. In 1793 the charter was reissued, with an updated membership roll, by T. & J. Swords.⁴² Among the membership that year we find John Pintard (recording secre-

40. Although Eleanor Bryce Scott's article appeared in 1933, confusion between the Friendly and Drone clubs has continued. Most of the mistake may be traceable to the comments of Dr. Francis ("Reminiscences of Printers," 262; and *Old New York, or, Reminiscences of the Past Sixty Years* [New York: W. J. Widdleton, 1866] 69). It is repeated in Martha J. Lamb, *History of the City of New York: Its Origin, Rise and Progress* (New York and Chicago: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1877–1880) 2.519; Adolf Growoll, *American Book Clubs: Their Beginnings and History, and a Bibliography of Their Publications* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1897) 14–15; Oral Sumner Coad, *William Dunlap: A Study of his Life and Works and of his Place in Contemporary Culture* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962) 19n; and more recently in 1987 by Thomas Bender, *New York Intellect*, 32.

41. *The Charter, Bye-laws, and Names of the Members of the New-York Society Library. With a catalogue of the books belonging to the said library* (New-York: Printed by Hugh Gaine, at his book-store and printing-office, at the Bible, in Hanover-Square, [1789]). Evans 22018.

42. *The Charter, Bye-laws, and Names of the Members of the New-York Society Library, with a catalogue of the books belonging to the said library* (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1793). Evans 25915.

tary), Samuel Miller (corresponding secretary),⁴³ the Right Reverend B. Moore (first vice president), as well as: Dr. Samuel L. Mitchell, William Johnson, Dr. David Hosack, Anthony Bleecker and William Woolsey (the latter two having been members in 1789 as well). Other members included John M. Mason, William Linn, John Henry Livingston, William Dunlap, and Thomas Swords.

Some of the same individuals came together to form the New-York Historical Society (NYHS) in 1804 under the prompting of John Pintard, with help from others such as Samuel Miller. In fact one sees over and over again the same names associated coming together to form new societies and endeavors to improve the city. As one writer noted recently regarding the NYHS,⁴⁴

The founders of the society were that small but remarkably energetic band of cultured New Yorkers who also created or promoted New York Hospital, the Free School Society, the New York Society Library, the American Academy of Fine Arts, and the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, and who promoted the Erie Canal.

The same names pop up over and over again in connection with these things—Pintard, Mitchell, DeWitt Clinton, Dr. David Hosack. For these men, the American Academy of Fine Arts and the Erie Canal were of a piece. Each in its way furthered New York, speaking to different though equally important components of what makes a city great.

THE FRIENDLY CLUB

As noted, Dr. Samuel Latham Mitchell was one of the small number of influential “cultured New Yorkers” of the period. He was associated with one of the most important literary groups of the 1790s, the New York Friendly Club, “about which an astonishing amount has been written, most of it false...” (Cronin, *Diary*, 15). According to one writer, this club contained “perhaps the most brilliant of all the organizations of earnest and enlightened young men” in the country at the time.⁴⁵

The group began about the time of the arrival in the city of Dr. Elihu Hubbard Smith, who would be the most dedicated member of the club,⁴⁶ and who described the group in 1798 as follows (Cronin, “Elihu Hubbard Smith,” 471):

There exists in this city, a small association of men, who are connected by mutual esteem, & habits of unrestricted communication. They are of different professions and occupations; of various religious or moral opinions; & tho’ they coincide in the great outlines of

political faith, they estimate very variously many of the political transactions of the men who have, from time to time directed the councils of the nation. This diversity of sentiment, however, as it has never affected their friendship, has made them more active in investigation; & tho’ they may have formed different judgments concerning the facts, has led them to a general concurrence in the facts themselves.

Judging from Smith’s diary, the group formed sometime between September 1793 and September 1794 (Cronin, 473). The membership varied from its founding but around 1795 came to consist of Smith, lawyer William Johnson, businessmen William and George Woolsey, lawyer James Kent, professor of law at Columbia College, who would become Chancellor of New York and the “first American judge to achieve international reputation” (Cronin, 474), and dramatist and artist William Dunlap. It was a close knit group as Cronin describes:⁴⁷

This was a tight little group. William Woolsey, who was twenty-seven in 1793, was at the beginning of a successful career. He became president of a fire insurance company, a bank, a railroad, and a Bible society, as well as the father of Theodore Dwight Woolsey, president of Yale (1844–1871). George Muirson [Woolsey] also became prosperous but not quite so spectacularly. Dunlap, who was twenty-seven, had during the previous year inherited from his father a looking-glass and china store which served to keep him financially sound, although he was far more interested in portrait painting and playwriting. He was to become a kind of one-man American dramatic movement. Dunlap was married to Elizabeth, sister of the Woolseys. Timothy Dwight was married to Elizabeth’s half-sister. And William Woolsey was married to Timothy Dwight’s sister. It seems probable that their acquaintance with Smith began during the year which

43. Miller had arrived in the city to receive the call from the United Presbyterian congregations only in January 1793.

44. Francis Morrone, “New York’s Mother Museum,” *The New York Sun*, November 1, 2005. Online version: <http://www.nysun.com/article/22342>.

45. Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) 233–234.

46. Catherine Kaplan writes, “Between 1795 and 1798, the years he kept his diary, Smith was perhaps the most dedicated member of the Friendly Club....” Catherine Kaplan, “Document: Elihu Hubbard Smith’s ‘The Institutions of the Republic of Utopia,’” *Early American Literature* 35.3 (2000) 304.

47. James E. Cronin, ed., *The Diary of Elihu Hubbard Smith* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1973) 12.

he spent at Greenfield Hill.⁴⁸ Thomas Mumford married Mary Smith on January 29, 1795.

The club was not formally organized as was the Calliopean, and it “was more a coterie than a society” (Bender, 28). While it had regular meetings, several of the band of friends would meet often together, almost daily, two or three, socially for discussion as well as for business (31). And while it had ‘regular’ members,⁴⁹ whose duties mainly were alternately playing

48. Smith was the youngest graduate from Yale at age 15 and nine days, where he seems to have met and become good friends with William Johnson, his future roommate in New York and others, including James Kent. Too young to do anything professional at his age, Smith was sent by his father in 1787 to Timothy Dwight’s Academy at Greenfield Hill, where his other connections were formed. Cronin notes: “Somewhere in these early years Elihu learned English grammar and the skills for sophisticated composition; it is more likely that these came to him at Greenfield Hill rather than at Yale. More important was the influence that Dr. Dwight exercised on his mind, a point to which Smith repeatedly testifies in his ‘Diary.’ Certainly from about this time Smith shared with Dwight the conviction that it was the duty of an intelligent man to interest himself in everything concerned with the betterment of the human race. He also began to emulate Dr. Dwight the poet” (Cronin, *Diary*, 4). Just prior to moving to New York, Smith had published the first collection of American poetry, which included contributions by Dunlap and Dwight. [Elihu Hubbard Smith,] *American Poems, Selected and Original* (Litchfield, Conn.: Printed by Collier and Buel, 1793). Volume 1 of only 1 published. The preface is dated June 1793. Evans 25104.

49. There is significant variation in the recounting of the membership of the club: and the informal nature of the club and the termination of Smith’s diary make it difficult to be sure who may have been official members after the period he covered. Dunlap gives two different lists in two different works, and James Kent’s account written in his old age is full of inaccuracies (Cronin, *Diary*, 15).

50. Dr. Edward Miller’s membership is attested to by the fact that he ‘hosted’ the meeting for May 5, 1798. At the same meeting Samuel Miller and Dr. Mitchill are noted as guests (Cronin, *Diary*, 443). Smith does not record Samuel Miller often as a guest, and it is likely this is at least due to the fact that the group meet on Saturday nights, when a preacher should have other things to do and on his mind than the kinds of discussions of interest to the club.

51. See *The Medical Works of Edward Miller, late professor of the practice of physic in the University of New-York, and resident physician of the city of New-York collected, and accompanied with a biographical sketch of the author, by Samuel Miller* (New York: Collins and Co., 1814) xxix. Cited in Samuel Miller (1816–1883), *Life of Samuel Miller, D.D. LL.D.* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen, and Haffelfinger, 1869) 1.111.

52. Italics in the original. It may be that Samuel Miller did not attend enough meetings to recall that they took place on Saturday, the day always noted in Smith’s Diary; or perhaps after Smith’s death the meetings were moved to Tuesday nights. As noted previously, Saturday night would not have been a good meeting night for a minister. This account by Miller was written less than ten years after the club’s demise, and it is hard to imagine it being a slip of memory. Interestingly enough, the meetings of the Calliopean Society took place on Tuesdays; which may perhaps be yet another reason for the confusion over the membership of the Friendly and Drone Clubs.

host to the meetings of the club, it also had frequent and even regular guests. Bender notes that four “others were associated with the group, but they apparently were not ‘members’ of the club: Samuel Lathrop [sic] Mitchill, Anthony Bleecker, John Wells, and Samuel Miller” (29). Others included novelist Charles Brockden Brown, who was considered a member when he visited New York, and Samuel Miller’s physician brother Edward, who joined the coterie when arriving in New York in 1796, and would become a member in 1798 shortly before Smith’s death.⁵⁰ As to the importance of the distinction between membership and guest status, it is interesting that Samuel Miller, in mentioning the Friendly Club, notes those who associated with each other at the time, rather than giving a tally of the membership of the club itself.⁵¹

Soon after his establishment in *New York*, Doctor *Edward* Miller became a member of a literary association, which had been for some time known to those who participated in its pleasures and advantages, by the unostentatious name of “the Friendly Club.” The meetings were held in rotation at the respective houses of the members, on Tuesday evening of each week....⁵²

The associates of Dr. [Edward] *Miller* at this invaluable period, the first years of the club, were *William Dunlap*, then manager of the New York theatre; *James Kent*, the recorder of the city, and now chief justice of the State of New York; *Anthony Bleecker*, attorney and counselor at law and master in chancery; *Charles Brockden Brown*, the author of *Wieland*; *William Walton Woolsey*; Doctor *Elihu Hubbard Smith*; *George Muirson Woolsey*; Doctor *Samuel Latham Mitchill*; *John Wells*, attorney and counselor at law; *William Johnson*, attorney and counselor at law, and reporter to the supreme court of the State of New York; and the reverend *Samuel Miller, D.D.*

This band of friendly associates probably met up fairly quickly in 1793. Samuel Miller visited New York for a month in June of 1792 while entertaining a call to the United Presbyterian Churches there, and upon accepting the call, moved to New York in January of 1793. James Kent arrived in New York about the same time, and “became an attendant upon the ministry of the Collegiate Presbyterian pastors...” (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 1.89). As already noted, Elihu Smith arrived in the city in September of that year, and already knew Dunlap via his connection to Timothy Dwight and the Woolseys. On November 13, 1793, Smith, George Muirson Woolsey and Samuel Miller were all proposed for membership at the quarterly meeting of the Manumission Society (Cronin, *Diary*,

13). Woolsey's brother William, William Johnson and William Dunlap were already members (Coad, 23–24).⁵³ James Kent was presented for membership in May, 1794, the same meeting Noah Webster was admitted. The chief work of the society was the support of the African School, of which Dr. Smith became a trustee in May of 1794 (Dunlap had become a trustee in 1793). Dr. Mitchill may also have been a member of the Manumission Society as he accompanied Dr. Smith to the "monthly Examination of the African School" on at least one occasion (Cronin, *Diary*, 289).

Regarding Miller and Smith Cronin writes: "Miller, two years older than Smith, was a Presbyterian minister.... Despite his profession he became a frequent visitor of Smith with whom he enjoyed long arguments. He was a brother of Smith's associate Dr. Edward Miller who came to New York in 1796" (Cronin, *Diary*, 13 n. 49). Smith met Dr. Mitchill almost immediately upon coming to New York, as he was part of the board that examined him to practice medicine in the city. Mitchill was a native of New York and had returned to the city after graduating from medical studies in Edinburgh in 1786. While Dr. Smith passed the exam, and took over a practice, he let it dwindle away, in favor of following his literary pursuits and his own self improvement (Cronin, *Diary*, 13).

Now, it is fairly certain the Swords had no direct connection with the Friendly Club; neither Sword was a member or a guest on any occasion. But they had connections with many of the members, the earliest with Dunlap and Mitchell.

WILLIAM DUNLAP AND SAMUEL L. MITCHILL

William Dunlap, who was a painter, did an illustration for a work the Swords published in 1793, executed by the engraver Cornelius Tiebout.⁵⁴ From November 1794 through April 1796, there also appeared in the Swords' magazine eleven theatrical reviews under the title "The Theatrical Register." These have been credibly attributed to Dunlap by Mary Rives Bowman, who notes as well that the "editors of the *New-York Magazine* evidently valued his work, for of the eleven numbers of the 'Register' which appeared, seven occupied the lead-off position in the publication, and three more had the second place."⁵⁵ Dunlap made many contributions to periodicals of the day, including four signed pieces for the Swords' which appeared from December 1795 through November 1797 (Coad, 296–297).⁵⁶ The Swords would later publish three works by Dunlap, and were booksellers for three others.⁵⁷

Samuel Latham Mitchill "was a doctor, editor, United States senator and representative, studied under Dr. Samuel Bard, and completed his training in Edinburgh. On his return he studied law and entered politics" (Cronin, *Diary*, 13 n42). He "was still in his twenties when he became professor, in Columbia College, of botany, natural history, chemis-

try and agriculture, but he easily devoted himself to zoology, geology, and anthropology in addition ... his work on the fishes of New York, entitles him to be considered the father of American ichthyology."⁵⁸ In 1794, the Swords published two works by Dr. Mitchill as "printers to the faculty of physic of Columbia College," and subsequently several more works from 1795 to 1802.⁵⁹

THE MEDICAL REPOSITORY

Perhaps the most important production of the period to come forth from the members of the Friendly Club and from T. & J. Swords was the publication of the *Medical Repository*. Robinson writes:

In the days when New York was a cross between a Dutch-English trading village and a rising American metropolis ... three doctors strolled along the leafy lanes of Broadway, discussing a daring project. They were young, unmarried, and idealistic, and they talked about starting the first medical journal in America.

They felt the time was ripe for such a periodical, for terrifying and highly destructive epidemics,

53. Coad notes that there is some notice of this in the Sword's *New York Magazine* for 1793. "A board of trustees was chosen from the society, whose duty it was to inspect the school every month, and recommend such measures as seemed necessary." *New York Magazine*; or, *Literary Repository* 4 (1793) 258.

54. *The Dramatist, a Comedy, in Five Acts. Written by Reynolds, Esq. Author of Werter, etc. As performed at the theatre, New-York, by the Old American Company* (New-York: Printed by T. and J. Swords, no. 27, William-Street, for John Reid, bookseller, no. 17, Water-Street, 1793). Evans 26070.

55. Mary Rives Bowman, "Dunlap and the 'Theatrical Register' of the *New-York Magazine*," *Studies in Philology* 24 (1927) 413.

56. The specific issues of the *New York Magazine* were those of December 1795, January 1796, October 1797, and November 1797. The first two items are translations of German poetry. Coad, 296–297.

57. See Appendix G.

58. Victor Robinson, M.D., *The Story of Medicine* (New York: The New York Home Library, 1943; First edition, 1931) 459.

59. *The Present State of Learning in the College of New-York* (1794). Evans 27331. *Nomenclature of the New Chemistry* (1794). Evans 27330. *Remarks on the Gaseous Oxyd of Azote or of Nitrogene, and on the effects it produces when generated in the stomach, inhaled into the lungs, and applied to the skin: being an attempt to ascertain the true nature of contagion, and to explain thereupon the phenomena of fever. By Samuel Latham Mitchell, M.D. F.R.S.E. Professor of chemistry, natural history and agriculture in the College of New-York* (1795). Evans 29089. *The Present State of Medical Learning in the City of New-York* (1797). Evans 32488. *Explanation of the Synopsis of Chemical Nomenclature and Arrangement: containing several important alterations of the plan originally reported by the French academicians* (1801). Shaw & Shoemaker 940. *Hints Towards Promoting the Health and Cleanliness of the City of New York* (1802). Shaw & Shoemaker 2403.

especially of yellow fever, aroused the apprehensions of the public and quickened the zeal of the physicians.... Their circular address—with its curious blending of old-fashioned farm-medicine and the modern experimental method—was dated November 15, 1796, and signed by Samuel L. Mitchill, Columbia College; Edward Miller, 158 Broadway; and E. H. Smith, 45 Pine Street.

Delays, inevitable and excusable in a pioneer publishing venture, occurred and recurred, but on July 26, 1797, American medical journalism was born; on that day, there came from the press of T. & J. Swords, the first issue of the first American medical journal—the *Medical Repository* (455–456).

A more scholarly account written for the 200th anniversary of the birth of the *Repository* appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The blockade by the British during the war for American independence “created shortages of European medical periodicals and books as well as of drugs and medicines.”⁶⁰ This no doubt brought home the need to be less dependent on Europe for these things. Indeed, before “the appearance of the *Medical Repository* there was no medical journal in the United States. As a specialized form of publication, the medical journal brought ‘a new element of timeliness to the dissemination of medical information,’ writes historian James Cassedy,⁶¹ ‘one that invigorated and greatly accelerated the processes of medical change ... [and] became a locus of medical influence and authority as well as a measure of medical professionalism.’”

There were many reasons to begin an American medical journal. Chief among them were the desire for cul-

tural independence and the medical and economic impact of major epidemics in the coastal cities. Even before the British colonies in America became independent, there were those who encouraged the writing and publication of the “American medical experience.” In 1769 Peter Middleton, Professor of the Theory and Practice of Physic at the new Medical School at King’s College, in New York, wrote: “The physicians of this country have still more forcible reasons, for imparting to the World, such Medical Remarks as may seem instructive or uncommon: For our Climate, Way of Living, and other Circumstances, which ought always to be regarded in the Treatment of Diseases, are so very different from those of the Countries....”⁶² In 1791 Benjamin Waterhouse delivered a discourse entitled “The Rise, Progress, and Present State of Medicine” to the Middlesex Medical Association of Boston, stating that “A country so completely independent in other respects as the United States, however ready to receive information in the higher grades of science ... should blush to be indebted to foreign seminaries for the first principles of professional instruction.”⁶³

In New York on October 31, 1795, Noah Webster, a layman, published a circular that included the following appeal: “To the Physicians of Philadelphia, New-York, Baltimore, Norfolk and Newhaven.... As malignant fever has, for three summers past, raged in different parts of the United States, and proved fatal to great numbers of our fellow-citizens, and extremely prejudicial to the Commerce of the Country.... To decide on the origin and nature of the Yellow Fever, we want the evidence of facts [about] epidemics in the United States....”⁶⁴

The papers Webster sought in that circular were edited and published by him in 1796 as *A Collection of Papers on the Subject of Bilious Fevers, prevalent in the United States for a few years past*. [Webster, *ibid.*] Webster did not receive as many communications as he had hoped. Asked in July 1796 to advertise for more papers for another edition, he wrote: “... I have neither inclination nor leisure to devote much time to this object: nor am I convinced that the object itself will reward a continuance of my labors....” [Webster, *ibid.*]

Webster’s decision to abandon this project proved crucial to the creation of the *Medical Repository*. Six weeks later, on August 11, 1796, a young New York City physician named Elihu Hubbard Smith wrote in his diary: “... I think, as Mr. Webster has relinquished his plan of

60. Richard J. Kahn, Patricia G. Kahn, “The *Medical Repository*—The First U.S. Medical Journal (1797–1824),” *The New England Journal of Medicine* 337:26 (December 25, 1997) 1926–1930.

61. The authors cite J. H. Cassedy, *American medicine and statistical thinking, 1800–1860* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984) 1–24.

62. The authors cite P. Middleton, *A Medical Discourse or an Historical Inquiry into the Ancient and Present State of Medicine: the Substance of which was Delivered at Opening the Medical School in the City of New York* (New York: Hugh Gaine, 1769) 68.

63. The authors cite B. Waterhouse, *The Rise, Progress, and Present State of Medicine: a Discourse* (Boston, Mass.: Thomas and John Fleet, 1792) 28.

64. The authors cite N. Webster, *A Collection of Papers on the Subject of Bilious Fevers, Prevalent in the United States for a Few Years Past* (New York: Hopkins, Webb, 1796).

continuing his collection, of taking it up myself ... & publishing an annual volume; the principal object of which will be the preserving & collecting of the materials for a History of the Diseases of America, as they appear in the several seasons...." [Cronin, *Diary*, 201] The *Medical Repository* was conceived.

Given all the connections the various associates of the Friendly Club had with the Swords, as well as their reputation as publishers of the *New York Magazine*, and of medical titles, it is not surprising that when Drs. Miller, Mitchill and Smith agreed to undertake creating the first medical journal for the United States, they took the prospectus to T. & J. Swords.⁶⁵ Smith writes in his *Diary* in a memorandum dated November 14, 1796 (Cronin, *Diary*, 246):

Finished my Prospectus of a Medical Repository. Several errands took up much time after dinner. Called on Dr. Mitchill. We went to Dr. Miller's. Read, & agreed on the Prospectus; & to have 300 copies printed to distribute privately; & then to have the Address published in all the News Papers. Went to T. and J. Swords—& bargained for the impression."

However, as previously noted, the first issue of the *Repository* did not come off the press until July 26, 1797. In the meantime, Dr. Smith was not idle. In January 1797, he arranged for the Swords to publish an opera he had written: "Called at Swords—respecting the printing of my opera" (Cronin, *Diary*, 286), which was issued forth on March 1797 (298, 305).⁶⁶ About the same time, the Swords printed Samuel Miller's address to the Manumission Society for April 1797, which was his fourth published work, but the first by the Swords. "Samuel Miller was the Orator. His Discourse was handsome, but the auditory was small" (309). Smith would give the annual address the next year.⁶⁷

After working some months on the text of the first volume of the *Repository*, Smith notes on Monday June 19, 1797, the same month he records having read Miller's Manumission discourse published by the Swords (Cronin, *Diary of Elihu Hubbard Smith*, 326):

Visit to Mitchill & [Edward] Miller—who has just returned. Long conversation. Medical, chemical & agricultural; & on our Repository. At the Hospital as usual. Dined at Dunlap's.... Went to Sword's [sic] & bargained about the printing of our Medical Repository.

In a letter to Philadelphia Bookseller Joseph Dennie, Junior, Smith adds the following postscript (Cronin, *Diary*, 327):

The materials for the First No. of The Medical Repository are nearly ready for the Press. We expect to put them into the printer's hands the first of July. I believe I sent you our Proposals. If I did not, I will just inform you that each No. will contain about 100 8vo. Pages—and will be sold for 50 cents. If you can procure subscribers, with you, the Nos. shall be regularly forwarded."

One interesting day, Wednesday, July 19, 1797, Smith records the following (333–334):

Medical visits & calls. Learnt that Mitchill was in town. Went to Mrs. Miller's, to the College, & to Mrs. M's again, in vain search after him. Visited Dr. Miller, who is unwell. A long visit from Dr. Wheaton. Pursued the reading of Moseley' [sic] book. Went to the Printer's, & busy there, some time, in correcting the press &c. Found Mitchill here, when I returned.... Dr. Mitchill & I went in search of an Austrian Professor who is now here. We did not find him. We drank tea

65. Samuel L. Mitchill, Edward Miller and Elihu Hubbard Smith. *Address, &c. After a Continued Struggle of Many Centuries against the Absurd Systems of Ancient Physicians ...* (New York: s.n., 1796). Signed on page 8 and dated November 15, 1796. Shipton & Mooney 47834; Early American Medical Imprints, 1317 (R. B. Aušlin, *Early American Medical Imprints: a Guide to Works Printed in the United States, 1668–1820* [Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Health Service, 1961]). Smith corrected the proposal the next March: "Thursday, 9.—Corrected my proposals for 'The Medical Repository,' & with Dr. Miller's approbation, gave them to our printer" (Cronin, *Diary*, 298).

66. *Edwin and Angelina; or The Banditti. An Opera, in three acts* (1797). Evans 32843. Tuesday, January 31, 1797. "Called at Swords—respecting the printing of my opera" (Cronin, *Diary*, 286).

67. Samuel Miller, A.M., *A Discourse, delivered April 12, 1797, at the Request of and before the New-York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves, and Protecting Such of Them as Have Been or May Be Liberated* (1797). Evans 32477. E. H. Smith, *A Discourse, delivered April 11, 1798, at the Request of and before the New-York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves, and Protecting Such of Them as Have Been or May Be Liberated* (1798). Evans 34554. Elihu Smith read Miller's discourse on June 10, 1797 (Cronin, *Diary*, 322). Dr. Smith's address was given in the collegiate Presbyterian Church on Wall Street. "Dr. Miller called on me. Sometime after I called on him, & his brother the clergyman, & we went to the Presbyterian Church in Wall St. where, notwithstanding the violent storm of wind & rain, more than 300 gentlemen, and some ladies were assembled—to whom I delivered my Oration" (436). [May] "Wednesday, 16.—At our printer's, into whose hands I put the copy of my 'Manumission Oration'" (445). The oration must have been in print by late May. "[May] 29th Rain continues. Read Smith's discourse before the Manumission Society deliver'd while I was at Phil (*Diary of William Dunlap 1766–1839. The Memoirs of a Dramatist, Theatrical Manager, Painter, Critic, Novelist, and Historian* [New York: Benjamin Blom, 1960. Repr. of 1939 edition] 263).

at Mrs. Miller's. Parson Miller was there.⁶⁸ Conversation of morals, &c. Mr. Miller & I walked on the Battery. Conversation continued. System of Godwin, of the french [sic] philosophers &c. Medical visit.

ELIHU HUBBARD SMITH AND
CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

In addition to the *Medical Repository*, Dr. Smith continued his publishing endeavors as editor of works by his friend Charles Brockden Brown. With the work on his opera and the ongoing work of the *Repository*, Smith became a regular visitor to T. & J. Swords. The firm is often styled in his Diary as "our printers." Not surprisingly, when Smith determined to have the first work by Brown published, he chose the Swords. In a letter to Richard Alsop dated December 18, 1797, he writes, "I am about publishing, by subscription, a performance of our friend Charles B. Brown." Nine days earlier he had recorded: "I opened my subscription for 'Alcuin' to-day."⁶⁹ While he does not say that this was via the Swords, he mentions visiting his printer on the fourth of December, and was "occupied in business of the Repository" on the eighth, which may have involved visiting the Swords; and on twelfth he "prepared some copy for our printers" (Cronin, *Diary*, 399–401, 406).

68. Mrs. Miller, with whom Smith often had tea, is not Mrs. Samuel Miller as Cronin identifies her in the index to the diary. She may have been the wife of some relation of the Millers, or the widow of the doctor, who took ill, and possibly passed away, whose practice Dr. Smith took over shortly upon coming to New York (Cronin, *Diary*, 13 and n44). The dwelling is apparently always referred to by Smith as "Mrs. Miller's." Comparing various diary entries makes it clear that Parson Miller is Samuel Miller. The bachelor Miller brothers were living together in New York from Edward's arrival in 1796 to some time shortly after Samuel brought his new bride to New York in 1801 (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 1.167).

69. Charles Brockden Brown, *Alcuin; a Dialogue* (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1798). Evans 34553.

70. Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland; or The Transformation. An American Tale* (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1798). Evans 33461.

71. See Appendix H.

72. See Appendix I.

73. "This was, for the greater portion of the time it existed, truly a 'friendly club'; but after a continuation of most perfect and cordial communion for a few years, the demon, whose infuriated and blasting influence is unceasingly exerted to mar the blessings of our envied country, party politics, found his way among the 'friendly club,' and the institution died a lingering death." *Life of Samuel Miller*, 1.111. Some write that the club ended with Smith's death. "Its leading spirit was the physician and aspiring author Elihu Hubbard Smith, whose early death in 1798 ended the club" (May, 233). But as Miller indicates, the club continued beyond 1798, and their work with Brown's *Monthly Magazine* seems to indicate the same. It may have lasted until 1802 when the magazine ended, but probably no later than 1805 when Dunlap left New York.

On March 12, 1798, he writes: "Corrected the first proof of 'Alcuin.' Visit to Dr. Miller. Went with Dunlap to our printer's, on business..." The two following days, in addition to more work proofing *Alcuin*, he worked on the *Repository*, correcting some proofs, and also corrected proofs for another work he was seeing through the Swords' press, an edition of Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden* (430). Later in July of 1798 Smith notes the Swords' work on Brown's second published work, for which he was the editor: "Arranged the foreign news for the Repository, & was at our printer's. The Swords' commenced the printing of Charles's 'Wieland,' this day."⁷⁰ Isaac Riley is either agent for the purchaser, Caritat,⁷¹ or in part purchaser as well as Agent" (457). In the second to the last entry in his Diary, two days before taking ill with the Yellow Fever, Smith notes: "Brown's 'Wieland' was published to-day" (464).

When Smith died shortly after the publication of *Wieland*, the associates of the Friendly Club were hit hard by the loss. They first determined that they needed to find continued employment for Brown's talents, and the *Monthly Magazine and American Review* was founded (1799–1800), with Brown as contributor and editor. Within a couple of years, this publication was renamed and continued two more years after as *The American Review, and Literary Journal* (1801–1802). The publishers were by T. & J. Swords. However, by 1802 Brown had returned to Philadelphia, and the publication ceased.⁷²

With the passing of Elihu Smith, the Friendly Club lost the main glue which held them together. Samuel Miller notes that it was "party politics" which eventually drove the group to a lingering death.⁷³ Also, most of the members began their association unmarried, and the dynamics probably began to change as each left the single life—Mitchill in 1799, Samuel Miller in 1801, and Brown in 1803. Dunlap, who had married about 1795, moved away from New York in 1805 when his theatre business folded.

NEW YORK CLERICAL ASSOCIATION
AND OTHER SOCIETIES

As indicated previously the period's rather small community of New York literati included practically all the prominent ministers of the city, and many of them took part in some of the societies and clubs already noted. A list of these men includes Samuel Miller and Philip Milledoler of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA); John N. Abeel; John Henry Livingston and William Linn of the Dutch Reformed; John Mitchell Mason of the Associate Presbyterians; and Alexander McLeod of the Reformed Presbyterians. These men would have met often during this period as they took part in joint educational and religious endeavors.

In particular, the Presbyterian ministers of the several denominations in the city would meet regularly together. In a

letter written to Dr. Sprague (for inclusion in his biography of Dr. McLeod), Dr. Miller remarked:

My acquaintance with Dr. McLeod commenced in the year 1801, soon after he had accepted a pastoral charge in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the city of New York, where I then resided.... At the period of which I speak, there was a Clerical Association in the city of New York, which was in the habit of meeting on Monday morning of each week. This Association comprehended most of the ministers of the different Presbyterian denominations in the city. The exercises consisted of prayer, conversation, both general and prescribed, and reading compositions on important subjects. In this delightful Association I was so happy as to enjoy, for ten or twelve years, the privilege of meeting with Dr. McLeod weekly, and seeing him in company and conversation with the Pastors venerable for their age and standing, in that day ... (Sprague, "Reformed Presbyterian," *Annals*, 9.24).

SCHOOLS / TRUSTEES OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE

Another point of connection was Columbia College, as many of the ministers of the period served as trustees. These included Dr. Mason (1795–1821); Dr. Miller (1806–1813); John Henry Livingston (1787–1810); and John N. Abeel (1799–1812). There were other more personal educational projects. In 1805, McLeod, with Drs. Miller and Mason and Abeel, took "part in establishing a select grammar school, of a superior kind, in New York," in which two of the men would visit the school monthly to monitor the progress of the students (*Life of Miller*, 1.199).

NEW YORK MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Other ecumenical endeavors included the New York Missionary Society, in which Samuel Miller took a great interest and part in founding in 1796. This society "embraced several Calvinistic denominations.... Among its officers, the Presbyterian Church was represented by Dr. John Rodgers, Dr. John McKnight, and Mr. Miller; the Reformed Dutch, by Dr. John H. Livingston, Dr. William Linn, and Rev. Messrs. John N. Abeel and Gerardus A. Kuypers; the Associate Reformed, by Dr. John M. Mason; and the Baptist, by Dr. Benjamin Foster" (*Life of Samuel Miller*, 1.104–105).

THE OCCASIONAL PRESBYTERIAN PUBLICATION

It is interesting to note that from about the same period the

Swords' business began to grow in earnest, that they also began to publish the occasional title from amongst this group of Presbyterian and Reformed ministers. It is not hard to imagine that their reputation for fine work at least would have attracted this business, but also that those who first used the firm may have recommended them to others as they socialized over the years in the various venues just mentioned. Certainly, Samuel Miller took the most advantage of the Swords' press, which is not surprising given his connection as well to the Friendly Club. From 1795 through 1806 the Swords published more than two dozen titles by Presbyterian and Reformed ministers or churches.⁷⁴

The Swords' first two titles by a Presbyterian or Reformed minister were by William Linn, published in 1795 and 1796. This is interesting given that Linn's son was the poet and Presbyterian minister John Blair Linn, who was a friend of Charles Brockden Brown and an occasional visitor to the Friendly Club. Also in 1796 the Swords published a title for the Associate Presbyterians, as well as the inaugural address and constitution of the previously-mentioned New York Missionary Society in which Samuel Miller took such an interest in forming. Of the more than two dozen titles the Swords would publish by this section of the New York community, they published the majority for the Associate Reformed Presbyterians and John M. Mason (eleven titles) and for Samuel Miller (seven titles).

Amongst the Swords' Presbyterian and Reformed productions, more than a couple of items have had enduring interest. Some of the works are among the most noteworthy of the several men the Swords published. Mason's *Letters on Frequent Communion* began the long move of much of the Presbyterian world away from infrequent observance of the Lord's Supper—what critics have regarded as an unwarranted bondage to traditions built up around the communion season as it was practiced at the end of the eighteenth century.⁷⁵ McLeod's *Messiah Governor of the Nations*, a "triumphant vindication of the Universal Government of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Sprague, "Reformed Presbyterian," 9.23), stands out amongst the two productions from his pen and from this sermonic material in

74. Brief biographies and listings of these titles are given in Appendix J.

75. Perhaps the first blast against practices institutionalizing infrequent communion was John Erskine's "An Attempt to Promote the Frequent Dispensing the Lord's Supper," *Theological Dissertations* (Edinburgh, 1808; first edition, 1765) 267–339. Mason references Erskine a number of times. Old habits die hard and forty years after Mason wrote, the *Princeton Review* saw need still to condemn the same abuses. "Review of *Letters on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* By Samuel Bayard, Esq.," *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review for the year 1840*. Volume XII. Issue 1 (Philadelphia: M. B. Hope—Education Rooms, no. 29 Sansom Street; J. Bogart Printer—Princeton) 18ff. For more information in addition to these works, see Leigh Eric

general.⁷⁶ Miller's sermon on the death of George Washington was not necessarily the best of the many eulogy sermons at the time, but it is of historical interest, and was a particularly nice printing by the Swords. The sermons on the folly of suicide probably are the best of the Miller sermons from this period when the Swords published Presbyterian material.⁷⁷

JOHN M. MASON AND THE *UNITED STATES*
CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

An interesting connection between John M. Mason and the Swords' firm is worth noting. In 1795 Dr. Mason wrote a letter to the Philadelphia bookseller William Young on behalf of the editors of a proposed Christian periodical, soliciting his aid in obtaining subscribers in that city.

New York, August 25, 1795

Dear Sir,

I have taken the liberty to request your interference in behalf of the U. S. Christian Magazine of the proposals for which I enclose you two copies. You would greatly oblige the editors, & it is hoped, do some service to the interests of religion if you will engage to become their agent in the business for the city of Philadelphia. The method they wish you to adopt, if your convenience will permit is, to employ a person in the first instance to go through the city with the proposals in order to obtain subscribers and afterwards to carry round the Nos as they appear, receive the money, and deliver it to

you for remittance. You need not hesitate about the expence necessary in hiring a sober, trusty person: this, with your own commissions as agent, will be cheerfully paid, as well as all expences accruing on the carriage. [four or five words struck out] If you incline to meet our wishes on this subject, or to decline the proposal, please to drop me a line immediately. If you will cooperate with us, we request you to send about the subscription paper, without delay. It is understood as an indispensable condition that the money be punctually paid on the delivery of each No. You may consider this as written by the editors; & myself, if you please, as responsible for the contents—I am Sir, yours respectfully,
J[ohn] M. Mason.⁷⁸

The proposal mentioned in this letter was published by none other than T. & J. Swords and "Communications" were to be "directed to Messrs. Thomas & James Swords ... for the editors."⁷⁹ Similar to the contributions of the Drone Club to the Swords' *New York Magazine*, the contributors, as well as the editors in this case, were all anonymous.

The editors' laudable objectives as stated in the preface to the first issue were "the explanation and support of the doctrines of the Reformation," "the detection and refutation of contrary errors," and "the promotion of vital, practical piety."⁸⁰ However, trouble was intimated with the second issue as a "fund destined for the support of the Magazine" had "been withdrawn," and the editors were "compelled to resort to subscriptions" (*United States Christian Magazine* 1.2, 78). This was no doubt the reason for Mason's letter to Young. Whether he was more involved or provided any material for the publication is not ascertainable given the anonymity of the contributors. It is interesting though, that Mason's known venture into periodical publishing was called *The Christian's Magazine*. This ran to four volumes (1806–1811), the first issue of which began Mason's refutation of 'divine-right episcopacy,' which so riled the advocates of 'high churchism' in the City of New York.⁸¹

Clearly though the endeavor would have been something that may have been undertaken by a group of Reformed or Presbyterian individuals, or even ministers. It is interesting that the third and last issue closed with a notice of "domestic intelligence" describing the organizing of the New York Missionary Society, including a reproduction of Macwhorter's address, and a detailing of the rules and officers. At the head of the officers, "John M. Mason, Secretary," appears in large letters, with the following listing: John Rodgers, President; John H. Livingston, Vice President; Alexander Robertson, Treasurer; and John N Abeel, Clerk. Among the other directors were William Linn and Samuel Miller. These all appear

Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001); D. G. Hart and John R. Muether, "The Lord's Supper: How Often?" *Ordained Servant*, 6.4 (October 1997) 97–98. *Ordained Servant* is online at http://www.opc.org/OS/Ordained_servant.html.

76. The other McLeod piece published by the Swords was an 1801 sermon against slavery. See Appendix J.

77. See these titles in Appendix J. The Swords' edition of Miller's sermon on the fire at the Richmond theatre, published in 1813, is the one lone piece that falls outside the period in question, and probably is the most important and interesting of the small productions, if it is taken under consideration with the earlier sermons.

78. John Mitchell Mason to William Young, 25 August 1795, MC 2001.5, Box 1, Folder 01, William Young (1755–1829) Archive, Archives and Special Collections, Dickinson College. The author here records his thanks to the college archives for providing a copy of this letter.

79. *New-York, Feb. 10, 1795. Proposals for Printing by Subscription, a Magazine, entitled, The United States Christian Magazine* (New York: Printed by T. & J. Swords, 1795). Shipton & Mooney 47439.

80. *United States Christian Magazine* 1.1 (1796) 1.

81. This controversy will be the subject of the second and concluding part of this series on T. & J. Swords. See Mason's description of the matter and the controversy on page 88 of this journal.

on the last page of the short lived *United States Christian Magazine*.

[To be continued and concluded in a second part in the 2007 issue, D.V.]

APPENDIX A. STANFORD AND SWORDS

See footnote 2. There seems to have been at least two Stanford brothers connected with T. & J. Swords at some point. Edward Stanford was the son of a minister (Butler, 91), presumably John Stanford, A.M., a prominent Baptist minister in New York City, who authored more than a dozen works published by the Swords from 1791 to 1821. John Stanford married Sarah, the daughter of Abraham Ten Eyck who was a vestryman of Trinity Church at the time of his death. The Swords published a biography of the elder Stanford: *Memoir of the Rev. John Stanford, D.D. Late Chaplain to the Humane and Criminal Institutions in the City of New-York*. By Charles G. Sommers, Pastor of the South Baptist Church in New-York.... (New-York: Swords, Stanford, and Co., 1835). Another son, Thomas N., who is clearly identified as a son of John Stanford, was a prominent bookseller in New York (William B. Sprague *Annals of the American Pulpit* [New York, 1869] 6.249). He appears to have taken over the firm upon the death of James R. Swords in 1855. A grandson of Thomas Swords was named Stanford Swords. Butler writes (91–92):

James Swords, it is stated, “retired from the publishing business in 1832.... On his retirement from the house, its style became Swords, Stanford and Company.” Edward Stanford was the son of a minister, and had been in the employ of the firm for several years, and it was natural that Thomas Swords, the remaining senior partner, should associate himself with an active and younger member of the organization. That the relationship of the new partners was close is attested to by the fact that the grandson of Thomas Swords, who was born in 1853, was given the Christian name of Stanford. There was another Swords in the firm at this time, Edward, the eldest son of Thomas....

When Thomas Swords retired, his “place in the firm was taken by two of his sons, Edward and James, but in a short time, it appears, Edward withdrew to devote himself to ‘the Printing Department,’ and the firm became known” as “Stanford and Swords.” (Butler, 92).

As noted the firm of T. & J. Swords first located at 43 Crown Street. Going by titles listed at AASOCC, from 1791–1793 the Swords address was 27 William Street, with one title reading 167 William Street. In 1794 they use both addresses. In 1795 the Swords are using 128 Pearl Street and 99 Pearl Street, and

continue using the 99 Pearl Street address through 1827. Also between 1803 and 1821 they are using 160 Pearl Street as well. In 1827 the Swords moved to Broadway and the firm or its successors had the addresses: 127 Broadway (1827–1831), 152 Broadway (1832–1843), 139 Broadway (1843–1848), 137 Broadway (1849–1853), and 167 Broadway (1853–1857). During the times where it appears the Swords are using two addresses, it may be that one was for the print shop and the other for the bookstore.

APPENDIX B: EARLY NEW YORK INTELLECT

See footnote 13. King’s (Columbia) College and the New York Society Library had been founded, but organizations and attempts to improve intellectual conditions in the city and country had stalled out during the war. “The revolutionary war was no sooner terminated by the peace of 1788, than the friends of literature began to feel more than ever the importance of encouraging institutions for diffusing useful knowledge among the people” (Miller, *Brief Retrospect*, 2.380). A more recent author summarizes: “When George Washington arrived in New York City in 1789 to assume the presidency of the newly established national government, the cultural landscape of New York looked far different than it had in 1750. [William] Livingston and [Samuel] Baird had substantially raised the general prestige of their respective professions, and they had probably raised the level of technical competence as well. But it is also clear that many inferior and inadequately trained doctors and lawyers continued to offer their services to New Yorkers. The establishment of the library and college were essential first steps in the creation of a serious general intellectual culture in New York City, but they fell far short of the impact imagined by their projectors. One cannot dispute the sardonic judgment of the French traveler Brissot de Warville in 1788 that ‘this city does not abound in men of learning,’ though he noted that a good deal of intellectual excitement could be found ‘at the moment’ because ‘the presence of Congress attracts the most celebrated persons from the various parts of the United States.’” Thomas Bender, *New York Intellectual, A History of Intellectual Life in New York City, from 1750 to the Beginnings of Our Own Time* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987) 27. See also, Samuel Miller, *Brief Retrospect*, 2.354–358.

APPENDIX C: SWORDS PUBLICATION FOR 1792

See footnote 21. Henry M. Van Solingen, *An inaugural dissertation on worms of the human intestines. Submitted to the examination of the Rev. William Linn, D.D. P.T. president; and to the trustees and faculty of Queen’s College, New-Jersey; for the degree of Doctor of Medicine* (Evans 24953). Jonas Smith

Addoms, *An inaugural dissertation on the malignant fever, which prevailed in the city of New-York during the months of August, September, and October, in the year 1791. Submitted to the examination of the Rev. William Linn, D.D. P.T. president; and to the trustees and faculty of Queen's College, New-Jersey; for the degree of Doctor of Medicine, with the rights and immunities thereunto appertaining* (Evans 24024). David Hosack, M.D., *An enquiry into the causes of suspended animation from drowning; with the means of restoring life* (Evans 24409). Richard C. Moore, Rector of St. Andrew's Church, *A sermon, delivered in Trinity Church, on the 11th day of October, 1791, before the convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the State of New-York* (Shipton & Mooney 46223).

APPENDIX D. NOAH WEBSTER AND THE NEW YORK MAGAZINE.

See footnote 27 and 30. The editor of the Swords' *New York Magazine*, initial or otherwise, was in all likelihood not Noah Webster as suggested by Bender (Bender 32), who relies on a note in William Alexander Duer's address before the St. Nicholas Society [William Alexander Duer's. LL. D., *New York as it was, During the Latter Part of the Last Century. An Anniversary Address Delivered Before The St. Nicholas Society, of the City of New York, December 1st, 1848* [New York: Stanford and Swords, 1839] 46]. Speaking of his friend William Johnson, Duer, who was nearly seventy at the time, adds a note, "He was a contributor, together with the late John Wells, Anthony Bleecker, William Dunlap, Dr. E. H. Smith, Dr. Edward Miller, and others, to a literary magazine, edited by Noah Webster." Bender assumes this is a reference to the *New York Magazine*. Duer does not name the publication, but if this is the case, then he obviously was confusing the *New York Magazine* with the *American Magazine*. Webster founded and published the latter in New York, which ran from December 1787 to November 1788. About the same time he helped found the New York Philological Society, which ended sometime after he left New York in 1789. William Dunlap and Samuel Mitchill were members with Webster in the Philological Society, and some of Webster's orations to this group appeared in his *American Magazine*.

Dunlap and Mitchill and the other men in this listing by Duer were later members of the Friendly Club (formed no earlier than September 1793). Webster, an acquaintance of many of these men, did not return to New York until 1793, the same year as the arrival of Smith and Johnson in the city. He by all accounts was not a member of the club. In December 1793 Webster founded the first daily newspaper for the city (the *American Minerva*, later renamed the *The Commercial Advertiser*). Some of the individual members of the Friendly Club may have contributed to various periodicals of

the period; however, if there was a society supportive of the Swords' publication, it was the Calliopean/Drone Club.

The publication that does appear to have been a child of the Friendly Club was *The Monthly Magazine and American Review*, founded to give some employment to their friend Charles Brockden Brown. It ran for 27 issues between 1799 and 1800. It is possible that Duer is confusing Webster's publication with Brown's given the clear relationship the latter had with the the Friendly Club, and that it is Bender's mistake in presuming the confused reference was to the Swords' *New York Magazine*. As it is, one author notes that Bender "overstates the relationship between the Friendly Club and the *New York Magazine*." (Catherine Kaplan, "Document: 'Elihu Hubbard Smith's 'The Institutions of the Republic of Utopia,'" *Early American Literature*, 35.3 [2000] 304, n1). However, this is really due more to Bender's conflating of the Friendly Club with the Drone Club, for which see more in the body of this article.

APPENDIX E. THE OLD BOOKSELLERS OF NEW-YORK

See footnote 28. "The publishers of the *New York Magazine* were Thomas and James Swords, of No. 44 Crown Street, known for many years as publishers of books relating to the Episcopal Church. They recite in their preface that the proposed work will be printed with beautiful new type cast by the ingenious Mr. Caslon, on good American manufactured paper, that it will consist of 64 pages, and be published the first of each month. 'Each number,' they add, 'will contain one or more copper plates representing some particular passage in the work.' ... The publishers appear to have launched their literary craft with some mental misgivings, and in an address to the public they humbly solicit the countenance and support of the native and free-born Americans, 'whose characteristic has ever been to foster and cultivate the arts, and to reward honest industry by the bounty of a liberal hand.' In conclusion they state that if 'this appeal for support is merely sufficient to defray expenses the magazine will live; if it is inadequate it must DIE.' ... The literary feast which the editors of the *New York Magazine* spread before its readers was sufficiently diversified to suit the most catholic tastes. It embraced meteorological observations, historical sketches, essays, travels, hints on gardening, short stories, tales of adventure, Congressional reports, foreign and domestic intelligence, marriages and deaths. A large portion of its space was devoted to poetical effusions, and the editors appear to have made every effort to foster the budding American muse, and assist in its laborious ascent of Mount Parnassus." William Loring Andrews, *The Old Booksellers of New York, and Other Papers* (New York: Author, 1895). Cited from pages 10 and 11 of an online version: [http:](http://)

//www.americanexchange.com/NewAE/aemonthly/article.asp?f=2&id=174&page=10&start=.

APPENDIX F. JOHN DAVIS.

See footnote 35. It seems unlikely that John Davis would have met Joseph Priestley (often caricatured as Dr. Phlogiston), in New York in 1801 as his health was in decline the last few years of his life before his death in 1804 and he lived in Northumberland, Pennsylvania. Also, it was in March 1801, while in Philadelphia for Jefferson's inaugural, that he suffered his first serious illness and nearly died, and it seems unlikely he would have been in New York a few months later. While Davis may have met Priestley on some occasion, this seems to be one of his many fabrications and embellishments. For some background on Davis, and his relationship to the French bookseller Caritat, see George Gates Raddin, Jr., *Hocquet Caritat and the Early New York Literary Scene* (Dover, N.J.: The Dover Advance Press, 1953). "The story of Caritat's association with Davis is complicated by the tales told in the volume of Davis's travels in the United States, published in Bristol, England, in 1803. And, since Davis apparently is the only one who has left a detailed personal account of Caritat, it is necessary—in order to sift the grains of truth from the chaff of sheer fabrication—to devote more attention to the rogue than his literary merit deserves. On the other hand, no matter how tedious and objectionable he was to his contemporaries, his antics today furnish an amusing and well-balanced picture of early New York literary life. Davis was a young man of very ordinary talent, very modest creative ability, and very limited education, whose sensitive spirit was sustained by an irrepressible vanity.... His greatest weakness was the impulse to create impressive personal history out of facts that were very often dull and commonplace. He could not tell the plain, simple truth if it did not place him in a most conspicuous position or set his affairs in a hopelessly exaggerated light." Raddin, 62. For a less censorious handling of Davis, see Thelma Louise Kellogg, M.A., "University of Maine Studies Second Series, Number 1, The Life and Works of John Davis 1774–1853," *The Maine Bulletin* 26 (June 1924).

APPENDIX G. SWORDS' PUBLICATIONS FOR WILLIAM DUNLAP

See footnote 57. *The archers, or Mountaineers of Switzerland; an opera, in three acts, as performed by the Old American Company, in New-York; to which is subjoined a brief historical account of Switzerland, from the dissolution of the Roman Empire, to the final establishment of the Helvetic Confederacy, by the Battle of Sempach* (1796). Evans 30369. *Tell truth and shame the Devil: a comedy, in two acts, as performed by the Old*

American Company, New-York, January, 1797 (1797). Evans 32066. *Andre; a tragedy, in five acts: as performed by the Old American Company, New-York, March 30, 1798. To which are added, authentic documents respecting Major Andre; consisting of letters to Miss Seward, The cow chase, proceedings of the court martial, &c. Copy right secured* (1798). Evans 33652. August von Kotzebue, *The virgin of the sun: a play, in five acts. From the German of Augustus von Kotzebue. With notes marking the variations from the original* (New York: Printed by G.F. Hopkins, for William Dunlap. And sold at the office of the printer, no. 84 Maiden-Lane; T. and J. Swords, no. 99 Pearl-Street..., 1800). Evans 37763. *The wild-goose chase: a play, in four acts. With songs. From the German of Augustus von Kotzebue. With notes marking the variations from the original* (New York: Printed by G.F. Hopkins, for William Dunlap, and sold at the office of the printer, no. 84 Maiden-Lane; T. and J. Swords, no. 99 Pearl-Street..., 1800). Evans 37766. *Pizarro in Peru; or, The death of Rolla. A play, in five acts. From the German of Augustus von Kotzebue. With notes marking the variations from the original* (New York: Printed by G.F. Hopkins, for William Dunlap. And sold at the office of the printer, no. 136 Pearl-Street, T. and J. Swords, no. 99 Pearl-Street..., 1800). Evans 37757. Miller writes: "Towards the close of the century no dramatic writer in the German language was so generally popular as Kotzebue...." He then expands in a note on the moral tendencies of the German dramas, and their potential for corrupting the principles and virtues of those who contemplate their productions (*Brief Retrospect*, 2.221).

APPENDIX H. HOCQUET CARITAT.

See footnote 71. Hocquet Caritat was a Frenchman who came to New York in 1797. He opened up a bookstore and one of the largest private circulating libraries of the time. After using the Swords for *Alcuin*, it "was only natural, therefore, when Brown turned over the manuscript of his first novel, *Wieland; or the Transformation*, to Caritat in the summer of 1798 he should have suggested the Swords firm as printers; Caritat had never used them before. The arrangement was made by Caritat or Brown, or by Caritat alone, with the three friends, Smith, Johnson, and Dunlap, out of the financial end of it." LeRoy Elwood Kimball, "An Account of Hocquet Caritat, XVIII Century New York Circulating Librarian, Bookseller, and Publisher of the first two novels of Charles Brockden Brown, 'America's First Professional Man of Letters,'" *The Colophon A Quarterly For Collectors and Lovers of Books* 18 (1934) [2–3]. The title page notes: "Articles are listed in order of placement. The making of signatures by various presses at different times and places prevents folio pagination". Kimball's piece appears first. There is no evidence Caritat published *Alcuin*, the subscription of which as noted above, was managed by Dr. Smith.

Kimball did not have the advantage of access to Smith's diary which was not published until 1973. See Cronin's note on Isaac Riley for background on this gentleman who was Richard Alsop's brother-in-law (Cronin, *Diary*, 457, n49).

APPENDIX I. BROWN'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

See footnote 72. Smith, Johnson, Brown and Dunlap actually discussed founding a Monthly magazine in the August before Smith's death, to be published by the Swords. In December Brown read Dunlap a proposal for a magazine. *Diary of William Dunlap*, 323; 355. Miller recalls the venture: "After the yellow fever had passed away, Mr. Brown's friends in New York, the Friendly Club in particular, busied themselves to find him employment, and a means of support, agreeable to his literary tastes. He was accordingly encouraged to establish 'The Monthly Magazine and American Review,' the first number of which bears the date of April, 1799. We find Mr. Miller writing, December, 24, 1798 to Dr. Morse, to solicit his influence in behalf of this proposed publication. He says, 'You may rest assured, this is not an ordinary, nor a catchpenny, plan....' Dr. Morse demurred, expressing his fears, as it would seem, that the work might be too Democratic in its bearing. To this Mr. Miller replied, April 3, 1799, 'The principal editor of the American Monthly Magazine is a Mr. Charles B. Brown, lately of Philadelphia. You may, I believe, fully confide in him as a Federalist. Of his learning and taste there can be no question. There is a society, or club, of some ten gentlemen, who meet once a week to consult about the magazine, and concert plans to make up its contents and to promote its interests. Of these ten, seven are decided Federalists; the other three are a little Democratic, but remarkably mild and moderate men. I am not at liberty to mention their names, but am persuaded you need be under no apprehension respecting the work in a political point of view'" (*Life of Miller*, 1.119–120).

APPENDIX J. THE SWORDS' PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED PUBLICATIONS

See footnote 74. As noted in this article, T. & J. Swords occasionally published Presbyterian and Reformed works from the pens of some of the most prominent men in New York City.

82. Edward Tanjore Corwin, *A Manual of the Reformed Church in America (formerly Ref. Prot. Dutch Church) 1628–1878* (New York: Board of Publication of the Reformed Church in America, 1879) 75–79. For more information on Linn, see Philip J. Anderson, "William Linn, 1752–1808: American Revolutionary & Anti-Jeffersonian," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 55 (1977) 381–394; William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York, 1869) 9.75; Frederick Lewis Weis, *The Colonial Clergy of the Middle Colonies* (Worcester, 1957) 262; Alfred Nevin, *Encyclopedia of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1884) 432.

WILLIAM LINN, D.D.

William Linn (1752–1808) was ordained to the gospel ministry by the Donnegal Presbytery (later Carlisle) about 1776 when at the same time he was serving as a Chaplain to General Thompson's regiment. He served Presbyterian pastorates at Big Spring and briefly at Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, with a two year stint as headmaster of an Academy in Somerset, Maryland, in between. After only a few months at Elizabethtown he received and accepted a call in 1786 to be one of the associate pastors of the Collegiate Dutch Reformed Church in New York. He became one of the most prominent ministers of the city, and "one of the most attractive and impressive preachers of his day."⁸² The sudden death in 1804 of his son the Rev. Dr. John Blair Linn affected his already weakening health and he resigned his charge and moved to Albany, where he died in 1808. Dr. Linn was the first chaplain of the House of Representatives, a friend of General and Mrs. Washington, and served variously as Regent of the University of the State of New York, as acting President of Queens College (Rutgers), and briefly before his death, as President of Union College in Schenectady.

The Swords published the following three sermons by Dr. William Linn:

A discourse, delivered on the 26th of November, 1795; being the day recommended by the governor of the state of New-York to be observed as a day of thanksgiving and prayer, on account of the removal of an epidemic fever, and for other national blessings (1795). Evans 28974.

A discourse, delivered at Hackinsack, June 28, 1796, on occasion of the meeting of a commission of synod to compose certain differences in the congregations of Hackinsack and Schralenburgh (1796). Evans 30697.

A discourse on national sins delivered May 9, 1798; being the day recommended by the president of the United States to be observed as a day of general fast (1798). Evans 34003.

JOHN MITCHELL MASON

John M. Mason (1770–1829), was one of the most distinguished ministers in the City of New York. He attended Columbia and received his bachelor's degree in 1789. Upon his father's decease in 1792 he became pastor of the church on Cedar Street in New York. Princeton University granted him the doctor of divinity degree in 1794. In 1804 he founded the first seminary for the Associate Reformed Church, which is now Union Theological Seminary. He was also a trustee for Columbia University from 1795 to 1811, and served as provost from 1811 until 1816. "While serving as provost, Mason became minister of the Murray Street Church in New York City in 1812. Declining health from excessive work forced him to

take leave of his duties in 1816, and then again after suffering a slight stroke upon his return. Following a second recovery, Mason accepted a position as president at the newly reopened Dickinson College, beginning his term in the fall of 1821.”⁸³ After continued ill health and suffering the deaths of his son and wife in 1822, he resigned in 1824. He died in New York City, December 26, 1829.⁸⁴ T. & J. Swords published three works by Dr. Mason:

Hope for the heathen: a sermon, preached in the Old Presbyterian Church, before the New-York Missionary Society, at their annual meeting, November 7, 1797 (1797). Evans 32438.

Letters on frequent communion: addressed particularly to the members of the Associate-Reformed Church in North-America (1798). Evans 34062.

Pardon of sin in the blood of Jesus: a sermon, preached in Philadelphia, on the evening of the Sabbath, the 31st of May, 1801 (1801). Shaw & Shoemaker 885.

SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.

Before taking up his long post as Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Princeton in 1813, Dr. Miller served as one of the pastors of the United Presbyterian Churches in the City of New York from the time of his ordination there in 1793. He became one of the prominent ministers of the city.⁸⁵ The Swords published the following by Dr. Miller.

Discourse, delivered April 12, 1797, at the request of and before the New-York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves, and Protecting Such of Them as Have Been or May Be Liberated (1797). Evans 32477. Sparkman 005.0.⁸⁶

Sermon, delivered May 9, 1798, recommended, by the president of the United States, to be observed as a day of general humiliation, fasting, and prayer (1798). Evans 34109. Sparkman 006.0.

Sermon, delivered December 29, 1799, occasioned by the death of General George Washington, late president of the United States, and commander in chief of the American armies (1800). Evans 37964. Sparkman 008.0.

Sermon, delivered before the New York Missionary Society, at their annual meeting, April 6th, 1802 (1802). Shaw & Shoemaker 2660. Sparkman 010.0.

A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century (1803). Shaw & Shoemaker 4654. Sparkman 013.0.

The guilt, folly, and sources of suicide: two discourses, preached in the city of New York, February, 1805 (1805). Shaw & Shoemaker 8903. Sparkman 014.0.

Sermon, delivered January 19, 1812, at the request of a number of young gentlemen of the city of New-York, who had assembled to express their condolence with the inhabitants of Richmond (1812). Shaw & Shoemaker 26082. Sparkman 030.1.⁸⁷

OTHER PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED TITLES

BY T. & J. SWORDS

John Henry Livingston (1746–1825). *A sermon, delivered before the New York Missionary Society, at their annual meeting, April 3, 1804; to which are added, an appendix, the annual report of the directors, and other papers relating to American missions* (1804). Born in 1746 in Dutchess County, near Poughkeepsie, N.Y., Livingston graduated from Yale College in 1762, and sailed to Amsterdam to study for the ministry. The Classis of Amsterdam ordained and licensed Livingston in April of 1770. In May he was given a doctor of theology degree by the University of Utrecht and returned the same year to America where he became a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in New York. The aforementioned Dr. Linn joined Livingston in 1786 as a co-pastor of the church. Livingston is known as the Father of the Dutch Reformed Church in America.⁸⁸

Alexander McLeod (1774–1833), Pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation in the city of New-York: *Negro Slavery Unjustifiable* (1802).⁸⁹ Shaw & Shoemaker 2572. *Messiah, Governor of the Nations of the Earth* (1803). Shaw & Shoemaker 4574. McLeod, a native of Scotland, came to this country in 1792. He graduated from Union College in 1798,

83. See the brief biography of Dr. Mason at the website for Dickinson College, which also has online the full four volumes of his works. <http://deila.dickinson.edu/theirownwords/author/MasonJ.htm>.

84. In earlier days in New York City, John Pintard was an acquaintance of Dr. Mason's. He writes in a letter dated Tuesday, December 29, 1829: "The Rev. Dr [John M. Mason], perhaps the most eminent Divine, in his prime, died on Sunday aged 60, & is to be buried this P.M. I fear the weather will be too unfavourable for me to attend. I was once intimate with him." *Letters from John Pintard to his Daughter* (New York: Printed for the New York Historical Society, 1940–41) 3.115.

85. A brief life of Dr. Miller was in the previous issue of this journal, along with an Annotated Bibliography of his publications, and a first time transcription from manuscript of one of his earliest sermons. *CPJ* 1 (2005) 9–10.

86. See Wayne Sparkman, "The Rev. Dr. Samuel Miller October 31, 1769–January 7, 1850 An Annotated Bibliography," *CPJ* 1 (2005) 11–40.

87. This was also published in New York in 1812 by Whiting and Watson and D. & G. Bruce. It is unclear to this author which was the first edition, but Miller was using Whiting and Watson at this time and had not published with the Swords since 1805 and the outbreak of the "High Churchism" controversy.

88. Sprague, *Annals*, "Dutch Reformed," 9.52–66.

89. Interestingly enough, James Swords as late as 1810 was a slave holder. "Quite a few slaveowners included in the 1810 census lived in the northern half of the Fifth Ward and 'commuted' to work somewhere on the southern tip of Manhattan—James Swords, the printer and bookseller, lived at 410 Greenwich but had his shop at 160 Pearl...." Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent: The End of Slavery in New York City, 1770–1810* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1991) 46.

studied theology under James McKinney, and was licensed by the Reformed Presbytery in 1799.⁹⁰ Dr. Miller notes that he became so well known, “far beyond the bounds of his own ecclesiastical denomination, that several of the most wealthy and respectable churches in the city, in succession, invited him to take the pastoral office over them” (Sprague, 9.24). Despite his fame, however, Dr. McLeod remained a Reformed Presbyterian.

Alexander Macwhorter (1734–1807), Pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Newark: *The blessedness of the liberal: a sermon, preached in the Middle Dutch Church, before the New-York Missionary Society, at their first institution, November 1, 1796* (1796). Evans 30733. The Swords published several items for the New York Missionary Society, including the Address and constitution of the New-York Missionary Society which may have originally appeared in print along with this sermon by Macwhorter (see Evans 30883), and the three sermons by Miller and Mason and Livingston noted above.

Philip Milledoler (1775–1852), *A discourse, delivered in the Presbyterian Church in Wall-Street, March 23, 1806: for a society of ladies instituted for the relief of poor widows with small children, and published at their request* (1806). Shaw & Shoemaker 10871. Milledoler was born in New York in 1775 and graduated from Columbia in 1793. He was pastor of the German Reformed Church on Nassau Street in New York from 1795 to 1800, and then of the Third Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia (1800–1805). At the time of this discourse Milledoler was pastor of Rutgers Street Presbyterian Church in New York (1805–1813). The main object of his call to this ministry was the need for a fourth minister to aid in the duties of the collegiate pastors of the United Congregations in New York City (PCUSA). Dr. Samuel Miller preached at Milledoler’s installation.⁹¹ Rutgers Street was split off from the united congregations; with Milledoler serving as its sole pastor, it soon grew to become one of the largest churches in the PCUSA by 1813 (*Life of Miller*, 1.198). In that year, he left

to serve the Collegiate Dutch Reformed Church in the city, and remained there for a dozen years. He taught at and was president of Rutgers College from 1825 until 1840.⁹²

THE SWORDS PUBLISHED THE FOLLOWING DENOMINATIONAL TITLES:

PCUSA. Presbytery of New York. *An address from the Presbytery of New-York to the churches under their care, on the subject of educating poor and pious youth for the gospel ministry* (1805). Shaw & Shoemaker 9189.

Associate Reformed Presbyterians. In addition to other pieces, the Swords published extracts of the minutes for the Associate Reformed Synod for the years 1797, 1798 and 1801, and for 1802 and 1804, after their reorganization as the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. The titles are:

A draught of an overture for the government, worship, & discipline of the Associate-Reformed Church in North America (1796). Evans 30002.

Extract from the minutes of the acts and proceedings of the Associate Reformed Synod, met at Philadelphia, May 29, 1797, and continued by adjournments. Published by order of synod (1797). Evans 31755.

Extracts from the minutes of the acts and proceedings of the Associate Reformed Synod, met at Philadelphia, May 30, 1798; and continued by adjournments. Published by order of Synod (1798). Evans 33319.

Extracts from the minutes of the acts and proceedings of the Associate-Reformed Synod, met at Philadelphia, May 27, 1801, and continued by adjournments (1801). Shaw & Shoemaker 79.

Extracts from the minutes of the acts and proceedings of the Associate-Reformed Synod; at their meeting, held in the city of New-York, October 21st, 1802, and continued by adjournments. With an appendix, containing sundry documents (1803). Shaw & Shoemaker 3694 and 3695. AASOCC describes this as: “Extracts from the proceedings which resulted in the division of the Associate Reformed Synod (1782–1801) and its reorganization as the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (1802–1822).”

Extracts from the minutes of the proceedings of the first General Synod of the Associate-Reformed Church in North-America; held at Greencastle, Pennsylvania, on Wednesday, the 30th of May, 1804, and continued by adjournments (1804). Shaw & Shoemaker 5733 and 5734.

A Letter to the members of the Associate Reformed Church, illustrating the act of synod concerning a synodical fund (1798). Evans 33995.

The Constitution and Standards of the Associate-Reformed Church in North-America (1799). Evans 35119.

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90. Sprague, *Annals*, “Reformed Presbyterian,” 9.9–25.

91. Sprague quotes the following anecdote from Dr. Milledoler regarding Dr. Miller going back to the year 1795 prior to the former taking the pastorate at the Third Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia: “We frequently passed each other on the Sabbath, Mr. Miller going to the Brick Church, and I to my charge in Nassau street. Mr. Miller’s appearance was very youthful—I had just passed my nineteenth year. Being dressed in full canonicals, not omitting the three-cornered hat, we were called the ‘boy ministers.’” Cited in *Life of Miller*, 1.89.

92. See John McClintock and James Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, “Milledoler, Philip, D.D.” (Harper and Brothers, 1867–1887; Reprint. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981) 6.264. “Leadership on the Banks: Rutgers’ Presidents, 1766–2004. Philip Milledoler, 1825–1840.” http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/libs/scua/university_archives/milledoler.shtml. See also the entry in Sprague, *Annals*, volume 9, and in Corwin’s *Manual of the Reformed Church*.

*In Brief: Samuel Miller's Sermon on the
Death of George Washington*

Our beloved and deplored WASHINGTON was, emphatically, A MAN WHOM GOD HAD MADE GREAT. Without the tinsel ornament of titled nobility—without the advantage of what is called distinguished and honourable birth, he was raised by the Governor of the world to a degree of greatness, of which the history of man has furnished but few examples. He was not, indeed, endowed with those brilliant and dazzling talents, which many erroneously imagine to be alone estimable. His mind was of an higher order. Providence designed him to move in a sphere in which a dignified prudence, soundness of judgment, firmness, self command, and uniformity, were especially needful; and, therefore, these were the leading features of his character....

When the encroachments and oppressions of Britain prompted our countrymen to throw off her yoke—when a few infant colonies rose up to contend with a gigantic, rapacious, and haughty parent, you saw him step forth, their patriotic leader, in asserting their precious rights, and in braving all the ills of a perilous and doubtful conflict. And, though little versed in the art of war; though placed at the head of a raw and undisciplined army; though contending with skilled, veteran, and more powerful foes, you saw his wisdom, his perseverance, and his valour, rise superior to the most formidable difficulties. You saw him lead on his fellow-citizens, from time to time, to conquest and triumph; until the fair fabrick of Independence was completely reared over the tomb of tyranny....

The admired hero, and the beloved sage, notwithstanding all his greatness, must, at length, lie down in the dust. There, according to the high decree of heaven, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the honoured and the despised, must become the common food of corruption and worms. Candidates for immortality! *So number your days, that you may apply your hearts unto wisdom.* What will it avail you to receive the applause of man, *whose breath is in his nostrils*, and to be loaded with those honours which soon fade away, if, after all, you have no inheritance secured beyond this little span of existence? There is a kingdom which is *not of this world*, offered and secured to all the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. There is a glorious exaltation tendered to them, *without money, and without price*;—an exaltation in comparison with which the objects of earthly ambition are insignificant trifles. To this felicity and glory, then, let each of us aspire. Let us seek after reconciliation with God, through the atonement of his dear Son; and a conformity to his image, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Let it be our highest ambition *to be found of him at last in peace, without spot, and blameless: that when He who is our life shall appear, we also may appear, and live and reign with him in glory, forever and ever.* AMEN! (pp. 28–29; 38–39). ■

A
SERMON,
Delivered December 29, 1799;
OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF
GENERAL
GEORGE WASHINGTON,
LATE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
AND
COMMANDER IN CHIEF
OF THE
AMERICAN ARMIES.

By SAMUEL MILLER, A. M.
One of the Ministers of the United Presbyterian Churches in the
City of New-York.

Published by Request.



NEW-YORK:
Printed by T. & J. SWORDS, No. 99 Pearl-street.
1800.

Mr MILLER'S
SERMON
ON THE DEATH OF
GENERAL WASHINGTON.

ABOVE: Detail of the cover (half-title) and title pages of Samuel Miller, *Sermon*, delivered December 29, 1799, occasioned by the death of General George Washington, late president of the United States, and commander in chief of the American armies (1800). There is an ornamental tailpiece on the last page of the sermon, which is reproduced on page 256.

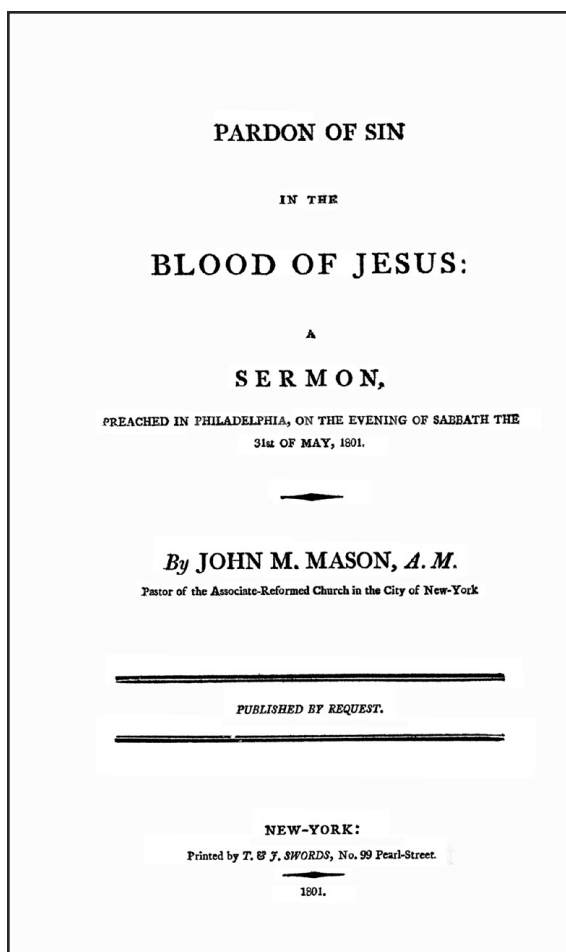
In Brief: Extract from John M. Mason, *Pardon of Sin in the Blood of Jesus* (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1801).

While our souls rejoice in this plenteous redemption, and the forgiveness which it secures, let us lift up our eyes to the source from whence both proceed. This is the

III. And last part of my discourse. We have redemption and forgiveness *according to the riches of Jehovah's grace*. Such is the plan of salvation, that while sinners are delivered from going down to the pit, *the Lord alone shall be exalted*. In the pardon of sin, the voice of human pretension must, not be heard. *Grace, mere grace*, the *riches of grace*, is the burden of our song. The text suggests infinite arguments of this truth. 1. Sin is such an evil, that nothing but the *grace of God* could have projected its pardon. Sin! Ah! my brethren, who can develop the meaning of the horror-smiting term? Canst thou dive into its depths, and display its hidden hells? *One sin* changed legions of holy spirits into devils. *One sin* brought perdition on our wretched race. Make thy suit to the benevolence of angels; lay before them, in its true colors, the least of thy provocations, and thy best hope will be *as the giving up of the ghost*. Not one of them would dream of mercy for thee. It belongs not to creatures to show *such* forgiveness. Herein he is glorious, herein he is seen to be **GOD**, that when he alone has a full view of the sinfulness of sin, he alone can think of its pardon.

2. As nothing less than divine grace could forgive sin, so the purpose of it *originated* in no exterior cause. Many, whose affections are, touched with the love of Christ, entertain forbidding thoughts of the austerity of the Father. This is a great error. Christ purchased not the Father's love. On the contrary, it was the Father's love which appointed and sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Grace is its own reason. *He loved us, because he loved us*. Here is the original fountain, here the overflowing ocean, from which forgiveness issues. Had it depended upon anything external, no Redeemer had been known, no hope revealed, no sinner saved.

3. The most ineffable effect of the Father's grace, its *riches*, its *infinite expression*, is the forgiveness of sin at the expense of the blood of Jesus. Had he given the universe beside, it would have been little, it would have been nothing, in comparison of his Son. With all holy reverence be it spoken, grace can go no farther. Sinners, here is the very heart of God! Here he has uncovered the profound of his compassions. *God so loved the world that he gave his ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON*—for whom? for rebels; for those who were *enemies to him by wicked works*. For what? *That whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but might have everlasting life*.



4. In the *application* of forgiveness through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, *grace is exceedingly abundant*.

Not only is it beyond our desert and expectation, but far above all that we are able so much as to think. The forgiveness which the gospel reveals, is the forgiveness of God. We can form no conception of the generosity, the extent, the riches of forgiveness, unless we consider the wonderful redemption through which it flows. Grace went every length in giving the Lord Jesus for an atoning sacrifice; and it goes every length in pardoning them that believe in his name.

The doctrine which I have now laid before you, brethren, is not a lofty speculation which you may admire without adopting; It is truth of everlasting moment; truth essential to your happiness; and for which you shall soon, very soon, give an account at the bar of God. I address you as sinners who need forgiveness; who perish without it; and shall never obtain it but through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. In his great name, therefore, allow me to demand what reception you will give to the gospel of his cross. *Exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins,*

he waiteth to be gracious; and tenders to the chief of sinners, without money and without price, all the benefits of his covenant. *Behold*, they are his own blessed words, *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If ANY MAN hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me*. Let no sinner, then, exclude himself from mercy which is offered in the gospel, as directly to him, as if there were not another sinner under heaven: and offered with such marvelous grace, that nothing but his *acceptance* is wanting to place him forever beyond the reach of the curse. The corrupt heart will invent a thousand pretexts to palliate its neglect of the great salvation, and has even the effrontery to charge its sin upon the holy God. But be it known unto you, that if, after all your means and opportunities of grace, you die in your iniquity, you will be found, at last, to have been your own destroyers; and the real, the guilty cause of your rejecting Christ Jesus, to have been your own **VOLUNTARY, CHERISHED UNBELIEF**. **YE WILL NOT come to him that ye might have life**; for the mouth of the Lord path spoken it!

Some who have been religiously educated, and who add to a general profession of Christianity all the exterior decencies of life; who are sober, just, humane; active in their temporal vocations; at peace with themselves, and respected by others; may consider as inapplicable to them, remonstrances which imply an impious character and a dangerous state. Supposing their religion to be sufficiently correct, they give to the wind all their anxieties about their present pardon or their future condition: while, at the same time, they are strangers to the power of godliness, nor ever understood the meaning, by enjoying the mercy, of *passing from death unto life*. Be not deceived. The salvation of God is not so slight a matter, nor so slightly to be possessed. The Christian name, the charitable opinion of men, the outward privileges of God's people, embellished with the whole train of social morals, fall far short of that *holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*. All this will not prove forgiveness of sin, nor the sanctification of the Holy Ghost. To a hope which shall not become the mock of death, more, my brethren, much more is necessary. You must be divinely convinced of your natural enmity against God. This enmity must be slain, and you reconciled to him by the death of his Son. You must receive, as condemned rebels, a pardon written in his atoning blood. You must be renewed by his Spirit, and conformed to his image; be united with him by that faith which purifies the heart and works by love; be communicants in his death and the power of his resurrection; and become, in virtue of this union and communion, fruitful branches of the true vine, or—*ye have no life in you*.

In some who congratulate themselves on their escape from the bondage of superstition, and who remit religious care to minds incapable of liberal research, this doctrine of forgiveness may perhaps, excite only a smile of scorn. Yet with all

their contempt for what they call vulgar prejudice, and all their superiority to religious belief, they must allow me one moment to expostulate. *We rejoice in the salvation of Christ Jesus: it is our greatest happiness that we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace*. You affect to pity and despise us, while you reject our Redeemer's cross, and *put him to an open shame*. To justify this violence, your own hope ought to be better founded and more animating than ours. Is this the fact? Are you sure that you have committed no offence which, without forgiveness, must ruin you forever? Are you *sure* that there is forgiveness with God in any other manner than through the redemption of the Saviour's blood? or that the gospel which reveals it may not prove true at last? Are you *sure* that your own sins are pardoned? or that you run no hazard of any judgment to come? Can you produce a single instance of pardoned sin except through the obedience and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ? On what, then, do you presume? I shut up this volume of inspiration, and challenge your hope. What is its nature? and where is its warrant? Is it in these heavens? Is it in that deep? Is it inscribed on any page of creation's book, or engraven on the tablets of conscience? Unbeliever! give glory to God, and homage to his truth. Thou knowest that on all these points, on all that awaits thee beyond the grave, thou art tossed from conjecture to conjecture, and thy most flattering expectation is, at best, but dread uncertainty. Upon such slender ground, in the love and indulgence of a thousand lusts, thou art about to take the adventurous leap into a world of everlasting retribution! And, with all this, thou art a man of reason, a philosopher, who never believes but on evidence, nor acts but from conviction, and looks down with disdain upon the Christian faith! God have mercy on thee, poor fanatic! Yet thou canst not altogether stifle thy secret misgivings. There are times when, like Felix, thou tremblest! Guilt, with all thy boastings, makes thee a coward. Nor wilt thou ever find relief but in the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Be persuaded to try this happiest of all experiments. He is rich in mercy, and ready to forgive even thee. A refusal will cost thee thy soul; and thou wilt perish under that most fearful condemnation which will follow the rejection of eternal life, when it was near, *even at the door*.

Here, then, we part, and I turn to a voice of anguish which pierces my ear. Who is this that standeth afar off, with his eyes downcast to earth, smiting his breast, and crying, in broken accents, *God be merciful to me a sinner*! What aileth thee? Have the terrors of the Almighty seized upon thy spirit? Are thy sins set in order before thee? And while thou art compelled to sue for pardon, art thou filled with apprehensions lest thy suit be refused? Come to a forgiving God in the name of Jesus, and dismiss thy fears. Let no enormity of transgression be an obstacle to an *immediate acceptance of his unspeakable gift*.

Sinners entertain most injurious thoughts of forgiving mercy. They measure it by their own contractedness. Be persuaded, brethren, that Jehovah is as far above you in grace as he is in majesty. You profess to believe that there is merit enough in Jesus to save you, but doubt his *willingness* to apply it to *such* sinners. This is accursed pride, veiled in the garb of humility. "If you were not such atrocious offenders, you would more easily take courage." That is, if you had less unworthiness, or, which is the same thing, were more worthy. You wish to come with a price in your hands. You are not reconciled to a salvation of which Christ Jesus shall have all the glory. Here is the secret. Men affect to doubt *his* willingness, but *they* are not willing. Let them take eternal life as a free gift, and it is theirs. O brethren! never question the superabounding grace of God in Christ. *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* This glorious forgiveness is too high to be reached by carnal or merely rational apprehension. The mind will still shrink back from it as more desirable than credible? "Is this the manner of man? Is there any resemblance to it among the creatures? How can it be true? How can it be possible?" No, it is not the manner of man; there is nothing like it among the creatures; and yet it is possible, and yet it is true. Hear the word of Jehovah, O ye of little faith: *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and lett him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will ABUNDANTLY PARDON.* "Thou hast multiplied sins upon sins," saith God, "and I will multiply pardons upon pardons." Ah! Lord God! I could not pardon with the ten thousandth part of such goodness, my brother that is as mine own soul; and how canst *thou* pour down such pardons upon *me*? "Because thou art a man, and I am God. Let not the thankless objection again pass thy lips, nor rise in thy heart." For *my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Let the doubting, disconsolate sinner throw himself, with all his guilt and vileness, into the arms of this forgiving mercy. It never yet repulsed any who came in the faith of the Mediator's blood, and it will not begin its repulses with thee. Go without delay; go with all boldness in this blood; and thou shalt find as cordial a welcome as grace can give thee.

This forgiveness of sins in the redemption of Jesus, imposes infinite obligations upon them who have *believed it to the saving of their souls*. Whoever disparage the doctrine of sovereignty, it must not be such as owe to it all their present interest in the salvation of God, and all their hope of his eternal glory. But such are we. *By nature the children of wrath even*

as others; alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in us; rushing madly on in the paths of death; grace, unsought, undesired, met us; opened our eyes to our folly; hedged up our way with thorns; turned us back into the path of righteousness. Our wounded consciences and wearied hearts found healing and rest in Jesus Christ. His precious blood was the remedy of our guilt. How soothing the voice which whispered to our troubled spirits, *Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace!* Shall we ever forget that we deserved everything the reverse of what we have received? *That our birth and our nativity was of the land of Canaan, our father an Amorite, and our mother a Hittite? That we were cast out in the open field, to the loathing of our persons?* And that the compassionate Saviour passed by us, and saw us polluted in our own blood; and said unto us when we were in our blood, *LIVE* yea, said unto its when we were in our blood, *LIVE!* If we have fled from the wrath to come; if we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; if we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *ABBA, Father*; all this, and all the glory which is yet to be revealed in us, are the blessed fruits of forgiveness through the redemption of the blood of Jesus. Sweetly constrained by his love, shall we not judge, with the Apostle of the Gentiles, that we must *henceforth live, not unto ourselves, but unto Him that died for us, and rose again?* The sum of our duty and happiness, O believer! is comprised in this precept—*As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so WALK YE IN HIM.* The blood of sprinkling, kept by faith in the conscience, is the sure preservative from guilt; the holy secret of a comfortable and familiar walk with God. In this privilege let us go *from strength to strength*, lifting up our eyes to the hills from whence cometh our help; *showing forth the righteousness and the salvation of Jehovah all the day long*; and waiting for that great consummation, when, all the sorrows of earth's pilgrimage ended, and all its defilements washed away,

"Heaven lifts her everlasting portals high,
And bids the pure in heart behold their God!"

[The text of this extract is taken from Mason's sermon as printed in *The Complete Works of John M. Mason, D. D. in Four Volumes. Edited by His Son, Ebenezer Mason.* Volume 3 (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1849) 187–198. This edition of the Works of Mason are online at <http://deila.dickinson.edu/theirrownwords/title/0057.htm>. ■

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ADDENDA & ERRATA

ADDENDA— Samuel Miller, D. D. (1769–1850) *An Annotated Bibliography*. By Wayne Sparkman, M.A.R., M.Div. *The Confessional Presbyterian* 1 (2005) 11–40.

Below are additional works by Dr. Samuel Miller noted subsequent to the publication of the bibliography in the 2005 issue of *The Confessional Presbyterian*.

- 120.5 *The Earth Filled with the Glory of the Lord*. Reprinted in *The New Southern Presbyterian Review* (Cumming, Ga.: Chalcedon Presbyterian Church) 3.1 (Spring 2005) 7–35.
- 120.6 Reprinted in *The Missionary Enterprise: A Collection of Discourses on the Conquering Power of the Gospel* (Birmingham, Ala.: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005).
- 201.0 Biographical Sketch of the Rev. Dr. Alexander McLeod, in *Annals of the American Associate, Associate Reformed and Reformed Presbyterian Pulpit, or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished Clergymen of these Denominations in the United States* (New York: Robert Carter, 1869) 23–25, of the Reformed Presbyterian section of this volume. Dr. Miller's entry is dated 30 January 1849.
- 201.1 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: Arno Press, 1969) 3.23–25 (Reformed Presbyterian section).
- 201.2 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Presbyterian Pulpit* (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005) 3.23–25.
- 202.0 Biographical account of John Rodgers, D.D., in *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1856) 3.154–165. Pages 154–161 are drawn from Miller's 1813 biography of Rev. John Rodgers (see entry no. 036.0; pages 162–165 present new material, composed by Dr. Miller and dated May 30, 1849).
- 202.1 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: Arno Press, 1969) 3.154–165 (Reformed Presbyterian section).
- 202.2 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Presbyterian Pulpit* (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005) 1.154–165.
- 203.0 Biographical account of Elihu Spencer, D.D., in *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1856) 3.165–169.
- 203.1 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: Arno Press, 1969) 3.165–169.
- 203.2 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Presbyterian Pulpit* (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005) 1.165–169.
- 204.0 Biographical account of Matthew Wilson, in *Annals of the*

American Pulpit (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1856) 3.178–180.

- 204.1 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: Arno Press, 1969) 3.178–180.
- 204.2 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Presbyterian Pulpit* (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005) 1.178–180.
- 205.0 Biographical account of John Ewing, D.D., in *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1856) 3.216–219.
- 205.1 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: Arno Press, 1969) 3.216–219.
- 205.2 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Presbyterian Pulpit* (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005) 1.216–219.
- 206.0 Biographical account of Charles Nisbet, D.D., in *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1856) 3.450–459.
- 206.1 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: Arno Press, 1969) 3.450–459.
- 206.2 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Presbyterian Pulpit* (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005) 1.450–459.
- 207.0 Biographical account of John Nelson Abeel, D.D., in *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1856) 9.97–98.
- 207.1 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York: Arno Press, 1969) 9.97–98.
- 207.2 Reprinted in *Annals of the American Presbyterian Pulpit* (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005) 3.97–98 (Reformed Dutch section).
- 208.0 Letter, dated 15 November 1828, in memory of the Rev. Dr. John Livingston, reprinted in *Memoirs of the Rev. John Henry Livingston, D.D.*, by Rev. Alexander Gunn (New York: W.A. Mercein, printer, 1829) [337–348?]
- 208.1 Reprinted, (New York: Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1856) 337–348.

Biographical—

Sprague, William Buell, D.D., Biographical Entry for Samuel Miller, D.D., in *Annals of the American Presbyterian Pulpit: Commemorative Notices of Distinguished Clergymen of the Presbyterian Denominations in the United States* (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005) 1.600–612. Includes accounts by Rev. James Carnahan (607–610) and Rev. Nicholas Murray (610–612). See also the editions of the *Annals* previously noted.

Contemporary interactions—

Alexander, J. Addison, “A Manuel of Presbytery,” [Review] in *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 21.1 (January 1849) 116–144. [cf. Miller 119.17]

Anon., Review of *A discourse, delivered in the chapel of Nassau-Hall, before the Literary and Philosophical Society of New-Jersey at its first annual meeting, September 27, 1825* (Princeton, N.J.: D.A. Bor-

renstein, 1825; cf. Miller 060.0) in *The North American Review* (Cedar Falls, Iowa: University of Northern Iowa) 22.50 (January 1826) 226–227. Online at <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/browse/journals/nora.1826.html> as part of the *Making of American* project developed by Cornell University.

The Christian Advocate [edited by Ashbel Green] Review of *Letters on the Eternal Generation of the Son of God*, by Moses Stuart and *Letters on the Eternal Sonship of Christ, Addressed to the Rev. Professor Stuart*, by Samuel Miller, D.D., 1.10 (October 1823) 457–464; 1.11 (November 1823) 510–514; and 1.12 (December 1823) 565–570. [cf. Miller 058.0]

Ely, E.S., Review of Dr. Miller's Sermon, in *The Presbyterian Magazine* 1.1 (January 1821) 34–37. [at the ordination of Rev. William Nevins; cf. Miller 046.0]

Gilman, Samuel, Review of *Letters on Clerical Manners and Habits*, by Samuel Miller, D.D., in *The North American Review* (Cedar Falls, Iowa: University of Northern Iowa), Volume 28, Issue 63 (April 1829) 503–521. [cf. Miller 071.0]. Online at <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/browse/journals/nora.1829.html> as part of the *Making of American* project developed by Cornell University.

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

G. New York Historical Society, New York, New York.—

“Item 1494. Rev. Samuel Miller (1769–1850), Presbyterian clergyman, author, professor. Correspondence and papers, 1798–1843. 50 items, including 11 letters from James Eastburn & Co., New York, 1817–1821, and 13 letters to Campbell P. White, 1840–1843, about a delay in dividends on scholarships at Princeton University. Two volumes of documents and papers (known as Miller Papers), collected by Rev. Miller for his proposed history of New York, including letters to him from various learned persons from whom Dr. Miller sought information on various subjects. Included are extracts and transcripts of Dutch and English records, memoranda, notes, etc., relating to Indians, proceedings against Jacob Leisler, territorial disputes, laws, surrender of New Amsterdam, ecclesiastical history, relations with other colonies, etc., up to about 1756. Baptisms performed by Rev. Miller as pastor of the Collegiate Presbyterian Church (First Presbyterian Church), New York City, 1804–1809. 1 vol., 40 pp. (Printed in the NYHS *Quarterly*, July, 1918, and January 1919).” Description from Arthur J. Breton, *A Guide to the Manuscript Collections of the New-York Historical Society* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, [1972]) 247–248.

Note: There are copies of original Samuel Miller correspondence in a collection of material relating to Charles Brockden Brown at Duke University. However, as we were not able to trace the originals before going to press with this issue of *The Confessional Presbyterian*, we hope to provide specific information in the next issue (D.V.).

ERRATA— Samuel Miller, D. D. (1769–1850) An Annotated Bibliography. By Wayne Sparkman, M.A.R., M.Div. *The Confessional Presbyterian* 1 (2005).

Page 11. Left column, first paragraph, for “Online Catalog of the Library of Congress (OCLC)” correct to “Online Computer Library Center (OCLC).”

ERRATA— Examining the Work of S. W. Carruthers: Justifying a Critical Approach to the Text of the Westminster Standards & Correcting the 18th Century Lineage of the Traditional Scottish Text. By Chris Coldwell. *The Confessional Presbyterian* 1 (2005).

Page 62. Left column, second paragraph, for “November 25, 2004” correct to “November 21–22, 2004.”

ERRATA— Reframing Presbyterian Worship: A Critical Survey of the Worship Views of John M. Frame and R. J. Gore. By Frank J. Smith, Ph.D., D. D. and David C. Lachman, Ph.D. *The Confessional Presbyterian* 1 (2005).

Page 150. Under Endnote A, correct “Public Worship of God,” to “Public Worship of God.”

ERRATA— Antiquary: The Development of the Traditional Form of The Westminster Standards. By Chris Coldwell. *The Confessional Presbyterian* 1 (2005).

Page 169. Right column, end of footnote 8, for “Dr. Waugh’s presented ...” correct to “Dr. Waugh’s research presented ...”

Presbyterian Due Process, Continued from Page 42.

crime of adultery was a state concern that might call forth a death sentence and the corresponding need for due process afforded by the state. It may be that as the Church finds itself assuming its own place and acting more independently from State interference or control that the need for due process protections in formal discipline becomes more urgent.

This study, has not attempted to account for the due process rules of Anglicanism or Methodism in America. What makes Presbyterian due process unique with respect to these other churches would require further study but what has been presented thus far points to a Presbyterian concern that had its own line of development and, if anything, reacted against the Anglican practice rather than adopting it.

Finally, this study presents some food for thought on how Presbyterians might more zealously include the congregation in disciplinary processes. In our desire to avoid congregationalism, we should not be ignorant of the role the congregation plays in the process. Unless we expect a congregation to have implicit faith in Presbyterian judicatories, our disciplinary process must be generally public if we are to expect congregation members to regard excommunicates as worthy of admonition and general disapproval. ■

Liberty of Conscience, Continued from Page 60.

as a screen that keeps the world, the flesh and the devil out of the church and only allows in the true doctrine and practice of God's inerrant word. Thus, it defends the purity of the church.

Second, it serves as a confessional imperative. Theology, like other academic disciplines, continues to learn new biblical truths. Since Liberty of Conscience bars new teachings from the church until they are proven to be absolute truth, it creates a demand that the church make a decision. It becomes the responsibility of denominational synods or general assemblies to decide if a doctrine is biblical, and if so, elevate it to confessional status. ■

An Analysis of Open Theism, Continued from Page 70.

it purports to establish, namely, human responsibility before God.

The gospel of grace is nothing if it is not good news about God's sovereign purpose. God's good news assures us [the elect] that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). God did not wait for man to assist Him: He saw that no one could save himself, so He Himself put on the armor of salvation (Isaiah 59: 9–21). Since He Himself is the author of salvation, He

guarantees that nothing will separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:39). He accomplishes redemption in history, and He creates the response of faith in our hearts. He opens our hearts to respond to His message (Acts 16:14), so that all whom He has appointed to eternal life come to faith (Acts 13:48). At no point do we make the first move.

A gospel of grace is a gospel of divine sovereignty. That message may be distasteful to modern people, but it is the Word of God, and without it we have no hope. Free will leaves us in despair. Only sovereign grace can bring salvation, faith, and hope (NOG, 212).

Soli Deo Gloria. ■

In Brief: T. & J. Swords Letter Transcription, Continued from Page 205.

"Sent by Mail about the 1st of Aug \$30." Then on the left hand inside page which was previously blank the same hand writes the following:

"In addition to the Prayer Books contained in this Bill I bought previously 26 and have now sent for 36 more by Mr A. Burr Sept 13th 1817.

"Sept 8th 1818 I have now purchased and disposed of in my papers between 160 and & a 165 books."

The back page (also not shown) is the cover of the letter. When folded one panel displays the addressee "Rev Joseph D. Welton, Weston, Connecticut" with a red circular date stamp "New York Jul 11." The other side reads: "Messrs Swords' N.Y."

Psallo: Psalm 2:1–12, Continued from Page 206.

the inspired vehicle of praise for God's people, witnessing to the surpassing greatness of Christ, His Divine perfections, His offices as Redeemer, King, Prophet, Priest. In the passage from Luke's Gospel above, we see Christ chiding some of His disciples for their blindness in that they saw not His suffering, death, and glory in their Bible, which included the Psalter. Let us not be like them! Let us, in the light of New Testament, see Christ in its lines, as we sing to the Glory of Him whose kingdom shall be from sea to sea, and shall last as long as the sun (Psalm 72:8; 17)!

TODD L. RUDELL ■

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T. & J. Swords detail. See page 233.