14 The Confessional Presbyterian

2018 *A Journal for Discussion of Presbyterian Doctrine & Practice*

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Editorial

While a bit tardy, the reader has in hand the fourteenth issue of *The Confessional Presbyterian*, and the editors are pleased to offer again a wide variety of material. We as always owe a debt of thanks to the contributors. Our cover subject is T. D. Witherspoon, for which we have provided a transcription from manuscript of one of his earliest sermons, as well as some biographical notices and a survey of one of his most known works. Also in *Articles*, there is an exegetical piece of interest, a large number of historical/historical-theological articles, and several doctrinal subjects close out the section. As we intend to keep this editorial brief this year, we simply commend them all; however, without prejudice to the rest, we would single out the importance of "Images of Christ and the Vitals of the Reformed System," by Harrison Perkins. The teaching of the Westminster Larger Catechism in Q&A 109, that imaging the Second Person of the Trinity is prohibited in the second commandment, is one of the most frequent exceptions taken to the Westminster Standards by ministers in confessional Presbyterian churches today, second only to the doctrine of the Sabbath (see our 2016 'Sabbath' issue). Mr. Perkins defends the Larger Catechism's position and that it is integral to the Westminster system of doctrine. His essay should be required reading by those contemplating, or who have taken, such an exception. He concludes: "[T]he Reformed interpretation of the second commandment, which prohibits images of Christ, should be normative for our lives because the entire force of the Reformed system supports this position. The immediate import of this thesis is that exceptions to the confessional position do strike at the vitals of our faith and should not be permitted by presbyteries."

This issue continues with our regular *Reviews* section, for which we direct the reader to the listing below, and wraps up with some fine entries in our regular recurring back end sections. Todd L. Ruddell provides a setting with commentary on Psalm 128 for *Psallo*. Ryan Hurd provides us with a translation with introduction and background in "*In Translatione*: Johannes Hornbeeck (1617–1666), Disputational Piety at Leiden, and a Translation of *De desiderio animæ erga Christum*." For our *Antiquary* feature this year we are very pleased to announce the discovery and transcription of a surviving portion of a sermon preached by George Gillespie at the opening of the Scottish Parliament in March of 1648. Only two Gillespie sermons are known to have survived, so even a portion of another is a significant find, let alone one preached at that crucial time, and on top of that, with the last verses of Psalm 2 as the text.

We announce again some staff changes for this year. James J. Cassidy and Glen J. Clary have had to step down as editors due to the demands of life and the ministry. We wish them well and extend our thanks for their contributions and aid to the journal over the years (Jim since issue 2). We also have removed the distinction of articles and reviews editors and dismissed with thanks our slate of contributing editors, three of whom we asked and have agreed to continue in the capacity of assistant editors: Frank J. Smith, Alan Strange, and Wayne Sparkman. All three have been of assistance to the journal from early on and we welcome them to this new position with the journal.▪

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Thomas Dwight Witherspoon
(1836–1898)

Biography (1884)[1]

In the year 1836 there resided in the village of Greensboro, Ala., a godly family, whose lineage was illustrious in the best sense of the word. Robert Franklin Witherspoon and Sarah Agnes, his wife, could look back to their ancestry with honest pride. Mr. Witherspoon was a ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church, and his *ancestors for five generations* had held the same honorable office. In the great day of the founding of the nation John Witherspoon had set his name to the *Declaration of Independence*, and still further back the godly elder loved to point to one illustrious name from whom he could trace his descent—the intrepid Elijah of Scotland, whose name the whole Christian world will treasure while the world stands—John Knox. If pride in illustrious descent is ever justifiable, it was so in this case.

Mr. Witherspoon was a planter in the neighboring "canebreaks" of Marengo County. He was a man of ardent piety, deeply read in the theological lore, and very fond of theological inquiry. It was in that godly home that the future Moderator was born, on January 17th, 1836. Dr. Witherspoon is now, therefore, in the forty-ninth year of his age. The good elder was an ardent admirer of Timothy Dwight, and Dwight's "Theology" was his favorite text-book. In honor of his favorite author he gave his boy the name of Thomas *Dwight*.

Four years afterward the godly father fell asleep in Jesus. The boy's training devolved on his mother, happily a devoted Christian woman, of rare intelligence, sagacity and consecration. Her impress, more than that of any other human being has been upon his whole after life. It pleased God to spare her life until a few years ago, so that she was permitted to reap the fruit of her early and assiduous care in his mental and religious training.

Under the fostering care of such a mother, his religious experiences were very early developed, and in 1846, *at the age of ten years*, the boy made confession of Christ during the progress of a meeting conducted by the Rev. Robert Nall, D.D., the evangelist of the Synod of Alabama, and was admitted to the communion of the Mt. Zion Presbyterian Church, near Greensboro.

In 1853, at the age of seventeen, he entered The University of Alabama as a student in the Sophomore Class; but in the year following changed to the University of Mississippi, from which institution he was graduated in June, 1856, with the highest honors of his class. In the fall of the same year (1856) he entered the Theological Seminary at Columbia, S.C., completing the course and receiving his theological diploma in May, 1859.[2]

On the 6th of June, 1859, he was licensed as a probationer for the Gospel ministry by the Presbytery of Chickasaw, of the Synod of Memphis, and on the 13th day of May, 1860, he was ordained by the same Presbytery to the full work of the ministry and installed as pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Oxford, Miss., the site of the university from which he had recently graduated. It was in this, his first church, that a characteristic of Dr. Witherspoon's ministry was first noticed,

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The Sources from which these extracts are taken were provided by Wayne Sparkman.

1. "The Rev. Thomas D. Witherspoon, D.D., LL.D., of Louisville, Ky. Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (Southern)," *The Christian Herald and Signs of Our Times,* Thursday, November 20, 1884 (No. 47 – New Series): 738–739.

2. "He was licensed to preach at Zion Church. He was a graduate of Columbia Seminary and was engaged to be married to Miss Nannie Thornwell, the daughter of Rev. J. H. Thornwell. The very day that they were to be married, death came to the Thornwell home and the bride elect, her wedding robes converted into burial robes, was laid away in the cemetery at Columbia. A beautiful name on her tombstone is read by every student that passes that way, Nannie Witherspoon Thornwell." The Reverend C. W. Grafton (Cornelius Washington Grafton), "The History of the Mississippi Synod Presbyterian Church, U. S." (Unpublished manuscript, Union Mississippi, 1927), 527. The University of Mississippi holds the original manuscript and this and the next note have been transcribed from a copy.

which has been observed ever since, wherever he has preached. His teaching has always been especially attractive to young men. There was a warm sympathy in his manner, and a simple, direct, manly force in his words which went straight to the hearts of the young, and he succeeded, by rare tact, in winning their attention to the things which make for their peace. God abundantly blessed him, notably in this sphere of labor, which is, more than any other, a source of strength to the Church.

But this useful work was rudely interrupted.

The outbreak of the war occurred early in Dr. Witherspoon's settlement at Oxford. It was not likely that a congregation such as that he had gathered around him would be indifferent to the issues which were agitating the country from end to end. The young men who looked up to their pastor for spiritual guidance were deeply moved by the events of that sad time. They were true to their principles, and thoroughly in earnest in their convictions of the justice of their cause. When, leaving their homes and their families to take up arms in that bitter struggle, they marched to the field of battle, Dr. Witherspoon marched with them, claiming no exemption as a privilege of his profession, but ready to fight and die with his friends as their comrade. He enlisted as a private in the Lamar Rifles of the Eleventh Mississippi Volunteers, and served in that capacity through the first year of the war. Later, his services were needed so sorely in the capacity in which they were most effective, but they were never remitted. He acted as Chaplain to the regiment, and remained steadfast in that service until, at Appomattox Court House, he received his parole in the final surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia.[3]

Dr. Witherspoon's courage had been tested on the battle-fields of that long and heart-breaking struggle, and it was to be still further tested by another ordeal, in which even the bravest soldiers have often succumbed. He accepted a call to the Second Presbyterian Church of Memphis, Tenn., where he settled in August, 1865. The war and the miserable time which followed it had reduced the church to a very dispirited and enfeebled condition. Under a ministry of five years, through *epidemics of cholera and yellow fever*, the church grew with such rapidity that it became and continues to be the strongest and most influential of that denomination in the city.

His health giving way under the influence of excessive labor in a malarial climate, he was forced to resign his pastorate amid the tears of his people, in August, 1870, and to seek recuperation in the mountains of Virginia, spending one year very pleasantly as supply of the mountain church of Christiansburg, Va. In 1871 he was called for a two year's term to the chaplaincy of the University of Virginia, where two of the happiest and most useful years of his life were spent.

During the summer of 1873 a further relief from labor became indispensable. He therefore crossed the Atlantic, and travelled extensively in Europe. After a few months of change he found his health so far restored as to be able on his return to resume regular work; and so, in October 1873, he became pastor of the Tabb Street Presbyterian Church, in Petersburg, Va., one of the largest and most influential churches in the State. Here he remained greatly endeared to the people until the fall of 1882, when, having received a unanimous call to the First Presbyterian Church of Louisville, Ky., he felt it his duty to sever the delightful relations that had existed for nine years, and enter the larger and more vigorous city of the West.

Here he is now serving this important church, and with the superabundant energy which characterizes him and the strong appetite for labor that seems to be a part of his being, he accepted the office of Chairman of the Synod's Committee of Evangelistic Labor, having oversight of that extensive work, in which more than twenty evangelists are employed, and as a result of which over *fifteen hundred communicants* were added last year to the roll of the Synod.

Few men of Dr. Witherspoon's age have shared more of the honors of the church.

There are few of the prominent pulpits of the Southern Church to which he has not at one time or another, when vacant, been asked to devote his pastoral services. He has been time and again solicited to take the presidency of colleges and universities. Various chairs in theological seminaries have been tendered him. But he has felt that his *one mission in life* was to preach the Gospel and nothing has ever turned him aside from this work.

His Preaching, as we have said, is simple, earnest and direct. It is in the only true sense of the word extemporaneous. Though he prepares, with most careful mental elaborations, he never writes before speaking, and therefore, of course, never has any notes with him

3. "After the licensure of Mr. Witherspoon the call came for the loyal ones to enter the war in the great civil conflict and Rev. T. D. Witherspoon entered as chaplain in Davis' Brigade, C.S.A. He stayed right with the boys all the time, carrying his rifle on the field of battle, comforting them and cheering them, taking the hard fare of the boys. He preached to them and buried the dead. After the hard struggle was over he became the noted Dr. Witherspoon of Louisville, Ky. and filled a great field of usefulness. He was Moderator of the General Assembly which met at Vicksburg in 1884 and was the author of a very noted book called "Children of the Covenant." Grafton, 527.

in the pulpit. His sermons, lectures, literary addresses, etc., are all prepared without putting pen to paper, the thoughts being all carefully elaborated, but the language left to the inspiration of the moment.

The degree of D.D. was conferred upon him in 1867, at the age of thirty-one, by the University of Mississippi, and the degree of LL.D., by the same institution, at the age of forty-eight—only a few months ago.

Dr. Witherspoon is of delicate stature, but capable of undergoing an incredible amount of work, and his ministry thus far has been signally blessed in the addition of souls to the church.

Among the publications from his pen may be noted the following: "The Appeal of the South to its Educated Men" (1866); "Children of the Covenant" (1873); "Materialism in its Relations to Modern Civilization" (1878) and "Letters on Romanism" (1882). The second of these has passed through several editions, and has elicited the highest praise as a book of encouragement for parents and instruction for the young.

As an illustration of the position Dr. Witherspoon holds in the esteem of his Northern brethren, we may say that in the course of an interview with Dr. Talmage recently, he said, referring to the subject of our sketch: "I am glad that you are going to give a biographical sketch and portrait of Dr. Witherspoon in your paper. He is one of the grandest and best men in the South. He wields a large influence, and it is always on the right side. I rejoiced with many when I saw that the Presbyterian Church honored itself by selecting him as Moderator of General Assembly."

T. D. Witherspoon as a Preacher (1900)[4]

The observant study of the personality and the methods of work followed by effective preachers affords an exceedingly useful form of homiletical research. The careful study of the best treatises on homiletics is a good thing, but to observe the preacher actually at work is often better. In any event, such study of homiletics in the concrete is a valuable addition to its investigation in the abstract.

In this article the personality and pulpit work of the late Dr. Witherspoon, Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology in Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, who passed away deeply lamented a little more than a year ago, will be studied for the purpose, namely, of bringing out some useful hints that may be of value to younger ministers. We have heard many preachers in this and other lands, and we can freely say that, as a sermonizer, the subject of this article had very few equals; and as a preacher, if he had possessed a deep, rich voice, he would have had few superiors in this generation as an effective popular pulpit orator.

It was the writer's privilege to know him very intimately; and, by the courtesy of his family, he has had the advantage of access to his literary remains for this study. Such a study naturally falls into two parts. The first deals with the personality of the man, and the second with his methods as a preacher.

The Personality of the Man.

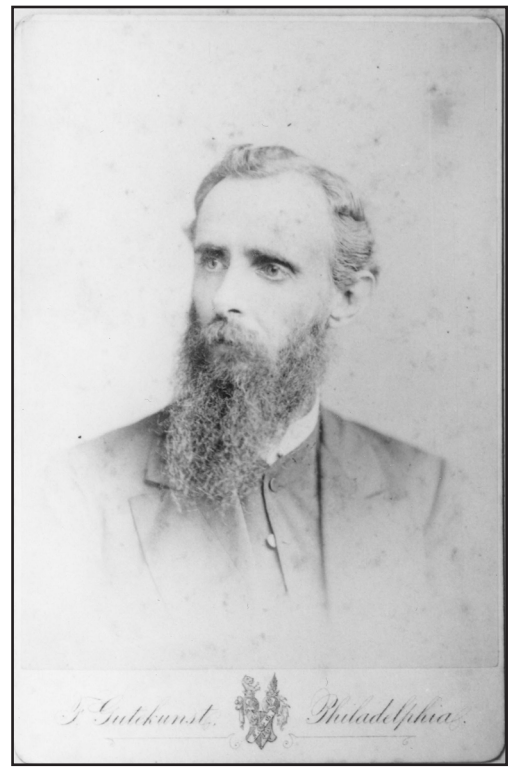
He was a thorough gentleman. He came from noble ancestry, having in his veins the blood of John Knox. He was dignified and courteous, and always showed this in his intercourse with all classes of people. The most cultured greatly respected him, and those in the lowly walks of life always felt at ease in his presence. In him dignity and courtesy, gentleness and strength, self-respect and consideration for others were finely blended.

Such a man had in this respect important gifts for the preacher. The pulpit always needs such men. When the call to the ministry comes to the sons of our best families, the result is one of God's noblest gifts to His Church. The Church needs men from all the walks of life, and she urgently requires that all alike be gentle and strong, refined and dignified. A boorish manner or a clownish way in the pulpit will greatly limit a preacher's usefulness. Good manners, fine feelings, and refined instincts on the part of the preacher will touch a responsive chord in all classes.

His mental gifts were superior. This appeared during his career as a student, and was evident all his life. His powers of mind were finely balanced and harmoniously developed. His logical power was good, his philosophical insight was keen, and he could think a matter through in a very thorough way. His imagination was unusually fine. It was vivid, yet always under the control of good taste and judgment. It was this faculty, with the fine poetic feeling which went along with it, that enabled him to produce profound impressions.

4. "The Late Rev. Thomas D Wight Witherspoon, D.D., Ll.D., as a Preacher," By Francis R. Beattie, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D., Louisville, Ky., Professor In Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Author Of "Radical Criticism," Etc., *The Homiletic Review*, Volume 39 (Funk & Wagnalls, 1900): 214–219. In a note to the title of his piece Beattie writes, ""The readers of The Review are familiar, through his valuable articles on preaching, with the name of Dr. Witherspoon, who entered into rest November 3, 1898. While he was very popular as a preacher with people of the highest culture, he was equally popular with the rough mountaineers of Kentucky. His work of instruction in the Louisville Theological Seminary of the Southern Presbyterian Church was supplemented by summer evangelistic campaigns in the mountains. His varied experience makes the study of his personality and his methods of peculiar value to other preachers."

For the preacher all this is important. These gifts, used as they were by Dr. Witherspoon, enabled him to reach all classes. He could edify the refined city congregation, and could deeply move a gathering of peasants among the hills. The Church needs the very best minds for her service, for the day is past when these gifts, consecrated to the Master's service, can any longer be despised. Above all, to the careful cultivation of the imagination every minister should give earnest attention. This faculty gives vividness and concreteness to preaching. Its use enables the preacher to reproduce Scriptural scenes, and to illustrate the truths he presents in such a way that they stand before the audience like very pictures. The truth has color and movement given to it, and it is thus made attractive and effective. If young ministers would save themselves from getting prosy, they must cultivate the imagination.



T. D. Witherspoon. *Carte de visite portrait.* Reproduced with permission of the PCA Historical Center.

He had a deeply sympathetic nature. He had a warm heart as well as a good head. His feelings were very kindly, so that he had sincere sympathy with people in all conditions. The result was that rich and poor, high and low felt that they had ready access to him. He could with the same natural graciousness enter the mansion of the cultured and the cabin of the mountaineer. Children were drawn to him, and those in trouble and sorrow readily sought him in seasons of distress. This gave his preaching a warmth and pathos that ministered much comfort to those in trouble.

He was also in ardent sympathy with nature in her varying moods. Some of his most striking illustrations were drawn from this source. When moderator of the General Assembly in 1884, and at the Westminster Assembly Celebration in 1897, illustrations of this kind then used in public addresses produced effects almost electrical. This sympathy enabled him to produce many original illustrations.

Here are vital hints for the preacher. He must have warm sympathies, if he is to get near to his people and to have heart in his work. And sympathy with nature should be cultivated by every preacher. The Old-Testament prophets were deeply imbued with the influences from nature; and our Lord constantly drew on nature for His parables and illustrations. Here is a pattern for the preacher to-day.

To crown all, Dr. Witherspoon was a man of simple faith and devout piety. He came from a godly ancestry. He early devoted his life to the service of Christ in the Gospel ministry. The records of these early years serve to show how earnest he was in this purpose. He had strong and well-grounded convictions in regard to the reality of divine things. He was a firm believer in the Bible as the Word of God. He so received, and so preached it. His piety was simple, natural, and unobtrusive. His life was always marked by high devotion to principle, so that religion with him was not a mere sentiment.

Here, again, is an example worthy of imitation. The spiritual tone of the preacher has much to do with the quality of his preaching. "Like priest, like people " here means that the piety of the preacher will in the long run determine the average piety of the pew. If the preacher is to retain his power, he must have piety as well as learning. No forced utterances about piety will avail if there be not a living fire on the altar of his heart. The preacher must ever keep this fire burning; and this piety must be deeply rooted in principle, so that his life may commend the Gospel which he preaches.

These natural and gracious endowments in the subject of this paper were cultivated by him with great care and constancy. He formed good habits of study in early days, and kept them up all his life. He did not think that when college and seminary days end, hard study may be given up. He not only prepared his sermons with great care, but he continued to read widely in all directions. The stores thus gathered he poured into his sermons. This discipline enabled him to do his work rapidly and thoroughly, and it also made his sermons

fresh and instructive. He could scarcely be dull if he tried. He acquired an almost faultless literary style. His sermons are models of pure English, his conversation was always elegant, his articles for the press were clear as crystal, and his letters were always so correct that they were ready for the printer.

All of this is full of meaning for the young minister. Good mental habits, severe intellectual discipline, wide reading, patient methods of study, and thorough work on sermons are simply indispensable for the preacher of the present day. The dead-line is not so much a matter of years as of habits of study. That line is sometimes crossed a few years after the young man leaves the seminary; or it may not be reached at seventy years of age, as was the case with Cuyler and Storrs, now both over seventy. Unremitting study, constant reading and meditation, ever-increasing knowledge of the Holy Scriptures are the secrets of a growing ministry. If learning without piety makes a fruitless ministry, piety without learning is sure to make an ineffective ministry.

His Methods of Work

There now lie before the writer several thousand sermons fully written, and sermon briefs, and their perusal has been made with deep and pathetic interest. Beside the sermon books and manuscripts lie two books in which a complete record of his sermon texts and of the date and place of preaching is made. The last entry is No. 4,917, which may be taken to represent the number of his sermons. By following this record one can trace out the whole movement of his life during the almost forty years of his ministry. Some of the most touching entries are of the sermons preached when he was a chaplain in the Confederate army, mainly in Virginia. There is the record of one at Waynesburg, Pa., and another at Gettysburg, Pa., about the time of the terrible battle at the latter place. An inspection of this varied material reveals several instructive features of homiletical value.

There is everywhere evidence of most careful work. Everything about these sermons and addresses impresses one with the marked diligence and system of the work. Here are his first sermons, which were parts of trial for licensure and ordination in 1859-60, and they are in very perfect literary form, and very mature for a young man of twenty-three. Here are a dozen books filled with carefully written sermons, and for each an index, giving the text, with a fitting title for the sermon. The sermons on single manuscripts, and even the outlines of his prayer-meeting addresses, bear the same features of systematic treatment and orderly, careful work throughout.

Here is a good lesson for ministers young and old. A good systematic habit of working will save time and make the task lighter. Once in a while a genius may appear who can set all rules of order at defiance, but the average minister must be content with a genius for hard work, and a systematic habit is his best helpmeet in it. Let the young minister acquire this habit at the outset of his ministry, and he will master circumstances, and not be at the mercy of his surroundings.

Another marked feature of the materials before us is their strictly Scriptural nature. A good text, not a mere catchword, of Scripture is usually chosen, carefully expounded, and then its truth developed and applied in a direct and rational way. We do not observe a single case in which some topic of the times is taken for the sermon theme and a text gotten for it. The text is from Scripture, and its truth is brought out by careful exposition, and then applied to the conditions and needs of the time. This is a vital matter for the preacher to regard.

At the present day there is temptation for ministers to forget their true function. They are to preach to the times; but they should always be sure that the message they bear is not their own, but God's. To heed this will give directness and power to all preaching.

A further quality of the work before us is its expository character. In some cases there is a thorough exposition of some difficult texts, and in others a comprehensive exposition of connected passages. A series of sixteen sermons on the Book of Job, and one of twelve on the Minor Prophets, illustrate this feature. Much labor has been bestowed upon these expositions. They are so complete in both matter and form as to be almost ready for publication.

Here is a pertinent hint for the pulpit of to-day in regard to the nature and value of expository preaching. The people want to know what the Bible teaches. One of the healthful signs of the present time is this demand of the pew for the Bible, and the pulpit should respond promptly and fully to meet it. This means hard work, for expository preaching of the right kind needs more time and labor than any other. The careful and devout exposition of any book of the Bible in a connected way will do both preacher and people great good.

The work lying before us reveals great variety. This variety appears in different respects. In the selection of themes the whole area of religious truth and duty seems to be covered. The texts are taken from all parts of the Old and New Testaments. Doctrinal, evangelical, and practical themes appear in due Scriptural proportion. Biography, history, prophecy, parable, miracle, and promise all recur in ever-inviting variety as one turns

the pages of these sermon books. Christian privileges, the duties of Church officers, and the life and work of the Church are all presented in these sermons.

This is an important feature for all preaching. There must be variety in pulpit work, and endless variety, as the Scriptures exhibit and the needs of the people demand. With Christ crucified as the central theme, the pulpit should cause all its preaching to revolve in constantly recurring variety around this theme. Here is room for endless skill, inventive resources, and patient labor. But it will make the pulpit the minister's throne, and his ministry a constantly growing power.

Along with this variety we see adaptation in the materials before us. The themes were chosen to fit the circumstances. The sermons and prayer-meeting addresses are appropriate. His sermons to children, of which there are many, and on special academic and other occasions, are admirable in their adaptation. Those preached to the soldiers in camp, to students at the university, to people in sorrow and trouble, and to the plain mountain people are always peculiarly suitable. There is genius for adaptation always. This was one of the most marked features of his whole ministry, and never did it more plainly appear than in his later years, when, with a company of the seminary students, he went, during vacation, to the rough mountains of Kentucky to preach the simple Gospel to the people there.

This reveals a feature of his ministry that every preacher should strive to possess. Many a good man fails for lack of tactful adaptation in his preaching. A good sermon fails to hit its mark simply because the aim was not good. Endless labor, and careful study not only of the truth to be set forth in the sermon, but also of the audience to be addressed, are demanded.

There are striking courses of sermons among the material before us. Some of these courses are worth mentioning. One on the apostles and one on the prophets arrest attention. A course on some of the negatives in the Book of Revelations gives: No sin; No tears; No more pain; No more sea; No winter; No night there; No temple. Sometimes two sermons are coupled together so as to make a very vivid contrast: Crowns at the Feet; and Crowns on the Head. One series on " The Antitheses of Character " is so marked that it is worth quoting in full: I. Lot, A Worldly Choice; and Moses, A Religious Choice. II. Baalam, A Religious Sentiment; Caleb, A Religious Principle. III. Samson, Endowments Wasted; Gideon, Endowments Consecrated. IV. Jephthah, The Superstitious Vow; Ruth, The Religious Vow. V. Saul, Promotion without Piety; David, Promotion with Piety. VI. Solomon, The Seeker of Wise Counsel; Rehoboam, The Despiser of Wise Counsel. VII. Jonah, Peril in the Midst of Security; Daniel, Security in the Midst of Peril.

This will serve to mark a feature of the work of the subject of this study which is full of suggestiveness for young ministers. There will be pleasure in such work, and its result will always be fresh and instructive to the people. Let the young preacher cultivate the habit of original research into the hidden depths of the Scriptures, and let him seek to exercise in a proper way his inventive skill in framing brief courses of sermons after the manner of those quoted.

Only a closing paragraph can be devoted to the method of preparation as revealed in this material. During the early period, for perhaps ten years, there seems to have been faithful writing in full. Then evening sermons seem to have been preached from notes in an extemporaneous way, but always with vigorous thinking through of the subject. In later years he preached sometimes without writing at all, and then wrote the sermon out afterward. This seems to have been the natural growth of a disciplined and well-stored mind. It affords a suggestion and a warning. It warns the young minister against dispensing with writing his sermons in the early years of his ministry, and it suggests that by patient effort a preacher can do his very best preaching without notes after severe reflection and careful mastery of all his materials. The subject of this study never read his sermons, and his example and advice were always against it.

"After he had served his own generation, by the will of God he fell on sleep." " And he being dead yet speaketh."▪

Christ. His Constraining Love.
A Sermon by T. D. Witherspoon

Introduction.

T. D. Witherspoon entered the Christian ministry at age twenty-three, having been licensed to preach on June 6, 1859[1] and ordained on May 13, 1860.[2] In his early ministry he adopted the practice of writing out his sermons in full, transitioning to notes and outlines in his later years.[3] A substantial archive of some of his 4,917 sermons and note books is housed at the PCA Historical Center.[4] Witherspoon preached the fifth sermon of his ministry while still a licentiate at his home church where he first professed faith at age ten, Mount Zion Presbyterian Church, in Pontotoc County, Mississippi.[5] As indicated, it is fully written out and almost publishable as is,[6] if not for lack of punctuation and perhaps a few missing or implied words.It is string-bound in booklet form, comparable to the modern "blue book," as are the other fully written sermons. Some have lined pages but most are unlined in the collection as in this fifth sermon.[7] In this example, the first page (i.e. the cover) contains only the title information, which reads,

No. 5
-Christ-
His constraining love
2 Corinthians 5:14
July 1857~~9~~.

The Transcription. Edited by Chris Coldwell. Transcriptions of several of T. D. Witherspoon's sermons have been made by students of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary for the PCA Historical Center, and Wayne Sparkman provided the draft text of this sermon to the editor. The draft was corrected against the original, some omitted material and various editorial notes have been added and punctuation imposed by the editor where needed.

1. Witherspoon preached his "Trial Sermon for Licensure" on June 4, 1859. The text was John 1:9 and he preached at Zion Church. The next day, the Lord's Day, he preached by request of the Zion congregation on 1 Corinthians 1:23, which he numbers his third sermon. Hence, if his numbering is correct, Witherspoon must have preached again the day before or preached a morning sermon also at Zion or elsewhere on the Sabbath. See Wayne Sparkman, "The Sermons of the Rev. Thomas Dwight Witherspoon Covering the period of 4 June 1859 – 17 September 1865 during which time he was pastor of the Oxford, MS Presbyterian Church and Chaplain of the 42nd Mississippi Infantry Regiment, CSA" (2005), Sermon 1, sermon 2, page 1. Thomas Dwight Witherspoon Papers, PCA Historical Center, http://www.pcahistory.org/findingaids/witherspoon/ (accessed July 2, 2018). The collection lacks sermon two and sermon four of the first sermons preached by Witherspoon. A second file lists the sermons for the later period of his ministry.

2. The prior biography gives this date. A history of the Zion Church gives the year as 1859, but this is an error. J. Hunter League, "History of White Zion Church," http://msgw.org/pontotoc/churches/whitezion-history.htm (accessed July 2, 2018). Witherspoon's ordination sermon on Romans 5:1 was preached on May 12, 1860. Sparkman, #68, p. 2.

3. See the biographical notices on Witherspoon preceding this sermon.

4. The collection contains over a hundred full length sermons, most from his ministry at Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tennessee, and several hundred smaller booklets of sermon notes and outlines. Thomas Dwight Witherspoon Papers, Manuscript Collection #83, PCA Historical Center, St Louis, Missouri. Sermon 5 is number three on the list compiled by Wayne Sparkman.

5. The biography notes this was near Greensboro, apparently referencing the old county seat of Webster County, which no longer exists but is still known for the Old Greensboro Cemetery.

6. Witherspoon's biographer makes the same observation, and also notes that he never merely read his sermons to his hearers. See the biographical notices of Witherspoon prior to this sermon.

7. The watermark or logo of the manufacturer of the booklet is on the title page in the upper left-hand corner. Closer examination may identify the company, but at press time the only thing clear is possibly the word London running on the right side of the oval shaped mark. Others of the sermons also have this emblem.

The "7" in 1857 has been overwritten heavily with a "9". This may indicate that as he used this sermon again, Witherspoon added this information and mistakenly wrote 1857 and later corrected this (as he does again, below). The sermon notes begin on the first right-hand page after the title page which is numbered page 1. On the first inside page after the title page (page 2), there

are notes on the occasions this sermon was preached and on the hymns and psalms Witherspoon chose to go with it. In the upper left corner there are hymn numbers in ink which have been augmented later in pencil with psalm selections, likely as alternatives for the later occasions.

H. 283 (in ink) 95th Ps 1st Part (in pencil)
H. 193 (in ink) 35 2d Hymn (in pencil)
H. 276 (in ink) 348th " (in pencil)

These all may be found in *Psalms and hymns adapted to social, private, and public worship in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America approved and authorized by the General Assembly* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1843).

In the middle of the page is a list of the other dates Witherspoon preached this sermon, the first four subsequent occasions all in 1859. In pencil are then added later dates, interestingly all in the month of October, the reason for which is not clear.

Zion	July 18579
Pontotoc[8]	" "
Oxford Aug[9]	"
Water Valley[10]	" "
College Hill[11]	Nov. " "
Memphis[12]	Oct. 1868 (in pencil)
Christianburg[13]	Oct 1870 (in pencil)
U of Va[14]	Oct 1871 (in pencil)

On the last page facing the inside back cover, Witherspoon has given some more hymn information (perhaps for quotation as he specifies only one or two stanzas) and written a paragraph, all in pencil, except for the text in bold, which was in ink. The symbol (here rendered §) in each case varies in form but seems to stand for stanza.

Ps 90 P. 2. C. M. **§3**
283 **§3**
194 **§2&4**

"It was the misfortune of the Apostle Paul, as it has been of many illustrious servants of God since, to have his motives as a Christian Minister misunderstood—to have his zeal for religion construed as fanaticism[15] and to be regarded practically as insane—"

As for the editing of the text presented here, since this text was one penned from which to speak, punctuation has been added or changed without notice to aid the reading of it. All footnotes are editorial. Clear misspellings are corrected without notice. All ampersands are rendered "and" and other abbreviations and contractions expanded without notice. Needless capitalization has been omitted, and pronouns in reference to persons of the Trinity uniformly capitalized. The original underlining is preserved; original page numbers are noted in the text where the text breaks as |2|, |3|, etc. Quotation marks have been added or paired/corrected without notice. If there is doubt about the rendering of a word it appears either in {braces} or is commented upon in a footnote. Paragraph breaks and other formatting have been added without notice. The insertion point (^), which is original unless in square brackets, indicates words have been written interline above at that point in the text.

8. Pontotoc Presbyterian Church. A transcription of the session minute book online at the website for Saint Andrew's Presbytery (PCUSA), has the interesting notice. "August 31st 1856. Session met. The following members were present. Rev. J. H. Miller, Mod'r. Elders. Robert Gilmer, Wm Spencer A. H. Conkey. On motion A. H. Conkey was appointed a delegate to Chickasaw Presbytery which is called to meet at Zion Church, Pontotoc County on Friday before the first Sabbath in September, for the purpose of receiving Thomas D. Witherspoon under care. A. H. Conkey, S. Clerk." Witherspoon's brother P. F., who taught at Chickasaw College, and was an elder at Zion, transferred to Pontotoc in 1868 and came on session as well. "Session Book Of The Presbyterian Church, Pontotoc, Miss., Vol. II (1856–1874)," transcribed and annotated by The Rev'd R. Milton Winter, Ph.D., Historiographer of Saint Andrew Presbytery (PCUSA) (December 2008), pages 3, 65–66. http://www.standrewpresbytery.org/pontotoc-church-session-records-1856-1874 (accessed, July 2, 2018).

9. First Presbyterian Church, Oxford, Mississippi (PCUSA), founded in 1837 (current church built in 1881). Witherspoon was ordained and installed as pastor of this church on May 13, 1860.

10. First Presbyterian Church, Water Valley, MS (PCA). Established in 1843, the current church building dates to 1896. https://misspreservation.com/2012/05/15/suzassippis-mississippi-first-presbyterian-church-of-water-valley/ (accessed July 2, 2018).

11. College Hill Presbyterian Church (PCA), was founded in 1835 and the current building constructed in 1846. It is just east of Oxford,

12. Witherspoon "accepted a call to the Second Presbyterian Church, of Memphis, Tenn., where he settled in August, 1865." See the bibliography preceding this sermon, page 4.

13. Christiansburg Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), Christiansburg, Montgomery County, Virginia. Established in 1837, the 1853 building still stands today. In 1870 Witherspoon was serving here as pulpit supply.

14. In 1871 Witherspoon began two year's service in the chaplaincy for the University of Virginia, "two of the happiest and most useful years of his life…." See the previous bibliography, p. 4.

15. Witherspoon has written above the line apparently as an alternative to "to have his zeal…", the text "[to] *rest* [*????????????*] *under* the *reputation* of *insanity*." Italicized words are questionable. The long word that is not dicipheable is apparently overwriting a previous word or words which adds to the difficulty. It looks to read something like *fatiguingly.*

Christ. His Constraining Love.
2 Corinthians 5:14.
For the love of Christ constraineth us.

The true people of God in all ages of the Church, and especially His earnest and devoted ministers, have been charged by the enemies of the cross with folly, fanaticism and madness; and while it is true that these charges are ever the result, to a considerable extent, of a malicious and contentious spirit, it is none the less true that there is something in the very nature of the zeal which Christianity inspires, that to one unacquainted with its spirit, bear the appearance of fanaticism. Zeal is but the natural fervor of the mind in pursuit of some object which it deems worthy of attainment. In itself it possesses no moral character; it is neither essentially right nor essentially wrong and we are accustomed to justify it solely by the motives by which it is impelled, the ends |2|[16] to which it is directed and the means which it employs. If these be such as commend themselves to us, we approve of the zeal and admire those in whom it appears; but if the ends be unworthy, the means inadequate or the motives insufficient, we condemn the zeal which enters into such a cause and we characterize its subject as enthusiasts, fanatics, or madmen.

Now Christianity is essentially a spiritual religion. The very principals in which it is grounded, the hope upon which it is built, the ends which it proposes, the means which it employs, motives to which it appeals, the encouragements which it holds out, the reward which it offers, all are alike spiritual. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit: for they are foolishness [un]to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."[17] Such a one can form no conception of a motive to action springing entirely from a desire |3| to promote the glory of God. He can form no conception of the spiritual renovation of mankind as the great end to which the Christian's efforts are directed, or of faith in Christ as the simple sublime instrumentality by which this glorious result is to be achieved. To such a one the preaching of the cross is ever to some extent foolishness, and the zeal of the Christian blind infatuation. Hence in the early planting of Christianity, ere its true spirit had been apprehended and its sublime results foreseen, it was no wonder that as the young and gifted Philosopher of Tarsus dashed from him the cup of earthly happiness in the very moment of its apparent fruition, forfeited the honors and enrolments which the votaries of science and the friends of philosophy were just ready to heap upon him and gave up his time and talents to a cause like this, men who viewed Christianity in the mere light of human reason could form no other |4| conclusion then that the apostle was insane.

This charge of being "beside himself" had already been made against the apostle by his enemies at Corinth; and now as in writing this second letter he has spoken of the labour, dangers and sufferings to which in common with his fellow apostles he has been exposed, when he has shown how all these apparent evils have redounded to the glory of God, has disclosed in the most sublime language his entire willingness to endure or to die, to be ~~present~~ at home in the body, or to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord, the thought seems to occur to him: but may not all this be attributed to mere insanity—to the power of a heated imagination borne on with no adequate motive to the accomplishment of some insignificant or chimerical object? 'Not at all,' says the apostle. 'In all that we do and in all that we suffer we have a worthy, a sufficient end—for if as our enemies repre|5|sent we are beside ourselves, we would have them know it is to God, to the glory of His name, to the advancement of His cause, to the manifestation of the riches of His grace in the salvation of sinners. Or if we be on the other hand, as you well know us to be in the proper use of our sober senses, we would have you feel that it is for your cause, that we may reason with you and bring you as reasonable beings to Christ. Nor in either case are we as our adversaries represent without a sufficient motive. We have an adequate, a glorious motive; we are under the very strangest and sweetest constraints to do all that we do and to suffer all that we suffer, for in all our labours, dangers and sufferings "the love of Christ constrains us."' Here, then, Brethren, we have the love of Christ set forth as the great constraining motive to Christian obedience and sacrifice. Let us study it in this relation, |6| and in order that we may do so with profit, let me invite your attention to two points: (1) the motive here referred, to the love of Christ; (2) the influence which it excels, "constraineth us."

I.

The motive here referred to, "the love of Christ." It has been the subject of much dispute among commentators whether the love here referred to is the love which the believer bears to Christ or the love which Christ bears to the believer and which is the foundation of the former love. In so far as the phraseology is concerned, it is impossible to decide, since the love of Christ may be

16. This notation marks the beginning of the text of the next numbered page in the manuscript.

17. 1 Corinthians 2:14.

either the one or the other with equal propriety; but from the fact that in the succeeding verse the death and resurrection of Christ seem to be given as the evidence or manifestations of the love referred to, it seems evident to us that it is the love of Christ to the believer of which the apostle is speaking.*[18] Indeed the very genius of the |7| text would seem to require this construction. It is not the feeble imperfect faltering love of the creature that forms his constraining motive to obedience, but it is the perfect divine incomprehensible love of Christ—that love which underlies the whole covenant of grace, which conditions the very possibility of redemption, a love which we can never doubt, however much we may doubt our own, and which can never cease to act with its constraining power.

Here, then, Brethren, is the sublime theme which we are called upon to study—"the love of Christ." How should we estimate it? With what shall we undertake to compare it? Shall we endeavor with the apostle to be "able to comprehend with all saints what is" its "breadth and length and depth and height."?[19] Why, in its breadth it stretches out before us a mysterious ocean, upon which as we gaze we behold no distant shore, no barrier of nation or rank |8| or outward condition, rising up to stay its flood and saying to it, like the heaven-appointed barriers of the sea—"thus far shalt thou come but not further, and here shall thy proud wave be stayed."[20] But the contrary, overleaping every barrier, overcoming every obstacle, this love offers itself to all of every age and country who will accept it on the terms of the gospel.

Or shall we view this love in its length? It extends along the whole line of the Christian experience, from the first moment of regeneration until the final establishment in heaven. Nay more, it extends from eternity to eternity. "I have loved thee," says the Savior, "with an everlasting love."[21] "The mercies of the Lord are from everlasting to everlasting,"[22] from the eternity of the past in predestination to the eternity of the future in glorification, a mysterious chain of love linking two eternities together, each end of the chain be|9|ing in the heaven, while the central link meets upon the earth in the effectual calling of the sinner.

Or will you view this love in its depth? It is like the deep, deep sea into whose ~~depths~~[23] bosom we may indeed let down the fathoming line, but whose mysterious depths are unfathomable.

Or shall we view it in its height? It is like the clear blue sky above into whose azure depths the eye may indeed gaze, but whose vastness it can never comprehend. And thus we have sent out the[24] measuring line of human speculation to its utmost limit; and when with the still deeper fathoming line of Christian experience we have gained still richer dimensions of this love, it is still and must ever be in its breadth and length, in its depth and height, "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."[25]

Or shall we view this love in its source? It shines from the very bosom |10| of God Himself. There on the eternal throne does it shine forth in the midst of all the other attributes of the divine character. There, summoned by holiness, justice, wisdom and truth, does it find its eternal dwelling place for the brightest and noblest of them all; for <u>God</u> <u>is</u> <u>love</u>, and as the angel whom John in apocalyptic vision saw standing in the sun was above its brightness, so this attribute of love beams forth resplendent, where all around is splendor.

Or shall we view this love in its object? While we were <u>yet</u> <u>enemies</u> He loved us. Yes, Brethren, here in this blessed gospel for the first time does the doctrine of love to the enemy appear. Search through all the tomes of heathen philosophy, examine every system of heathen morality, and you will no where find such an idea as this. You will find as their highest eliminations as the result of their highest and deepest investigations, "Thou shalt love thy |11| neighbor and hate thine enemy." But it was reserved for ~~Christian~~ the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ to proclaim "I say unto you, love <u>your</u> <u>enemies</u>."[26] It was reserved for Christianity to engraft it as an essential element of its morality, and for the Lord Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, to give the perfect exemplification of His precept by coming in person to die for His enemies.

Or shall we view this love in the condescension which it implies? "When I consider" the "heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and [the] stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him" or "the son of man, that thou visitest him?"[27] It is great condescension that the thoughts of the Lord of heaven should but for a moment be concerned with

18. An asterisk is added here in pencil and at the foot of page 6, also in pencil, is written, "Calvin in loco." The text following is faint but matches up to the text in Calvin's commentary, which is "that measureless love of Christ towards us, of which he had furnished us with an evidence in his death" ("which" was abbreviated "wh."). *Commentaries* XX (Calvin Translation Society, 1849; repr. Baker, 1981), 230.
19. Ephesians 3:18.
20. Compare with Job 38:11.
21. Jeremiah 31:3.
22. Compare with Psalm 103:17.
23. A word has been marked out, possibly "depths."
24. A short word or the beginning of a word starting with the letter "f" has been crossed out.
25. Ephesians 3:19.
26. Matthew 5:44.
27. Compare with Psalm 8:3–6.

His sinful, fallen creatures. The condescension appears still greater as we behold Him actu|12|ally visiting our world, as we behold Him taking upon Himself human nature, as we behold Him taking this nature in its lowest outward condition of poverty and reproach in its lowest inward condition subject to pain and want, to sickness and sorrow, to all the ills and infirmities of life, save those which embrace a sinful element of nature; and our notions of condescension becomes overpowering as we see the Lord of glory crowned with thorns, spit upon, buffeted and crucified as a malefactor amid the jeerings and maledictions of a sinful world. What, I ask you, must have been a love which could prompt to sacrifices like this?

> "Oh love divine! immeasurable love! Stooping from heaven to earth, from earth to hell,[…]" beyond "all asking giving far, to those Who naught deserved, who naught deserved but death. Saving the vilest! saving me!" The "love divine, […] O Lamb, once slain! |13| At thought of thee, thy love, thy flowing blood, all thoughts decay, all things remembered fade;[…] All actions done by men Or angels, disappear, absorbed and lost."[28]

Or shall we view this love in the sacrifices to which it prompted? "Who gave himself a propitiation for us"[29] Notice the language: not His life, not His dying blood, but Himself. We are too apt to forget the greatness of the gift which our Savior has made to us. As we see Him laying aside His crown in heaven and descending as our incarnate mediator, we feel that this was for us; but do we realize, as we see this same Jesus ascending to heaven clothed with the same humanity and again ascending His eternal throne, do we feel that this, too, is for us? As we see Him entering the gates of death, we feel that He dies for our sins; but do we remember that He rose again for our justification and that He ever liveth at God's right hand to make intercession for us?[30] Yes, Brethren, not only the life |14| of suffering that our Savior lived upon earth, but the life of glory that He now lives in heaven is for us. All the acts of His exaltation as well as of His humiliation are performed with reference to us, and it becomes[31] therefore to live henceforth not for ourselves, but for Him who died and rose again for us.

Or shall we view this love in its tenderness? "The bruised reed will he not break and the smoking flax will he not quench."[32] All earthly conclusions fail to give an idea of the tender love of Christ. Do but hear Him as He comes to the sinner lingering on the very border of despair, with all multitude of his sins rising up before him; hear this tenderhearted Savior say to the stricken soul, "Come now, let us reason together … though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."[33] Hear Him as He speaks to the sinner laden with the sense of his guilt and danger, saying, "Come unto me all you that |15| labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[34] Or would you see the tenderness of a Savior's love, could you feel the warm palpitations of a Savior's heart, go with Him to the chamber of His afflicted follower, see Him as He binds the broken heart, hear Him as in accents of love He says to the bewildered, heart-stricken mourner,"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."[35] See Him as the tears roll down His furrowed cheek and in broken accent He utters the words "I am the resurrection and the life,"[36] and tell me is there an earthly affection that can compare in tenderness with this? {Oh, no}.[37] The love of a sister ardent and ingenious {as it is}, the love of a mother with all its tenderness and depth of affection, nay, even that nearer dearer tie which binds his mutual heart in life-long sympathy and affection, all sink into insignificance in the comparison.

Finally, Brethren, look at the love of Christ in its con|16|stancy. Many waters cannot quench its flame; but with the same unwavering constancy amid all the errings and wanderings of the creature it still follows his devious course and never deserts him till it has brought him safely to the eternal shore. And thus, as we view this love in its various relations and aspects, we can truly say that in all these it "passeth knowledge."[38] Well may the angels of heaven be represented as desiring to look into a love like this.[39] Well might Moses in

28. Robert Pollok, *The Course of Time,* Book IV, The Praise of Redeeming Love (1829; New York: Barnes and Co., 1856), 147–148. The ellipses have been inserted where text was omitted and the spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc., changed to align with the source. Quotation marks denote the actual text in Pollok.

29. Cf. Titus 2:14 (who gave himself for us), 1 Timothy 2:6 ("Who gave himself a ransom for all"), 1 John 2:2 ("and he is the propitiation for our sins"), 1 John 4:10, Hebrews 2:17, and Romans 3:25. The quotation appears to be drawing from or is a mash-up of several of these.

30. See Hebrews 7:25, Acts 7:55, etc.

31. *Becomes:* is befitting; is suitable.

32. Cf. Isaiah 42:3, Matthew 12:20.

33. Isaiah 1:18.

34. Matthew 11:28.

35. John 13:7.

36. John 11:25.

37. The two short words are faint with the first clearer and likely "oh," and the second beginning the next line much fainter and difficult to read.

38. Ephesians 3:19.

39. 1 Peter 1:12.

that tabernacle, which he was instructed to build "after the pattern of the heavenly," represent the cherubim as seated with expanded wings above the mercy seat, gazing anxiously upon it, absorbed in profoundest study of its sacred mysteries.[40] With us, Brethren, the very highest acting of mind in reference to this love is not comprehension, but admiration—astonished, adoring admiration—until our heads |17| are overwhelmed, our thoughts and understandings lost, and our souls carried out of ourselves and laid in the dust of self-oblivion, that they may be swallowed up in the contemplation of the unspeakable love of Christ.

II.

Let us now notice, in the second place, the influence which the love of Christ is said to exert upon us. It "constraineth" us. The term in the original which is here translated "constraineth," is one of peculiar emphasis, expressive of the strongest and deepest emotions. It is only read in one other place^[41] of the New Testament, where our Savior says of Himself, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I strained" (or constrained) "until it be accomplished."[42] The many different explanations of this term given by commentators, seem to err not so much in putting a wrong meaning ^upon it,[43] as in failing to give its full meaning. Thus, some have referred the constraining influence to the judgment, others to the emotions, and others again to the will. |18| I think it expressive of an influence exerted upon all the faculties of the soul, in which they are all drawn forth into lively and vigorous exercise, a state of the soul in which the understanding is absorbed in the contemplation of some interesting subject, the emotions armed and called into exercise and the will nerved with resistless energy borne onward to the attainment of some desired result.

This is evidently the signification of the term in the Classic Greek, where it is used to express the influence of an orator upon his audience. For it is the true purview of the orator to bring some momentous subject of thought into intimate and living contact with the {minds} of his [audience],[44] to rivet the attention of the understanding upmost, to draw forth the emotions of the heart and thus to operate upon the will, and as the Greek expresses it, "have with" him or carry always with him his audience to the desired conclusion or action. It is expressive moreover of |19| the influence exerted by a single principle or controlling thought in the mind— and here again do we find a precise accordance with classic use for it—enters into the very genius of oratory that it should lay hold upon some single principle and make that the engine with which it accomplishes its mighty results. We may admire, indeed, we must admire the man who grasps in his comprehensive mind a hundred different thoughts, and making of each a separate argument, brings to bear abreast on the question, overwhelming us with a conclusion from a hundred different premises, which but a moment after we have forgotten. But he alone is the perfect orator, who seizing upon some great fundamental principle, some leading thought, forgets for the time every side issue and argument, brings all the power of his mind to bear upon it, gathers around it all the force of his learning and genius, brings all the faculties of his au|20|dience into sympathy with it and helps it with all the force of his eloquence to its natural conclusion.

Then if we will examine the term in the ~~only two~~ places of Scripture in which it is found – ~~the two~~ [^those] given above,[45] I think we shall see that this is precisely the meaning. And thus, when our Savior says He is straitened until His baptism is accomplished, or in other words constrained to its accomplishment, He means that His whole soul is pervaded with the thought of this baptism of suffering {therein}[46] which He is called to keep with the glorious results that should follow. His whole soul is animated and torn with conflicting emotions in view of it, and so intensely does He long for its accomplishment, that He is borne forward in Spirit to the time and enabled[47] to rejoice in the fires already kindling in the hearts of Scribes and Pharisees, only to be quenched in the life blood of the love of God. |21|

Thus too when the apostle says in the words of the text, "the love of Christ constraineth us," he evidently refers to its inward action as a motive principle upon

40. See Hebrews 8:5, Exodus 37:9.

41. Witherspoon has later placed the insertion point and underlined these words and added interline above in ink, "a singular mistake of mine. See Acts 18:5, Phil 1:23, Acts 7:57 Etc."

42. Luke 12:50.

43. The words "upon it" have been inserted interline in ink above "meaning as".

44. The word is "winds" or "minds." If one presumes "audience" at the end of the previous sentence is implied or missing (there is no indication of a space in the text) "minds of his [audience]" makes the most sense.

45. The text has been corrected in keeping with the previous correction, but in pencil as opposed to the ink used before.

46. The word is not clear and may be abbreviated with an apostrophe (a large dot) out in the margin; there, therein, through, etc.

47. The text is not clear, but seems to be "enabled," comparing to a subsequent use. It possibly may be "humbled," but "enabled" fits the intended sense. The word is split between two lines and begins with, apparently, a connected ampersand. If the word is "humbled," the "m" is but a short scribble.

the heart. This thought of the unspeakable love of Christ had taken possession of the whole soul of the apostle. His mind had been filled with it. His heart had been warmed by it, his will weaned[48] and strengthened by it; and he himself thus enabled to count all things but a loss for the excellency of the love of Christ. Here then is the influence exerted by the love of Christ. It is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit.[49] It enters and takes possession of the mind. It enlists and calls forth the emotions; it kindles and engages the affections. It moves upon and influences the will, and thus the whole man is constrained, {and}[50] with it, borne on over over [*sic*], every obstacle rendered superior to every danger. This is precisely the effect produced by the love of Christ in the sinner's conversion. |22|

"And I if be lifted up," says the Saviour, "will draw all men unto me."[51] And what is this lifting up but the manifestation, consummation and evidence of the unspeakable love of Christ? It is the love of Christ which the Spirit wields as His most powerful argument to the sinner's conversion, for it is love alone that can melt the stubborn rebellious heart. The thunder of Sinai may forever well above him; the law may proclaim, trumpet-tongued, "The soul that sinneth it shall die!";[52] Ebal may forever utter forth its cursings;[53] the sword of justice may forever sway above the sinner's head; the gates of hell may be forever yawning to receive him; and yet the heart will remain as sluggish and inactive as at first. Nay, rather, the {sinful} soul will raise up fresh mountains of sin under which to bury itself from the presence of God and will rush on more madly |23| to despair and everlasting death.

It is only when the sinner looks to Calvary, when he sees the tokens of a love as infinite as the holiness which required its sacrifice; it is only when he hears that voice in its dying agonies saying, "Father, forgive them"; it is only when he feels the pressure of the amazing love of the Trinity to the sinner, and at the same time the impossibility after the sacrifice of Christ that any sinner can escape unpunished; yes, it is only then, when love mingles with holiness, grace shines with justice, that the heart is melted, the rebel is overcome and falls prostrate at the foot of the cross. The sense of God's love in Christ has entered his heart as a beam of light from the cross, animating, affecting, transforming the whole.

Before, he has not known the love of Christ. Now for the first time under the illumination of the Spirit |24| is he enabled to understand the mystery of the cross. It has become the wisdom of God to him. He has gained a motive power in the soul of a spiritual nature. He is now enabled to feel the constraining power of a divine love; and as we trace his whole succeeding history, we shall find that just in proportion to the life of faith in his heart shall be the strength of this reigning principle. The terms of the law cease to warn him; but a higher constraint has been put upon him, and with this principle of love animating the mind, kindling the affections and molding the will, he has an incentive to action, a stimulus to self-denial, a compassion for suffering and a superiority to danger which fit him for any and every station.

Yes, Brethren, only give me the Christian whose soul feeds ever upon a consciousness of the amazing |25| love of Christ, to whom it is light to the mind, warmth to the heart, impulse to the will, and you give me one filled for any and every emergency of life. Is he called upon to engage in arduous and incessant labour for Christ? Is there any incentive to patient persevering labour on behalf of another, so strong as the consciousness that the one for whom we labor is one who loves us with warm devotion and who has undergone greater labour for us? Is the believer called upon to endure hardness as a good soldier of the cross? Let him, as he faints by the way, but lift his eye to Calvary and behold the Master toiling up its rugged steep bearing His cross amid the taunts and derisions of the enemies, and how will he rise to newness of life and girding himself with fresh vigor of soul run the wearying race!

Is the believer called upon to endure self-denial? And what form may it take in which this love will not |26| act powerfully upon it? Shall he be required to forfeit the honour of the world? What are they to him who has the love of Christ? Shall he forfeit its wealth? He counts all things but loss for Christ?. Shall he endure its reproaches? That is only to follow in the footsteps of his blessed Master. Shall he sigh for the fawning smile of this world's great, when he has forever glory and honour in the eyes of his heavenly friends? Shall he pine for the paltry, fading honour of this world, when he has the favour of the King of Kings? Is he called upon to abandon home and friends, to carry the banner of the cross into distant lands? He does but tread in the footsteps of the first great missionary who came from heaven to earth, and the love of this elder brother makes home on the

48. The word is not clear with an open "a" like a "u" (not uncommon in this text), and one letter standing for the "ne", if this is the correct rendering.
49. Romans 5:5.
50. Possibly "had."
51. John 12:32.
52. Ezekiel 18:20.
53. Deuteronomy 27:11–26.

rolling wave or the distant shore; the nearest and dearest |27| of friends shall be ever with him.

Is he called upon to endure afflictions? And what though wave after wave of sorrow rolls over the anguished breast, until with the psalmist he can say all "thy billows are gone over me!"?[54] So long as he hears above the war of the tempest the voice of a loving Savior saying to him, "Fear not," "O Jacob." "I have redeemed thee, […] thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."[55] What though the furnace of affliction be seven times heated? Shall not another walk therein? And the same kind voice whisper here, "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."[56]

Is the believer called upon to sever tenderest ties of earth, to give up that subject the heart holds most dear, to part with |28| all life's treasures in one, and having been bereaved of that, look out upon a world, desolate, dreary, homeless and heartless? Still, let the thought of a Saviour's love enter the mind, and the bereaved one finds that earth is no longer desolate—nay, that the solitude and dreariness of a barren rock girt isle would be a paradise with the constant love and sympathy of such a compassionate Savior. Is the believer called upon to encounter death? What is death to the object of a Savior's boundless love? Is it not the glad summons to His presence to behold Him face to face and go not out any more forever? Is it not to drink still more richly of the fountain of love? Is it not to hear all the yearnings of the fond heart satisfied to rest forever in the embraces of this dear object of love?

Is the believer called upon finally to stand amid the |29| ruins of a dissolving universe? What though the heavens be rolled together as a parched scroll and the elements dissolve with fervent heat?[57] What though every separate star shot forth from its orbit, become a ~~separate~~ flaming minister of death? Still the believer can rise in the sublimity of our undoubting faith, view without {tears} the majestic scene, and as worlds and systems dash together in wild confusion, as thousands fall upon his right hand and ten thousands upon his left,[58] he can lift himself amid the horrors of the universal conflagrations and with the great apostle ~~ask~~,[59] "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor power, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, |30| which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I {have} thus endeavored to illustrate, rather than fully to develop, the constraining influences of the love of Christ. Let me say in conclusion:

1. To the follower of Christ: You see where our true strength lies. It is in the view we get in the infinite, amazing love of Christ. There are periods of darkness in the history of every true child of God, times when we are led to doubt whether or not we are true Christians. Our hearts are so hard, our wills so sluggish, we distrust our own love and go with our heads bowed down, mourning over our lost estate. We spend days and weeks and months in a state of suspense, ever searching into our hearts for the light of heaven and finding only the darkness of earth. Are there any of us now in this situation? If so, let me say to you, cease to study your own hard hearts. Run away from |31| them to the cross of Christ. If you wished to know whether or not you had a love for the sublime and the beautiful, would you sit quietly in your room and endeavor to reason yourself into a belief that you had? No, methinks you would go in person or in fancy to some scene of natural grandeur, where mountains rise upon mountains, where frowning cliff and rugged rock and silvery stream and foaming cascade and flowery mead fall upon the ravishest sight, and as the emotions spontaneously flowed forth, they would evidence their presence and power in the soul. So I bid you go to Christ, study Him in His person, character or work; and if there be a spark of love in your bosom, it will kindle to a flame.

2. To the sinner: What motive to compare with this? You call us fools and madmen. ~~Truly~~[60] "No doubt [but] ye are the people, and wisdom" will "die with you."[61] Who is the wise man? He who is impelled by motives and labouring for ends which a reasonable being alone can appreciate? Or he who shares a common motive and common end with the beasts that perish?[62]▪

54. Psalm 42:7.
55. Cf. Isaiah 43:1–2.
56. Isaiah 43:2. Cf. Daniel 3:19.
57. 2 Peter 3:7.
58. Psalm 91:7.
59. It is not clear if the "ask" is over-writing something or has been struck out in error, since it is required. The quotation is from Romans 8:35, 38–39.
60. A word, perhaps Truly, has been struck out and "no doubt" written above it.
61. Job 12:2.
62. Psalm 49:20.

A Children's Book about God's *Hesed*: T. D. Witherspoon's *Children of the Covenant*

By C. N. Willborn

Thomas D. Witherspoon was educated at the Universities of Alabama and Mississippi. He graduated from the latter in 1856 at the age of 20, achieving what we would call Valedictorian ranking among his peers. In the same year he moved to Columbia, South Carolina to pursue theological studies at the Presbyterian Seminary (later to be named Columbia Theological Seminary). His seminary education was at the hands of the master theologian, James Henley Thornwell. Except for Providence, Witherspoon would have become Thornwell's son-in-law by marrying his daughter, Nancy. She died short of their wedding date and lies under a large magnolia united to Christ at her father's side in Elmwood Cemetery in Columbia.

Witherspoon would go on to have a faithful and fruitful ministry as a gospel minister, first in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and, after 1861, in the Presbyterian Church United States (PCUS). He first served the church of his college alma mater—Presbyterian Church of Oxford, Mississippi, from his ordination in 1860 until the onset of the War Between the States in 1861. Serving initially as an infantryman, he was soon persuaded to take up the chaplaincy for his band of Mississippi soldiers. After the War he served some of the most influential churches in the PCUS, from Second Church, Memphis, to Tabb Street in Petersburg, Virginia, and finally First Church, Louisville, Kentucky. His service to the PCUS was manifold, including acting as Moderator of the General Assembly in 1884 and in co-founding Louisville Presbyterian Seminary in 1893. In the latter institution he served faithfully and influentially as a faculty member until his death in 1898. Interestingly, this year witnessed the deaths of two other Southern giants, R. L. Dabney and John L. Girardeau.

In the fine article prior to this,[1] the reader will have noted that Witherspoon was a child of the covenant. He was born into a Presbyterian family that professed faith in Jesus Christ as their God and Savior and served faithfully in the visible bride of Christ in Greensboro, Alabama. We raise this point again to bring attention to the topic before us—covenant children. T. D. Witherspoon was a covenant child and product of a godly upbringing in home and in the church. He seems to have never lost sight of the importance of this weighty blessing. Indeed, of his many publications there is one book that seems to garner the most attention when mention is made of Witherspoon's contributions, and that is *Children of the Covenant.* This little book briskly went through two editions in 1873 and 1874. It was handsomely bound in brown cloth with beveled edges and gold embossing. The external qualities of the book are only surpassed by the internal contents, which are of eternal value, presented in a style typical of Witherspoon's sermons, *simple elegance*.

The book is about a family. It is about a family who served a covenant faithful God and Savior. It is about, however, a family who suffered much in this fallen world. Through all the suffering, the steadfast love (*hesed*) of their God was sufficient to sustain them and bring them through the valley of the shadow of death, even the deaths of three precious covenant children.

Witherspoon was pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis from 1865–70. Those were hard years. Reconstruction was in full force. The Southern States were struggling to get back on their feet after a cruel and crippling war. But for regions like Memphis

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1. See "Thomas Dwight Witherspoon (1836–1898)" beginning on page 3.

there were additional enemies, like malaria and cholera, which always threatened. Present day readers must remember that as recent as the nineteenth century little was known of the cause, and even less was known of cures for such dreaded foes.

Ministering just a few miles north of Memphis during these harsh years was Andrew Hart Kerr. He had moved to the rural area in 1854 at age forty-two and founded Delta Presbyterian Church in 1857. Kerr spent twenty-nine of his forty-four years of ministry there, before dying in 1883. His contributions to the surrounding population were publicly recognized when his community was formally named in 1873 with the moniker, *Kerrville*.

Witherspoon and Kerr became dear friends and it was out of this friendship that Witherspoon gathered the source material for his classic little book, *Children of the Covenant.* Three children born to A. H. Kerr and Mary Indiana C. Kerr would die in the bud of life—Andrew Hart, Jr., Sarah Ward, and Mary Clarissa. Witherspoon devoted one chapter to the life of each of these three children of the covenant. These chapters, full of their life stories, are followed by "An Appeal to the Baptized Children of the Church," "A Word to Christian Parents," and finally an "Appendix," which contains letters of condolence with responses from Kerr, Sr.

Three Children of the Covenant

In the very first chapter we note a few of the highlights Witherspoon drew on from the life of young Andrew Hart Kerr, Jr., who died at the age of thirteen in 1866. The youngster's life began with a question mark, for soon after his birth he ceased breathing. The attending doctor warned the excited couple of his grave condition. Prayer ensued throughout the house and his life was spared. The parents expressed their belief "that it was in immediate and gracious answer to their prayers that the life so full of promise and hope was given to them."[2]

Witherspoon includes in his early paragraphs the account of the youngster's baptism into the visible body of Christ. One of those in attendance said, "then I felt that the Master was there present ratifying and approving the dedication, and often since have I said that if I had no other and higher testimony in proof of the 'doctrines of the covenant' in regard to infant baptism, what I saw and felt upon that occasion would be enough" (14). Such was the strong faith of the parents and church and their recognition of God's covenant faithfulness, signified in the covenantal sign and seal of baptism. Young Andrew grew in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man from that early reception into Christ's church.

In addition to the youngster's handsome and manly features described by Witherspoon, his love of life is paraded before us on the pages. He was a great favorite with his young companions. "They loved to visit him," Witherspoon explained, "to spend hours in his company, and to listen to his conversations upon all the various topics that awakened their inquiry. He never seemed to have much relish for the ordinary sports of children, or any preference for their companionship." However, "when thrown into their company, as he frequently was, and especially when they visited him at his father's house, he entered with all the earnestness of his nature into the pastimes which they engaged. His books, marbles, toys were always at their disposal, but in their games he generally preferred to sit as the umpire, to whom all matters of difference were referred; and while he seemed to enjoy himself, and be as happy as the happiest, contributing in his own unselfish way to the enjoyment of all the rest—the central figure in the group, admired and beloved by everyone, he always seemed glad when the time came for the little circle to break, that he might return again to the society and companionship of persons of mature age" (16, 17).

We are told that he was a precocious lad and mature beyond his age and this seems to be true from those earliest years of his short life. He loved to read and was nurtured in this regard by his mother and father. He had a keen interest in history. He could be seen reading the newspapers voraciously throughout the War. This was such that at the end of that horrific epoch he could talk on all the major battles with comprehensive details, based upon the published records. Witherspoon says, however, that while he could converse on a vast range of topics, this was true "especially upon the great subject of the doctrines, principles and obligations of religion" (18). This topic particularly drove him into a relationship with his father, "rarely found between a parent and child" (19). Hart, as he was called, loved nothing more than to listen to the theological discussions his father would have with other adults. Often he was allowed to sit up at night when guests were present so that he could overhear their conversations.

As would be expected, Witherspoon offers sample stories as heard and recounted by family and friends. In one such account Hart was engaged by a gentleman on a steamboat bound for St. Louis. The conversation ranged from the mode and meaning of baptism

2. T. D. Witherspoon, *Children of the Covenant* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1873), 12–13. Further references will simply give the page reference in parentheses in the text.

to election and its design. The climax of the latter came when Hart asked the man when God had determined to save the man. He asked "'whether this design of God to convert his soul was from eternity, or was formed at the time when the conversion actually took place.' His [adult] friend refused to answer, and Hart then said: 'If it was in time that God determined to convert you, He then knew something that He never knew before; and to admit that, is to admit that He is not God.' His friend did not attempt to meet his argument, but simply expressed his opposition to the doctrine of eternal Election, when Hart asked him again: 'When God converted your soul, did he not do a good thing?' 'Oh yes,' answered his friend. 'Well then,' said Hart, 'are the good things of God made bad by having age upon them?'" (23). This bit of history is introduced to show that the young Kerr had a love for learning the truths of God, but also even at this young age a desire to speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15).

That this was not a simple academic pursuit of Hart or the case of a genius-child with an inordinate amount of "head-knowledge," Witherspoon illustrates by the affect the doctrine had upon the moral fiber of the youngster. Let us remember that the Kerrs lived in a genteel society, where training in proper decorum was of the essence of living in a godly society. Moral turpitude was not tolerated, especially among the children of a household of rank. Corporal punishment was a key component in maintaining decency and honor. With this historical reminder listen to the account from Witherspoon: "His moral nature was singularly exempt from the vices of childhood and early youth. He was never known to tell a deliberate falsehood, or to utter an oath of any kind whatever. So far from his parents' finding it necessary to inflict any corporeal punishment upon him, they do not remember ever to have administered even a severe rebuke" (24).

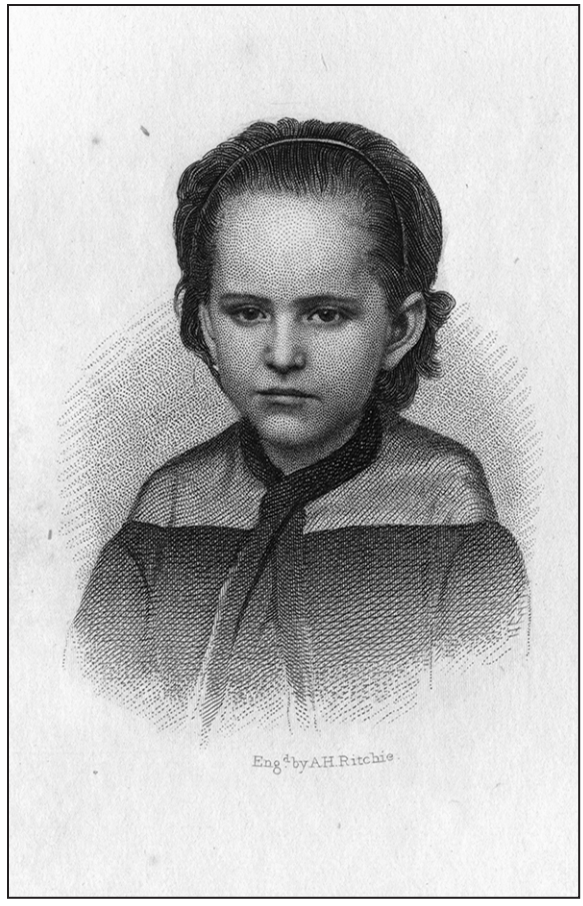
These characteristics no doubt flowed from living in a covenant household where Scripture, prayer, and catechism were daily, not weekly menu items. From his induction into the visible body of Christ through the baptismal waters, Hart received a steady dose of instruction in the truths of the Bible and was engaged in prayer from the time he could string words together for sentences. These daily exercises flowed from his family's devotion to the heavenly day or market day of the soul,[3] as it has been called—the Lord's Day.

With all this said about Hart, it will not surprise the readers to know that, when taken suddenly by the crippling death-hold of cholera in November 1866, he gave a remarkable testimony of the Savior and His saving

grace in which he rested. Indeed, in giving testimony to John B. Adger and Joseph Ruggles Wilson, he said that he "now felt that he would rather go and stay with Christ and with the angels, than stay in a world of sin and sorrow" (37).[4] He then requested, just a few hours

3. As English Sabbatarianism came to be articulated in Elizabethan Puritanism, defenders of the doctrine that would later find a prominent place in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, such as Greenham, Bownd, Andrewes and others, were fond of calling the Lord's Day the market day of the soul because on that divinely appointed day the means of grace were abundantly available. Cf. Nicholas Bownd, *Sabbathum Veteris et Novi Testamenti: or The True Doctrine of the Sabbath* (Naphtali Press and Reformation Heritage Books, 2015), xxxv, 346–347.

4. Adger and Wilson were leading figures in the Presbyterian Church, with the latter being most famous for his son, Woodrow Wilson. These men were present in the home on this occasion because of the meeting of the General Assembly in Memphis, just south of Kerrville.



Sarah Ward Kerr. The portraits of the three Kerr children are taken from T. D. Witherspoon, *Children of the Covenant* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1873). Provided by C. N. Willborn.

before his death, "that the hymn, 'Rock of Ages,' should be sung" (38). Witnesses say he sang with all the gusto he could muster. He then turned to those gathered around him, including many who had been in Memphis for the General Assembly of the PCUS, and urged all "not to weep for him, but rather rejoice in the goodness and glory of God, who was going to take him from a world of sin and trouble up to Himself, where he would very soon be singing with angels, and where he would take his seat in the General Assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven" (38). Again, he requested they sing and this time, "Come Humble Sinner" was his choice. His last words were to his family, "I love my father and my mother, and my sisters very much, but I love Jesus more, and would rather go to Him than stay here" (39). And so, at ten o'clock on Wednesday morning, November 28, 1866, this child of the covenant was taken into Emmanuel's land.

Had Hart been the only child to be taken from Andrew and Mary Kerr, it would still be a sobering story and reminder of man's frailty and finitude and God's *hesed*. He was not, however. They would lose more children in the very tender years of life. In fact, Hart was preceded in death by Sarah who would precede all her siblings and live but four short years.

After Hart came another named Sarah who would live but eight years. Born in Shelby County, Tennessee on June 13, 1859, Sallie, as she was called, was named for both of her grandmothers and her deceased sister. Witherspoon says this of Sallie:

> Childhood is in all its great essential characteristics the same everywhere. He who has read the life of one child may in a certain sense be said to have read the life of all children. The innocence, the sportiveness, the exuberance of joyous life, the freedom from anxiety and care, the spirit of confiding trust, and simple-hearted, tender love—these, which make the joy of one household, are found to a certain extent in all. The habits of childhood, its pursuits, amusements, and companionships, its infirmities, trials and crosses, are much the same everywhere (44, 45).

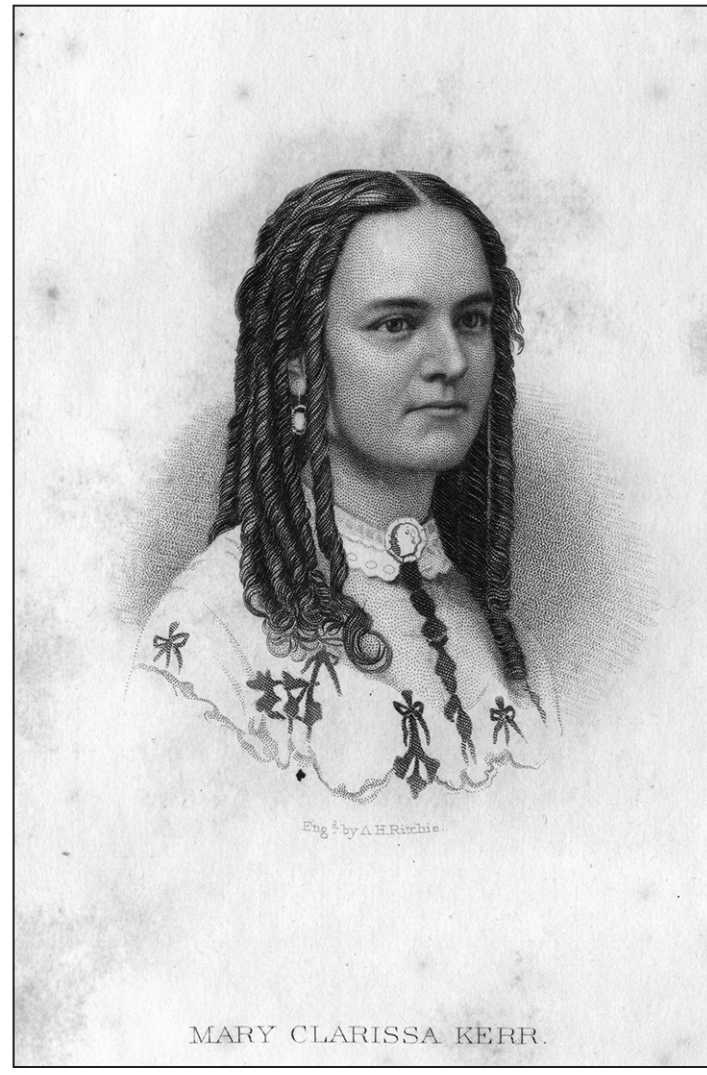
Like her brother, she too was an insatiable reader of all sorts of literature, including her Bible. And, so, it will not surprise the students of her life to learn that "She was especially remarkable for the veneration she always had for her parents, and the unquestioning obedience she rendered to them in all their commands" (51).

Still, Witherspoon reminds us of and illustrates her fallenness and need for a Savior. He therefore, leaves us without question as to his objectivity. It bears mentioning also that Witherspoon has "young readers" within his cross-hairs throughout this delightful little book. For instance, he said, "We have told our young readers that little Sallie was not perfect, that she had her strong temptations and her moments of weakness just as all other children have." This quality makes this piece of literature remarkable and imitable.

Sallie's conversion testimony was derived within the context of one of her sinful episodes—a temper tantrum. Having witnessed the outburst, her father took her aside to talk with her and she began to cry due to her sin against another child, a playmate. Her father advised his little one to go to a private place and pray to the Lord Jesus about her sin(s). She did and "After a while, though, she came back to her father with a subdued, peaceful, and even happy face, and when he asked her if she had gone to God with her trouble, she replied: "Yes,

sir, I told Him all—I told Him I had spoken hastily with my lips, and had sinned and I asked Him for Jesus' sake to forgive me and not let me do so any more." Kerr asked his precious little one why she felt the need to ask the Father forgiveness "for Jesus' sake." Her reply evidences her training in righteousness and her understanding of the depths of sin. She said, "If I had asked Him forever to forgive me for my own sake, he [i.e., God] could not have done it. I am nothing, but Jesus is everything with Him." As if this wasn't enough to warm the heart of any believer, her wise father asked why she thought the Father in heaven forgave her. She replied: "Because He has said, 'Ask and it shall be given you,' and whatever He has said, He will do; and besides, I have the feeling in my heart that He has forgiven me" (54). Both the testimony of the Scriptures and that of the Holy Spirit seem evidently to have been her comfort.

Witherspoon reminds his readers that Christians like young Sallie find much growth through the Scriptures by the work of the Spirit. There is also much aid for living and dying supplied by the daily trials of life. Sallie witnessed the death of her dear teacher and the serious, life-threatening illness of her own father. Both provided her with examples of Christian suffering and dying which would be used very soon in her own transition from life to death.



As with her older brother's case, Witherspoon provides us with eyewitness details of Sallie's last days on earth. Stricken with "the croup," and high fevers, she declared her love to all those around her. She urged all to trust Jesus and pray regularly. She gave her "last will and testament," in the form of a dictated profession of faith. She wanted Psalm 23 and 103 read and, at the end, she whispered these words, the last words of her earthly existence:

> Behold, what condescending love
> Jesus on earth displays,
> To babes and sucklings He extends
> The riches of His grace.

These words were obviously etched upon her heart and mind. She had, no doubt, sung them many times in family and corporate worship. They are the first stanza of an eighteenth-century hymn by Philip Doddridge. No doubt a favorite of hers and used at the end by the Spirit of God. At the tender age of eight, Sarah Ward Kerr's soul entered into the presence of her Savior. Her body was buried, united to Christ, near her home in Kerrville, Tennessee.

The third chapter portrays for us Mary Clarissa Kerr. Witherspoon opens this account of the third Kerr daughter with these words: "In the two preceding sketches we have seen how wonderfully the grace of God was manifested in bringing two of the dear children of the church to Jesus, and giving them in childhood the victory over death and the grave. We are now to see this same grace illustrated in one who was permitted to live

through the period of youth, which is most fraught with temptation, and to exhibit a life of pure and holy consecration to God in the midst of the allurements and vanities of the world" (81).

Mary Clarissa was born in Davidson County, Tennessee near the Hermitage on December 20, 1847. She was baptized into solemn membership of the visible church of the living Savior in Nashville's First Presbyterian Church. At age thirteen, during "the exercises of family prayer," her heart was warmed to the Savior and she declared her fealty to the loving Savior of sinners. Here are words as recorded by her mother: "'Oh, Pa! Pa! Pa! I have found Jesus. Oh, Ma, Ma, I have found the Saviour,' then, turning to her brother Hart, who was then only six years of age, she said 'O, my dear brother, I have found a precious Saviour; give Him your little heart. I know He loves little children. My heart is full of His love'" (89).

While this book might be considered a sketch of three young lives that were short-lived on this earth, it is far more than that. It is the testimony of the covenant faithfulness, the *hesed,* of our great triune God. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in Witherspoon's inclusion of the following words by Andrew Kerr as he announced the reception of Mary and several other into the full communion of the visible church of Christ during a special worship service with communion on September 29, 1860.

> In common with those who are of my own kindred here, I trace my lineage through successive generations to two brothers who have lived and died in Scotland many years ago. They were men eminent for their piety and for their devotion to the Presbyterian Church. They were men who revered and honoured God's covenant, to whom the seal of that covenant in baptism was a precious, priceless ordinance, and who were accustomed to train their children, as those who had been dedicated to God from their childhood, and by covenant right were His. When I recall to mind my venerable grandfather, who, if he were now living would be nearly an hundred and fifty years of age; when I revert to the memory of my sainted father, whom I revere most of all because he was a faithful and successful minister of Jesus Christ; when I reflect upon the fact that while I am of God's great grace permitted to stand here today as a minister of the gospel of Christ, my only surviving brothers are Ruling Elders in the house of God; that those of my brothers and sisters who have gone down to the grave, have fallen asleep in Jesus, and that my only surviving sister is safely within the visible fold of the Great Shepherd, how can I ever sufficiently extol God's great mercy in His faithfulness to His covenants with my fathers.
>
> And then when I look around me on this scene at the communion table to-day, and remember that four of the dear children who sit down at the Lord's table for the first time are the grandchildren of my father; that at this same board sits, as a member of this church, one of his great-granddaughters, and that just there (pointing to a little child seated in the midst of the Assembly), sits his great-great-grandson, upon whose face I myself have been honoured in putting the seal of God's covenant; when I look forward with assured confidence to the time when he too, in common with so many others, shall be made a happy participant of God's covenanted mercy and grace, is it any wonder that my eyes overflow with tears of joy, and my heart is full of thanksgiving and praise to Him who hath remembered His covenant, and hath established His faithfulness in the very heavens'? And oh, my friends, you who are still without the pale of God's church and covenant; you who have never dedicated to Him either yourselves or your children; who have never had impressed, either upon you or upon them, the seal of this holy covenant between God and men, is there not something in all this to encourage you to come to Him this day, to enter into covenant with Him, that these blessings may be your inheritance and the inheritance of your children? (91–93)

This steadfast love of God received ample testimony in the life of Mary Clarissa from this day forward. As part of the portrait, Witherspoon included these comments: "But beyond all this, there was a devoted love to the church which kept her from feeling that there was any great cross in the observance of its rules. One of her favourite songs of praise, one that her voice would often be heard singing in the stillness of the night, and in the retirement of her chamber, was Dr. Dwight's [hymn, "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord,"], beginning:

> I love Thy kingdom, Lord,
> The house of Thine abode;
> The church our blest Redeemer saved
> With His own precious blood.

And while she loved all who profess the name of Jesus, to whatever denomination they belonged; and rejoiced in the welfare of every church in which the pure gospel of Christ is preached, she was especially and ardently

devoted to the Presbyterian church…. Her's was an intelligent attachment, the result of a careful and prayerful examination of the doctrines and polity, the faith and order of the Presbyterian church" (101–102).

Mary Clarissa lived to observe the sickness of her brother, Hart. She encouraged him through the death-shade and was there for his exchange of this world for the next. It was only nine months later that the same disease would grip her body and take her from her friends, her parents, and her church on earth. She died and was buried alongside her siblings on Saturday, August 17, 1867.

The three sketches just summarized fill one hundred and eighteen pages of this little book about God's steadfast love to His people. The balance of the book, one hundred and forty-four pages, contain "An Appeal to the Baptized Children of the Church," "A Word to Christian Parents" and an "Appendix" full of correspondence concerning the children, condolences, and encouragements to the parents.

Appeal to Baptized Children of the Church

In the "Appeal" Witherspoon writes for young readers, with exhortations to imitate the lives portrayed through faith in Christ Jesus. His prefatory text for this chapter is most suitable: "It is you who are the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways" (Acts 3:25, 26). His first words following the scripture citation say:

> Dear Young Friends—These pages have been written especially for you. The writer, who loves little children, has thought that it would be pleasant to you to read the lives of these bright and interesting children, who were taken away from this world by death in their early youth, and who are now, as we confidently trust, among the number of the redeemed ones in glory. He has hoped too that while you are reading these little sketches, and after you have laid them down, the Holy Spirit may incline your hearts to love the same Saviour whom these sainted children loved, to seek the same experience of His love which they had, and to be prepared by His grace for the same bright world to which they have gone.

Witherspoon proceeds to explain to them the manifold benefits they possess because they are covenant children. In doing so he reminds them "You should be thankful too that when your parents were converted to God, they chose for their church one which recognizes the covenant of God with His people as extending also to their children, so that little children like yourselves are entitled to membership in the church" (123). He wants them to remember that not all children are so blessed. He wants them to know something special is theirs because of their membership in Christ's church. He continues:

> Many churches around you do not admit that little children have any interest in the covenant of God with His people. Therefore they will not administer baptism, which is the outward seal of the covenant, to little children. Although our Saviour expressly says: 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,' and although the apostles, whenever they baptized a believer who was the head of a household, always baptized his household with him, these churches will not baptize little children, and teach that, until they are old enough to enter into covenant for themselves with God, they have no interest in His covenanted promises (123–24).

In an age like ours, where there is considerable disinterest in the church as an institution, even among professing Christians, Witherspoon is a fresh breeze of Biblical devotion. Not only is there a high and proper view of the church in this little book, but a proper view of children born into believing households. There is no regenerational power given to the sacramental waters, but sanctifying covenantal significance abounds. "Sanctifying" in the sense of setting apart unto a special status like Paul gives to those children of at least one believing parent (1 Cor 7:14); "Covenantal" in the sense of the children of believing and faithful parents as the Psalmist explains (Ps 103:17, 18).

Here he is following his mentor, James Thornwell, who believed covenant children to be of a different class than the children born outside the covenant household and church. Thornwell viewed the children of believing parents to be heirs apparent to the gospel of the covenant of grace. Thornwell was precise as usual when he wrote: "If it be asked, why the Church embraces the family, and is not restricted to professing individuals, the answer is plain. The children of the faithful are the heirs apparent of the promises. God has graciously promised to show mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments; the decree of election runs largely in their loins, and through their faithfulness in rearing a holy seed. The Church is perpetuated, and

new recruits are constantly added to the communion of saints. They are all incorporated into the Church, because many of them hereafter are to be of the Church."[5] They are not of the class "properly called the *world,*" argued Thornwell. It is clear as well that Witherspoon did not view covenant children, baptized and members of the visible body of Christ, the church, as pagans, but as a special people with apparent rights to the eternal covenant of grace.

Listen to Witherspoon as he extends this point: "Is it not a special thought to you that, as one of the baptized children of the church, you are the Saviour's special care—that He feels in you a deeper interest than in those whose parents have never thus dedicated them to God, and claimed the promises of His covenant concerning them?" (126). He goes on to tell his adolescent readers of his own childhood and the evidence of the Savior's special care for him—"One of these [stories] will help you to understand what I mean, when I say that your relation to the Saviour is a more precious one than that of other children who have never been baptized" (126). Again, he writes "Whenever you think of the fact that you are a baptized child of the church, let it encourage in you such thoughts as these: 'The Lord Jesus feels a special interest in me. He loves me as one of the lambs of his fold. He seeks my love in return. Blessed Jesus! teach me to love thee. Reclaim me from all my wanderings. Let me abide forever under thy gentle control—one of the sheep of thy pasture—one of the people of thy care'" (128, 129).

The pastor then gently moves upon the little lambs of the church to do what lambs need to do, namely, follow the Shepherd. "Do not think for a moment," he said, "of waiting until you are older" (135). He urges them in simple trust to take advantage of their special status and His special interest in them. He lovingly calls them to believe in the gentle Savior. Through faith he assures them they will find the fulfillment of all the covenantal promises and, therefore, life in its fullest on this earth.

Having instructed them on their covenanted status with Christ Jesus through the church, and calling them to faith in Christ to own the covenant, he turns to one last exhortation for his young audience. He calls them to loving devotion to the church. Oh, for a revival of this spirit! Witherspoon serves as a prophet to our century by including the visible church on earth in his gospel call to the wee ones of Christ. Like his contemporary, Stuart Robinson, he understood the vital importance of the church "out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation" (Westminster Confession 25.2). Robinson would make his point clear in the very title of his landmark treatment on ecclesiology, *The Church of God as an Essential Element of the Gospel.*[6] The twin spirits of personal pietism and revivalism have severed the good news from the church, our adopted home on earth. Witherspoon reminds his readers not to separate what God has joined—the good news of salvation and inclusion in the family of God, the church of the living Christ.

He drives this point home with illustrations of the Kerr children. "They read the Scriptures" he said, "and read judiciously written books, that they might know the true principles of church government, and compare the creed of their fathers with the Scriptures of Eternal truth" (138). Well, this article is probably not being read by teenaged covenant children, so it behooves our adult readers to take to heart the level of Christian education we are offering our children both in our homes in family worship and in our churches. Are we less zealous to rear godly, Christ-trusting, Bible-loving and reading children than the saints of old? Is it any wonder we are losing generations from our churches? Wouldn't it be wonderful and heart-pleasing if we, in years to come, could recount our children's attachment to the church, but not just any church? Do we not believe ours is the one most true to God's inerrant Word and therefore best for our souls, those of our children, and best for the reaching of the lost world?

Lest we think Witherspoon was obnoxiously sectarian, he goes into some length with his children readers to show the wide-love of God for those who claim faith in Christ Jesus alone. In so doing he includes "all members of evangelical churches,[7] whether they are called Methodists or Baptists, Episcopalians or Presbyterians; whether they are Calvinists or Arminians,

5. James H. Thornwell, "The Revised Book of Discipline," in *The Collected Writings of James H. Thornwell,* 4 vols. (1875; reprint, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1986), 4.340.

6. Stuart Robinson, *The Church of God as an Essential Element of the Gospel* (1858; reprint, Willow Grove, PA: The Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2009).

7. It probably goes without saying to our readers, but keep in mind that the term "evangelical" in Witherspoon's day connoted more theological substance and devotion to the fundamental doctrines that make up the good news and life abundant. Remember that in his day, the mentioned denominations were far more biblically and theologically sound than the mainstream version of the same bodies many of us know today. One should also note that Witherspoon does not include Roman Catholics among "denominations" who believe the gospel for they deny the gospel and in so doing hold another gospel, which is soul damning. Furthermore, they do not rightly administer the sacraments of the new covenant. Finally, the reader will notice that he does not include the broader array of "churches" that we often see included in current evangelical definitions, e.g., Churches of Christ, Seventh Day Adventist, etc. He would have been fully aware of them, but did not list them as "evangelicals" for gospel reasons.

Lutherans or Reformed" (141). He then returns to his exhortation: "But while you cherish a kindly spirit towards all other branches of the church…. Be decidedly and frank in your attachment to Presbyterianism…. Let others see that you love the faith and order of the Presbyterian Church, that its doctrines and polity, its history and memories are all dear to your heart" (143).

One last comment about this chapter seems noteworthy. After Witherspoon appeals to his readers to love the church of the Lord Jesus and particularly the Presbyterian Church, he goes into a lengthy exposition on what we would term, ecclesiology. Remember his audience. He repeatedly refers to his "children" readers. Certainly there were adults basking in the warmth of this little book, but he intended it and wrote it (in nineteenth century style) for children! As twenty-first century readers take up this little book it will be amazing to them no doubt that it was consciously written for children. This should serve as a convicting point that he would have reasonable expectations that children would and could read a book that, let me say this gently, would be deemed "advanced" for many if not most Christian readers today.[8] With that said, Witherspoon spent twenty-six (26) pages developing the doctrine of the church from the Abrahamic covenant to the present day, comparing and contrasting the biblical doctrine with systems of men, and concluding: "Let us love her for what she is, and venerate her for what she has been. Peace within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces…. Because of the House of the Lord our God, let us ever seek her good" (171).

Once finished with his precis of ecclesiology, the pastor exhorts and blesses the children. "Oh, that the Lord may bless you, and enrich you with His grace, and prepare you to stand up like men under the responsibilities that are to devolve upon you, so that when, in a green old age, you transmit to others the legacy of Presbyterianism which you have received from us, you may transmit it in its purity, having your names honourably associated with the increase of its prosperity, and the extension of its influence throughout the world!" (172).

To Christian Parents

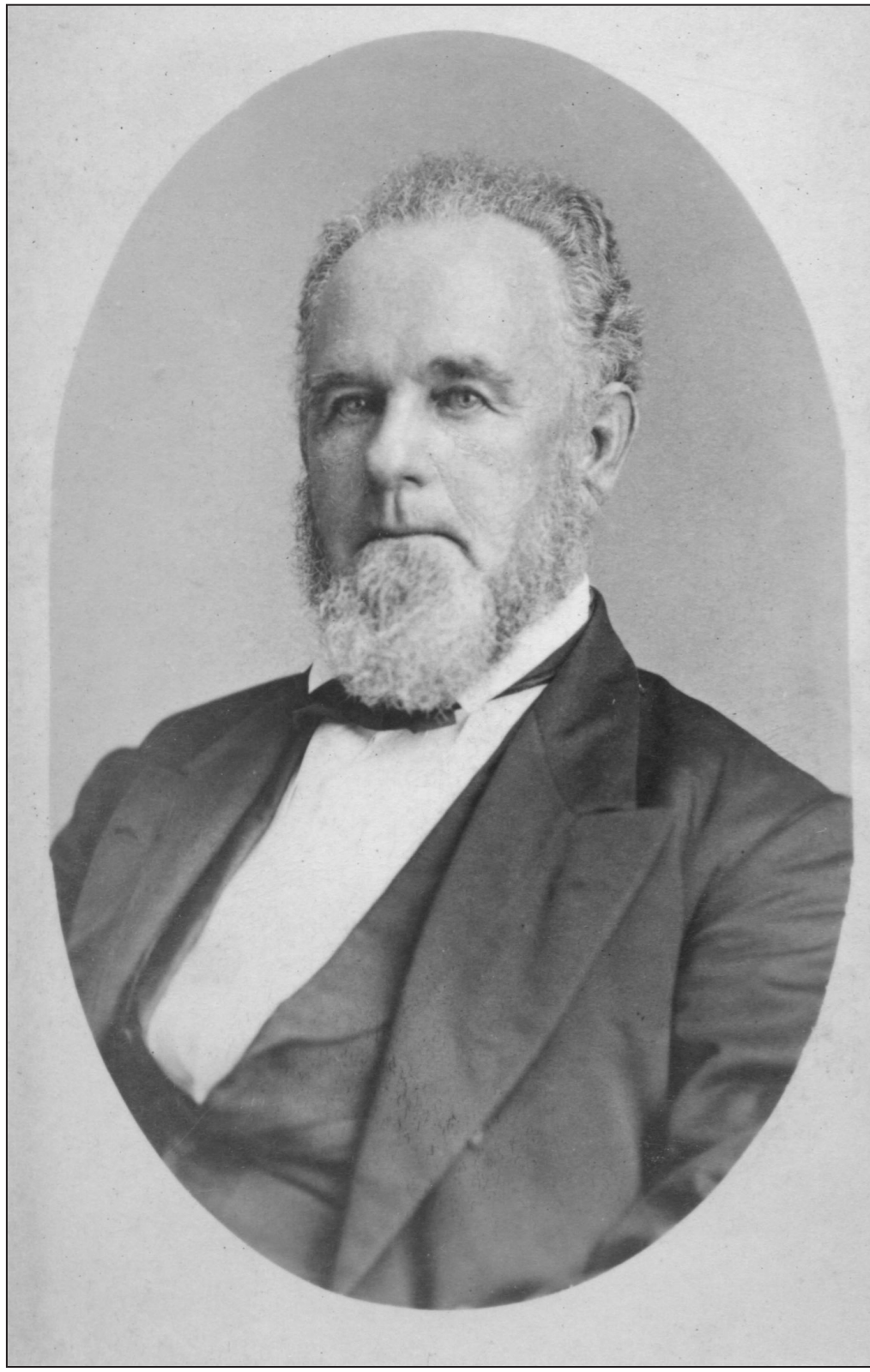
The final chapter, as alluded to above, is for the parents of children—"A Word to Christian Parents." He begins with the overarching question—who among you would not want the same for your children as God lavished upon Hart, Sarah, and Mary Clarissa Kerr? What parent does not want his children to enjoy the marvelous work of the Spirit, which so characterized these three covenant children? "In so far as these remarkable examples of early piety are to be traced to the extraordinary influences of His Holy Spirit,— and it certainly is to these influences alone that we can trace them as their source,—we can only say, as did our blessed Lord: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (177). Here we see Witherspoon, consistent to the revealed truth of God, laying the credit at the feet of an all sovereign and loving God who alone can save.

The pastor is also aware that the same revealed truth of God tells us that God has ordained, not only the ends, but the means—"…while He is free to dispense His Spirit, or to withhold Him at His will, yet it is none the less true, that in grace, as in nature, God works ordinarily by means. There are certain channels through which He is pleased to communicate His Holy Spirit. There are certain means, the use of which He is pleased to own and bless" (179). God's grace, Witherspoon acknowledges, "is sovereign; but it is by no means arbitrary" (179). The means are channeled through Christians and the church which is faithfully administering those prescribed means unto grace.

So, our author calls parents to careful attention to their role in the lives of their children. He urges believing parents to expect and pray for great things for their children. Listen as he explains: "Inasmuch as God's covenant with His children embraces not only believers, but their children also; inasmuch as the means through which He communicates His grace, are means which may be made available for children, as well as for persons of mature years; and inasmuch as we know, from the experience of the past, that His Spirit does often times most wonderfully operate upon the minds and hearts of those who are yet in early childhood, we have a right both *to pray for* and *to expect* the early conversion of our children; and if they are not converted in childhood, or opening youth, the fault lies at our own door" (180).

Witherspoon admits immediately that "This may appear very startling to some" (180). But then he proceeds to appeal to Jonathan Edwards as one who supports his understanding of the Scriptures and God's covenant faithfulness to generations of those who love and obey him. Next, he turns to Scripture and the *analogia fide*. For example, "And yet is there any reason why our children should not be converted in childhood? Did not our blessed Lord, on more than one occasion, say: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" [Matt

8. Another example of nineteenth century pastoral writing for younger readers can be seen in J. A. Waddell, *Letters to a Young Presbyterian* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1895).



Andrew Hart Kerr. Courtesy of The PCA Historical Center, Saint Louis, Mo. Used with Permission.

18:3]. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" [Luke 18:17], &c. Is there anything in the plan of salvation which the child cannot apprehend as truly as the grown man? Is not faith in Jesus Christ the simplest, most child-like exercise of the human mind and heart? If those children who die in infancy, are regenerated by the Holy Spirit before they pass that mysterious bourne, beyond which there is no remission of sins, and no work of grace, may not the same Almighty Agent, who transformed their natures, that they might be new creatures in Christ Jesus, transform also the natures of those who are to remain in this world of sin (182)?" He urges the parents to recognize the power of the covenantal home and the church where the Word is poured out into the hearing and hearts of the children, where the sacraments are set before them to call for their attention, where the Holy Spirit is present for the tasting of those who believe and their children.

It is here he begins to urge parents "to apprehend the reality of the covenant which God has made with believing parents and their children, and the consequent failure to take hold of this covenant by faith, and appropriate to themselves the precious promises which it contains" (185). He further reminds them of the nature of a covenant and the conditions inherent. He says of Abraham, to illustrate:

> He was not only publicly to confess, for himself, the true God; publicly to recognize and accept the redemption which God had provided through the sacrifice of atoning blood, and through the regeneration of the Holy Ghost; and publicly to consecrate himself to the true worship and service of God; but he was publicly to confess this Jehovah as the God of his children also; the God whom they were to be taught to fear, to love, and to obey. He was publicly to accept this salvation through the blood of a divine Victim, as the salvation of his children. To the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, their earliest thoughts were to be directed, that they might believe on Him that justifieth the ungodly, and have their faith counted to them for righteousness. He was, moreover to consecrate his children to the service of God, as truly as he consecrated himself—to feel that, by the condition of this covenant, they were in a peculiar sense the Lord's, in a sense as high and holy as that in which the believer, by the act of self-consecration, gives himself up to the service of God" (186–87).

Now, what of this consecration? What does Witherspoon have in mind that the parents are responsible to do for their children? He answers when he continues saying: "The condition of the covenant, (as that covenant lay at the foundation of the visible church,) embraced, in a word, just what every believing parent is expected and required to do—to consecrate his children to God—to throw them in faith upon the arms of God's covenant mercy, and in daily faith and daily prayer, by the help of divine grace, to rear them as the true servants of God, and the heirs of the promises in Christ" (187). Every believing parent takes upon himself and herself, in the waters of baptism for his children, "the same obligations which Abraham took" (191). Then he laments that parents fail to receive as and believe baptism to be of "true spiritual import" (192). Sadly, he admits, many parents see in the sacrament of baptism a "simply impressive form" (192). It is nothing more than a rite whereby their children are members of the church. The bottom line is this, Witherspoon is accusing parents of not believing in the powers of the covenantal blessings for believers *and their children.* They are not taking God at His word and where there is not faith, we have not (James 1:5–8). With an exhortation then he ends this point: "We, who are the children of the Covenanters, have need to take up God's covenant out of the dust, to put honour upon it, to plead it with Him, to rely upon His faithfulness, and to hope in His mercy. The parent who fails thus to appropriate to himself the provisions of the covenant, does a wrong to his child, that he can never undo, and discards a birthright for him, more precious than the title to princely estates, or imperial honours, or the highest distinctions of rank and fortune among men" (194).

A "second difficulty" the pastor sees in the church of his day (and like the first, we might add, in our day) "is found in the failure, on the part of Christian parents, to begin the work of religious education at the proper season" (195). You must start early, very early, he argues. Why? For the seed of sin is already sown in the heart of every newborn. Parents must not allow those seeds to grow into weeds out of control before casting the seed of God's truth into the child's heart soil.

A third weakness in parenting that leads to gospel failure in the early life is communication, or lack thereof. That is, lack of substantive, free, and intimate communication. Heed Witherspoon: "Many parents never seem to win the confidence of their children at all. They never come into confidential relations with them. The most intimate thoughts of the child's mind, the most sacredly cherished emotions of its heart, are never communicated to the parent. Between father, or

mother, and child, there is an unnatural barrier of reserve—a wall of mutual separation. The few communications as to its inner life, which the natural yearnings of the child lead it to make, are treated with indifference, or, perhaps, made the occasion of severe rebuke" (198). Oh, parents, take heed to this warning. Covenant with your child early, and renew it often, that you will talk … about everything and anything. Never lose an opportunity. Know the heart of the child and meet the void of that heart with the Savior who fits that God-shaped vacuum, as Augustine said.

Here I would encourage our readers to access this little book and read the full treatment of this "difficulty." Make it available to your church, especially parents. Witherspoon goes into details covering nine pages on this topic alone! Take this to heart. Let us not fail as parents and grandparents. The lives at stake are too precious.

Admitting that there are many other failures on the parent's part, he mentions one last—"to make everything in connection with his child subservient, as far as possible, to the advancement of its religious interests. The true parent must feel, if he gives any serious consideration to the matter, that the one great end to be attained for his child, is the salvation of its priceless and undying soul. He must, therefore, feel that the one object which he is to seek, is to fit his child, not to shine in the halls of society, or to excel in the marts of trade, but to attain to eminence in the kingdom of God" (207). Witherspoon proceeds to explain how the Christian parent can and must do this, and in the end, he brings the following exhortation:

> Dear Christian brethren, can we not, with the help of the Lord, roll these difficulties out of the way? Can we not, and will we not, suffer the little children to come unto Jesus, and forbid them not? Shall our unfaithfulness stand in the way of the blessings of that covenant-keeping God, who visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children? Will not every parent who reads this little book, and thinks of the priceless value of the immortal souls of his children, before he lays the volume down, weigh carefully the considerations that have been presented, and enter anew into covenant with God, resolving that, by His grace, every barrier shall be removed, and every encouragement and assistance rendered to the little ones, to deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow Jesus (219–20).[9]

We have presented before the reader a little children's book. While you may not agree with T. D. Witherspoon upon every detail in regard to theology, there is no amount of argument that can discount the literary beauty of this little book. Likewise, there is no discounting its value to the Church then and now. While the present abstract you are reading falls far short of the literary style of the nineteenth century in general, and Witherspoon in particular, it is our hope that the effort will result in more attention on the part of the Church to her covenant children; that parents of covenant children will take more seriously the sign and seal of the covenant and the benefits of "solemn admission … into the visible church" (Westminster Confession of Faith 28.1). Parents, talk to your children early and often throughout the short days you have them near you. Guard their hearts and minds. Teach them to love the church. Pastors and elders, teach and preach upon these divine truths. Make them real to the people. Feed the sheep, but also the lambs. Remind the Church of the grand benefits of being covenanted people of God. Put off the ways of the world and communicate the glorious truths of God, God's way. Pastors and elders, and deacons alike, make Jesus the object of your work and make Jesus the subject of your visits when you are in the homes of Christ's Church. Witherspoon would have us all be more heavenly minded. Let our children, who are heirs apparent to the glorious kingdom of the King of Kings, know that nothing compares to Christ and His glorious Church. And, by all means, call them to faith in our God and Savior, Christ Jesus. "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (1 Thes 5:24).▪

9. This is a rather lengthy question to end the book, but either the author or the editors omitted the proper punctuation mark.

The Man in Linen:
A New and Old Interpretation of Ezekiel 9–10

By Lane Keister

Interpretations of Ezekiel 8–11 are both very unified and quite diverse. They are unified in that almost all interpreters see chapters 8–11 as a unit, of which the main theme is the departure of the localized glory of God due to Judah's idolatry.[1] However, the exact nature of the departure, and the reasons for it, are in dispute, as are the details of interpretation in the four chapters. For example, does the Lord's departure from Jerusalem happen as punishment for Jerusalem, or is the Lord departing from Jerusalem after he has already inflicted punishment?[2]

What I intend to do in this paper is examine some particular aspects of interpretation in chapters 9–10, particularly with regard to the identity of the man in linen in 9:2, and reflect both on how this text affects the understanding of the departure of God's glory from Jerusalem, and also how the larger picture of 8–11 qualifies the specific details of exegesis in 9–10. Therefore, I will be paying nearly constant attention to the interplay of context and text. Within the broader scope of Ezekiel studies, I will be advocating for a position that is relatively rare in the scholarship. The conclusions to which I come will only be stated at the end of the article, since a highly inductive method is necessary due to the unusual nature of the results I draw from the exegesis. The conclusions will be a bit tentative, since I do not regard the evidence as absolutely conclusive for the position I advocate.

The outline followed will look at the overall context of Ezekiel 8–11, examine the various exegetical options for selected questions in Ezekiel 9–10, propound the position advocated, answer some objections, fit the discussion inside the larger world of Ezekiel studies, and show how the conclusion contributes to a fuller understanding of Ezekiel.

As to method, a relatively straightforward grammatical-historical exegetical approach that follows holistic and typological lines of thought will be evident in this paper. I hold that Jesus is actually in the Old Testament, and does not have to be read back into the text. However, this does not imply that Jesus is under every rock and tree. Rather, the whole of the Old Testament points forward to Christ in an organic, unfolding way. A synchronic approach (treating the text as a finished whole) will rule throughout, as the criteria used for discerning "contradictions" in the text is much too artificial and limiting, as if the original authors could only write in one way.

The Overall Context of Ezekiel 8–11

Discussion of the structure of the book of Ezekiel as a whole falls into one of two basic camps in modern scholarship. We may call them the "Mayfield" camp and the "Renz" camp, after the two scholars who have given the most attention to the overall literary structure of the book.[3] The theory of Renz is that Ezekiel has, on the macro level, three main units: 1–24 (which can be

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1. See, e.g., Tyler Mayfield, *Literary Structure and Setting in Ezekiel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 105; Michael Lyons, *An Introduction to the Study of Ezekiel* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 148–9; Janina Maria Hiebel, *Ezekiel's Vision Accounts as Interrelated Narratives: A Redaction-Critical and Theological Study* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 136–8; Thomas Krüger, "Ezekiel Studies: Present State and Future Outlook," in *Ezekiel: Current Debates and Future Directions*, edited by William Tooman and Penelope Barter (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 18–27, esp. 19.

2. See Lyons' *An Introduction to the Study of Ezekiel* for an excellent discussion of the options.

3. See Tyler Mayfield, 105, and Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

further subdivided into 1–7, 8–13, and 14–25), 25–32, and 33–48. According to Renz, the section 8–13 is the second cycle of the first part, and "underlines that this prophecy will come true in spite of possible objections."[4] Specifically, the objection that 8–11 answers is "that God could not possibly abandon his people."[5]

The other main camp (though there are relatively few in the camp) is the "Mayfield" camp, which argues that the chronological markers offer a better way to outline the book than the content.[6] However, Mayfield cannot completely ignore content after the literary markers do their job.[7] The difference for the interpretation of the unit 8–11 does not seem to alter much. Both camps recognize a complete literary unit in 8–11. The significance of this for the study is that even outlines that run at cross purposes to one another still agree on chapters 8–11 as a literary unit.

To situate 8–11 in the larger context of the book is relatively simple.[8] Covenantal indictment of Judah is the order of the day after Ezekiel receives his calling to be a priestly prophet. All of Ezekiel 1–24 takes place in between the first and second deportation of Judah, so between 597–586 BC. Ezekiel ministered to half of a fractured people. Ezekiel was deported in 597, and was therefore with the exiles in Babylon.[9] The question naturally arose as to which group of people "had God on their side," as it were.[10] Did God have to stay in Jerusalem, and was he tied down to the temple in the promised land? Or was God's glory mobile? The vision of the wheels suggests that God's glory was mobile and would therefore be present with the exiles. In particular, God would be with Ezekiel, who would need such reassurance. After all, if Ezekiel was trained as a priest, he would gravitate towards the view that God's glory was positioned between the cherubim of the ark of the covenant. It was necessary for God to correct Ezekiel's thinking so that Ezekiel would have the courage to give the prophetic word to the people in exile. The many sign acts of chapters 3–7 show the Jews in exile that they were not to rely on Jerusalem to solve their problems. While they were in exile, they needed to rely on God, submit to God, and repent of their sins. Ezekiel urged the people to these actions in spite of the natural inclination of the people to rely on Jerusalem, submit only to themselves, and blame other people for what happened to them.

Chapters 8–11 detail a gradual, almost reluctant, departure of God's glory from the ark (9:3), to the entrance of the inner court (9:3), to the outer court (10:4), through the eastern gateway (10:19, 11:1), to the mountain on the east side of the city (11:23). Terry Clark states the movement of the section well: "The larger unit of Ezek 8–11 is rhetorically arranged to follow the pattern of a visionary tour with multiple scenes."[11] These multiple scenes correspond with the movement of the Shekinah glory. The other parts of chapters 8–11 explain why it is that God's glory is leaving Jerusalem. The abominations in chapter 8 and the corruption of leadership in chapter 11 together bookend the repeated description of God's glory in the wheels (with chapter 10 echoing chapter 1) and the response to the abominations in chapter 9. It is crucial that chapter 9 is a response to the abominations of chapter 8, a fact that is proven by the instructions in 9:4 to place a mark on all those who groan over the abominations practiced in Jerusalem. The abominations in view might indeed be larger in scope than what chapter 8 describes, but they would certainly include those four abominations.

Preliminary conclusions follow concerning the context of 8–11 and its impact on 9–10. The abominations of chapter 8, in particular, are the impetus for God's glory leaving Jerusalem, though the full story is broader than that. The abominations of chapter 8 could more precisely be called the last straw. God's glory will not co-exist alongside such abominations.

4. Renz, 62.

5. Renz, 62.

6. Mayfield, 10–11.

7. See Mayfield, *Literary Structure*, 94, in which he states that 8–11 constitute "a narrative that reports a vision that Ezekiel experiences while sitting in his house with the elders of Judah."

8. Even less synchronically oriented scholars, such as Leslie Allen (who tries to use both synchronic and diachronic methods), believes that "[t]he framework of the vision is firmly set within Ezekiel's prophetic ministry to the Judean prisoners of war in Babylonia, and there is no good reason to doubt this setting." See Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1994, 129). Although Allen is writing about the historical setting rather than the literary setting, it seems fairly clear that the literary setting is highly dependent on the historical. Allen does argue that 11:1–13 was added at a later date "to confirm the visionary message of accusation and judgment in a temple setting that appears in chap. 9" (ibid., xxvii.). However, he exegetes the verses as if they had always been there (see ibid., 159ff).

9. Brownlee's thesis that Ezekiel prophesied mostly in Jerusalem is a position rarely defended today. See William Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19* (Waco: Word Books, 1986), xxiii ff.

10. See Dalit Rom-Shiloni, *Exlusive Inclusivity: Identity Conflicts Between the Exiles and the People Who Remained (6th-5th Centuries BCE)* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013). She treats Ezekiel in chapter 6, pp. 139–197.

11. Terry Clark, *"I Will be King over you!" The Rhetoric of Divine Kingship in the Book of Ezekiel* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2014), 121.

Exegetical Questions in Ezekiel 9–10

I will consider six exegetical questions on the way to propounding my views on the identity of the man in linen. These questions will start from the most peripheral and progress to the most central, ending with the identity of the man in linen himself. Before we treat these six questions, the passage as a whole must come under scrutiny. Probably we are meant to think of chapters 8–11 as a covenantal lawsuit within the literary genre of a vision report. The Lord presents to Ezekiel the evidence in chapter 8, and sentences the people in chapters 9–10. Block believes that several indicators in the passage point to a judicial flavor. There are decrees (5–6), witnesses (Ezekiel himself), executioners (1–2, though their function is disputed, see below), a link between chapters 8–9 as indictment to sentencing, and the report of the man in linen as the decree accomplished (11).[12] Henry Parunak argues that the elements proving a lawsuit structure are: 1. convocation of the trial, 2. accusation by interrogation, 3. indictment, 4. declaration of guilt, and 5. declaration of doom.[13] If the overall context is judicial, the impact it has on the questions which will be considered is great, since the function of the man in linen must be understood within this judicial context. What he does to exercise both mercy and judgment is characteristic of a judge. All six exegetical questions will depend largely on this judicial context.

The Identity and Function of the Six Beings of 9:1

The first question has to do with the "executioners" of 9:1, both their function and their species. The word פְּקֻדּוֹת is an unusual word. The plural of פְּקֻדָּה, the word has a semantic range that includes soldiers, priests, administrators, gatekeepers/guards, overseers, executioners, and judges.[14] Given the weapons in their hands (כְּלִי מַשְׁחֵתוֹ בְּיָדוֹ), weapons of war or execution, it seems likely that "executioners" is the more probable description of their function. Furthermore, the contrasting mission of the man in linen to mark those who groan supports this position. While not prematurely judging the question of what the mark means, it is still evident that those who were not marked by the man in linen do in fact perish. Even though the man in linen delineates those to be saved in chapter 9, in chapter 10 he has the commission to execute those not marked. If Block is correct about the judicial flavor of the chapter, then "executioners" is a very natural fit for the context. Someone has to carry out the sentence.

The nuance of the word here "executioners" in Ezekiel 9:1 is disputed, though. Rashi translates it as "appointees" having the power to destroy.[15] The sense of "overseers" is well represented in the literature as well.[16] Cocceius uses the word "visitationes," implying not only oversight, but also a specific occasion of oversight.[17] Oecolampadius agrees with Cocceius, whereas the other major Post-Reformation commentaries use the idea of "prefect."[18] The view of Keil and Davidson that they are protectors seems highly unlikely.[19] The question is not whether they might have swords to protect the people of Judah from attack by outside forces, since there is no hint of this in the context. The question is a division of the people of Judah within Jerusalem between those who groan and those who do not.

There are two main views of what order of being these six executioners are: angels or humans. The view that they are angels seems preferable here. Although there are no unmistakable signs, the efficiency needed to carry out such a task would seem to point to angelic

12. See Daniel Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 303. Hummel agrees with this assessment. See Horace Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 264.

13. Henry Van Dyke Parunak, "Structural Studies in Ezekiel," Dissertation, Harvard, 1978, 208–210. Note that Allen claims that Parunak's claim "is forced" (*Ezekiel 1–19*, 130).Allen's argument appears to be that this passage is similar to an earlier sign act in the book. However, even in describing the earlier sign-act phenomenon, Allen uses courtroom language to describe the earlier phenomenon! Methinks Parunak's take is not as forced as Allen would have us believe.

14. See *TDOT* XII, 61.

15. See Rosenberg, *The Book of Ezekiel: Volume One* (New York: The Judaica Press, 2000), 57.

16. See Calvin's Commentaries, Volume 11, *Ezekiel I* (repr. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 300; and William Greenhill, *An Exposition Upon the Book of Ezekiel* (repr. Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 1994), 208, among many others.

17. Johannes Cocceius, *Prophetia Ezekielis Commentario Illustrata* (Amsterdam: Someren, 1669), 47.

18. See Johannes Oecolampadius, *In Ezechielem Prophetam Commentarii* (Geneva: Crispinana, 1558), 58; Franciscus Junius, *Commentaria in Iechezkelem Prophetam* (Heidelberg, 1610), 195; Johannes Piscator, *In Prophetam Ezechielem Commentarius* (Herbornae Nassoviorum, 1614), 60; Amandus Polanus, *In Librum Prophetiarum Ezechielis Commentarii* (Conrad Waldkirchii, 1620), 247; and Matthew Poole, *Synopsis Criticorum Aliorumque S. Scripturae Interpretum*, volume 3 (London: Smith, 1673), 1101, who naturally refers to all the options. Hummel prefers "supervisors" (*Ezekiel 1–20*, 263–4).He simply calls it "premature" to translate as "executioners." It is not clear why he thinks that 9:1b-2 demands an administrative or supervisory office, since 9:1b-2 have to do with the weapons that they hold. Allen translates it as "you who are responsible for the city's fate," a rendering which seems to want to capture all of the nuances simultaneously. See Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 116.

19. C.F. Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Ezekiel, Daniel, volume 1* (repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 126; and A.B. Davidson, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 65.

agents of destruction. However, given the fact that Ezekiel sees all this in a vision (8:1–3), there is not a necessity to choose. Greenhill, the Pulpit Commentary, Hengstenberg, Schröder, Fohrer, Keil, Davidson, May/Allen, and Rochester hold that they are angels.[20] Blackwood argues that they were human beings, specifically Babylonian generals, though he gives no reasons why.[21] Gill argues that they could have been either angels or Babylonian princes.[22] Block and Sweeney do not make a decision on the issue, choosing rather to describe them by their function rather than by what kind of creature they are.[23]

Rochester believes that the six together with the man in linen "can be viewed as a symbolically complete group of heavenly agents."[24] It is certainly true that 6+1 is a verifiable pattern in the Old Testament. The weekly rhythm has this pattern, as does the yearly pattern of six years of land being available for planting while in the seventh year it lies fallow. It is difficult, however, to see what place this numerical symbolism would have in the context of Ezekiel 9, unless it were to underline the completion of destruction. If the numerical symbolism is intentional, why would the man in linen be described so very differently from the other six? Even if the last one in the series has some differences (such as the Sabbath being different from the other days), the last item in the series still has to be of the same general kind as the six. If Gill or Blackwood is correct in describing them as Babylonian generals or princes, then why is the man in linen not solely an agent of destruction from the first? It is not perfectly clear at this point in the exegesis whether those marked are spared from execution or not. However, the act of marking is certainly not an act of destruction. Both his description and his function seem to be by way of contrast with the description and function of the other six, not continuity: the six have weapons of war, whereas the man in linen has a writing kit; the six destroy, whereas the man in linen marks those who will not be touched by the six (9:6).

The First Commission of the Man in Linen

The first commission of the man in linen is to mark (וְהָתְוִיתָ תָּו) the foreheads of all those who groan under the abominations practised in Jerusalem. Several issues need to be addressed. Firstly, what is the sign itself? According to the text quoted above, the sign is the Hebrew letter *tav*. Several commentators suggest that the Hebrew letter would not have looked like the modern Hebrew letter, but would have looked more like an "X," or a cross in the ancient way of writing the Hebrew letters.[25] The *tav* is simply a distinguishing mark (a cross is one of the easiest signs to make, which might very well be the reason why it was chosen as the mark), setting apart those destined for being spared from those destined for destruction.[26] Block's suggestion that the mark "represented Yahweh's signature, his claim on those who were citizens of the true kingdom of God" is compatible, though not identical, to the interpretation of the people being spared.[27] It is probable that Yahweh was marking his own people for the purposes of sparing them.

If this is so, then what is the significance of the mark?[28] If it marks out those to be spared, then what kind of sparing is in mind? Again, differing positions confront the interpreter. Some believe that all those marked were spared from the physical destruction that the rest of the inhabitants of Jerusalem suffered.[29] The strength of this interpretation is the phrase in verse 6: וְעַל־כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־עָלָיו הַתָּו אַל־תִּגָּשׁוּ. This clause seems to indicate that whatever the destroying angels were doing

20. Greenhill, *Ezekiel*, 210; E.H. Plumptre and T. Whitelaw, et al, *Ezekiel* (repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 162; E.W. Hengstenberg, *The Prophecies of the Prophet Ezekiel Elucidated* (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1869), 82; Fr. Wilhelm Julius Schröder, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (repr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 113; Georg Fohrer, *Ezechiel* (Tübingen: Mohr Seibeck, 1955), 53, who calls them "himmlische Wesen in Männergestalt" ("heavenly beings in human form"); Keil, *Ezekiel*, 126; Davidson, *Ezekiel*, 65; Herbert May and E.L. Allen, *The Book of Ezekiel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 111; and Kathleen M. Rochester, *Prophetic Ministry in Jeremiah and Ezekiel* (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 128. These authors do not all agree on the function of the angels, but they do all hold to the view that the six beings are angels.

21. Andrew W. Blackwood, Jr., *Ezekiel: Prophecy of Hope* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), 77.

22. John Gill, *Exposition of the Old & New Testaments, Vol. 6, Ezekiel to Malachi* (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1810), 38.

23. Block, Ezekiel 1–24, 303, claiming that they are simply "agents who are charged with the execution of a sentence"; and Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2013), 60, who says that they are agents "designated for an official task."

24. Rochester, *Prophetic Ministry*, 128. She references Greenberg, who also notes the number of completion. See Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1983), 175–6.

25. This is noted by many commentators, but see as one example Block, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 307. He says that the cross or "X" would have been the shape of the *tav* in the archaic cursive script. He notes further that this shape would have essentially been the shape of the letter all the way until the advent of the Aramaic square script.

26. See Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 61.

27. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*, 307.

28. The fullest treatment of the meaning of the mark is undoubtedly Steven Tuell's article, "The Meaning of the Mark: New Light on Ezekiel 9 from the History of Interpretation," in *After Ezekiel: Essays on the Reception of a Difficult Prophet*, ed. Paul Joyce and Andrew Mein (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 185–202.

29. Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 61.

to (at least) the majority of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, they would *not* be doing to those marked. Others believe that those marked were spared, but not from physical destruction. Instead it was a spiritual destruction from which they were spared.[30] This position can claim the first part of verse 6 as support, which verse seems to assert unlimited destruction. However, Tuell (who holds the position of spiritual destruction) does not address the significance of the clause quoted above, which would seem to mitigate against his interpretation. Jewish interpretation, possibly reacting against the Christian "cross" interpretation of the mark, said that it means those marked would only receive a quick and easy death.[31] This interpretation also does not come to terms with the exemption from destruction that is explicit in the phrase quoted above. Therefore, the logical conclusion is that the seemingly all-inclusive destruction of the people in the beginning of verse 6 is qualified by the instruction to spare those with the mark.

A relevant question is in order at this point: how would the man in linen know which people to mark? If there were people to mark, would they all have been groaning and lamenting over the city at the same time, such that there would be a clear external sign showing the man which people to mark? Or would the man in linen have been equipped to peer into the hearts of all in Jerusalem so as to know which should be marked and which should not? Should we simply throw up our hands, and say that since it was a vision, it was not important? It seems better to say that the man in linen was equipped to know which people should be marked. It is possible that God would have granted such knowledge of human hearts to a mere angel. However, there are no definite examples of this happening in the Bible. The supernatural knowledge is implied in the command from the Lord in verse 4. The Lord obviously expected the man in linen to be able to accomplish the task, which means that the man in linen must have been equipped. This at least hints at supernatural knowledge of human hearts. This point is rather important for the question of the identity of the man in linen.

The Second Commission

The man in linen is not finished in his tasks, however, just because he has completed the previous task, and reported it in 9:11. For in 10:2, the same man in linen is further directed to take a handful of embers and throw them over the city. In this action, the man in linen clearly passes over from the work of mercy to the work of justice. At first, this change might seem rather startling. Predictably, historical-critical scholars try to explain the contrast in terms of diachronically distinct layers in the text. One scholar describes the change this way:

> [T]he double function of the man in linen, first as a scribe marking the innocent (9:2e, 3d, 4, 11b) and then as priestly arsonist throwing fire over the city (10:2, 6–7) appears awkward; especially because he is characterized as a scribe only in Chapter 9 but not in Chapter 10, whereas his portrayal as a priestly figure (dressed in linen) is constant. These observations suggest the existence of two layers in the present text. [32]

To answer Hiebel's arguments is fairly straightforward. Firstly, why would the man in linen need to be characterized as a scribe in both chapters? Would the author think that the audience had already forgotten the description in chapter 9 when he wrote chapter 10? Furthermore, the man in linen's first commission had to do with writing, whereas the second commission does not. The nature of the commissions being different, the description would understandably be different as well. A different description of the same person, *as those descriptions are related to their particular tasks*, is no reason to posit literary layers as the explanation for the differences.

Secondly, the portrayal of the man as a priestly figure dressed in linen in both chapters is an argument in favor of unitary authorship. Both commissions are priestly in character. Discerning between what is clean and unclean is analagous to discerning the difference between those who mourn and groan versus those who do not. This similarity shows that the first commission was priestly in character. Furthermore, only priests would have access to the coals in their described location as being underneath the cherubim[33] (אֶל־תַּחַת לַכְּרוּב). Therefore, the second commission is

30. Tuell holds this position, believing that Calvin is a forerunner. See Tuell, op. cit., 200–202. Tuell holds that "[T]he mark in Ezekiel 9 may be understood as God's signature or seal, declaring that those marked belong to God. Those God claims as God's own are not held accountable for Jerusalem's sin; however, they still must suffer Jerusalem's fate. These persons...understand why the city must fall and so can face this tragedy with equanimity" (201–202).

31. See Moshe Greenberg, quoting Abarbanel, in *Ezekiel 1–20* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983), 177.

32. Hiebel, *Ezekiel's Vision Accounts*, 103.

33. See M.E. Andrew, *Responsibility and Restoration: The Course of the Book of Ezekiel* (Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 1985), 52. Zimmerli sees clearly that the two commissions have not transgressed the boundaries of priestly work. Contrary to Hiebel's conclusion, Zimmerli writes "That now, unlike 9:2f, 11, the instrument of the scribe is no longer mentioned in the equipment of the man

also priestly in essence. The man in linen is carrying out the judgment of the Lord, since the coals of fire represented God's own purifying fire.[34]

There is therefore no contradiction between the two commissions, any more than there would be a contradiction between distinguishing two parties, and then judging one of those parties after they have been distinguished. Even based on two different views of the identity of the man in linen (one holds that it is Christ, and the other an angel), Greenhill and Calvin both note how, ultimately, both mercy and justice come from God.[35]

The Significance of the Cloud

Given that, in the overall context of 8–11, the Shekinah glory of God is in the process of leaving Jerusalem, it is a bit of a puzzle why the cloud inhabits the temple again (the glory had risen from the temple to the court of the temple in 9:3), and specifically at the same moment that the man in linen enters the temple (10:3). This movement appears to be a step backwards in the progression of the Shekinah glory leaving the temple and Jerusalem. This seemingly backward progression, however, makes a rhetorical point, which is that the Shekinah glory is present, and even goes backwards, when the man in linen enters the Temple. The Shekinah glory, in other words, goes back into the temple when the man in linen is there. On reading the account, one gets the distinct impression that the Shekinah glory would not have temporarily reversed its exit for just anyone. The significance of this cloud and the moment of time when it is manifested is an important link in the case I am seeking to make.

The Shekinah glory does not always have to be connected specifically with the gracious presence of God. It can also signify the justice of God.[36] It always signifies God's holiness. The cloud here is clearly the Shekinah glory. Block makes a very compelling case for this by stressing the definite article, as referring to *the* glory, the well-known and familiar glory.[37]

The moment the cherubim stand at the right side of the temple is the same moment the man in linen enters. Hummel notes that the *beth* preposition "is a normal Hebrew idiom for a temporal clause."[38] While the temporal use of *beth* here connects the cherubic movement with the entrance of the man in linen, and does not grammatically include the cloud filling the inner court, the meaning of the text is still that these three events (cherubim standing at the right side of the temple, the man in linen entering, and the cloud filling the temple) are simultaneous. While it is certainly possible that the three events are somewhat coincidental, the juxtaposition of the entrance of the man in linen with the glory-cloud filling the temple is suggestive, especially when combined with the halt and reverse motion of the Shekinah glory in comparison to the rest of chapters 8–11.[39] If the glory-cloud is in the temple/tabernacle, human beings cannot be. This is clear from Ex. 40:35, Lev. 16:2, 1 Kings 8:10–11, Ez. 42:2,4. Therefore the man in linen cannot be a human being. Angels could theoretically be in the presence of the glory-cloud. However, nowhere in the Old Testament is the glory-cloud so concomitant with the appearance of an angel. In other words, there is more than a hint here that the man in linen is more even than an angel. Greenhill makes a point of connecting this cloud with the appearance of Christ, since the glory-cloud is often connected with appearances of Christ. He mentions expositors, but does not specify who they are.[40] Of course, the Shekinah glory is not always associated with a Christophany. It is more often associated with the Holy Spirit and the Father. Nevertheless, the context here indicates that there is a centering of focus on the man in linen in connection with the Shekinah glory, an element that is not present in the non-Christophanic appearances of the Shekinah glory.

clothed in linen, need not give rise to critical operations. The second task is no longer that of a scribe, but yet remains in another way the work of a priest," in Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1979), 250.

34. See Douglas Stuart, *Ezekiel* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1989), 97.

35. Greenhill, *Ezekiel*, 233, and Calvin, *Ezekiel I*, 322. Cf. Also Patrick Fairbairn, *An Exposition of Ezekiel* (repr. The National Foundation for Christian Education, 1969), 96–7, who says, "We have here the Old Testament foundation of the doctrine of the New, that all judgment has been committed to the Son; and a remarkable example of the harmony of the two Testaments, which in recent times has been but too much overlooked."

36. Gill argues that the Shekinah glory was present "not as a token of God's presence, as at the dedication of the temple; but rather of judicial blindness and darkness, which the people of the Jews were left unto" (*Exposition*, 41). Most likely this is true, except that there is an incorrect comma in Gill's sentence after the word "presence." God was present here in Ezekiel, though not in the same way as at the dedication. Gill's comma seems to be implying that God's presence was not indicated at all in Ezekiel, with the dedication as but one counter-example. The Shekinah glory is present, but not in the same way as at the dedication. This could have been what Gill was trying to say, but the comma makes the relationship of the clauses vague.

37. Block, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 320.

38. Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 286.

39. It is somewhat puzzling that Odell believes that the report of the entrance of the man in linen is delayed until verse 6. See Margaret Odell, *Ezekiel* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005). The end of verse two has וַיָּבֹא לְעֵינָי. The phrase in verse three is בְּבֹאוֹ הָאִישׁ. How are these not reports of the man going in?

40. Greenhill, *An Exposition*, 234–5.

Previous mentions of בַּד have to do with the priests.[41] That certainly seems to be its function here. While there is no previous mention of the glory-cloud in connection with any man in linen in the Hebrew Bible, since this appearance is unique, the silence is not significant. Ezekiel, trained as a priest, would certainly have thought of priestly vestments whenever linen is mentioned, even more so this particular kind of linen.

The Writing Paraphernalia

According to several scholars, the phrase "writing kit" (that describes what the man in linen has to mark the foreheads of those who groan) is an Egyptian loan word.[42] Davidson has a good description of what the writing kit would have included, and is followed by others with very little variation: "The inkhorn consisted of a case for holding the reed pens, with an inkholder attached near the mouth of the case. Such inkhorns are carried in the girdle at the present day, and those worn by high officials are often of silver, richly chased and ornamented."[43]

The significance of the writing kit is stated well by Trapp: "An ensign of his prophetical office, say some, as his linen clothing was of his priestly; and of his kingly, that he was among, or in the midst of, the six slaughtermen, as their captain and commander."[44] It is possible, contra Trapp, that the writing kit had more reference to a priestly act than to prophetical and kingly offices, since the marking of the foreheads was an exercise in the kind of distinctions that priests had to do so often. In this connection, I am not referring to the marking itself, but rather to what the marking is supposed to do: distinguish between those who mourn the abominations and those who do not. It is this distinction that parallels priestly decision-making regarding clean and unclean, common and holy, etc. The Pulpit Commentary definitely seems to be stretching things a bit when it claims that "it is obviously connected with the oft-recurring thought of the books of life and death in the chancery of heaven."[45] As has been fairly adequately demonstrated, the mark on the forehead has more to do with those marked being spared from the physical destruction of Jerusalem. While there would (presumably) be a fairly significant, or even majority, overlap between those who groaned over the abominations, and those who are faithful Israelites in an inner sense, this is not necessarily a one-to-one correspondence, and it is hardly the point of the passage. Furthermore, it is not likely that the ideas are connected, once it is pointed out that the book of life is a slightly different writing medium than the foreheads of human beings. It is still possible that other texts that mention the book of life may have patterned their thoughts on Ezekiel.

The Identity of the Man in Linen

Having addressed the previous exegetical questions, the stage is now set for the final exegetical question, involving the most controversial claims.

The position I hold is that the man in linen was the Angel of the Lord as an appearance of the preincarnate Christ. I believe this position makes the most sense of the data of the text, and it also has the resources to answer some of the objections that might be raised against a simple equation of the man in linen with Christ in some other form. On the other hand, it makes better sense of the text than the position of his being a mere angel.

Consider the following points. As Greenhill observes, the man in linen seems to have a position of pre-eminence among the destroyers.[46] The hint of supernatural knowledge in the wording of the first commission seems to point to a divine figure, not merely a heavenly one. That judgment and mercy both are in the hands of the man in linen would be unusual if merely an angel were in view, whereas it makes perfect sense if a divine being is carrying out both kinds of action. The timing of the cloud entering the temple at the same time as the man in linen would indicate that the man in linen, being able to be present at the same time as the Shekinah glory, is at least more than a man. There is no indication that such a meeting happened with a sin offering, which also suggests a sinless being (thus ruling out a mere man as a possibility). This could be true of a mere angel. However, the conjunction of this meeting with the glory cloud possibly points in a more exalted direction.

None of these points, either singly, or in the conglomerate, would constitute absolute proof of the position advocated here. What I am arguing is that the

41. See James Hoffmeier's article on linen in NIDOTTE III, p. 711, where he states, "This type of linen was used for priestly garments (Exod 28:42; 39:28; Lev 6:10[3]), including the 'linen ephod' worn by priests (1 Sam 2:18; 22:18) and is even called 'holy linen' in Lev 16:4." This is in contrast to various other kinds of linen mentioned in the same article.

42. See Lamar Cooper, Sr., *Ezekiel* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 127; Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), 130; John Taylor, *Ezekiel* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP, 1969), 101; and Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 266.

43. See Davidson, *Ezekiel*, 65.

44. Trapp, *Commentary*, 586.

45. Plumptre/Whitelaw, et al, *Ezekiel*, 162.

46. Greenhill, *Ezekiel*, 211. He argues this from the prepositional phrase "among them." This seems a bit more shaky than simply the overall picture, though his point is suggestive.

man in linen being the Angel of the Lord as the preincarnate Christ would fit the data admirably in all of its suggestiveness.

At this point a history of the various options on offer in the history of exegesis is in order. Greenhill, Trapp, and Henry all hold that the man in linen is Jesus Christ *simpliciter*.[47] Several scholars hold that the man in linen is an angel *simpliciter*.[48] Most of the rabbis say either Gabriel or a man.[49] Several commentators say it was the Angel of the Lord (some connecting it with Christ in a typological way, and others identifying the Angel of the Lord with the preincarnate Christ).[50] Some say that it was a human.[51] Lastly, some hold that Babylonian planetary deities are the background of the six plus one.[52]

Objections Answered

There are a number of obstacles in the way of my interpretation which must be answered. Keil objects to this interpretation with the most comprehensiveness. His objections amount to these: 1. Being clothed in linen is not exclusive to the angel of the Lord, or Christ. 2. The being with the writing materials is strongly contrasted with the appearance of Yahweh in Ezekiel 1 and Daniel 10 (or Christ in Revelation 1). 3. There is no indication that the man in linen is a being equal with God. His first objection amounts to an argument from silence. As a result, his argument could neither prove nor disprove the presence of Christ in the appearance of the man in linen. The only way his argument would be cogent would be if anyone argued that the man in linen was identifiable as Christ *because* of the linen. To my knowledge, no one has ever argued this. Most agree that there is a priestly association with the linen rather than a divine association. As to his second argument, there is no disagreement that the description of the man in linen contrasts rather strongly with the theophanies that Keil references. However, Ezekiel 1 and Daniel 10 are not obviously Christophanies as opposed to theophanies. It would therefore be unclear why a contrast to Ezekiel 1 and Daniel 10 would make a Christophany in Ezekiel 9 unlikely. Furthermore, there is no reason to suppose that Christ could have appeared in OT times in only one form or appearance. As to his third objection, I would argue that the degree of knowledge implied in the task commissioned to him, as well as the perfection required in being able to enter the temple without a sacrifice, combined with the glory-cloud appearance (especially with its retrogade movement), point in a divine direction over and above (though probably inclusive of) an angelic appearance.

Another possible objection arises at this point: if the man in linen is Christ, then why is no worship accorded to him? The answer is that worship was not always given to Christ when he was on earth. It depended on the context of what was happening at the time. People had to recognize Christ's glory in order to worship him. In the context of Ezekiel 9–10, that glory is not recognized, since there is no one but Ezekiel to see it happen.

Responses to Jewish objections to my position would have to be a bit more imaginative, since the Jewish scholars consulted for this paper did not address the exegetical issues under discussion, nor did they interact with the various Christian interpretations much.

It is quite probable that Jewish scholars would object to any idea that an angel could share in deity. However, the appearance of the Angel of the Lord that quite probably includes at least a theophany is quite common in the Old Testament: Gen. 16, 18, 22, 24, 31, 48; Ex. 3, 13–14, 23, 32; Josh. 5–6; and Jdg. 2, 6.[53] By the same token, Jewish objectors might agree that Ezekiel 9–10's man in linen is an angel, but they could say that there is a big gap between an angel and God. Of course, there is a

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47. Greenhill, *Ezekiel*, 211; Trapp, *Commentary*, 586; Henry, *Commentary*, 798.

48. See Calvin, *Ezekiel I*, 302; Davidson, *Ezekiel*, 66 (the "high angel"); G.A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936), 104 ("ranking angel"); and Hummel, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 273. This is certainly a strong possibility.

49. Moshe Eisemann, *The Book of Ezekiel* (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1977), 170. If it was an angel, it seems a bit pointless to speculate on whether it was Gabriel or not.

50. Fairbairn, *An Exposition*, 95 ("angel of the Lord"); Hengstenberg, *The Prophecies*, 83 (Angel of the Lord as a type of Christ); Schröder, *Ezekiel*, 113 (same as Hengstenberg); Feinberg, *The Prophecies*, 55 ("[T]he Angel of the Lord, the preincarnate Christ").

51. Abarbanel, in Rosenberg, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 57, who says it was a Babylonian officer. This is among the more bizarre interpretations in the history of exegesis. What would a Babylonian officer be doing marking the foreheads of Judeans in order to spare them from Babylonian slaughter? Joyce thinks that there is a contrast between the man in linen and the divine figure in 8:2. See Paul Joyce, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 102, which would imply a position that the man in linen was simply a man. However, Joyce does not explain how the two differ.

52. See Fohrer, *Ezechiel*, 54 (following Gunkel); cf. D.M.G. Stalker, *Ezekiel: Introduction and Commentary* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1968), 104, who (agreeing with Fohrer about the background) holds that "[T]he man clothed in linen (v. 2) occupies a middle place between the angel of Yahweh and the later Gabriel." It is unclear why he thinks this. There do not appear to be any indications that the man in linen occupies a middle position between any angels, but rather between God and humans, given his location of the temple, and the command from *God* to mark *humans*. Fohrer's position has been adequately answered by Ellison, *Ezekiel*, 44.

53. See *ISBE*, rev. ed., I, 125, for this list of passages, and a penetrating analysis of their content.

The Patristic Roots of Post-Reformation Views on the Properties of Scripture as Exhibited in the Preaching of John Chrysostom

By David T. King

When one begins to study the literature of the Reformation and Post-Reformation orthodox divines, the attentive reader becomes increasingly aware that these theologians of those eras never intended to employ a *tabula rasa* dismissal of the past, of which they were so often accused by their opponents,[1] in their pursuit to reform and restore the church of their day to the authority of that infallible rule bequeathed to her by her Lord, and upon which she was built, namely the word of the true and living God as we find it in Holy Scripture. In his monumental work on the development of Protestant orthodoxy following the Reformation, Richard A. Muller has meticulously documented "a fundamental continuity" between them and the Reformers "on the subjects of prolegomena, Scripture, and God."[2]

When Muller focuses particularly on Scripture as the *principium cognoscendi externum*[3] for these Protestant divines, he is careful to acknowledge that:

> Neither the Reformers nor their orthodox successors invented the notion of attributes of Scripture. Rather, they inherited from the church fathers and the medieval doctors the assumption that various attributes or properties could be noted concerning the character of Scripture in its normative use in the church….[4]

Nonetheless, the Reformers and their orthodox successors understood that such qualities of God's word were drawn from Scripture itself, as can be "seen in Reformed dogmatics and in the Reformed exegetical tradition from the time of Calvin and Vermigli onward."[5] These properties of Scripture, as outlined in Muller's work, are as follows: 1. Truth, Certainty, and Infallibility; 2. Purity, Holiness, Perfection, Sufficiency; 3. Perspicuity and Efficacy; and 4. Scripture is the infallible rule of faith and judge of controversies. It is the purpose of this cursory examination to demonstrate how these properties of Scripture, as affirmed by the Reformers and their successors, in the above order, were anticipated in the pastoral ministry of John Chrysostom (A.D. 349–407).

A Son of Antioch

First and foremost, beyond all other things which may be posited of him, John Chrysostom was a preacher of Holy Scripture. He informs us explicitly: "We preach not the things that come from our own mind but the teachings vouchsafed to us by the Lord through the Holy Scriptures, proclaiming them publicly and making them resound constantly."[6] Though he occasionally

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1. See *John Calvin & Jacopo Sadoleto, A Reformation Debate: Sadoleto's Letter to the Genevans and Calvin's Reply,* ed. John C. Olin (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966), 30–31, 57ff.

2. *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics, The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725,* 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 4.419. Hereafter *PRRD*. See also his *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

3. *Principium cognoscendi externum:* The external principle of knowing for the Protestant orthodox. See Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms, Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 246.

4. Muller, *PRRD,* 2.295

5. Muller, *PRRD,* 2.296.

6. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis 1–17,* trans. Robert Charles Hill, Fathers of the Church (*FC*), Vol. 74 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), Homily 11:9, p. 148. Greek text: οὐ τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκείας διανοίας φθεγγόμενοι, ἀλλὰ τὰ παρὰ τοῦ Δεσπότου διὰ τῶν θείων Γραφῶν ἡμῖν δωρηθέντα διδάγματα, ταῦτα εἰς μέσον προτιθέντες, καὶ ταῦτα συνεχῶς ἐνηχοῦντες. *Homiliæ in Genesin*, Hom-ilia XI, §3, Patrologiæ cursus completus, series Græca (*PG*) 53.94.

engaged in thematic and textual homilies, the principal work to which he gave himself was to expositional preaching through books of the Bible.[7] His homiletical gifts were exceptional, and it was for this reason that John was later to be given the sobriquet, Chrysostom (Ἰωάννης ὁ Χρυσόστομος) "the Golden-Mouth,"[8] due to his eloquence as an orator. If Suicer is correct, though the usage was anticipated by others, Chrysostom is the first writer who referenced the Bible under its present name τὰ βιβλία, the Books.[9]

While still a teenager, his mother, Anthousa (widowed around the age of twenty) sent him to the famous school of the pagan professor of rhetoric, Libanius, a prominent citizen of the Syrian city of Antioch. It was under his tutelage that John, along with his friend Theodore[10] (later bishop of Mopsuestia), was "trained in all aspects of the arts of composition and public speaking, including the actual preparation and delivery of speeches of different kinds."[11] In his biography of John Chrysostom, Kelly comments that "his chief debt to his teachers was for the classic purity of his Greek diction and the astonishing elegance of expression he acquired from them."[12] But being in personal agreement with one of the greatest from our day, namely that "preachers are born, not made,"[13] John demonstrated from the very beginning of his début as a preacher that he was unusually gifted for the work to which he was called.[14] Having been ordained to the office of presbyter, probably early in 386 by Antioch's bishop, Flavian (now in his late seventies), it became clear that he "had apparently singled him out to be not only the city's preacher *par excellence*, but also his own personal assistant.[15] From the very day of his ordination, for nearly the next "twelve years (386–397), John stood out as the leading pulpit orator of Antioch,"[16] the capital city of Syria. Kelly comments that "it is generally agreed that he preached extempore" and that "people were amazed" that he would do so with "no scrap of paper or book in his hand but held forth impromptu, something they had never seen before."[17] The ancient church historian Sozomen informs us that when the pagan sophist Libanius lay dying (around the year 392 or 393), his friends inquired of him whom he desired to succeed him as the instructor of rhetoric at his school in Antioch. His reply to them was; "It would have been John, had not the Christians taken (stolen, ἐσύλησαν from συλάω) him from us."[18]

It is also generally acknowledged that John was a student of Diodore of Tarsus (a see in Cilicia of which he was its bishop from the year 378 until his death a decade and a half later); but he (like John) was a native of Antioch, and the one who is commonly regarded as the father of the school of Antiochene exegesis.[19] Though some have challenged whether John actually studied under Diodore, Kelly points out that John "himself was to confirm it many years later when Diodore, now bishop of Tarsos, visited Antioch and he acclaimed him from the pulpit as his spiritual father and teacher."[20] This influential figure in the life of Chrysostom held a very high view of Holy Scripture. In his "sole surviving work, the *Commentary on the Psalms,*"[21] he wrote in the preface to it:

> "All Scripture is inspired by God," according to blessed Paul, "and useful for teaching, for reproving, for correcting, for training in righteousness." It teaches what is good, reproves sins, corrects omissions, and thus brings a person to perfection; in fact, he goes on to

7. This method of preaching was recovered by the Reformers beginning with Zwingli. See Hughes Oliphant Old, *Guides to the Reformed Tradition: Worship That is Reformed According to Scripture* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), 69.

8. This title originated sometime around the middle of the fifth century and gradually replaced his name John.

9. J. C. Suicer, *Thesaurus ecclesiasticus,* 2nd ed., volume 1 (Amsterdam, 1728), col. 687. Cf., e.g., Chrysostom, *Four Discourses of Chrysostom, Chiefly on the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus,* trans. F. Allen (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1869), 3rd Sermon, §2–3, pp. 62–68; and *De Lazaro Concio* III, §2–3, *PG* 48.993–994; and *In Matthæum,* Homilia IX, §4, *PG* 57.181. See also A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, first series (*NPNF1*), vol. 14, *Homilies on the Gospel according to St. John,* Homily 32.2

10. Theodore was another staunch representative of Antiochene exegesis, and who is remembered today as one of the most brilliant, as well as controversial, theologians and scriptural commentators of the eastern church.

11. J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom, Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 6. The normal age for the pupils of Libanius was 14–18. John graduated from his school at age 18.

12. Kelly, *Golden Mouth,* 7.

13. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), 119.

14. Kelly, *Golden Mouth,* 55.

15. Kelly, *Golden Mouth,* 57.

16. Kelly, *Golden Mouth,* 57.

17. Kelly, *Golden Mouth,* 57–58.

18. *NPNF2,* vol. 2, *The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen,* Book VIII, Chapter 2. Cf. *Sozomeni, Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ*, Liber VIII, Caput II, *PG* 67.1513: Λιβάνιος ὁ Σύρος σοφιστὴς … λέγεται Ἰωάννην εἰπεῖν, εἰ μὴ Χριστιανοὶ τοῦτον ἐσύλησαν.

19. Diodore's famous hermeneutical maxim survives in a fragment of his *Quæstiones* on the Octateuch: "We (in Antioch) far prefer τὸ ἱστοπικόν to τὸ ἀλληγορικόν (as practiced in Alexandria)." *Diodore of Tarsus: Commentary on Psalms 1–51,* trans. Robert C. Hill (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), xi-xii.

20. *Golden Mouth,* 19. Cf. *Laus Diodori*, *PG* 52.761–6.

21. *Diodore of Tarsus: Commentary on Psalms 1–51*, xii.

> say, "so that the person who belongs to God may be ready, prepared for every good work." You would not be wrong to infer that this general commendation of the divine Scripture applies to the book of the divine Psalms. After all, it gives gentle and kindly instruction in righteousness to those willing to learn, reproves willful people in a caring manner and without harshness, and corrects whatever chance failings befall us when our choices are awry.[22]

In his introduction to this work of Diodore, Hill notes that "Diodore is in no doubt of the divine inspiration of the biblical authors, προφῆται all" and that his precedent led "Chrysostom, Theodore and Theodoret to do likewise."[23]

It was at the very height of his popularity as a preaching presbyter in Antioch, under the oversight of his bishop Flavian, that John's life was to undergo a rather sudden, dramatic turn of events. Either in late October or early November of 397, due to circumstances entirely beyond his knowledge or control, and quite literally overnight, John was extradited by imperial order to become the new bishop of the city of Constantinople upon the sudden death of Nectarius. Kelly informs us that "the emperor's (Arcadius) letter had insisted that the operation should be carried out as discreetly as possible," because "it was feared that the populace [of Antioch] might be tempted to demonstrate if they learned that their adored preacher was being taken from them."[24]

Though it was a common expectation in John's day for the bishops of a particular metropolis to deliver their sermons from the episcopal throne, he was not personally constrained by this time-honored custom in his ministry as the bishop of Constantinople.[25] The early church historian, Socrates, informs us that, as a bishop he would mount the ambo (ἄμβων),[26] which was positioned in the middle of the church, "from which he was accustomed to address the people in order to be the more distinctly heard."[27] This was most likely a practice continued which he began as a presbyter in Antioch, where he stood, rather than sat, to preach.

The Precision of Sacred Scripture

Perhaps no early church father had a greater love for and devotion to the Holy Scriptures than John Chrysostom. Belonging to the Antiochian school of theology and exegesis, he is by far the best representative of its "cardinal virtue, *akribeia* (ἀκρίβεια), precision"[28] as an attribute of the sacred text, and it was John's own personal favorite property of Holy Scripture. Throughout his sermons he is continually exhorting his congregants to "see here once again, I ask you, the precision of Sacred Scripture."[29] Examples of his exegetical and theological commitment to the ἀκρίβεια of Holy Scripture could be multiplied from his sermons in the Schaff/Eerdmans series where, more often than not, the term has been mistranslated as "accurate," or "exact," rather than "precise" as shown in the various citations below:

> But mark, I pray thee, the accuracy (precision) of the prophets.[30]
> Σὺ δέ μοι σκόπει τῶν προφητῶν τὴν ἀκρίβειαν.[31]
>
> For so great was the accuracy (precision, ἀκρίβεια) of the prophets, that they omit not even these things, but foretell His very journeyings, and changes of place, and the intent with which He acted therein; that thou mightest

22. Ibid., 1.
23. Ibid., xvii.
24. *Golden Mouth,* 104.
25. Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom* (London: Routledge, 2000), 26.
26. Ambo: An elevated reading desk from which the Scriptures were read.
27. *NPNF2: Volume II*, *The Ecclesiastical History, by Socrates Scholasticus,* Book VI, Chapter 5.
28. *Homilies on Genesis 1–17,* p. 14. Chrysostom made repeated use of the word *precision* (akribeia, ἀκρίβεια) in connection with Holy Scripture, and one of Chrysostom's favorite phrases was "the precision of Sacred Scripture." For Chrysostom, *precision* is a distinctive feature of the biblical text. See, for example, *FC* 82, *Homilies on Genesis 18–45,* 18.3, 9, 20; 20.5; 21.8, 11; 22.5, 6; 23.4, 8; 24.5; 25.10, 20; 26.15; 27.16, 17, 23; 29.22; 30.4; 31.18; 33.4; 35.4, 8, 9; 36.12; 38.6; 39.11; 43.3, in which we find this phrase or its equivalent some 28 times: pp. 4, 9, 15, 38, 56, 59, 71, 90, 93, 107, 131, 139, 155, 173, 174, 179, 213, 222, 249, 278, 306, 309, 310, 334, 359, 381–382, 437. See also *Homilies on Genesis 1–17,* Homily 7.9–10, 13.5, 13, 15.11, pp. 96, 171, 175, 200; *FC* 87, *Homilies on Genesis 46–67,* Homilies 49.3, 55.5, pp. 43, 109; and Robert Charles Hill, *St. John Chrysostom Commentary on the Psalms,* 2 vols. (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998),1.80, 132, 158, 282, 304–305, 343 (e.g., "See the wisdom of the inspired author, who speaks of everything with precision," and "Note the inspired author's precision"). In short, this principle of ἀκρίβεια is a feature of Holy Scripture to which Chrysostom repeatedly alludes and uses throughout his writings/sermons to describe the sacred text. These are but a few examples of his use of ἀκρίβεια, his most favorite property of Holy Scripture.
29. *Homilies on Genesis 18–45,* Homily 18.9, p. 9. Ὅρα μοι πάλιν ἐνταῦθα τῆς θείας Γραφῆς τὴν ἀκρίβειαν, *Homiliæ in Genesim*, Caput III, Homilia XVIII, §3, *PG* 53.152. Interestingly enough, beyond Antioch one finds this emphasis elsewhere on the *akribeia* of Scripture in one of Chrysostom's contemporaries, Epiphanius of Salamis. "And see the precision (ἀκρίβειαν) of Scripture." *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Books II and III (Sects 47–80, De Fide),* trans. Frank Williams (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 616 (78. Against Antidicomarians, 19, p. 6). Cf. *Adversus Hæreses,* Liber III, Tom. II, LXXVIII, §19, *PG* 42.729D.
30. *NPNF1,* vol. 10, *Homilies on Matthew*, Homily 6.6.
31. *In Matthæum,* Homily VI, §4, *PG* 57.67.

learn, how they spake all by the Spirit. For if the secrets of men cannot by any art be known, much more were it impossible to learn Christ's purpose, except the Spirit revealed it.[32]
Τοσαύτη γὰρ ἦν τῶν προφητῶν ἡ ἀκρίβεια, ὡς μηδὲ ταῦτα παραλιπεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰς μεταβάσεις προφητεύειν, καὶ τὴν γνώμην μεθ' ἧς ταῦτα ἐποίει· ἵνα μάθῃς, ὅτι πάντα Πνεύματι ἐφθέγγοντο. Εἰ γὰρ τὰ ἀνθρώπων ἀπόῤῥητα ἀμήχανον εἰδέναι, πολλῷ μᾶλλον τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὸν σκοπὸν ἀδύνατον ἦν μαθεῖν, μὴ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἀποκαλύψαντος.[33]

Seest thou the accuracy (precision, ἀκρίβειαν) of prophetical language?[34]
Εἶδες ἀκρίβειαν προφητικῆς ῥήσεως.[35]

And mark thou, I pray thee, the accuracy (precision, ἀκρίβειαν) of the prophet, how he foretold all things.[36]
Σὺ δέ μοι θαύμασον τοῦ προφήτου τὴν ἀκρίβειαν, πῶς πάντα προεῖπε.[37]

What fruit do ye get from your services? Surely if you were getting any profit by them, ye ought to have been long leading the life of true wisdom (τῆς φιλοσοφίας), with so many Prophets twice in every week discoursing to you, so many Apostles, and Evangelists, all setting forth the doctrines of salvation, and placing before you with much exactness (precision, ἀκριβείας) that which can form the character aright.[38]
Τί καρποῦσθε ἀπὸ τῶν συνάξεων; Καίτοι εἴ γέ τι ὄφελος ὑμῖν ἐγίνετο, πάλαι πάντας ἔδει τὸν τῆς φιλοσοφίας βίον ζῆν, τοσούτων μὲν προφητῶν δεύτερον τῆς ἑβδομάδος ὑμῖν διαλεγομένων, τοσούτων δὲ ἀποστόλων, εὐαγγελιστῶν, πάντων τὰ σωτήρια δόγματα προτιθέντων, καὶ τὰ δυνάμενα ἦθος ῥυθμίσαι μετὰ πολλῆς ἀκριβείας παριστώντων ὑμῖν.[39]

Observe the accuracy (precision, ἀκρίβειαν) of the Prophet, and the judgment of the Apostle, what a testimony he has cited, how exceedingly apposite! For it not only shows us that those to be saved are some and not all, but also adds the way they are to be saved.[40]
Εἶδες ἀκρίβειαν προφητικὴν, καὶ σύνεσιν ἀποστολικὴν, οἵαν μαρτυρίαν ἐπήγαγε, πῶς σφόδρα ἐπιτηδείαν; Οὐ γὰρ μόνον ὅτι τινές εἰσιν οἱ σωζόμενοι καὶ οὐχὶ πάντες, δείκνυσιν ἡμῖν αὕτη, ἀλλὰ καὶ πῶς σωθήσονται προστίθησι.[41]

And when writing to the Galatians with great precision (ἀκριβείας), he [i.e. Paul] exacts of them Christian spirit and perfectness in this matter. But here he does not use this vehemency, because the faith was lately planted in them.[42]
Καὶ Γαλάταις δὲ ἐπιστέλλων, μετὰ πολλῆς ἀκριβείας ἀπαιτεῖ παρ' αὐτῶν τὴν ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις φιλοσοφίαν καὶ τελειότητα. Ἐνταῦθα δὲ οὐ κέχρηται τούτῳ τῷ τόνῳ, διὰ τὸ νεόφυτον εἶναι παρ' αὐτοῖς τὴν πίστιν.[43]

You see how accurate (precise, ἀκριβείας) are the expressions of Scripture![44]
Ὁρᾷς πῶς ἡ Γραφὴ μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς ἀκριβείας κέχρηται τῷ λόγῳ.[45]

Do you see the precision of his [i.e. John's] teaching?[46]
Εἶδες διδασκαλίαν ἠκριβωμένην.[47]

From Chrysostom's perspective, the precision of Scripture required the responsibility of precision (ἀκρίβεια) on the part of the exegete/hearer/reader as well, namely, a careful examination of the text. Robert Charles Hill (recently deceased),[48] who was perhaps the best modern day translator of the works of many early church Greek fathers, and whose prolific work has made many of Chrysostom's literary remains available for the first time in English, noted that it was Chrysostom's "belief in the extent of inspiration" that led him "to prize the *akribeia*, 'precision of Scripture,' (an oft-mistranslated

32. *Homilies on Matthew,* Homily 40, §2.
33. *In Matthæum,* Homily XL, §2, *PG* 57.440.
34. *Homilies on Matthew,* Homily 57, §1.
35. *In Matthæum,* Homily LVII, §2, *PG* 58.559.
36. *Homilies on Matthew,* Homily 66, §3.
37. *In Matthæum,* Homily LXVI, §3, *PG* 58.629.
38. *NPNF1,* vol. 11, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles,* Homily 29, §3.
39. *In Acta apostolorum*, Homilia XXIX, §3, *PG* 60.217.
40. *NPNF1,* vol. 11, *Homilies on Paul's Epistle to the Romans,* Homily 16, §9.
41. *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Romanos*, Homilia XVI, §9, *PG* 60.562.
42. *Homilies on Paul's Epistle to the Romans,* Homily 25, §2.
43. *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Romanos*, Homilia XVI, §2, *PG* 60.630.
44. *NPNF1,* vol. 13, *Homilies on First Epistle of Paul to Timothy,* Homily 7, 1 Timothy 2:2–4.
45. *In epistulam i ad Timotheum*, Homily VII, §2, *PG* 62.537.
46. *NPNF1,* vol. 14, *Homilies on the Gospel according to St. John,* Homily 5, §2.
47. *In Joannem*, Homilia V, §2, *PG* 59.55.
48. Hill (1947–2007) was one of the leading patristic scholars on John Chrysostom. He taught in the School of Theology at Australian Catholic University and in the School of Divinity at the University of Sydney. He was a member of the Roman Communion and past-president of the Australian Catholic Biblical Association. He held a doctorate in theology (STD from the Angelicum in Rome).

term, rendered inadequately as "accuracy"—an ironic fate for this champion of precision), prompting in the exegete by way of response to God's considerateness (συγκατάβασις,[49] not "condescension" as it is commonly translated) a like precision in exegesis."[50] Hill observed that "for Chrysostom, precision is both a characteristic of the biblical text and an obligation on the biblical commentator."[51] To put it another way, ἀκρίβεια was so much a part of his concept of Scripture and exegesis, that one would not at all be going beyond the margin of truth to state figuratively that he was as bound to it (as we would say in the deep south) as "white on rice!" Thus, as a faithful pastor, he would continuously exhort the members of his congregation in such language as follows:

> Accordingly, let us attend with precision (ἀκρίβεια), dearly beloved, to the text and see what Scripture says about Cain on the one hand and Abel on the other, and let us not pass it by heedlessly. I mean, Sacred Scripture says nothing idly (ἁπλῶς) or by chance; instead, even if it happens to be a syllable or a single jot, it has some treasure concealed in it.[52]

Elsewhere he reminds his hearers:

> It would be good for you to have such a precise (ἀκριβῶς) knowledge of the Scriptures and the stories they tell as to make unnecessary for us a longer sermon in explaining their meaning.[53]

And again:

> Pay precise (ἀκριβείας) attention, however: the reading out of the Scriptures is the opening of the heavens.[54]

Thus, as a son of Antioch, Chrysostom's most cited and emphasized property of Scripture, which he also required of the commentator, was that of ἀκρίβεια (precision). Consider the following examples from John Chrysostom as a representative of the patristic roots of Post-Reformation views on the properties of Holy Scripture.

1. Truth, Certainty, and Infallibility

The truth, certainty, and infallibility were properties of Scripture that were clearly presupposed in the comments and sermons of Chrysostom. He did not hesitate to remind his congregants that "the mouths of the inspired authors are the mouth of God."[55] Elsewhere in another homily he affirmed the same view of Scripture again: "Why, the mouth by which God speaks, is the mouth of God. Just as our mouth is the mouth of our soul, though the soul has no mouth, so the mouth of the Prophets is the mouth of God."[56] For him, these attributes of Holy Scripture were bound up with the divine inspiration of the text. In his commentary on Psalm 4, he stated:

> If, however, you do not believe the biblical authors, we can supply clear, unmistakable evidence that they were inspired, and that they told us nothing on their own account but with the inspiration coming from that divine love which is higher even than the heavens. Everything said by them achieves its purpose, and everything reaches fulfillment in the truth of reality, whether it is a question of ancient things or recent. What was said by the inspired authors about the Jews came true, and the fulfillment of it was clear to everyone; likewise what was said about Christ in the New Testament — which demonstrates above all the divine

49. See Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, Volume 2: The Patristic Age* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 187.

50. *Homilies on Genesis 1–17,* p. 18. Cf. Robert Charles Hill, "Akribeia: a principle of Chrysostom's exegesis," *Colloquium: the Australian and New Zealand Theological Review* 14 (Oct. 1981): 32–36; and Old, 185ff.

51. Hill, *St. John Chrysostom Commentary on the Psalms,* Psalm 7, vol. 1, p. 24.

52. *Homilies on Genesis 18–45,* Homily 18.17, p. 13. Greek text: Προσέχωμεν τοίνυν μετὰ ἀκριβείας, ἀγαπητοὶ, τῷ εἰρημένῳ, καὶ ἴδωμεν τί μὲν περὶ τοῦ Κάϊν διηγεῖται ἡ Γραφὴ, τί δὲ περὶ τοῦ Ἄβελ, καὶ μὴ ἁπλῶς παραδράμωμεν. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἁπλῶς καὶ ὡς ἔτυχεν φθέγγεται ἡ θεία Γραφὴ, ἀλλὰ κἂν συλλαβὴ τυγχάνῃ, κἂν κεραία μία, ἔχει τινὰ ἐγκεκρυμμένον θησαυρόν. *Homiliæ in Genesim*, Homilia XVIII, §4, *PG* 53.154.

53. *St. John Chrysostom Commentary on the Psalms,* Psalm 7, volume 1, p. 111. Greek text: Ἔδει μὲν οὕτως ἀκριβῶς τῶν Γραφῶν καὶ τῶν ἱστοριῶν εἰδέναι τὴν γνῶσιν, ὡς μὴ δεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς μακροτέρου λόγου πρὸς τὴν τούτων διδασκαλίαν· *Expositio In Psalmos*, Psalmum VII, §1, *PG* 55.80.

54. *St. John Chrysostom: Old Testament Homilies, Volume Two, Homilies on Isaiah and Jeremiah,* trans. Robert Charles Hill (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2003), 65. See also Robert C. Hill, *Reading the Old Testament in Antioch* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 30. Greek text: Ἀλλὰ προσέχετε μετὰ ἀκριβείας· ἡ γὰρ τῶν Γραφῶν ἀνάγνωσις τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐστιν ἄνοιξις. *In illud, Vidi dominum, Homilia II*, §2, *PG* 56.109.

55. *St John Chrysostom: Old Testament Homilies, Volume Two, Homilies on Isaiah and Jeremiah,* p. 65. Greek text: Τὰ γὰρ τῶν προφητῶν στόματα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστι στόμα. *In Oziam,* Homilia 2, §2, *PG* 56.110.

56. *NPNF1,* vol. 11, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles,* Homily 19, §5. Greek text: Τὸ στόμα, δι' οὗ ὁ Θεὸς φθέγγεται, στόμα ἐστὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Καθάπερ γὰρ τοῦτο τὸ στόμα τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν ἐστι, καίτοι ψυχῆς οὐκ ἐχούσης στόμα· οὕτω καὶ τὸ στόμα τῶν προφητῶν στόμα ἐστὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ. *In Acta Apostololorum*, Homilia XIX, §5, *PG* 60.156.

> character of both Scriptures. Now, if what is said about God in Scripture comes from God, it is all true.[57]

He would assure his congregation that "sound doctrine and saving truth are to be learned with accuracy (i.e., precision, ἀκριβείας), not from evil spirits, but from the Holy Scripture."[58] He would make reference to "the unerring truth of Scripture,"[59] as well as to "the light of the divine Scriptures" as "a more accurate (precise), an unerring standard of realities."[60] Four times in the following three citations, he emphasized that the Scriptures are more worthy of belief (ἀξιοπιστοτέρα) than everything else:

> In order to learn another reason why the teaching of the prophets is more worthy of belief (ἀξιοπιστοτέρας) than the report of those who rise from the dead, consider this fact, that every dead person is a servant, but what the Scriptures utter, the Master has uttered. So even if a dead person rises, even if an angel descends from Heaven, the Scriptures are more worthy of belief (ἀξιοπιστοτέρας) than any of them. For the Master of the angels, the Lord of the dead and the living, Himself has given the Scriptures their authority.[61]

And referring to the impossibility of one rising from the dead to testify, he stated in the same sermon:

> But God who foreknew all these things prevented this attack. To spare us, He did not allow anyone even to come from the other world and speak of what is there to living people. In this way He teaches us to consider the holy Scriptures the most trustworthy of all (ἀξιοπιστοτέρας).[62]

We see elsewhere in his commentary on Galatians, Chrysostom made precisely the same point again in more detail:

> When Abraham was requested to send Lazarus, he replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them: if they hear them not, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead." (Luke xvi: 31.) And Christ introduces Abraham thus speaking, to show that He would have the Scriptures accounted more worthy of credence (ἀξιοπιστοτέρας), even than one raised from the dead: Paul too, (and when I say Paul, I mean Christ, who directed his mind,) prefers them before an angel come down from heaven. And justly, for the angels, though mighty, are but servants and ministers, but the Scriptures were all written and sent, not by servants, but by God the Lord of all. He says, if "any man" preach another Gospel to you than that which we have preached,—not "if this or that man:" and herein appears his prudence, and care of giving offence, for what needed there still any mention of names, when he had used such extensive terms as to embrace all, both in heaven and earth? In that he anathemized evangelists and angels, he included every dignity, and his mention of himself included every intimacy and affinity. "Tell me not," he exclaims, "that my fellow-apostles and colleagues have so spoken; I spare not myself if I preach such doctrine." And he says this not as condemning the Apostles for swerving from the message they were commissioned to deliver; far from it, (for he says, whether we or they thus preach;) but to show, that in the discussion of truth the dignity of persons is not to be considered.[63]

Moreover, he repeats virtually the same point yet again in one of his homilies on 1 Thessalonians: "For whatever things the Scripture says, are more to be trusted than things we see."[64] Indeed, while commenting upon the

57. *St John Chrysostom: Commentary on the Psalms, Vol. 1,* p. 68.

58. Allen, *Four Discourses of Chrysostom,* §2, p. 42. Greek text: τὰ γὰρ ὑγιῆ δόγματα καὶ σωτήρια οὐ παρὰ δαιμόνων, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τῆς θείας Γραφῆς ἐστι μετ' ἀκριβείας μαθεῖν. *De Lazaro Concio II,* §2, *PG* 48.984.

59. *NPNF1,* vol. 14, *Homilies on the Gospel of John,* Homily 68, §2. Cf. τῆς Γραφῆς ἀψευδές, *In Joannem*, Homilia LXVIII, §2, *PG* 59.375.

60. *NPNF1,* vol. 10, *Homilies on Matthew,* Homily 13, §8. Cf. ἂν τὸ φῶς δέξηται τῶν θείων Γραφῶν, ἀκριβέστερον καὶ ἀνεξαπάτητον τῶν ὄντων ἔσται κριτήριον. *Homiliæ in Matthæum,* Homilia XIII, §4, *PG* 57.215.

61. *St. John Chrysostom On Wealth and Poverty,* trans. Catharine P. Roth (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), fourth sermon, p. 85. Greek text: Ἵνα δὲ καὶ ἑτέρωθεν μάθῃς, ὅτι ἀξιοπιστοτέρα ἡ τῶν προφητῶν διδασκαλία τῆς τῶν ἀνισταμένων ἀπαγγελίας ἐκεῖνο σκόπησον, ὅτι νεκρὸς μὲν ἅπας δοῦλος ἐστιν· ἃ δὲ αἱ Γραφαὶ φθέγγονται, ταῦτα ὁ Δεσπότης ἐφθέγξατο· ὥστε κἂν νεκρὸς ἀναστῇ, κἂν ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καταβῇ, πάντων ἔστωσαν αἱ Γραφαι ἀξιοπιστοτέραι. Ὁ γὰρ τῶν ἀγγέλων Δεσπότης, καὶ τῶν ζώντων Κύριος, αὐτὸς ἐκείνας ἐνομοθέτησε. *De Lazaro Concio* IV, *PG* 48.1010. Cf. Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) 1:4–5; Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC) Q&A 4.

62. *St. John Chrysostom On Wealth and Poverty,* Fourth Sermon on Lazarus and the Rich Man, §3, 86–87. Greek text: Ἀλλ' ὁ θεὸς ἅπαντα ταῦτα προειδὼς, ἀπετείχισεν αὐτῷ τὴν ἐπιβουλὴν διαλεχθῆναι τοῖς ζῶσιν ἀθρώποις, παιδεύων ἡμᾶς πάντων ἀξιοπιστοτέρας ἡγεῖσθαι τὰς θείας Γραφάς. *De Lazaro Concio* IV, *PG* 48.1010–1011.

63. *NPNF1*, vol. 13, *Commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians,* Chapter 1, Ver. 8, 9. Cf. *In epistulam ad Galatas commentaries*, Caput I, *PG* 61.624–625.

64. *NPNF1,* vol. 13, *Homilies on the First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians,* Homily 8, Comments on 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17. Greek text: ἅπερ γὰρ ἂν εἴπῃ ἡ Γραφὴ, ταῦτα τῶν ὁρωμένων πιστότερα. *In Epistulam i ad Thessalonicenses*, Homilia VIII, §3, *PG* 62.442. In addition to these examples, see also *NPNF1,* vol. 14, *Homilies on the Gospel according to St. John*, Homily 25, §2; *In Joannem*, Homilia XXV, §2, *PG* 59.150.

Apostle John in contrast to the disciples of pagan philosophers, who asserted "everything on uncertain and fallacious arguments," he declared:

> Not so this fisherman; for all he saith is infallible (ἀσφαλείας); and standing as it were upon a rock, he never shifts his ground. For since he has been thought worthy to be in the most secret places, and has the Lord of all speaking within him, he is subject to nothing that is human.[65]

Thus, in the manner of these examples, John Chrysostom expressed his own views on the veracity, certainty and infallibility of Holy Scripture.

2. Purity, Holiness, Perfection, Sufficiency

In his exegesis of the pivotal passage of 2 Timothy 3:16–17, John underscored the purity, holiness, perfection, and sufficiency of Holy Scripture. Chrysostom comments that Scripture would supply "if anything is deficient," and Timothy would have the Scriptures "in place of" the Apostle Paul. The concept of extrabiblical tradition does not appear even to have entered the mind of this ancient Antiochene exegete. Speaking of the Apostle Paul, he stated that "having offered much exhortation and consolation from other sources, he adds that which is more perfect, derived from the Scriptures," and then goes on to note:

> For this reason he writes: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (θεόπνευστος), and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." All what Scripture? all that sacred writing, he means, of which I was speaking. This is said of what he was discoursing of; about which he said, "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures." All such, then, "is given by inspiration of God"; therefore, he means, do not doubt; and it is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
>
> "For doctrine." For thence we shall know, whether we ought to learn or to be ignorant of anything. And thence we may disprove what is false, thence we may be corrected and brought to a right mind, may be comforted and consoled, and if anything is deficient, we may have it added to us.
>
> "That the man of God may be perfect." For this is the exhortation of the Scripture given, that the man of God may be rendered perfect by it; without this therefore he cannot be perfect. Thou hast the Scriptures, he says, in place of me. If thou wouldest learn anything, thou mayest learn it from them. And if he thus wrote to Timothy, who was filled with the Spirit, how much more to us![66]

In one of his sermons on the Gospel of John, Chrysostom declares the sufficiency of Holy Scripture in this language:

> Great is the profit of the divine Scriptures, and all-sufficient (διαρκὴς) is the aid which comes from them. And Paul declared this when he said, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written aforetime for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4, and 1 Corinthians 10:11) For the divine oracles are a treasury of all manner of medicines, so that whether it be needful to quench pride, to lull desire to sleep, to tread under foot the love of money, to despise pain, to inspire confidence, to gain patience, from them one may find abundant resource.[67]

Using the imagery of a prospector searching for precious metals, to describe the purity and sufficiency of Holy Scripture, he would remind his hearers repeatedly:

> You see, if those who dig up metals do not pass over even tiny fragments, but on striking a vein of gold look around carefully for nuggets, much more should we do this in the case of the Scriptures. Admittedly, in the case of metals the search is very difficult for the prospectors: the metals are earth and the gold is nothing but earth, and their natural commonality deceives the eye of the prospectors; yet instead of desisting they give evidence of utter diligence, knowing as they do by sight what is really earth and what is really gold. In the case of Scripture, on the other hand, it is not like this: the gold does not lie mixed up with earth — it is pure gold (καθαρὸν χρυσίον). "The Lord's sayings are untainted," Scripture

65. *NPNF1,* vol. 14, *Gospel of St John,* Homily 2, §3. See also *In Joannem,* Homilia II, *PG* 59.31 (ἀσφαλείας – certain, safe, secure, reliable, firmness, infallible).

66. *NPNF1,* vol. 13, *Homilies on the Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy,* Homily 9. Cf. *In Epistulam ii ad Timotheum*, Homilia IX, *PG* 62.649–650. Cf. WCF 1:5, 8.

67. *NPNF1,* vol. 14, *Homilies on the Gospel according to St. John,* Homily 37.1. Cf. *In Joannem*, Homilia XXXVII, §1, *PG* 59.207.

> says, remember, "silver purified by fire, tested by earth" — that is to say, the Scriptures are not metals that require hard labor; rather, they provide a treasure ready for those searching for the wealth coming from them. It is in fact sufficient (ἀρκεῖ) merely to peep within, and go away filled with every benefit; it is sufficient (ἀρκεῖ) only to open them, and at once discern the sparkle of the jewels.[68]

It was the great desire of Chrysostom for those who sat under his preaching to be thoroughly acquainted with and educated in the Holy Scriptures. He made this abundantly clear time and time again from his pulpit:

> This, after all, is the object of all our vigilance and enthusiasm, that you would all become perfect and complete, and that nothing of the contents of the Holy Scriptures would escape you. Acquaintance with them, remember, will also make the greatest contribution to your progress towards an excellent life, provided you are prepared to be sober and alert, and will make you readier for the difficulties virtue involves.[69]

As Hughes Oliphant Old observed: "John may never have studied the doctrine of the perfections of Scripture as it was taught in the theological schools of Protestant orthodoxy, but he seems to have understood it just as well."[70]

3. Perspicuity and Efficacy

It would by no means be a stretch of the imagination to state unequivocally that no early church father emphasized the perspicuity and efficacy of Holy Scripture more than John Chrysostom. His sermons and commentaries are literally full of such expressions! Perhaps the first example worth highlighting is an occasion in September of 386, while sensing the need to rebuke Christians who were being drawn to and influenced by the ceremonial practices of a Jewish minority in Antioch, he made a statement in passing that leaves us with a personal insight into his own conversion, which underscores both the perspicuity and efficacy of Holy Scripture: "It was the Scriptures," he said, "which took me by the hand and led me to Christ."[71]

In what is perhaps his most well-known statement on the perspicuity of Holy Scripture, Chrysostom offers the illustration of how if the representative or herald of an earthly king were to enter a city to pronounce a message from the same on matters of great importance, all would immediately become silent in his presence, and give him their most earnest attention. Chrysostom then reminds his congregants that when they enter the church, and the Scriptures are read, they are listening to "letters sent from God." He then goes on to state that their need for a homily "arises from our sloth" declaring, "All things are clear and open that are in the divine Scriptures; the necessary things are all plain."[72]

No early church writer was more assiduous about urging his congregants to procure and read (or have read to them) the Scriptures! Chrysostom's constant, repeated exhortations to his congregants, as such, presuppose at least three things; (1) That the Scriptures were accessible to the people of his time, (2) that illiteracy was no excuse for ignorance of the Scriptures,[73] and (3) that the Scriptures were essentially perspicuous and efficacious. The following citations are from his third sermon[74] on Lazarus. The first comes from section one of this sermon:

> I also always entreat you, and do not cease entreating you, not only to pay attention here to what I say, but also when you are at home, to persevere continually in reading the divine Scriptures. When I have been with each of you in private, I have not stopped giving you the same advice. Do not let anyone say to me those vain words, worth of a heavy condemnation, "I cannot leave the courthouse, I administer the business of the city, I practice a craft, I have a wife, I am raising children, I am in charge of a household, I am a man of the world; reading the Scriptures is not for

68. *St. John Chrysostom, Old Testament Homilies, Volume Two: Homilies on Isaiah and Jeremiah,* Homily Two on Isaiah 6, p. 65. Cf. *In Oziam,* Homilia 2, §2, *PG* 56.110. See also Robert Hill, "St John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in 'Six Homilies on Isaiah,'" *Vigiliæ Christiana* 22 (1968): 28–29.

69. *Homilies on Genesis 18–45,* Homily 28.2, p. 184.

70. Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures, Volume 2*, p. 195.

71. *FC* 68, *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians,* trans. Paul W. Harkins (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1979), Disc. 1.6.5, pp. 23–24. Cf. *Adversus Judæos*, Oratio Prima, §6, *PG* 48.852.

72. *NPNF1,* vol. 13, *Homilies on the Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians,* Homily III, Comments on 2 Thessalonians 1:9, p. 10. Greek text: πάντα σαφῆ καὶ εὐθέα τὰ παρὰ ταῖς θείαις Γραφαῖς, πάντα τὰ ἀναγκαῖα δῆλα. *In epistulam ii ad Thessalonicenses*, Homilia III, §4, *PG* 62.484–485. Cf. WCF 1:7.

73. As Chrysostom pointed out, "having others to read to thee privately…" See *NPNF1,* Vol. 12, *Homilies on First Corinthians,* Homily 36.9. Likewise, so argued Cæsarius of Arles (470–543): "If those who are illiterate love God in truth, they look for learned people who can read the sacred Scriptures to them." See *FC* 31, *Saint Cæsarius of Arles, Sermons (1–80)* (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1956), Sermon 8.1, 49.

74. Early in 388 or 389, John preached some seven sermons on the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. See *St. John Chrysostom On Wealth and Poverty,* Fourth Sermon on Lazarus and the Rich Man, pp. 10–11. See *Conciones VII de Lazaro*, *PG* 48.963–1054.

> me, but for those who have been set apart, who have settled on the mountaintops, who keep this way of life continually." What are you saying, man? That attending to the Scriptures is not for you, since you are surrounded by a multitude of cares? Rather it is for you more than for them. They do not need the help of the divine Scriptures as much as those who are involved in many occupations. The monks, who are released from the clamor of the marketplace and have fixed their huts in the wilderness, who own nothing in common with anyone, but practice wisdom without fear in the calm of that quiet life, as if resting in a harbor, enjoy great security; but we, as if tossing in the midst of the sea, driven by a multitude of sins, always need the continuous and ceaseless aid of the Scriptures. They rest far from the battle, and so they do not receive many wounds; but you stand continuously in the front rank, and you receive continual blows. So you need more remedies. Your wife provokes you, for example, your son grieves you, your servant angers you, your enemy curses you, your fellow soldier trips you up, often a law suit threatens you, poverty troubles you, loss of your fortune depresses you, and many causes and compulsions to discouragement and grief, to conceit and desperation surround us on all sides, and a multitude of missles falls from everywhere. Therefore we have a continuous need for the full armour of the Scriptures.[75]

Chrysostom proceeds then to emphasize the salvific need which is met in the reading of the Scriptures:

> We must thoroughly quench the darts of the devil and beat them off by continual reading of the divine Scriptures. For it is not possible, not possible for anyone to be saved without continually taking advantage of spiritual reading.[76]

In his customary fashion, Chrysostom continues to stress the importance of reading the Bible, and thus the efficacious nature of this discipline:

> Reading the Scriptures is a great means of security against sinning. The ignorance of Scripture is a great cliff and a deep abyss; to know nothing of the divine laws is a great betrayal of salvation. This has given birth to heresies, this has introduced a corrupt way of life, this has put down the things above. For it is impossible, impossible for anyone to depart without benefit if he reads continually with attention.[77]

This translation of Chrysostom's third sermon on Lazarus and the rich man as provided by Roth, and published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press (an Eastern Orthodox Publication), omits by and large all of sections two and three of this sermon, wherein Chrysostom expresses repeatedly his views on the clarity and efficacy of Holy Scripture. Thus we look to an older translation as provided by F. Allen to fill in the gap. To be sure, this is a rather lengthy citation, but it sets forth very vividly Chrysostom's characteristic convictions on the perspicuity and efficacy of Holy Scripture. He rebukes the neglect of Holy Scripture, as well as the charge of its obscurity. That which is of particular interest is how Chrysostom exegetes the passage in Acts 8:26–40 concerning the Ethiopian eunuch and Philip at the end of section three. Again, he states in sections two and three:

> 2. Many other such things there are that beset our soul; and we have need of the divine remedies that we may heal wounds inflicted, and ward off those which, though not inflicted, would else be received in time to come—thus quenching afar off the darts of Satan, and shielding ourselves by the constant reading of the Divine Scriptures. It is not possible—I say, it is not possible, for any one to be secure without constant supplies of this spiritual instruction.[78] Indeed, we may congratulate ourselves (i.e. one ought to be content), if, constantly using this remedy, we ever are able to attain salvation. But when, though each day receiving wounds, we make use of no remedies, what hope can there be of salvation?
>
> Do you not notice that workmen in brass, or goldsmiths, or silversmiths, or those who engage in any art whatsoever, preserve carefully all the instruments of their art; and if hunger come, or poverty afflict them, they prefer to endure anything rather than sell for their maintenance any of the tools which they use. It is frequently the case that many thus choose rather to borrow money to maintain their house and family, than part with the least of the instruments of their art. This they do for the best reasons; for they know that when those are sold, all their skill is rendered of no avail, and the entire groundwork

75. Roth, 58–59.

76. Roth, 59. Chrysostom often employed this turn of phrase, "it is not possible, not possible…".

77. Roth, 60. Cæsarius of Arles from the west made essentially the same point as Chrysostom; see *FC* 31, *Saint Cæsarius of Arles, Sermons (1–80),* Sermon 8.3, p. 52.

78. Translator's note, "Or without constantly making use of spiritual reading."

of their gain is gone. If those are left, they may be able, by persevering in the exercise of their skill, in time to pay off their debts; but if they, in the meantime, allow the tools to go to others, there is, for the future, no means by which they can contrive any alleviation of their poverty and hunger. We also ought to judge in the same way. As the instruments of their art are the hammer and anvil and pincers, so the instruments of our work are the apostolic and prophetic books, and all the inspired and profitable Scriptures. And as they, by their instruments, shape all the articles they take in hand, so also do we, by our instruments, arm our mind, and strengthen it when relaxed, and renew it when out of condition. Again, artists display their skill in beautiful forms, being unable to change the material of their productions, or to transmute silver into gold, but only to make their figures symmetrical. But it is not so with thee, for thou hast a power beyond theirs—receiving a vessel of wood, thou canst make it gold. And to this St. Paul testifies, speaking thus: "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and earth. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work," (2 Tim. ii. 20, 21). Let us then not neglect the possession of the sacred books. For gold, whenever it becomes abundant, causes trouble to its possessors; but these books, when carefully preserved, afford great benefit to those who possess them. As also where royal arms are stored, though no one should use them, they afford great security to those who dwell there; since neither thieves nor burglars, nor any other evil-doers, dare attack that place. In the same way, where the inspired books are, from thence all satanical influence is banished, and the great consolation of right principles comes to those who live there; yea, even the very sight of these books by itself makes us slower to commit iniquity, Even if we attempt any forbidden thing, and make ourselves unclean, when we return home and see these books, our conscience accuses us more keenly, and we become less likely to fall again into the same sins. Again, if we have been stedfast in our integrity, we gain more benefit, (if we are acquainted with the word;) for as soon as one comes to the gospel, he by a mere look both rectifies his understanding and ceases from all worldly cares. And if careful reading also follows, the soul, as if initiated in sacred mysteries, is thus purified and made better, while holding converse with God through the Scriptures.

"But what," say they, "if we do not understand the things we read?" Even if you do not understand the contents, your sanctification in a high degree results from it. However, it is impossible that all these things should alike be misunderstood; for it was for this reason that the grace of the Holy Spirit ordained that tax-gatherers, and fishermen, and tent-makers, and shepherds, and goatherds, and uninstructed and illiterate men, should compose these books, that no untaught man should be able to make this pretext; in order that the things delivered should be easily comprehended by all—in order that the handicraftsman, the domestic, the widow, yea, the most unlearned of all men, should profit and be benefited by the reading. For it is not for vain-glory, as men of the world, but for the salvation of the hearers, that they composed these writings, who, from the beginning, were endued with the gift of the Holy Ghost.

3. For those without—philosophers, rhetoricians, and annalists, not striving for the common good, but having in view their own renown—if they said anything useful, even this they involved in their usual obscurity, as in a cloud. But the apostles and prophets always did the very opposite; they, as the common instructors of the world, made all that they delivered plain to all men, in order that everyone, even unaided, might be able to learn by the mere reading. Thus also the prophet spake before, when he said, "All shall be taught of God," (Isa. liv.13). "And they shall no more say, everyone to his neighbor, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest," (Jer. xxxi. 34). St. Paul also says, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the mystery of God," (1 Cor. ii. 1). And again, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," (1 Cor. ii. 4). And again, "We speak wisdom," it is said, "but not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought," (1 Cor. ii. 6). For to whom is not the gospel plain? Who is it that hears, "Blessed are the meek; blessed are the merciful; blessed are the pure in heart," and such things as these, and needs a teacher in order to understand any of the things spoken?

But (it is asked) are the parts containing the signs and wonders and histories also clear and plain to everyone? *This* is a pretence, and an excuse, and a mere cloak of idleness. You do not understand the contents of the book? But how can you ever understand, while you are not even willing to look carefully? Take the book in your hand. Read the whole history; and, retaining in your

> mind the easy parts, peruse frequently the doubtful and obscure parts; and if you are unable, by frequent reading, to understand what is said, go to someone wiser; betake yourself to a teacher; confer with him about the things said. Show great eagerness to learn; then, when God sees that you are using such diligence, He will not disregard your perseverance and carefulness; but if no human being can teach you that which you seek to know, He himself will reveal the whole.
>
> Remember the eunuch of the queen of Ethiopia. Being a man of a barbarous nation, occupied with numerous cares, and surrounded on all sides by manifold business, he was unable to understand that which he read. Still, however, as he was seated in the chariot, he was reading. If he showed such diligence on a journey, think how diligent he must have been at home; if while on the road he did not let an opportunity pass without reading, much more must this have been the case when seated in his house; if when he did not fully understand the things he read, he did not cease from reading, much more would he not cease when able to understand. To show that he did not understand the things which he read, hear that which Philip said to him: "Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts viii. 30). Hearing this question he did not show provocation or shame: but confessed his ignorance, and said: "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (ver. 31). Since therefore. while he had no man to guide him, he was thus reading; for this reason he quickly received an instructor. God knew his willingness, He acknowledged his zeal, and forthwith sent him a teacher.
>
> But, you say, Philip is not present with us now. Still, the Spirit that moved Philip is present with us. Let us not, beloved, neglect our salvation! "All these things are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come," (1 Cor. x. 11). The reading of the Scriptures is a great safeguard against sin; ignorance of the Scriptures is a great precipice and a deep gulf; to know nothing of the Scriptures, is a great betrayal of our salvation. This ignorance is the cause of heresies; *this* it is that leads to dissolute living; *this* it is that makes all things confused. It is impossible—I say, it is impossible, that any one should remain unbenefited who engages in persevering and intelligent reading. For see how much one parable has profited us! how much spiritual good it has done to us! For many I know have departed, bearing away abiding profit from the hearing; and if there be some who have not reaped so much benefit, still for that day on which they heard these things, they were rendered in every way better. And it is not a small thing to spend one day in sorrow on account of sin, and in consideration of the higher wisdom, and in affording the soul a little breathing time from worldly cares. If we can effect this at each assembly without intermission, the continued hearing would work for us a great and lasting benefit.[79]

Chrysostom urged his congregants to acquire for themselves copies of the Scriptures. It stands to reason that no pastor would exhort those under his care to acquire something beyond their reach:

> Tarry not, I entreat, for another to teach thee; thou hast the oracles of God. No man teacheth thee as they; for he indeed oft grudgeth much for vainglory's sake and envy. Hearken, I entreat you, all ye that are careful for this life, and procure books that will be medicines for the soul. If ye will not any other, yet get you at least the New Testament, the Apostolic Epistles, the Acts, the Gospels, for your constant teachers. If grief befall thee, dive into them as into a chest of medicines; take thence comfort of thy trouble, be it loss, or death, or bereavement of relations; or rather dive not into them merely, but take them wholly to thee; keep them in thy mind.
>
> This is the cause of all evils, the not knowing the Scriptures. We go into battle without arms, and how ought we to come off safe? Well contented should we be if we can be safe with them, let alone without them.[80]

Moreover, Chrysostom embraced, in his day, the Post-Reformation Orthodox maxim that "Scripture is to be explained from Scripture."[81] One needs not to peruse a great deal of studies on the Reformation to be reminded that "the constant use of Scripture to explain Scripture" was "an interpretive technique that well supported the *sola Scriptura* of the Reformation" and "one that was also characteristic of patristic and medieval exegesis."[82]

79. Allen, *Four Discourses of Chrysostom, Chiefly on the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus,* third sermon, §2–3, pp. 62–68. See *Concionis VII, de Lazaro* 3.2–3, *PG* 48:993–996.

80. *NPNF1,* vol. 13, *Homilies on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians,* Homily 9. Cf. *In Epistulam Ad Colossenses*, Homilia IX, *PG* 62.361–362. See also *NPNF1,* vol. 14, *Homilies on the Gospel according to St. John,* Homily 32.2. Cf. *In Joannem*, Homilia XXXII, §3, *PG* 59.187–188. See also *NPNF1,* vol. 10, *The Christian Priesthood,* Book 4, §7–8; and *NPNF1,* vol. 14, *Homilies on the Gospel according to St. John,* Homily 11.1.

81. *Scripturam ex Scriptura explicandam esse*. See Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 277.

82. *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation,* ed. Richard

Robert Charles Hill noted that "he [i.e., Chrysostom] is a great believer in his principle 'Scripture interprets itself.'"[83] One of the best illustrations of this can be seen from his gloss on Isaiah chapter five. True to the Antiochian rejection of the tendency to use allegory as a means of interpretation, Chrysostom nonetheless recognizes when Scripture itself employs its use:

> There is something else we can learn here. What sort of thing is it? It is when it is necessary to allegorize Scripture. We ourselves are not the lords over the rules of interpretation, but must pursue Scripture's understanding of itself, and in that way make use of the allegorical method. What I mean is this. The Scripture has just now spoken of a vineyard, wall, and wine-vat. The reader is not permitted to become lord of the passage and apply the words to whatever events or people he chooses. The Scripture interprets itself with the words, "And the house of Israel is the vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth." To give another example, Ezekiel describes a large, great-winged eagle which enters Lebanon and takes off the top of a cedar. The interpretation of the allegory does not lie in the whim of the readers, but Ezekiel himself speaks, and tells first what the eagle is and then what the cedar is. To take another example from Isaiah himself, when he raises a mighty river against Judah, he does not leave it to the imagination of the reader to apply it to whatever person he chooses, but he names the king whom he has referred to as a river. This is everywhere a rule in Scripture: when it wants to allegorize, it tells the interpretation of the allegory, so that the passage will not be interpreted superficially or be met by the undisciplined desire of those who enjoy allegorization to wander about and be carried in every direction. Why are you surprised that the prophets should observe this rule? Even the author of Proverbs does this. For he said, "Let your loving doe and graceful filly accompany you, and let your spring of water be for you alone." Then he interprets these terms to refer to one's free and lawful wife; he rejects the grasp of the prostitute and other woman.[84]

And elsewhere Chrysostom declared:

> Anyhow, in case by wanting to make a display of these people's stupidity we, too, find ourselves induced to utter unseemly remarks, let's have done with their folly and turn aside from such idiocy; let us follow the direction of Sacred Scripture in the interpretation it gives of itself, provided we don't get completely absorbed with the concreteness of the words, but realize that our limitations are the reason for the concreteness of the language. Human senses, you see, would never be able to grasp what is said if they had not the benefit of such great considerateness.[85]

He then proceeds in the same sermon to declare:

> You see, despite the use of such precision by Sacred Scripture, some people have not questioned the glib words of arrogant commentators and farfetched philosophy, even to the extent of denying Holy Writ and saying the garden was not on earth, giving contrary views on many other passages, taking a direction opposed to a literal understanding of the text, and thinking that what is said on the question of things on earth has to do with things in heaven. And, if blessed Moses had not used such simplicity of expression and considerateness, the Holy Spirit directing his tongue, where would we not have come to grief? Sacred Scripture, though, whenever it wants to teach us something like this, gives its own interpretation, and doesn't let the listener go astray. On the other hand, since the majority of listeners apply their ears to the narrative, not for the sake of gaining some profit but for enjoyment, they are at pains to take note of things able to bring enjoyment rather than those that bring profit. So, I beg you, block your ears against all distractions of that kind, and let us follow the norm (τῷ κανόνι) of Sacred Scripture.[86]

Thus Chrysostom was a forerunner of Post-Reformation Orthodox views on the perspicuity and efficacy of Holy Scripture, as well as affirming Scripture to be its own best interpreter. He anticipated and rejected the later apologetic accretion of Rome's insistence for the requirement of an infallible human magister:

> Scripture says, remember, "Do not call anyone on earth your teacher." When therefore we take an inspired book in our hands, let us concentrate, collect our thoughts and dispel every worldly thought, and let us in this manner do our reading with great devotion, with great attention so that we may be able to be led by the Holy

A. Muller and John L. Thompson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 340.

83. Hill, *St. John Chrysostom Commentary on the Psalms,* volume 1, p. 30 and fn. 287.

84. Duane A. Garrett, *An Analysis of the Hermeneutics of John Chrysostom's Commentary on Isaiah 1–8 with an English Translation* (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), Isaiah Chapter 5, 110–111. Cf. *Interpretatio in Isaiam prophetam*, Caput V, §3, *PG* 56.60. Cf. WCF 1:9.

85. *FC* 74, *Homilies on Genesis 1–17,* Homily 13.8, p. 172. Cf. *Homiliæ in Genesim*, Caput II, Homilia XIII, §2, *PG* 53.107.

86. Ibid., *FC* 74, p. 175; *PG* 53.108.

> Spirit towards the understanding of the writings and may gain great benefit from them.[87]

4. Scripture is the infallible rule of faith and judge of controversies

In one of his homilies on the Book of Acts, Chrysostom employs the illustration of someone wishing to convert to Christianity, but not knowing which group of Christians with which he should unite, poses the question, "I wish to be come a Christian, but I know not whom to join." This imaginary figure then states, "there is much fighting and faction among you, much confusion: which doctrine am I to choose?" Chrysostom then responds:

> How shall we answer him? "Each of you" (says he) "asserts, 'I speak the truth.'" (b) No doubt: this is in our favor. For if we told you to be persuaded by arguments, you might well be perplexed: but if we bid you believe the Scriptures, and these are simple and true, the decision is easy for you. If any agree with the Scriptures, he is the Christian; if any fight against them, he is far from this rule (κανόνος). (*a*) "But which am I to believe, knowing as I do nothing at all of the Scriptures? The others also allege the same thing for themselves. What then (*c*) if the other come, and say that the Scripture has this, and you that it has something different, and ye interpret the Scriptures diversely, dragging their sense (each his own way)?" And you then, I ask, have you no understanding, no judgment? "And how should I be able (to decide)," says he, "I who do not even know how to judge of your doctrines? I wish to become a learner, and you are making me forthwith a teacher." If he say this, what, say you, are we to answer him? How shall we persuade him? Let us ask whether all this be not mere pretence and subterfuge (i.e., evasion)…. "There is such a multitude of men, and they have different doctrines; this a heathen, that a Jew, the other a Christian: no need to accept any doctrine whatever, for they are at variance one with another; but I am a learner, and do not wish to be a judge" — but if you have yielded (so far as) to pronounce against (καταγινώσκειν) one doctrine, this pretext no longer has place for you. For just as you were able to reject the spurious, so here also, having come, you shall be able to prove what is profitable. For he that has not pronounced against any doctrine at all, may easily say this: but he that has pronounced against any, though he have chosen none, by going on in the same way, will be able to see what he ought to do. Then let us not make pretexts and excuses, and all will be easy. For, to show you that all this is mere excuse, answer me this: Do you know what you ought to do, and what to leave undone? Then why do you not what you ought? Do that, and by right reason seek of God, and He will assuredly reveal it to thee.[88]

Chysostom directs him nowhere but to the Scriptures to make this determination! Notice that when such a person begins to complain as a novice that he's facing what Roman apologists and postmodern advocates today describe as the problem of hermeneutical pluralism, Chrysostom cuts through such sophistry judging it to be no more than "mere pretence and subterfuge." It is as though Chrysostom's own presuppositions anticipated the words of one in our own day to the effect that "Christians will insist that the sovereign/personal God is a talking God; that he has left a record of his words in Scripture; that we can understand those words truly, if not wholly or flawlessly."[89] To state the principle another way, we need not understand Holy Scripture exhaustively or infallibly in order to understand it sufficiently.

Elsewhere Chrysostom reminds us that "we possess an exact (precise, ἀκριβῆ) balance (ζυγὸν, scales, measurement), and square and rule (κανόνα) for all things…. Wherefore I exhort and entreat you all, disregard what this man and that man thinks about these things, and inquire from the Scriptures all these things."[90] Moreover, in another place, he tells us that "a rule (κανὼν) admits neither addition, nor subtraction, since that destroys its being a rule (κανὼν)."[91] It is striking that the learned

87. *FC* 82, Homily 35.2, p. 305. See also *NPNF1,* vol. 11, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles,* Homily XXXIII. Chrysostom insisted elsewhere: "We have 'not lordship over your faith', beloved, nor command we these things as your lords and masters. We are appointed for the teaching of the word, not for power, nor for absolute authority. We hold the place of counselors to advise you." *NPNF1,* vol. 13, *Homilies on Ephesians,* Homly 11, Ephesians 4:4–7.

88. *NPNF1,* vol. 11, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles,* Homily 33. Cf. *In Acta apostolorum*, Homilia XXXIII, §4, *PG* 60.243–244.

89. D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 544.

90. *NPNF1,* vol. 12, *Homilies on Second Corinthians,* Homily 13. Cf. *In Secundam Ad Corinthios Epistolam Commentarius*, Homilia XIII, *PG* 61.496–498.

91. *NPNF1,* vol. 13, *Homilies on the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians,* Homily XII, Comments on Philippians 3:16. Cf. *In Epistolam Ad Philippenses Comentarius*, Caput III, Homilia XII, *PG* 62.273. Basil of Cæsarea (329–379) made the same observation in his refutation of Eunomius: "For, surely, O wisest of men, the rule (κανὼν) and the norm (γνώμων), as long as they do not fall short of being the rule and the norm, do not need any supplementation for their precision. Additions are made, after all, when something is missing. But if the rule and the norm should be imperfect, there would be no justification for designating them as such." *FC* 122, *St. Basil of Cæsarea Against Eunomius*, trans. Mark DelCogliano and Andrew Radde-Gallwitz

and voluminous French Romanist author, Louis Ellies Du Pin, stated of Chrysostom that he "looks upon the Holy Scripture as the ground and rule of all the truths of Religion" and that he "exhorts all the faithful to read it exactly: and this advice he presses an infinite number of times."[92] Indeed, the nineteenth century biographer of Chrysostom, August Neander concurred:

> Chrysostom had not derived his opinions upon points of doctrine from the secret traditions of the church, but from a study of the Bible. From his youth upwards his life and Christian views had been formed and matured by the reading of Holy Writ; and he was far from making the exposition of the inspired writings subordinate to the traditions of the Church. He considered the Scripture to be a direct and independent source of knowledge, fully sufficient of itself to determine the truths of our faith; and to this living fountain he alone referred.[93]

The only excursion by Chrysostom into unwritten tradition is where he offers a gloss on 2 Thessalonians 2:15: "It is a tradition, seek no farther."[94] But this passage from him cannot be adduced to prove his support for an extrabiblical source or basis for doctrine. For in the very next homily on 2 Thessalonians, he informs us what he understood the Apostle Paul to mean by such a reference: "Tradition, he says, which is through works [i.e. actions]. And this he always calls properly tradition."[95]

Conclusion

Although as a son of late fourth century Antioch John Chrysostom's presuppositions precluded Augustinian thought on such doctrines as original sin and grace, nonetheless his views on the properties of Holy Scripture anticipated the mature reflections of the Reformation and Post-Reformation orthodox divines on the same. In this regard, he knew no patristic superior (and perhaps no equal) in his day if this judgment is to be rendered in the light of his literary remains alone. And to be sure, this review has only scratched the surface of his testimony to this end.

At the end of his life, having been driven into exile by imperial edict, weak and sick in body from one journey after another in a dangerous climate and equally dangerous localities, existing everywhere there under the threat of Isaurian raiders who were engaged in the pillaging and murder of all in their path, his health continued to deteriorate due in large part to the cruelty of his military escort who held him captive. He wrote what was to be his last treatise, *On the Providence of God*. Even then, he included therein a response to an accusation against the Scriptures that we hear from certain quarters in our own day:

> Tell me, how many people have been scandalized by the Scriptures? From them, how many heresies have derived the pretext for their own existence? Therefore, on account of those who were scandalized, should the Scriptures have been blotted out, or never have been given to begin with? Not at all! Rather, they should most certainly have been given, on account of those who would reap profit from them. As for those who are scandalized—again I will not stop saying the same things—let them impute the scandals to themselves. Those who were to derive exceedingly great profit from the Scriptures would have been wronged if the senselessness and heedlessness of the others had deprived them of this benefit from receiving the Scriptures.[96]■

(Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), Book 1.5, p. 91. Cf. *Adversus Eunomium*, Liber I, §5, *PG* 29.513.

92. See Louis Ellies Du Pin, *A New History of Ecclesiastical Writers: Containing an Account of the Lives and Writings of the Primitive Fathers, A Judicious Abridgment and Catalogue of all their Works; with Censures Determining the Genuine and Spurious and a Judgment upon their Style and Doctrine: Also their various Editions, Together with A Compendious History of the Councils,* Volume the Third (London: Abel Swalle and Timothy Childe, 1693), 39. Du Pin (1657–1719) was eventually censured and condemned by the Archbishop of Paris in April of 1696 for bringing to light the doctrinal positions of many early church writers in contrast to Rome and for his Gallicanism.

93. August Neander, *The Life of John Chrysostom*, trans. J. C. Stapleton (London: R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1845), 250.

94. *NPNF1,* vol. 13, *Homilies on the Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians,* Homily IV, Comments on 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

95. Ibid., Homily V, comments on 2 Thessalonians 3:6. See also H. E. W. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth* (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., reprinted 1954), 321; and G. L. Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics* (London: S.P.C.K., 1958), 20.

96. St. John Chrysostom, *On the Providence of God,* trans. Monk Moses (Platina, California: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2015), 119. Cf. *Ad eos qui scandalizati sunt,* Caput XV, *PG* 52.516.

William Ames and the Westminster Assembly

By Allen Stanton

The importance of William Ames (1576–1633) to the development of Reformed theology has long been entrenched in historical and theological literature. Scholars have often noted his influence on the Netherlands via the Synod of Dort (1618–19) and the *Nadere Reformatie*.[1] Special attention has been directed toward his role in the development of covenantal thought particularly through his most famous pupil Johannes Cocceius (1603–1669).[2] His contribution to the development of Reformed theology in America has likewise been explored.[3] However, his importance to his home country, England, has been largely reduced to puritan casuistry. But in this realm, he has been viewed more as an articulator of his teacher, William Perkins (1558–1602), than an original casuist thinker.[4] Considerably less attention has been paid to his distinctively theological contributions and influence on the Westminster Assembly. However, there may be cause for reappraisal.

I. William Ames and the *Medulla Theologiæ*

Born in 1576 in Ipswich England, Ames attended Cambridge and earned the B.S. and M.A. degrees. During this time, he came under the influence of the systems of William Perkins and Pierre Ramus (1515–1572).[5] Ultimately, Ames landed in the Netherlands and earned a reputation as a polemicist against Arminianism and Catholicism.[6] Although his polemical works were regularly reprinted, his most lasting contribution came with the production of the *Medulla Theologica*, which contained the substance of his theological lectures at Franeker University where he taught from 1622 until just prior to his untimely death in 1633.[7]

Ames' reputation as a theologian continued to grow posthumously as the *Medulla* underwent a second edition in 1634 and a series of translations in Dutch and English that swiftly followed. Furthermore, his *Christianae catecheseos sciagraphia* was published in 1635, followed in the same year by *De Conscientia,* works which proved his worth as a catechist and casuist as well as a theologian and polemicist.[8] Each of these were regularly reprinted over the next two decades.

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1. See for example Heinrich Heppe, *A History of Puritanism, Pietism, and Mysticism and their Influences on the Reformed Church,* translated by Arie Blok (Leiden 1879, translation 1997); and R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (United Kingdom: Paternoster, 1997).

2. Jan van Vliet, *William Ames: Marrow of the Theology and Piety of the Reformed Tradition* (PhD dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, 2002); see also "The Rise of Reformed System: The Intellectual Heritage of William Ames," Studies in Christian History and Thought (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013).

3. Although he denies the assumption that Ames was quickly forgotten in England, Sprunger spends little time considering the extent of this influence and accredits his greatest legacy to that of New England. See Keith L. Sprunger, "William Ames in Perspective," in *The Learned Doctor Ames* (PhD dissertation: The University of Illinois, 1963), 278–303.

4. Richard A. Muller, "Covenant and Conscience in English Reformed Theology: Three Variations on a 17th Century Theme," *Westminster Theological Journal* 42 (1980): 308–334. Joel Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2012), 41–55.

5. Cf. Erland Sellberg, "Petrus Ramus," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), (Last Accessed 4/13/2017) URL = http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/ramus/

6. See his polemical writings against the Remonstrants in William Ames, *Animadversiones in synodalia scripta Remonstrantium, Quoad Articulum Primum* (Franeker, 1629). His polemic against Catholicism is chiefly found in *Bellarminus enervatus,* 4 vols. (Amsterdam: Joannes Janssonius, 1625–1628).

7. From 1629–1638, *Bellarminus enervatus* was reprinted six times (1629, 1630, 1632, 1633, 1637, 1638). William Ames, *Medulla Theologica Editio ab ante Recognit in locis. Noissima Authore obitum et varys auctd* (Amstelodami: Ioannem Ianbonium, 1634).

8. William Ames, *Christianae Catecheseos Sciagraphia: Ubi Sub*

However, since the publication of the *Biographia Briatannica* in the mid-eighteenth century, scholars have uncritically adopted its position that Ames had been more popular "abroad than in his native country."[9] Sprunger maintains that "although Ames left England in 1610 and never returned, there is a great deal of evidence to show that neither the bishops nor his old Puritan friends forgot him."[10] Ames' works landed on English soil as early as 1639 with the translation of the *Medulla* into English as the *Marrow of Sacred Divinity* followed by *Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof* in 1639.[11] Just before the Westminster Assembly, his works "by order from the Honorable the House of Commons" were collected in a volume of *The Works of William Ames* which contained the previously mentioned titles alongside his commentary on the epistles of Peter.[12] From the title page it appears that the publishers hoped for an Amesian influence on the Assembly when they described it "a Worke useful for this season."[13] Of these works, Sprunger says, they "were eagerly read and the demand [for publication] was not quickly satisfied."[14] Likewise, Ames' first biographer, Visscher, claimed that the Assembly used the *Medulla* to frame its documents.[15] The veracity of these statements could challenge the pervasive supposition that Ames scarcely influenced England.

Corresponding with the aforementioned assumption is the failure to consider the possibility that Ames influenced the Westminster Assembly.[16] Even Sprunger, who maintained that Ames greatly influenced the English divines, denied that the *Medulla* substantially impressed the Westminster documents.[17] Yet there is significant evidence to question this conclusion.

Although a complete survey of the divines' writings would surpass the limits of this paper, a general use of Ames can be found in the writings of the Westminster divines which may establish the likelihood that they used his works in crafting the documents of the Assembly. One of the most influential delegates at the Assembly, Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680), claimed that, "Next to the Bible," he esteemed the *Marrow* as "the best book in the world."[18] Another commissioner, John Philips (1585–1663), the brother-in-law of Ames, likely attended debates with Ames in mind (and perhaps in hand).[19] Anthony Burgess (d.1664) utilized him in his teaching on justification as did Stephen Marshall (1594–1655) in his work on baptism and in his work on grace and assurance.[20] The Scottish commissioners Robert Baillie (1602–1662), George Gillespie (1613–1648), and Samuel Rutherford (1600–1661) particularly utilized Ames and spoke of him with admiration even when critical of him.[21]

Furthermore, the minutes of the Westminster Assembly record several explicit appeals to Ames' works. Struthers' and Mitchell's collection records two such

S. Scripturae textu apposite, singulae Dominicae Catech. Reformatae breviter, solide, docte & perspicue enodantur, & suis Documentis, Usibus, & Quaestionibus Illustrantur (Amestelodami: Joannem Ianssonium, 1635); *De Conscientia Et Eius Ivre vel Casibus* (Amstelodami, Ioannem Ianssonium, 1635).

9. *Biographia Britannica*, 6 vols (London, 1747–66), I, 135.

10. Sprunger, 284.

11. William Ames, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures and the Interpreters thereof, and brought into Method by William Ames, Sometime Doctor, and professor of Divinity in the famous University at Franeken in Friesland. Trnalsated out of the Latine, for the benefit of such who are not acquainted with strange Tongues. Whereunto are annexed certain Tables representing the substance and heads of all in a short view, directing to the Chapters where they are handled. As also a table opening the hard word therein containd. A Work useful for this Season published by order from the Honorable House of Commons* (London: Edward Griffin, 1639); and *Conscience with Power and the Cases thereof. Divided into V. Bookes. Written by the Godly and Learned, William Ames, Doctor and Professor of Divinity, in the famous university of Franeker in Friesland. Translated out of Latine into English for more publique benefit* (London: Edward Griffin, 1639).

12. Sprunger claims that this injunction carried a "propaganda value for the Puritan and Parliamentary cause." (p.284). William Ames, *An Analyticall Exposition of both the Epistles of the Apostle Peter, Illustrated by Doctrines out of every Text. And applyed by their uses, for a further progress in Holinesse* (London: Edward Griffin, 1641). See also the comments of Woolsey, p.58, n.94.

13. See Sprunger, 285.

14. Sprunger 284.

15. Visscher, *Amesius,* 216–17, cited in Sprunger, 284.

16. Some exceptions include B. B. Warfield, "The First Question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism," *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield,* 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, reprinted 2000), VI:379–400, esp.396. Andrew A. Woolsey, *Unity and Continuity in Covenantal Thought* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2012), 58, fn.94. See Jan van Vliet, *Rise of the Reformed System,* 105–156.

17. Sprunger, 286.

18. As quoted by Increase Mather, "To the Reader," in *The First Principles of the Doctrine of Christ,* by James Fitch (Boston, 1679) and cited in Beeke and Jones, 54.

19. Mitchell, *Minutes,* lxxxiii.

20. Anthony Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification Asserted, and Vindicated, from the Errors of Papists, Arminians, Socinians, and More Especially Antinomians. In XXX Lectures Preached at Lawrencyiury, London* (London: Robert White, 1648), 246–247. See also the preface of *Spiritual Refining: Or A Treatise of Grace and Assurance* (London, 1652); Stephen Marshall, *A Defence of Infant-Baptism: in Answer to two Treatises, and an Appendix to them concerning it; Lately published by Mr. J. Tombes. Wherein that Controversy is fully discussed, the ancient and generally received use of it from the Apostles days, until the Anabaptists sprung up in Germany, manifested. The Arguments for it from the holy Scriptures maintained, and the objections against it answered* (London, 1646), 118.

21. Robert Baillie, *A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time:*

occasions by Edward Calamy (1600–1666) and Sydrach Simpson (1600–1655).[22] Chad Van Dixhoorn's collection cites five separate occasions, distinct from those in Mitchell, on which Ames' name is explicitly invoked.[23] But aside from these explicit references, one may discern the impressions of the *Marrow of Theology* on the divisions, definitions, and distinctions of the Assembly documents, to which this paper now proceeds.

II. General Observations on the *Medulla* and Westminster

Before moving to general considerations of comparison, it would be practical to consider motivation for Westminster's purported use of the *Marrow.* Several possible motivations exist for the Assembly's utilization of the *Marrow* alongside or instead of other theological systems. We offer four explanations.

a. *Ramism.* The dissatisfaction with revived Aristotelianism led Pierre Ramus and his followers to propose a modified logical system by which to organize theology.[24] Ramism (as it came to be known) found considerable appropriation in the training grounds of the Puritans, Oxford and Cambridge, and had become commonplace among them since the turn of the seventeenth century.[25] In his polemical, casusistical, and theological writings, Ames established himself as one of the foremost appropriators of the Ramist system. His *Medulla,* republished just prior to the Westminster Assembly, provided a complete theological system built on the Ramist approach which would have been presupposed by a majority of the Assembly's divines. This made the *Medulla* a natural resource for the Assembly.

b. *Scholasticism.* Ames and his theological successors likewise shared a commitment to *scholasticism.*[26] This commitment to modified Medieval methodology by the divines (perhaps via Ames) can be seen in their utilization of the *disputatio* in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. One example might be found in the doctrine of God, which Medieval Scholastics addressed under three principle questions: *An sit Deus,* "whether God exists?"; *Quid est Deus,* "what is God?"; and *Quantes sit Deus,* "how many Gods?"[27] All these elements of scholasticism come together in the catechisms of Westminster, which asked the very same questions. Although this method is not generally associated with catechetical literature, one can clearly perceive the scholastic commitments of the divines in the catechism, which could provide rationale for the Assembly's use of Ames.[28]

c. *Brevity.* Scholastic method was utilized for two reasons: clarity and brevity. Its use encouraged the maximizing efficiency of words for the sake of precision and clarity. Ames' utilization of this method made the *Marrow* a "theological classic in its day ... a summary of Reformed theology in concise and orderly form."[29] This precision may have provided a motivation for the utilization of Ames' work to build a succinct confession and catechism.

d. *Genre.* Ames' *Medulla* provides a summary rather than an extensive treatment of theology. For this reason, Ames avoided entering into disputes. The title *Medulla,* translated "Marrow" or "Substance," highlights Ames' intention of producing the essential substance

Wherein the Tenets of the Principall Sects, especially of the Independents, are drawn together in one Map, for the most part, in the words of their own Authours, and by their maine principles are examined by the Touch-Stone of the Holy Scriptures (London, Samuel Gellibrand, 1645), 17; George Gillespie, *A Dispute Against the English-Popish Ceremonies, Obtruded upon the Church of Scotland. Wherein Not only our owne Arguments against the same are strongly confirmed, but likewise the Answeres and Defences of our Opposites, such as Hooker, Mortone, Burges, Spring, Paybody, Andrewes, Saravia, Tillen, Spotswood, Lindsey, Forbesse, &c. particularly confuted* (1637), Part I. iv.8–9; Part II, i.10; Part III.i.8, iv.82–84; and Samuel Rutherford, *The Due right of Presbyteries, or, A Peaceable Plea, for the Government of the church of Scotland* (London: Edward Griffin, 1644), see especially 205, 227, 413, 455.

22. Alexander Ferrier Mitchell, John Peterson Struthers (editors), *Minutes of the Westminster Assembly of Divines While Engaged in Preparing their Directory for Church Government, Confession of Faith, And Catechisms* (November 1644 to March 1649) (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), 26–27, 54.

23. Cf. Chad Vandixhoorn (editor), *Minutes of the Westminster Assembly* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), II:272; III: 107, 358, 365, 494.

24. See Petrus Ramus, *Animadversionum Aristotelicarum, Libri XX. Ad Carolum Lotharingum, Cardinalem Guisianum* (Lutetiae, 1548); and *The Logike of the Most Excellent Philosopher P. Ramus Martyr: Newly translated, and in divers places corrected, after the minde of the Author* (London: Thomas Vautrolier, 1581).

25. See Willem J. van Asselt and Peiter L. Rouwendal, "Distinguishing and Teaching: Constructing a Theological Argument in Reformed Scholasticism," *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011), 92–94. Frank P. Graves, *Ramus and the Educational Reformation of the 16th Century,* (New York: Macmillan, 1912).

26. For assessment of Protestant Scholasticism see Willem J. van Asselt & Eef Dekker (editors), *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001); Willem J. van Asselt (editor) *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011); and Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520–1725,* 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003).

27. Richard A. Muller, "Scholasticism and Orthodoxy in the Reformed Tradition: An Attempt at Definition" (Inaugural Address, Grand Rapids, 1995), 4–5.

28. The Larger Catechism asks expressly these questions: Q. 2, "How doth it appear that there is a God? (*An sit Deus*)"; Q.7, "What is God? (*Quid est Deus*)" and Q.8, "Are there more Gods than one?" (*Suntne plures uno Deo*).

29. Sprunger, 170.

of theology without divulging into minutia. In Ames' words, it served as a "short compendium for the unlearned ... in hopes of stirring up readers to piety."[30] Similarly, the catechisms and confession were intended to provide summaries in a succinct, simple, and memorable way. The terse nature of both the catechism and the *Medulla* allows for favorable comparison.

These suggestions provide plausible rationale for the utilization of the *Marrow* at the Westminster Assembly. In the proceeding discussion, before descending into particulars, a few general comparisons will be made between the *Marrow* and Westminster which may further suggest appropriation: the *ordo theologiae* and *ordo salutis.*

1. Ordo Theologiae

In Ramist fashion, Ames began the opening chapter on "The Nature of Divinity" by dividing theology into two principle heads: faith and duty.[31] The *Shorter Catechism* divides upon exactly those lines. Questions 1–38 define the content of faith and questions 39–107 describe the duty of man, as summarized in the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. The catechism states that this division constitutes the scope of the Scriptures which teach what "man is to believe concerning God (*quod homini de Deo sit credendum*) and what duty God requires of man (*quidque officii exigat ab homine Deus*)."[32] Likewise, both utilized 2 Tim.1:13 as the primary text for proving this bifurcation.

This twofold division stems from Ames' definition of theology as both a practical and theoretical discipline. In his definition, Ames appropriates the Ramist emphasis on practice while moving beyond him to equally emphasize doctrine. While Ramus defined theology as the "art of living well,"[33] Ames defined it "the doctrine (*doctrina*) of living *to God*."[34] Unlike those medieval scholastics who defined theology as science which referred primarily to the speculative enterprise, and unlike the theologians (including Ramus) who emphasized practice over doctrine, Ames held both together—speculative and practical.[35] In this, Ames represents a modified Ramism which, in turn, found appropriation in the *Shorter Catechism.*

Although this Ramist dichotomy appeared in other theological compendiums of the period, such as Amandus Polanus (1561–1610) and Johannes Wollebius (1589–1629), Ames alone enjoyed print in English.[36] Commonly known as a "popularizer of Peter Ramus's logic," it is likely that the Ramist bifurcation found in the Westminster Standards can be attributed largely to Ames' influence.[37]

2. Ordo Salutis

Following the developments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a standard post-Reformation *ordo salutis* developed, encapsulated by the Westminster Assembly: election, effectual calling, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and glorification. Although this general pattern may be observed in systems prior to Westminster, one aspect stands out—the placement of the doctrine of *adoption.*

Prior to Westminster, the doctrine of adoption received little attention. If treated as a distinct category it generally found placement as a sub-topic either of justification or sanctification but not as a standalone doctrine. The *Medulla* proves the clearest exception.[38] In the *Marrow,* Ames treats the doctrine in this place as a separate locus following and flowing from justification. Likewise, he treats the doctrine with a thoroughness previously unseen in Reformed theology by describing twenty-seven characteristics of adoption.[39] This denotes a development from his predecessor William Perkins, who excluded adoption from the *ordo salutis*, and constitutes a significant contribution to Reformed theology that should not be missed. The appearance of adoption in the Westminster Confession as a separate locus placed between justification and sanctification is likely owed to Ames. This will be considered further below.

III. Particular Considerations

Having considered general commonalities, it would be appropriate to consider particular evidences of the

30. Ames, *Marrow,* 3, 5.

31. Ames, *Medulla,* Book I. Cap.II. §1. *Marrow,* 2.

32. WSC, 3. Latin references in the Confession or Shorter Catechism is taken from Philip Schaff (editor), *The Creeds of Christendom: The Evangelical Protestant Creeds,* vol. III (Reprinted Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007):600–703. Here quoted on 676.

33. Petrus Ramus, *Petri Rami Ver Omandui, Philosophiae et Eloquentiae Regii professoris celeberrimi, Commentariorum de Religione Christiana, Libri quator* (Francofurti: Andream Wechelum, 1577), 6. *Theologia est doctrina bene vivendi.*

34. Ames, *Marrow,* 1.

35. For a fuller treatment of this medieval debate and its continuance in the post-reformation age, see Muller, *PRRD* (1987): 1.215–226.

36. Amandus Polanus, *Syntagma theologiae christianae* (Hanover, 1609; Geneva, 1626); Johannes Wollebius, *Compendium theologiae christianae* (Basel, 1626).

37. See Kendall, 154 and K. L. Sprunger, 'Ames, Ramus, and the Method of Puritan Theology,' *Harvard Theological Review* (1966): 133ff. See also Muller, *Covenant and Conscience,* 308, fn.1.

38. Tim J. R. Trumper, *An historical study of the doctrine of adoption in the Calvnistic tradition* (PhD dissertation: Edinburgh School of Divinity, 2002).

39. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap. XXVIII.

appropriation of the *Marrow* in the literature developed by the Westminster Assembly.

1. Man's Chief End

Shorter Catechism question and answer one memorably asks: "What is the chief end of man?" Answer: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." The uniqueness of this catechism moved B. B. Warfield to search for its source.[40] In his quest, he traced the theological flow through various parties and ultimately to Calvin's Geneva Catechism. The Westminster divines adopted Calvin's question nearly verbatim; however, they slightly modified his answer. Calvin answered, "That men should know God by whom they were created." He continued, "What reasons have you for saying so? Because he created us for this, and placed us in the world, that he might be glorified in us. And it is certainly proper that our life, of which he is the beginning, be directed to his glory." Next Calvin asked what was the *summum bonum* of man, and he answers, "the very same. Because without it our condition is more unhappy than that of any brutes."[41]

One can begin to discern a common thread in the theology of Calvin and Westminster. Both wish to ascribe man's chief purpose to God and the chief good to knowing him. However, the divines go beyond this to *the enjoyment of God.* Whereas Calvin describes the knowing of God as the *summum bonum* (the highest good), Westminster moves beyond the knowledge of God to the enjoyment of Him (*eodemque frui in oeternum*).[42] This is an enlargement upon Calvin, which Warfield and Mitchell admit likely came from Ames.[43]

According to Mitchell and Warfield, the second part of the question ("and enjoy him forever") only finds precedent in two other catechisms aside from Ames: Leo Jud and Gagliardi.[44] Jud wrote that God had made man so that in all things he should "fear, love and reverently honor" him and "to enjoy him forever" (*aeternum fruamur*).[45] In his Italian catechism, Gagliardi similarly wrote, "To what end was man created?" answer: "To know and love God and enjoy Him forever."[46] However, it is unlikely that the divines had been influenced by Gagliardi whose catechism existed only in Italian and Spanish. The Lutheran Jud is more likely, yet less probable than Ames whose works had been readily available in Latin and English and reprinted since 1627.

Upon comparison, there may be more reason to trace the influence to the *Medulla.* Ames wrote:

> 5. And seeing that, that life of the Creature is most perfect, which comes nearest to the living, and life-giving God, therefore the nature of Divinity-life is to live to God. 6. Men live to God when they live, according to the will of God, to the glory of God, God inwardly working in them … 8. But although in this life there is contained as well to live happily as to live well … and that which ought chiefly and finally to be respected is not blessednesse, which respects our profit, but goodnesse, which is referred to God's glory Therefore Divinity is better defined by that good life whereby we live to God … 9. Moreover seeing this life is a spiritual act of the whole man, whereby he is carried on to enjoy God...[47]

In this elaboration of the purpose of theology, and thereby of life, one observes a unanimity between *the Marrow* and WSC 1. Like Westminster, Ames grants a singular purpose to life, which he calls the "Divinity-life." In Ramist fashion, like the divines, he divides that singular purpose into two parts—to glorify God and to live the blessed life, which he later calls the enjoyment of God. However, these are not two distinct purposes but two aspects of living to God which are both accomplished by living consistently with God's word. These similarities emerge more strikingly in Ames' comments in the *Substance of the Christian Religion.*

In his opening Lord's Day lecture, Ames derives several doctrinal points from Psalm 4:6–8. They are thus:

1. Our chief felicity and happiness ought above all other things to be regarded and sought after, and that throughout our whole life.

2. That a man's chief good or happiness cannot be found in the goods of this life.

3. That our true and chief good consists in our union and communion, that we have with God.

4. That joy that the faithful have from the communion that they have with God, in its sweetness, surpasses all other human delights and joys.[48]

40. B. B. Warfield, "The First Question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, *The Princeton Theological Review,* vi. (1908), 565–587.

41. John Calvin, "Catechism of the Church of Geneva," in *Calvin: Theological Treatises* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 91.

42. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom,* III: 676.

43. Mitchell, *Minutes,* 421.

44. Mitchell, *Minutes,* 432.

45. Leo Jud, *Catechismus Brevissima Christianae Religionis Formula, Instituendae iuuentuiti Tigurinae, catechizandique rudibus aptata, adeoque in commune omnium piorum utilitatem excusa, Ad Lectorem* (Tiguri: Christophorum Froschouerum, 1539).

46. Quoted in Warfield, 391.

47. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap I. §9. 'Haec porro vita, cum sit spiritualis actus totius hominis, quo fertur ad Deum habendum.'

48. William Ames, *The Substance of Christian Religion: Or, A plain and easie Draught of the Christian Catechisme, in LII. Lectures, on chosen Texts of Scripture, for each Lords-day of the Year, Learnedly and*

In describing the chief end of man, the Assembly is likely utilizing Ames. Inexplicably, however, after acknowledging the probability that the heightening of the Shorter Catechism's answer had been likely received via Ames, Warfield concludes, "it may very well be that there was no conscious dependence here on any intermediary, but that the Westminster divines … found a felicitous brief expression for Calvin's thought."[49] In this, Warfield appears compelled to link Westminster directly to Calvin despite the suggestion of other evidence. Perhaps his context provided this motivation.

Early twentieth century scholarship have been characterized by an increasing emphasis on what some have called the "Solus Calvinus" and anti-Scholasticism.[50] In the former position, scholars have sometimes treated Calvin as the sole founder of the Reformed tradition to the neglect of other reformers. Consequently, these scholars used the works of Calvin to guage theological fidelity to the Reformed tradition. In the second position, twentieth century scholars claimed that the appropriation of scholastic method by post-Reformation writers evidenced a deviation from the so-called exegetical theology of the Reformation. Warfield found himself in the middle of these emerging thrusts, and this may explain his avoidance of attributing an Amesian influence on Westminster. However, it seems likely that the divines received the amended teaching of Calvin through Ames. Although Ames did not exclusively teach that a significant purpose in life consists in the enjoyment of God, those who did were few and Ames may have been the best known.

2. Of Faith

In scholarly literature, Ames' understanding of faith, or his so-called *voluntarism,* receives considerable attention with various interpretations. Kendall views Ames' emphasis on the role of the will in faith as the final break of English Puritanism from Calvin's more objective understanding of faith embraced and solidified in the Westmisnter Assembly.[51] Beeke and Jones, although recognizing development, consider it a consistent development and clarification of a trajectory already present in Calvin.[52] In a different direction, Heppe and Sprunger understand Ames' doctrine of faith to have risen in reaction to the supposed cold orthodoxy that he found in the Netherlands. According to them, his was a subjective and experiential understanding of faith and theology in contrast to what has been perceived as the overly objective faith of the Reformed Orthodox.[53] These varying interpretations require an extensive look at Ames' understanding of saving faith in comparison to Westminster.

The importance of Ames' understanding of faith can first be noted by its placement in the *Medulla.* Instead of beginning with the doctrine of Scripture and proceeding to outline the various loci of theology, Ames begins (after defining theology and providing its order) with the doctrine of faith. Ames defines faith as "a resting of the heart on God (*acquiescentia cordis in Deo)*" in order that we may be "freed from evil" and "obtain all good." The biblical parallel to this is *trust.*[54] However, Ames considers the various elements of *fides*. First, *fides* contains the element of belief (*credere*), "which signifies an act of the intellect, assenting to produced testimony" (*Credere vulgo significat actum intellectus, assensum testimonio praebentis*).[55] Saving faith, however, constitutes more than mere belief; it includes the act of the will, which in Scripture is paramount to *receiving.* Here he appeals to John 1:12 where John uses the terms believing and receiving interchangeably. Thus, faith is not just a mental assent, although it includes that, but is an "act of the whole man (*actus totius hominis*), as seen in John 6:35 where Jesus describes saving faith as coming to him."[56] In short, to rest the heart in God is to assent to the truth of divine testimony and by an act of the will "embrace the good" as it is found in Christ.

He continues, however, by denoting that faith presupposes: 1. Knowledge of the Gospel; and 2. A Pious Affection of the Will Towards God.[57] That latter is the *habit* from which faith flows (*habitus ex quo fluit fides*).[58]

Perspicuously Illustrated with Doctrines, Reasons, and Uses (London: T. Mabb, 1659), 3, 5, 6, 8. Originally published in Latin as *Christianae Catecheseos Sciagraphia* (1635).

49. Warfield, 396.

50. J. V. Fesko, *Covenant of Redemption: Origins, Development, and Reception* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016): 187–204.

51. R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism.*

52. Beeke and Jones, *A Puritan Theology.*

53. Heppe, 79. Sprunger, 181. "By stressing the will, Ames was seeking to involve man personally in theology and overcome the stifling effects of intellectual assent divorced from piety." Sprunger, 181.

54. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap.III. §1.

55. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap.III. §2..

56. Ames, *Medulla* I. Cap.III. §3.

57. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap.III.§§.3–4. His statement, *Pio voluntatis affect,* "a pious affection of the will," appears similar to Calvin's statement that "faith can in no wise be separated from a devout disposition (*bonne affectione*) "good affection." *Institutes* III.ii.8.

58. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap.III. §§ 5–6. Muller defines *habitus* as a "disposition; specifically, spiritual capacity, belonging to either of the faculties of soul, i.e., to mind or to will. The scholastics assumed that, in addition to defining the faculties of the soul, they also had to acknowledge the capacities or dispositions of those faculties. A faculty cannot receive a datum or act in a manner for which it has no capacity." Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 134.

Although not mentioned at this point, by this Ames alluded to his doctrine of calling by which a person formerly dead in sin receives the capacity or *habitus* to positively receive God.

Calling, Ames maintains, contains an inward and an outward element. The outward is a "propounding, or preaching of the Gospel or of the promises of Christ."[59] This is the preaching of the objective work of Christ which is proclaimed indiscriminately to all, but the obtaining of those things promised belongs only to the elect and, consequently, only they will truly rest upon those promises with a saving faith by virtue of an inward calling of God. Ames defines inward calling as a "spiritual enlightening, whereby those promises are propounded to the hearts of men, as it were by an inward word."[60] Through this calling, the receiving of Christ establishes union with him. In so far as this refers to a transition from sin to grace, it is called *conversion.* When used in reference to new life, it is called *regeneration.*[61]

Wherein that "principle" or habit of grace is planted in a man, he is completely passive. This implantation of grace "is begotten in the *will* of man."[62] He further elaborates that the will is the prime subject of this conversion, because the mind is not "sufficient to produce this effect, because it doth not take away that corruption which is in the will, neither doth it communicate unto it any new supernatural principle, by verture whereof it may convert it self."[63] Consequently, this can only be accomplished by God, and so in regeneration a person is completely passive.

However, this principle, or *habitus,* in operation necessarily elicits the act of faith or "active receiving," where it "now wholly leane[s] upon Christ as his savior, and by Christ upon God." This act of faith can be attributed to two things: 1. The Habit of grace at work; and 2. God's stirring and moving. This calling is irresistible. Although the will is not coerced, it freely complies with God's calling.[64]

Ames concludes his description of *fides* by delineating its objects which are first, God "in himself," and then as Christ the Redeemer, or the promises of God, and essentially the authority of God in His Word. This faith is further described as cleaving, leaning, or resting in God. This stands in contrast to the papists which make faith merely a "general assent" (*assensus ille generalis*).[65] Furthermore, it always always consists of a "special confidence" or "trust" (*includitur tame semper specialis fiducia*) which entails a confidence in the Messiah, or of confidence of union with Christ.[66] Yet he clarifies that this confidence (*fiducia*) can be spoken of as a synonym for faith (*fides*) or as a fruit of faith. It depends upon how one is speaking. In the former sense, *fiducia* must be present. But the presence of *fiducia* (trust or confidence in Christ) does not necessarily mean the certainty of salvation (*certitudo*) which is a fruit of faith and varies in degree by the quality of the person's faith. Consequently, one can have confidence in the Lord (*fiducia*), in the sense of *fides,* without possessing *fiducia* in the sense of certainty (*certitudo*). "Experience … teacheth that that particular assurance of the understanding (*certiorationem intellectus*) is wanting in some, for a time, who notwithstanding have true Faith lying hid in their hearts."[67]

In contrast with the assertions of Heppe and Kendall that Ames' emphasis on the will served as polemic against the "dead orthodoxy" of his peers, it is better to understand Ames' emphasis on the will as polemic against Roman Catholics. In the *Substance of Christian Religion,* he poignantly exhorts "against Papists, and others, who know nor acknowledge no other faith, but knowledge, and a certain material assent, which may consist with greatest diffidence and most wretched desperation."[68]

In summary, one can identify four distinct elements in Ames' chapter on faith. 1. Saving faith is a confident resting or trusting in Christ; 2. Faith stems from the assent to a knowledge of the gospel; 3. Faith emerges as a consequence to God's implementation of a new nature or *habitus* in the elect; 4. Faith contains some element of assurance, although this varies in degree and can actually be lost in the elect for some time.

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to consider this definition in comparison with Calvin, it must briefly be noted that Ames' description stands in continuity with Calvin's definition. In perhaps his most succinct definition of faith, Calvin writes: "Now we shall possess a right definition of faith if we call it a firm and certain knowledge of God's benevolence towards us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit."[69]

59. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap. XXXVI. § 11.
60. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap.XXXV. §§ 8, 13; Ames, *Marrow,* 111.
61. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap.XXXV. §§ 17, 18.
62. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap.XXXV. § 21; *Marrow,* 112. Italics added.
63. Ames, *Marrow,* 113.
64. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap.XXXV. § 27.
65. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap. III. §§ 7–12, 14,15.
66. Ames, *Medulla* I. Cap. III. §20.
67. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap.III. §22.
68. William Ames, *The Substance of the Christian Religion,* 53–54.
69. Calvin, *Institutes,* 3.2.7.

In this definition, one finds the various elements that Ames also espoused: 1. Intellectual Assent; 2. An inward work of God in which the recipient is passive, but in which 3. Trust in God's benevolence (*fiducia*) is produced. Similar to Ames, Calvin also adamantly protests against those who would place faith merely in assent to the exclusion of the inward man. "If we possessed only this one reason, it would have been sufficient to end the dispute: that very assent itself … is more of the heart than of the brain, and more of the disposition than of the understanding."[70]

Although Kendall seeks to pit Ames' voluntarism against Calvin's so-called intellectualized understanding of faith, the two share considerable unanimity. The bifurcation of voluntarism from intellectualism appears overly simplistic and fails to consider the breadth of Calvin's teaching on faith.[71]

Kendall is correct, however, in his assessment that the Westminster divines continued in the trajectory of Ames.[72] In defining saving faith, the *Shorter Catechism* stated that "Faith (*fides*) in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive (*recipimus*) and rest (*nitimur*) upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel."[73] As the Confession more fully states, "The principle acts of saving faith are accepting (*proecipui*), receiving (*acceptatio*) and resting (*reception*) upon Christ alone for justification, etc."[74] Although the Latin nomenclature differs slightly, the English translation captures the conceptual unity between Ames and Westminster.

For both, faith in Christ includes the elements of the mind and the will, yet with priority being granted to the will. Yet prior to the receiving and resting upon Christ, the Spirit of God must effectually call the sinner, which includes "enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills," wherein, "he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel."[75] On the assurance of faith, Westminster maintains, like Ames, that "This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be a partaker of it."[76]

Although great similarity exists between Ames and the divines, it would be difficult to attribute the *Standards* directly to the work of Ames. Nevertheless, Ames stands within a trajectory which insisted that faith be defined as consisting of the intellect and the will. This emphasis upon the will, although not unique to Ames, found its most ardent expression in Ames. Although Kendall may overstate his case, he does give support to an objective emphasis in Calvin and his immediate successors such as Perkins. Although, in our judgment, Ames assumed the objective quality of faith (i.e. Calvin and Perkins), he emphasized the will in saving faith to a greater degree than did his predecessors, a trajectory which Westminster followed.

The teaching by Westminster, which similarly to Ames described faith as "resting and receiving," appears to betray an Amesian influence. Although an exhaustive exploration would extend beyond the purposes of this paper, it should be noted that defining saving faith this way finds little expression in the literature of the time that is purported to influence Westminster. Perkins defines saving faith as "a special perswasion, wrought by the holy Ghost in the heart of those that are effectually called, concerning their reconciliation and salvation by Christ."[77] James Ussher (1581–1656) defines it as "such a firme assent of the mind to the truth of the word, as flowes into the heart, and causeth the soule to embrace it as good, and to build its eternal happinesse on it."[78] Similarly, John Ball (1585–1640) defines faith as "a beliefe of the promise."[79] The summarization of faith as "receiving and resting" stands out in Ames and Westminster in a way far more pronounced than that of

70. Calvin, *Institutes,* 3.2.8.

71. Vliet writes, "Admittedly, some individual Calvinian statements could be taken as privileging the intellect over the will in matters of faith. Yet in light of his entire body of work, the charge that Calvin intellectualized the faith cannot be maintained." See *The Rise of the Reformed System,* 61.

72. Kendall, 151–164.

73. WSC 86. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom,* III: 695.

74. WCF 14.2. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom,* III: 630.

75. WSC 31.

76. WCF 18.3.

77. William Perkins, *A Cloud of faithfull witnesses, leading to the heavenly Canaan, or, A commentarie upon the 11 chapter to the Hebrewes preached in Cambridge by that godly, and iudicious divine, M. William Perkins; long expected and desired, and therefore published at the request of his exegutours, by Will. Crashawe and Tho. Pierson, preachers of Gods Word, who hear him preach it, and wrote it from his mouth* (London: Humfrey Lownes, 1607), 3.

78. James Ussher, *A body of divinities: or the summe and substance of Christian Religion, Catechistically propounded, and explained, by way of Question and Answer: Methodically and familiarly handled. Composed long since by James Usher B. of Armagh. And at the earnest desires of divers godly Christians now Printed and Published. Whereunto is adjoined a Tract, intituled Immanuel, or the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God* (London: M. F., 1645), 197.

79. John Ball, *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace: Wherein The graduall breakings out of Gospel grace from Adam to Christ are clearly discovered, the differences betwixt the old and new Testament are laid open, divers errours of Arminians and others are confuted; the nature of Uprightnesse, and the way of Christ in brining the soul into Communion with himself: Together with many other Points, both doctrinally and practically profitable, are solidly handled* (London: Simeon Ash, 1645), 349.

other definitions of the times. Ames may not have been the only one saying such things by the time of the Assembly, but he certainly said it most often and clearly. Thus, Westminster's definition of faith gives evidence to an Amesian influence.

3. Adoption

Tim Trumper has argued that in the history of the church the doctrine of adoption has been largely neglected. Although the doctrine scarcely appears throughout the patristics and medievals, during the time of the Reformation it began to reappear. In his commentary on Galatians, Luther broached the subject. Likewise, the fatherhood of God became an important motif for Calvin, and it is interspersed throughout the pages of the *Institutes.* Nevertheless, neither theologian treated it as a separate or distinct locus.[80] The re-discovery of justification *sola fide* gave way to an emphasis on the forensic relationship between God and man that overshadowed the familial one.[81] In this vein, where adoption received treatment, it found placement as one of the benefits of justification.

The first time that the doctrine appears distinctly in confessional literature is that of *Craig's Catechism* (1581).[82] However, the treatment deals more with discovering the certainty of adoption than a description of the doctrine itself or its corresponding benefits. By "compiling a seminal creedal chapter on adoption the Westminster Assembly signaled a more formal recognition of the doctrine in Reformed theology."[83] But where did this idea come from?

Heinrich Heppe located the doctrine in only three theological systems: Andreas Hyperius (1511–1564), Franciscus Burman (1628–1679) and Johann Heinrich Heidegger (1633–98) followed later by Wilhelmus a Brakel (1635–1711).[84] However, Burman, Heideger, and Brakel's works are too late to have influenced Westminster. Evidence exists to support Hyperius' influence on English Puritanism; however, his treatment of the doctrine does not appear in any extensive sense.

Amongst the English Puritans, Trumper argues that it would be "unfair to claim" they "did not deal with adoption," but "too few of them dealt with the doctrine as a distinct theological *locus.* Notable exceptions include the Congregationalist William Ames (1576–1633) and his twenty-seven characteristics of adoption."[85] The only other names Trumper mentions are Thomas Watson (1620–1686) and Herman Witsius (1636–1708), who appeared too late to have influenced Westminster, and Thomas Goodwin (1600–1679) and John Owen (1616–1683), who treated adoption under predestination and communion with God respectively.[86] The doctrine also found scanty treatment in the catechism of James Ussher (1581–1656), which followed the same *ordo* as Westminster. However, it was not published until 1645, just two years prior to the publication of the Confession and Catechisms, and its treatment is quite brief.[87] Instead, the most significant contribution to the doctrine of adoption, published twenty years prior to the codification of it in the Westminster Standards, appears in Ames' *Medulla.* Consequently, a likely Amesian influence on the Assembly may exist at this point.

The appropriation of Ames may be seen in two ways: in the *ordo salutis,* and in the *substance* of the doctrine of adoption. Given that adoption had seldom been treated as a distinct doctrine, it should not come as a surprise that it seldom appeared in the *ordo salutis* of the Protestant *systema.* Westminster marked a decided change in this by moving from effectual calling to justification, adoption, and sanctification.[88] Following the Assembly, this became a common puritan *ordo.* As stated previously, this found precedent in William Ames.

As to the substance, the Shorter Catechism teaches: "Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God (WSC, 34)." The *Confession* elaborates:

> All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption: by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have His name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by Him as by a Father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.[89]

80. Trumper, 17.
81. Trumper, 19.
82. James T. Dennison Jr. (editor), "Craig's Catechism (1581)", in *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation,* 5 vols. (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2008–2014), III:544–606.
83. Trumper, 21. Beeke and Jones claim that it was the first but, as Trumper notes, it was at least second to Craig. See *Puritan Theology,* 538.
84. Trumper, 20.
85. Trumper 22.
86. Trumper, 22.
87. See James Ussher, *A Body of Divinity,* 200–201.
88. WSC 11–13; WLC 69–75; WSC 32–35.
89. WCF 12. Cf. WLC, 74.

When one reduces Ames' teaching on adoption and removes the sections in which he compares human adoption with divine adoption and likewise separates the fruit of adoption, one finds fifteen distinct statements on adoption, whereas the Westminster Confession's treatment reduces to sixteen. When compared, the two appear quite similar. In the Table to the right we have reduced the similarities (and places of distinction) to this simple outline.

One could argue that the similarity of language between Ames and Westminster may be attributable to the Bible as a common source. Many of the things stated about adoption in both, after all, come expressly from biblical descriptions. However, the Divines' separation of adoption as a separate locus and its placement in the *ordo salutis,* innovative in the work of Ames, makes the utilization of the *Marrow* in the crafting of the Westminster Standards far more plausible. Or, to put it another way, it is difficult to imagine Westminster striking out on this new path in the history of Reformed confessions without considering the precedent of it in Ames. Given that the divines were reading Ames, it appears more likely that they did use him than not.

Table. Adoption in *Marrow* compared with WCF (Ames; WCF)

1. *It is a gracious sentence/act (1; 3)*
2. *It arises on account of the Son (2&8; 2)*
3. *Flows from but is distinct from justification (3–5; 1)*
4. *The dignity of God's name placed upon them (7&11; 5)*
5. *Adopted as children of God (and brothers of Christ) (9–10; 4)*
6. *Taken into God's family (12; 7) benefits of God's Fatherhood:*
   a. *Call God Father as members of his family (both)*
   b. *Taught by God (Ames)*
   c. *Protected by God (both)*
   d. *Provided for by God (both)*
   e. *Disciplined by God (both)*
   f. *Made heirs (Ames)*
   g. *Have access to the throne of grace (WCF)*
      Perpetual conversation (Ames)
   h. *Pitied by God (WCF)*
   i. *Eternal Blessedness (both)*
   j. *Never cast off (WCF)*
7. *Given the Spirit of Adoption (15; 6)*

4. Covenant Theology

Although Woolsey argues that Ball and Usher left the most lasting impressions on Westminster's covenant theology, this seems unlikely for two reasons. First, the works of these two men were both published in 1645, when the assembly had been underway for two years, and just prior to the completion and publication of the Confession (1647), Shorter Catechism (1647) and Larger Catechism (1648). This would not have left much time for reflection on Ball and Usher. Secondly, Ames, on the other hand, had been available in Latin since 1627 and in English since 1639. Considering that Ames "was one of the first to build an entire system of Reformed covenant theology,"[90] it is surprising how little Ames' covenant theology has been considered alongside that of Westminster.

a. *Definition of Covenant and the Covenant of Works.* Both Westminster and Ames describe a covenant as a gracious providence by which God voluntarily condescends to bind himself to his creatures.[91] In approaching a definition, both consider a covenant as consisting in the promise of blessings and the threatening of curses contingent upon obedience or disobedience to certain stipulations as seen most evidently in God's covenant with Adam.[92]

In this first covenant, God promised life to man based on obedience and threatened death for disobedience. The content of this covenant was a moral law along with the "special command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."[93] So closely does the law relate to the essence of the covenant that Ames regularly interchanges the words. Although other names are applied to describe this covenant, both utilized the phrase "covenant of works,"[94] which had been slowly adopted by federal theologians since the second half of the sixteenth century.[95]

In this covenant, God appointed Adam as the covenant representative or "publique person," the "head of man's nature, from whom all good and evil was to be derived to his posterity."[96] The Larger Catechism says similarly, "The covenant being made with Adam as a *public person*, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind … sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression."[97] Likewise, great significance was placed by Ames and the divines on the giving of the tree of life. However, Ames refers to it as a "sacrament," whereas the divines reduce it to a "pledge."[98]

90. Beeke and Jones, 42.
91. Ames, *Medulla* I. Cap. X. §§.1–9; and WCF 7.1, WLC 20.
92. Ames, *Medulla* I. Cap. X. §.9; and WCF 7.2, WLC 20.
93. WLC 92.
94. See Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap. XXXVIII. §§. 4, 9.
95. See D. A. Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth-Century Reformation Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
96. Ames, *Medulla* I. Cap. X. §.30.
97. WLC 22. Italics added.
98. Ames, *Medulla,* I. Cap. XXXVII. and WLC, 20.

Adam's failure to fulfill the terms of the covenant of works and man's fall into sin led to God's enacting a second gracious covenant. Vliet recognizes Ames' emphasis on the Adamic covenant as something of a progression of the federal theology. Vliet claims that the "prominence of this covenant in Ames' thinking [was] something not seen in either Calvin or Perkins."[99] This concept, however, found significant prominence in Westminster. Although not the creator of the concept, certainly Ames contributed to its development up to the time of the Westminster Assembly.

b. *The Covenant of Grace.* In chapters 39–40 of the *Medulla,* Ames divides his discussion on the covenant of grace into essentially three distinct topics: 1. The Unity of the Covenant; 2. The Diversity of the Covenant; and 3. The Various Administrations of the Covenant.

Ames begins by maintaining that, since its inception, the covenant of grace remained one covenant dispensed through various administrations. Although the essence of the Covenant of Grace is one throughout all its administrations, there are nevertheless differences in these dispensations. Ames claims that the varying epochs denoted advancement from the imperfect to the perfect. He then begins a series of contrasts in which he purports the superiority of the externals of the covenant fulfilled in Christ and those prior to his coming.

Prior to Christ, the covenant administrations were general and dark as they exhibited the Christ to come. The elements of these administrations tended to be "outward and carnall" and the church, as underage, experienced elements of servitude, carnality, and the spirit of bondage and fear. In contrast, in the New Covenant administration, a perfect unchangeable covenant is propounded in a more inward and spiritual manner. Christ is exhibited far more clearly in this covenant, and, rather than the bondage of infancy, the church possesses the Spirit of adoption and full sonship.[100]

Ames deals most extensively with the unity and diversity of the various covenant administrations from Adam to the end of the world. He divides his treatment into three sections: before Moses; Moses to Christ; and Christ to the end of the world. In each section, he demonstrates the central unity of the covenant of grace, which is the promise of Christ in the gospel and how each part of the *ordo salutis* (election, calling, justification, adoption, sanctification and glorification) was experienced by the church in each dispensation either by looking to the Christ to come through the various types, or, in the New Covenant, as the Christ who has come. He also traces the way in which each subsequent age saw greater clarity than the previous and, therefore, the differences in each administration.[101] In short, the covenants are all united in what is promised, and the greatest disunity consists in the manner of revelation—in that the old dispensations (prior to Christ) were less clearly revealed than in the New Covenant.

There is great conceptual unity here between Ames and Westminster. As the *Confession* reveals:

> This covenant [of grace] was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law, it was administered by promises, prophesies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foresignifying Christ to come; which were, for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the old testament. Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance, was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed … is held forth in more fullness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the new testament. There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations.[102]

The architectonic appropriation of a two-covenant system (works and grace) in the Westminster Standards is clearly not without precedent and, given the regular utilization of Ames elsewhere, it is probable that his work had been consulted on this topic as well. However, one might wonder about the *pactum salutis*.

c. *The Pactum Salutis.* J. V. Fesko has made the case that there is an implicit assumption in the Westminster Standards of a pre-temporal, intra-Trinitarian covenant that serves as the foundation of the covenant of grace known as the *pactum salutis*. Although some of the divines considered this a separate covenant altogether, others understood it as the pre-temporal extension of the covenant of grace.[103]

Fesko supports this argument by appealing to David Dickson's *The Summe of Saving Knowledge,* which was regularly appended to the Standards. In this document, the *pactum salutis* is distinctly affirmed, of which there is no record of objection. Some divines expressly

99. Vliet, *Rise of the Reformed System,* 41.
100. Ames, *Marrow,* Book I. Chapter XXXVIII. §§2–10.
101. Ames, *Marrow,* XXXVIII, §§11– XXXIX, §1–13.
102. WCF 7.5–6.
103. See J. V. Fesko, *Covenant of Redemption,* and also *The Theology of the Westminster Standards* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 163–166.

defended this doctrine in various publications. This, Fesko claimed, was because the *pactum* was the majority report of the divines.[104] However, the Confession's failure to develop an express position on the *pactum salutis* provides "another example of a doctrinal teaching that was not addressed directly by the Standards but left as an orthodox extra-confessional matter."[105]

Where did Ames fall on this matter? Did he share unanimity with this implicit majority report of the divines? Although he does not appear to touch upon it in the *Medulla,* he states quite explicitly an acceptance of a pre-temporal intra-Trinitarian covenant between the Father and Son in his *Substance of the Christian Religion.* On the fifteenth Lord's Day, in an exposition of 1 Peter 3:18, Ames proposes the doctrine of the text as: "Christ the Lord Suffered all these evils of punishment, which were due to us for our sins."[106] After describing the different sufferings Christ incurred, Ames proceeded with a second doctrine, that "Christ suffered all these things, neither out of any necessity of nature, neither by constraint, neither by causality and chance, but of his own free choice of wisdom and will."[107] One of the three reasons he gives for this doctrine is that Christ willingly underwent this because, "this was the very thing for which Christ came into the world, according to the form of covenant (*pacti*) made between the Father and the Son, *Isa* 53:10."[108] In that covenant arrangement, between the Father and Son, it was agreed that if "he would undergo that obedience for us," then the guilty should be set free from the penalty of their disobedience as well as of death itself.[109]

If, in fact, the *pactum* was the majority report by the mid-seventeenth century, Ames stands in continuity with that developing trend. As in other comparisons between Ames and Westminster, there is a shared unanimity on covenant theology that suggests a potential utilization of Ames' works in the construction of the Westminster Standards. Although the influence is not as apparent as in other areas, given that Ames stands on the cusp of the major federal developments of the 1640s and 1650s, he serves as an important precursor to the movement soon to find solidification in Westminster and, therefore, was a likely source for Westminster's covenant theology.

104. See the early chapters of Fesko, *Covenant of Redemption.*
105. Fesko, *Theology of Westminster Standards,* 166.
106. Ames, *Substance,* 105.
107. Ames, *Substance,* 106.
108. Ames, *Substance,* 107. Ames, *Christianae catecheseos,* 89, "Quia hoc fuit illud ipsum propter quod Christus venit in mundum, secundum formam illam pacti initam inter Deum Patre & Filium, Es.53.10."
109. Ames, *Substance,* 109.

IV. Conclusion

Although seeking to establish influence can be a precarious matter, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the Westminster divines utilized the writings of William Ames, particularly his *Medulla.* In the decades leading up to the Westminster Assembly, Ames had been celebrated and widely read on the continent and in England. Translations of his work appeared in the years just prior to the Assembly and with some suggestion that this was done intentionally to influence the divines. The demand for his work required regular republication. The English and Scottish divines both utilized his works prior to the meetings of Westminster and expressly appealed to Ames at the Assembly's meetings.

Furthermore, a comparison of the documents of Ames and Westminster has shown that sufficient evidence exists to confirm the likelihood of the divines' appropriation of Ames in the crafting of its summarizations of fundamental theology. The Ramism, scholasticism, clarity, brevity, and genre of the *Medulla* provides sufficient motive for its use, as does the similarity of theological construction in the *ordo theologiae* and *ordo salutis.* Finally, in some of the hallmark doctrines of Westminster, such as the "chief end of man," faith, adoption, and covenant theology, Ames appears to influence Westminster, or at the very least, he serves as a pivotal figure in the continuity of a theological trajectory.

This essay can in no sense be considered exhaustive. It has only provided some initial considerations which may promote further investigation into the influence of Ames on the Westminster Assembly. Nevertheless, this paper has potentially furthered Ames scholarship in two distinct ways. First, it has challenged the assumption that Ames yielded the most influence on America or the Netherlands with little influence on England. This may also contribute to greater understanding of the internationality of the theological community of the seventeenth century. Second, this essay has confirmed the claims of some scholars (such as Warfield and Mitchell) who assumed without substantiating their assumption, that Ames influenced the Westminster Assembly. In recognizing Ames' likely influence, the reading of the Westminster Standards may be enriched by further reflection on the theology of William Ames as it contextualizes the teaching of the Westminster Assembly.▪

Fighting for Phoebe:
The Widow-Deacon and the Westminster Assembly's Concept of an Alms-Based Women's Ministry

By Nathan Eshelman

The Westminster Assembly's most controversial disagreement was related to church government. Was the English church to be governed by an independent or a presbyterian ecclesiology? The "grand debate" is the moniker given to this. In the midst of the grand debate, the validity of the office of deacon was proven from the Scriptures. Debates concerning the office of deacon continued from December 5, 1643 into January of the next year. The following resolutions were passed[1] between December 5, 1643 and December 22, 1643:

1. That the Scriptures do hold out deacons as distinct officers in the church.
2. It belongs to the office of deacon to take special care in distributing to the necessity of the poor.
3. The office of deacon is perpetual.
4. That 1 Timothy 3:8–15 and Acts 6:1–4 prove this.
5. That it does not pertain to the office of a deacon to preach the word, or administer the sacraments.

Flowing from this discussion on the diaconal office, the assembly turned its attention to the question of the widow-deacon. Who is the widow mentioned in 1 Timothy 5 and what is the extent of her work and ministry? It must be noted that the material concerning widow-deacons, as understood by the assembly, is limited. Not all questions are answerable, as some of the answers have been hidden in the annals of history. Van Dixhoorn, in the *Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly* notes, "Sessions 120–154, forming an entire fascicle of the minutes, are missing…. Some of the events in the period from 21 December 1643 to 14 February 1644 can be reconstructed."[2] Through the collation of available papers and assembly-consulted writers, the question of the widow-deacon of 1 Timothy 5 will be explored, as well as her qualifications, her limitations, and her purpose according to the Westminster Assembly.

A Favorable Vote

December 29, 1643 was a day in which the assembly's prolocutor, William Twisse, was not in his chair. Not only was Twisse the moderator of the assembly, but also "one of the most respected theologians in England, admired at home and abroad."[3] Anthony Burgess sat in as moderator for the day. Burgess was an "assembly member from 1643 to 1649 … a key committee member for the Confession of Faith."[4] Under Burgess's moderatorship, Session 123 of the Westminster Assembly debated the following proposition: "That widows, which we read in 1 Timothy 5:3, and elsewhere, are *included under* the name deacons."[5] John Lightfoot, "an Hebraist and authority in Jewish traditions"[6] records it a bit differently, wrongly citing the debated text. Lightfoot says, "That the widows that we read of in 1 Timothy 5:2, and elsewhere, are *comprehended* under the name of deacons."[7]

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1. George Gillespie, "Votes Passed in the Assembly of Divines in Westminster, Concerning Discipline and Government", in *Works of Mr. George Gillespie,* 2 vols., The Presbyterian's Armoury: in three volumes (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1844), 2.5.
2. Chad Van Dixhoorn, *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly 1643–1652,* 5 vols. (Oxford University Press, 2012), 2.488.
3. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 1.140.
4. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 1.110.
5. Gillespie, *Works*, 2.5 (emphasis mine).
6. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 1.127.
7. John Lightfoot, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines,* in *The Whole Works of John Lightfoot,* 13 vols. (London: J. F. Dove, St. John's Square, 1824), 13.92.

Of course, the Scripture that was debated was 1 Timothy 5:3: "Honor widows who are truly widows."

"Included" rather than "comprehended" was the language of the assembly, as the *Votes of the Assembly* recorded the proposition: "That Widdows, which we read of <I> Tim. 5:3 and elsewhere, are included under the name Decons" [*sic*].[8] The word "include" means that the diaconate would "contain, comprise, and embrace"[9] the widow-deacon. "Include" shows something of the widow-deacon's work and service; i.e. the functional office is categorized under the diaconate.

As Burgess moderated, the committee recommendation to debate widow-deacons went forward. The debate wore on through the day and into the evening; the question was called, and the votes were cast. Lightfoot, also opposing the proposition from the beginning, called the widow-deacon, "far different from my judgment,"[10] obviously thinking that the proposition was unable to be defended from the Scriptures. He wrote in his journal, "This debate, held exceedingly long, and was much canvassed for and against, at last it was called to the question and was voted affirmatively, only by one voice odds: when it was my unfortunancy to be called into the city before it came to the vote."[11] The Westminster Assembly had voted in favor of widow-deacons; by one vote. The widow-deacon was to be included under the office of deacon.

The language of "office" may seem peculiar to the modern ear when considering the role of the widow in 1 Timothy 5. The primary usage of the word office merely means "performance of function" or "service of duty."[12] Performance of function is how the assembly of divines were accepting "the office" of widow-deacon. This is illustrated by Thomas Goodwin, who, wrote about the widow-deacon's qualifications, "For many women will not nurse, though God gave them breasts; they will not have their sleep broken, neither can they tarry so long at home; but if a woman cannot endure to do servile *offices* to her own children, she will never endure to do *service* [to the church]."[13] The functional office of service to children in the home is shown to be a prerequisite to the ability to serve functionally as a widow-deacon in the church. Under the deacon, in the debate, meant serving the diaconate.

Scope and Limitation of Terms

What did the assembly mean when they said the widow was included under the deacon? Who was the widow-deacon? What was her function? Is it eisegetical to assume that when the assembly promoted the widow-deacon as an office, they meant categorically the same office as deacon? Widow-deacon and deacon were not synonymous. The original question debated was "whether the widows were included under the name deacon." The question was not whether widows were deacons; but were to be included *under the name* deacon. This is an important distinction. The function of the widow-deacon was specific, as well as her qualifications. The Westminster Assembly was promoting the concept that the widow-deacon was to be included as a subset of the service or function of the office of deacon. The frequent use of the term "under the deacon" points to this distinction. John Calvin's understanding of the widow serves to clarify that "under the deacon" categorizes her work under the authority of the diaconate.

During the debate, John Gibbon, "assembly member … deeply interested in church government"[14] argued, "widows are comprehended *under* the deacon's title."[15] George Gillespie, Scottish commissioner noted for "clarity, wit, and promptness in speeches,"[16] said, "That widows, we read of [in] 1 Timothy 5:3, and elsewhere, are included *under* the name deacons."[17] These arguments are consistent with the original question which, when read in the context of the historical interpretations of the 1 Timothy passage, clarify that *under* relates to her being a servant of the diaconate, rather than an authoritative member of it. She was a widow being publicly supported by the church's alms and therefore was serving in diaconal ministry. Calvin points to this office of function which was to be included under the diaconal ministry of the church. He said,

> … for, being supported at the public expense, it was proper that they should have already reached old age. Besides, there was another and stronger reason; for they consecrated themselves to the ministry of the Church, which would have been altogether intolerable, if there were still a likelihood of their being married. They were received on the condition that the Church should relieve their poverty, and that, on their part, they should be employed in ministering to the poor, as far as the state

8. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 2.12. Spelling original unless otherwise noted.
9. *Oxford English Dictionary*, definition 2.
10. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 96.
11. Lightfoot, *Journal,* 96.
12. Oxford English Dictionary, entry 1 concerning "office."
13. Thomas Goodwin, *The Government and Discipline of the Churches of Christ* (London: John Clark, 1722), 79. Italics mine.
14. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 1.119.
15. Lightfoot, J*ournal,* 96. Italics mine.
16. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 1.120.
17. Gillespie, *Notes on the Assembly*, 5. Italics mine.

> of their health allowed. Thus there was a mutual obligation between them and the Church. It was unreasonable that those who were under that age, and who were still in the vigor of life, should be a burden to others.[18]

Calvin was not an innovator concerning his understanding of the role of women deacons in the life of the church. Calvin, as an avid student of the early church, understood that the debates surrounding the woman deacon were not new to the reformation. The early church frequently questioned the role of the widow of 1 Timothy 5 and her connection to the women of 1 Timothy 3. So, as the Westminster Assembly debated Phoebe and the feminine labor that would fall under the title of deacon, they were participating in a discussion over a millennium old.

In antiquity, women set apart for women's ministry was part of the milieu of ideas being discussed as pastors and theologians sought to understand the role of women, especially in light of 1 Timothy 3; 1 Timothy 5; and Romans 16:1. Aimè Georges Martimort, who wrote the *magnum opus* concerning women deacons, acknowledges "the title of deaconess is unknown to the New Testament."[19] Despite the title not being used in the New Testament, and the entire second century following the close of the canon being silent on 1 Timothy 3:11 and Romans 16:1, the deaconess or the widow more than occasionally appears in the ancient literature of the east as well as the west. "We are permitted on the basis of the title to associate them with the women who are themselves associated with deacons in 1 Timothy 3:11, but in doing we must not lose sight of the fact that this association remains a very fragile and contingent one."[20] Many questions remain when examining the first several centuries of church history evidence. "It is not enough to merely take note of their existence. Considering the vary great differences in discipline that existed from one local church to another, we must carefully examine the situation on a case-by-case basis."[21] The case for the widows and women deacons has no clear consensus in church history.

Besides the lack of clarity concerning their association, there is further difficulty in understanding the widow or the deaconess due to the fluidity of function that we see from the office. This will be the same problem found in the Westminster Assembly as well—who is she? What is her function? Is she ordained?

When the deaconess appeared in the post-apostolic church, she met the widow qualifications of 1 Timothy 5. "Entry into membership in this group was not merely the result of some spontaneous personal decision to join it; rather one had to be designated, 'enrolled' in the group."[22] This continuity is where the agreement ended—the widow deacon needed to be a widow.

In some regions of the church, the widow deacon served much like a male deacon, only focusing instead on the nuances of women's ministries: "Their activities were limited to what a priest requested them to carry out…."[23] In other parts of the church, the widow deacon performed liturgical functions with the priest's permission and when it was necessary to have a woman present.[24] For those who promoted the widow-deacon for her liturgical function, it was limited to service for women. In 375, St. Epiphanius argued, "Deaconesses are instituted solely for service to women, to preserve decency as required, whether in connection with their baptism or in connection with any other examination of their bodies."[25]

As the scale of widow-deacon function slid between tasks assigned by the priest to administering sacraments to females, St. Chrysostom must also be considered. His position was that the women deacons provided no function at all but were merely an institution of mercy—mercy administered to them because of their destitution and poverty. "The … widows performed no functions, but they did receive a subsidy from the church that was supposed to enable them to live a contemplative life," said Chrysostom, referring to them as the "choir of widows."

As the literature contains a breadth of function for her labor—or non-labor—so too is there a variety of views as to whether she was ordained or unordained. Among those who argue for her ordination, we must understand that the best scholars who speak favorably for the ordination of widow-deacons highly doubt the Greek and Latin words for her "consecration" constitutes an ordination. Martimort said, "The first liturgical or rite created to consecrate women into a special religious state of life could have well been 'the blessing

18. John Calvin on 1 Timothy 5:9, *Commentaries* (Calvin Translation Society), vol. XXI, p. 128.

19. Aimè Georges Martimort, *Les Diaconesses: Essai* (Roma: Edizioni liturgiche*, 1982); English translation, Deaconesses: An Historical Study,* translated by K. D. Whitehead (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 19.

20. R. Gryson, *Premiere Apologie* (Paris: Picard,1904), 65.

21. Martimort, 119.

22. Martimort, 23.

23. Martimort, 114.

24. For a fascinating look into the liturgical function of the deaconess in one region of the church, see "The Case of Deaconess in the Monesteries of the Region of Edessa, 4th to 6th century" in Martimont, 139–143.

25. Martimort, 127.

of the widow' … this institution was certainly different from ordination, which was conferred only upon the bishop, the priest and the deacon, but it was something more than an administrative act."[26]

These discussions, which quietly carried on for centuries—well into the middle ages—were part of the backdrop for Calvin's discussion of the deaconess and whether she would find a place in the Genevan order. So too, at Westminster, the widow-deacon, complete with discussions concerning office, function, and role were part of the debates at the assembly—and due to the theologians and churchmen at Westminster being serious students of the Word and church history, this discussion naturally found its way into the question of the deacon and whether the widow-deacon was included under the title of deacon.

In the debates of the assembly, her work would be called an office, yet this must be understood as function, rather than authority. Her work—or office—was functional. This is important to understand as her qualifications and roles are unfolded.

Another question that is important in the scope and limitation of terminology is the question of ordination. Ought the widow-deacon be ordained in order to do the work? Nowhere in the discussion concerning the widow-deacon do any of the theologians at Westminster discuss her as being an ordained officer. This was not on the agenda of discussion as they thought of her by way of the office of function rather than an office of authority. The deacons, on the other hand, were to be ordained, and there was much discussion surrounding the ordination of those who held authoritative office.

For example, Herbert Palmer, a frequent speaker at the debates of the Assembly,[27] when discussing the perpetuity of the diaconate was emphatic that they were to be ordained to the office when he said, "I grant it is the same office mentioned in Acts 6 because it is certaine they did apoynt persons to take care of the poore. Ther was that necessity in all other churches and they war ordained *eis Diaconian*."[28] Ordination of deacons was taken seriously, and that ordination was considered a solemn ordination—to that office—and that office alone. If a deacon left the diaconate for another office, another ordination would be required. The ordination of deacons, and the ordination of "other church governors" (i.e., elders); and the ordination of preaching elders, (i.e. pastors), were all different ordinations according to the outworking of Westminster theology. Palmer later would comment, "I conceive the ordination of deacons is not good to all purposes without a new ordination."[29] In all the discussion concerning the diaconal ordination and its scope and limitations, not once did any Westminster theologian on any side of the debate argue that the widow-deacon ought to be ordained. Her office was an office of function that was under the stewardship of the deacons, hence the assembly's question whether widows are included *under* the deacon.

The Parties in the Debate

The widow-deacon debate, did not, for the most part fall along party lines. The grand debate between independents and presbyterians was set aside. Wayne Spear notes, "The independents, especially Simpson and Bridge, argued most strongly in the assembly for the inclusion of deaconesses in the church."[30] Spear goes on to say, "The position taken by the independents was supported among other leading men of the assembly only by Lazarus Seaman and George Gillespie."[31] Seaman was a member of the presbytery in London. Van Dixhoorn notes that Seaman "ranks as the second most frequent speaker in the assembly with over 400 speeches."[32]

As the widow-deacon was debated and affirmed, both those from the independents and from the notable presbyterians came together to promote her as under the deacon's office. Others debating against the widow-deacon included, "Herle, Marshall, Palmer, Temple, and Burgess."[33]

The debate dragged on from Friday into Monday. The scope of the debate including various topics, the scriptural evidence for and against the widow-deacon was considered; the qualifications of the office were debated and decided upon; the role and function of the widow was determined. On Monday, January 1, 1644, the assembly then turned its attention to Phoebe, of Romans 16, and attempted to determine whether she was a deaconess in the church of Cenchrea.

The widow-deacon was determined to be an eleemosynary[34] ministry. It was a ministry that was related

26. Martimort, 126.

27. According to Van Dixhoorn, Palmer made just under 400 speeches at the Assembly, the 4th most frequent of the speakers. See *Minutes and Papers*, 1.131.

28. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 2.480.

29. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 3.456.

30. Wayne Spear, *Covenanted Uniformity in Religion: The Influence of the Scottish Commissioners on the Ecclesiology of the Westminster Assembly* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2013), 119.

31. Spear, *Covenanted Uniformity*, 120.

32. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 1.136.

33. Spear, *Covenanted Uniformity*, 120.

34. From the Greek, *eleamosuna*, "to give alms." According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, eleemosynary first appeared in the English language in 1630 and was a reference to "eleemosynary acts." This usage is "of or pertaining to alms or almsgiving; charitable. One

to and supported by the mercy ministry of the church. The widow-deacon was intended to be a service that focused on mercy towards women especially, and several assembly members would have her also to be supported financially by the mercy ministry of the church. She would receive an honor, or wage, from the alms of the church and she would be employed to serve those who were poor and in need.

The Historical-Theological Milieu of the Discussion

Reading through the pieced-together debate, it is clear the assembly of divines was rooting their argumentation in the Scriptures. 1 Timothy 5:3–16 is the controversial text from which the divines affirmed this theology. Both parties, those in favor of widow-deacons and those opposed to widow-deacons, used 1 Timothy 5:3–16 as their defense, some seeing the widow merely as the provider of mercy and the other party seeing the widow as the recipient of mercy. The debated text reads:

> Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. And these things command, that they may be blameless. But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan. If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.[35]

The milieu of theological interpretation concerning this text was diaconal in the reformation and Calvinistic tradition. Calvin himself promoted a variation on the idea of a widow-deacon:

> The care of the poor was committed to deacons, of whom two classes are mentioned by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity;" "he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Rom. 12:8). As it is certain that he is here speaking of public offices of the Church, there must have been two distinct classes. If I mistake not, he in the former clause designates deacons, who administered alms; in the latter, those who had devoted themselves to the care of the poor and the sick. Such were the widows of whom he makes mention in the Epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. 5:10). For there was no public office which women could discharge save that of devoting themselves to the service of the poor. If we admit this, and it certainly ought to be admitted, there will be two classes of deacons, the one serving the Church by *administering* the affairs of the poor; the other, by *taking care of* the poor themselves.[36]

In Calvin's understanding, there are two classes of deacon. One being authoritative, including administrative authority. The other class is strictly service-oriented, "devoted … to the care of the poor and the sick."[37] Calvin saw the widow-deacon in this servant class, serving and taking care of the poor. Women were able to devote themselves to the serving class of deacon, the widow-deacon—but not the administrative class of deacon. Calvin would use the term "steward" and "hospitalier" to distinguish between the authoritative deacon and the functioning deacon who was set apart to care for the poor and the sick. This distinction is seen in the "Fourth Order of Ecclesiastical Government: Namely Deacons." Commenting upon his own ecclesiastical practices, Calvin said,

> There were always two kinds of deacons in the early Church. The one kind was deputed to receive, dispense,

established for the distribution of alms. The word also has a later usage, which is the one who is "dependent on or supported by alms." This usage came into the English language in 1654, a decade after the debate at Westminster. An earlier usage, that is not pertinent to the widow-deacon, is "one dependent upon alms, a beggar." That usage came into the language in 1620; although "beggar" is not a part of the discussion here.

35. New King James Version.

36. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Beveridge translation, 4.3.9.

37. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.9.

> and keep the goods for the poor, not only daily alms, but also possessions, revenues, and pensions; the other kind to care for and remember the sick and administer the allowance for the poor, a custom which we still retain at present. And in order to avoid confusion, since we have stewards and hospitallers,38 one of the four stewards of the hospital shall be the receiver of all its bounty and shall be adequately paid so that he may the better fulfil this office.[39]

In the *Register of the Company of Pastors of Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, we learn that "The one kind [of deacon] was deputized to receive, dispense, and keep the goods for the poor, not only daily alms, but also possessions, revenues, and pensions; the other kind to care for and remember the sick and administer the allowance for the poor."[40] Under the Genevan church's order, the widow, upon election, would be called to serve as a hospitalier.

Among the independents, Henry Barrowe's[41] ten page tract on church government was frequently cited. Barrowe, a separatist, taking a four-office view of the church, in the tradition of Calvin, lists shepherds, elders, doctors, and deacons as the offices of the church. Calvin earlier wrote, "There are four kinds of offices that the Lord instituted for ruling of his church."[42] He would go on to list pastors, doctors (teachers), elders, and deacons. Barrowe, following this fourfold division of authority would include the widow as one functioning under the office of deacon. The "reliever or widow"[43] is categorized as an office that serves the diaconate. The deacons are male according to Barrowe, and the relievers, the servants of the deacons, may be widows. Barrowe writes:

> Their relievers or widows must be women of 60 years of age at the least, for avoiding of inconveniences: they must be well reported of for good works, such as have nourished their children, such as have been harborous to strangers: diligent and serviceable to the saints, compassionate and helpful to them in adversity, given to every good work, continuing in supplications and prayers night and day [1 Tim 5:9, 10].[44]

Barrowe went on to say, "these officers must first be duly proved." It was clear that Barrowe, and later a certain group of independents following Barrowe and Calvin, would consider the widow-deacon an officer, but she was an officer of function rather than an officer of authority. She was included under the office of deacon.

George Gillespie, promoting the widow-deacon as well, demonstrated the need for the office among the presbyterian side of the Calvinistic churches. In *Miscellany Questions*, Gillespie was answering a question about furthering reformation in the church and how certain practices creep into the church exhibiting the need for reform. He cited a number of examples of backslidings in the church; among them, "that young women should be no longer admitted to serve the church in the attending the sick, and that such widows must be at least sixty years old and the like."[45] Later Gillespie would discuss the New Testament "doctrine of faith and practical duties of the Christian life."[46] Flowing from that section is a list of the officers of the church. Among them Gillespie lists the widows.[47] It is clear that Gillespie, following Calvin, considered the widow-deacon a consistent outworking of reformation ecclesiology.

As the debate raged on from the morning of December 29, 1643 into Monday, January 1, 1643 (with the Lord's Day being a sabbath rest, of course), two claimants of Calvin's ecclesiology, independents and presbyterians, joined together to promote the widow-deacon in the Westminster Assembly. For the most part, independents and presbyterians disagreed on church polity issues at the assembly. In the promotion of the widow-deacon, party lines were set aside for the sake of the argument. Both were fighting for Phoebe.

Qualifications

What requirements did the Westminster Assembly see for the office of widow-deacon? What reasons did they present to defend that she was a servant, rather than merely a widow?

At the center of the debate was the question concerning her ministry, being one that was eleemosynary. She was an alms-related servant of the church, eleemosynary relating to alms from as well as alms towards. The question was whether she was dependent upon alms for her living, due to her widowhood, or whether she was one that earned her living from the alms of the church because she was an officer. This was central to

38. Some translations use "procurers" and "hospitiallers".
39. Phillip E. Hughes, *Register of the Company of Pastors of Geneva in the Time of Calvin* (1966; repr. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 42.
40. Hughes, *Register of the Company of Pastors*, 42.
41. Henry Barrowe or Barrow (1550–1593).
42. Hughes, *Register*, 14.
43. Henry Barrow, *A True Description out of the Word of God of the Visible Church*, Early English Books. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A05126.0001.001 (accessed August 2, 2018). Spelling modernized.
44. Barrowe, *True Description*, 4 (original work not paginated).
45. Gillespie, *Works*, 2.70.
46. Gillespie, *Works*, 2.85.
47. Gillespie, *Works*, 2.85.

Westminster's debate. Of Stephen Marshall, it was said that while he "at times was willing to paper over the cracks in the assembly, he was as likely to expose differences among his fellow presbyterians in order to delay decisions unpopular with the congregationalists."[48] In this debate he did not "paper over the cracks" when he said that she was a recipient of alms, rather than a distributor. Lightfoot notes, "Marshall proposed these doubts against it; and proved here is meant a widow that was to live on alms … he does not so much describe what she is now, but as she has been hereto."[49]

Gillespie disagreed with his fellow presbyterian brother. He claimed that "there were some widows that were eleemosynary, and not church officers; and there were those that were both."[50] But how does one decide whether the widow described in 1 Timothy 5 was a widow-deacon, an officer of the church, or whether she is the recipient of diaconal ministry due to her poverty brought on by widowhood?

For the Westminster divines who voted up the proposition, the answer was found in the word καταλέγω.[51] "To be enrolled, or taken into the number" requires an election, according to the favorable arguments of some of the divines. Sidrach Simpson, a former episcopalian who became congregationalist,[52] argued, "She was an officer because she was reckoned among the church officers; there is her election, a special register."[53] John Gibbon would say that *katalego* proves she was elected: "This catalog was of the officers."[54] Gibbon, referencing 1 Timothy 5, argued that the chapter speaks only of those who are holding office: elders and widow-deacons.[55]

Her registration or election set her apart as eligible for the widow-diaconate and this would require—by good and necessary consequence—a vote to elect her to the office. But what are the qualifications that the assembly saw in the New Testament concerning her?

First, and most obvious, is that she is to be a widow. All who would serve as widow-deacons must be a woman who has lost her husband to death. During this debate, Anthony Burgess noted that she is "a widow indeed... such a one as God had made a widow, and not one that was divorced or had divorced their husbands."[56]

Why are the theologians at Westminster so concerned that her husband is dead? It is because they argued exegetically rather than pragmatically. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul is interested in her widowhood as the first of the qualifications that would set apart the widow-deacon. "Honor widows who are truly widows" (1 Timothy 5:3). The apostle Paul would continue to give thirteen qualifications for the widow-diaconate in 1 Timothy 5. The section flows from the qualifications of elders and deacons (chapter 3) and then goes on to give instruction concerning how the church is to interact with those who hold office (chapter 5). The widow-deacon comes briefly into the list of the chapter 3 qualifications for deacons, given as a one verse excursus (3:11) and then more in depth in 1 Timothy 5. The Westminster divines would have all these qualifications met for one to serve as widow-deacon. In the **Table above**, notice the extensive qualifications that the apostle Paul puts forward:

Qualification for a Widow-Deacon	Biblical Reference
Committed to celibacy following the death of her husband	1 Timothy 5:3, 9; 11
Dignified, not a slanderer, sober-minded, faithful in all things	1 Timothy 3:11
Must be above reproach	1 Timothy 5:8
Hope is set on God	1 Timothy 5:5a
Continues in prayers and supplications day and night	1 Timothy 5:5b
At least sixty years old	1 Timothy 5:9a
Widow of one husband	1 Timothy 5:9b
A reputation of good works	1 Timothy 5:10a
Must have children she has raised	1 Timothy 5:10b
Be known for her hospitality	1 Timothy 5:10c
Lovingly served the saints (i.e., washed their feet)	1 Timothy 5:10d
Administered care for the afflicted	1 Timothy 5:10e
Devoted herself to every kind of good work	1 Timothy 5:11

Widow-Deacon Qualifications (1 Timothy)

These were the qualifications that the Westminster theologians were committed to as the requirements for the office. Gillespie earlier noted, when a congregation falls

48. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 1.128.
49. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 95.
50. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 95.
51. Hereafter, *katalego*, to enroll or take into the number.
52. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 1.137.
53. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 95.
54. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 95.
55. This is disputable, of course, as verse 1 lists elders, young men, older women, and young women. Gibbon may be under the impression that "women" is a reference to the widow, as 1 Timothy 3:11 is, by assemblymen, the widow-deacon, but under the name "wife or woman."
56. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 96.

away from the specific requirements for widow-deacon, it is in need of further reformation. Gillespie, of course, gleans that teaching from the apostle Paul who warns against the admission of young widows into the office of deacon-widow. The young widow is barred from the office by her age. The apostle's encouragement was that she would marry and leave the widow-deacon ministry to those who met the qualifications listed above (1 Timothy 5:14). For those Westminster theologians favorably arguing for the widow-deacon, the biblical requirements that stand behind her service were of utmost importance.

Role and Purpose

The Westminster Assembly upheld the very strict New Testament qualifications for the widow-deacon in their affirmative vote on the proposition that the widow-deacon is a New Testament office of function. While this was the case, they saw Scripture as being less perspicuous on the role of the office; therefore, the role and purpose were more fluid.

Romans 12:8 stood as central to the debate on her role as a functional officer of the church. This verse has been frequently understood as a direct imperative to those who hold office, not merely a directive to the church in general.[57] The Authorized Version reads, "Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." A word to preachers. A word to ruling elders. A word to deacons.

Arguing in favor of her office, both Gibbon and Simpson would cite this text in the debate as proof of her ministry. Wayne Spear comments that this evidence was put forward "with a curious change of gender."[58] This curious change of gender, "he" in the Greek New Testament and AV, and "she" in the widow-deacon debate, was a logical conclusion as the deacon-widow was a practitioner of mercy whose office served as a function of the diaconate. Her main role in serving the stewarding deacons of the church was one of mercy, a hospitalier, in Calvin's earlier terminology. The text's gender did not make it an invalid argument since she was included under the office of deacon in her practice of mercy. This was her service.

The deacon-widow was employed, or honored, by the church to focus on mercy ministry. The word "honor" carries the connotation of payment for labor, such as an honorarium. The Greek word used in 1 Timothy 5:3 for "honor", τιμάω (*timao*), means to "fix the value to" something. It is a word that carries financial implications. Lazarus Seaman, assembly member and London presbyterian said, "She is to have an honorable salary."[59] Her work was especially to that segment of the church that the all-male diaconate or session of elders would have difficulty ministering to in a modest way. Gibbon argued that the widow-deacon ought "to keep women, sick and with child."[60] This shows that the widow-deacon's function included mercy towards women in time of sickness and when they were with child. This was an aspect of public mercy that was on the minds of the assembly as the *Book of Common Prayer* was being revised.

The "churching of women" was a ministry that the Anglican communion had set apart for the service of the church. The 1559 *Book of Common Prayer* contains a ceremony for a woman's welcoming into the communion of the body following the giving of birth. In that ceremony, the priest would pray:

> O Almighty God, which hast delivered this woman thy servaunte from the great paine and peril of childe birthe: Graunt we beseche thee most mercifull Father, that she through thy help may bothe faithfully live, and walke in her vocation, accordyng to thy wil, in this lyfe present, and also may be partaker of everlastyng glory in the lyfe to come, throughe Jesus Christ our Lorde. Amen.[61]

The postpartum communicant, following this prayer would be welcomed back into the communion of the church. The ministry to women was an important component in Anglican worship, especially in an era with as high as a 13% infant mortality rate:

> Demographers estimate that approximately 2% of all live births in England at this time would die in the first day of life. By the end of the first week, a cumulative total of 5% would die. Another 3 or 4% would die within the month. A total of 12 or 13% would die within their first year.[62]

57. Calvin, "Of whom he speaks here, he did not understand those who gave of their own property, but the deacons, who presided in dispensing public charities." *Commentaries*, 19.463. Hodge, "This direction, considered in reference to the deacons…" Geneva Series of Commentaries, *Romans* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1986), 392. Brown, it is "the duty of the church by her deacons to relieve these [suffering]." John Brown, *Analytical exposition ... to the Romans* (1857), 454.

58. Spear, *Covenanted Uniformity*, 120.

59. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 92.

60. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 95.

61. *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. Brian Cummings (Oxford University Press, 2011), 176.

62. The demographics are taken from *Plymouth Ancestors,* Plimoth Plantation, http://www.plimoth.org/sites/default/files/media/pdf/edmaterials_demographics.pdf [accessed: July 3, 2017].

As Westminster reformed, or was in the process of reforming, worship in the English church, the ceremony of "churching women" was removed; yet the need for ministry to postpartum women remained a necessary component of the service of the church. The showing of mercy remained essential, as in Romans 12:8. The church's ministry needed to determine when it was right for a postpartum woman to return to worship. As the "churching of woman" liturgy was removed under Westminster, the widow-deacon would be able to assist in that time of transition back into the fellowship of the church and community.

Her ministry was to be beyond just to postpartum and sick women. She also was a practitioner of mercy in distribution to the poor. Not all Westminster assemblymen who affirmed the office of widow-deacon agreed that she was to collect alms, as many believed that was the responsibility of the stewards of the church, but it was agreed that she was to distribute alms to the poor at the discretion of the diaconate. Gibbon argued that she was to collect as well as distribute alms. He says she was to "gather the alms of the church … and to distribute these."[63] William Bridge, called "perhaps the most able speaker among the congregationalists,"[64] said she was to be about "attendance of the poor."[65]

The attendance upon the poor underscores the necessity of meeting the qualifications that the apostle Paul puts forward. Ministry to the poor requires mercy, wisdom, and delicate application to not injure the poor through fostering entitlement or breaking confidence. Much wisdom would be needed for this office as the widow-deacon ministered to the "least of these" among the churches of the three kingdoms. Wisdom from the congregation and leadership in putting forth a widow-deacon would also be essential.

Bridge said, "The attendance of the poor by the widow is not fixing to attend any in their chambers…."[66] What Bridge was arguing was that her ministry was one of that was responding to the work assigned to her, not necessarily going around looking for ministry. Her office functions as a response to the deacons' call for her ministry.

Besides ministry to sick, postpartum women, and to the poor, the widow-deacon was also to be one who would devote time to prayer for those who were in need. Thomas Goodwin, a "formidable debater"[67] and the member "most often called to order,"[68] said that she was to "attend on God in devotion in some singular way and her waiting on supplication and prayer."[69] He would go on to compare this to the priesthood's "burden of service." She carried a special burden to pray for those to whom she was given the ministry of mercy.

Does the church need those who set aside time for prayer? That is without question. For the Westminster Assembly, the preaching elder was one who prayed as an aspect of his vocation (Acts 6:4), but the widow-deacon was set apart to pray specifically for the women of the church, the children, the sick, and the poor. The marginalized of the congregation would have a servant to assist them, to minister to them as the diaconate would deem appropriate. Gibbon said she was "to show mercy … in attending … with words of piety."[70] This was no small office, but one of great importance to the ministry of the church.

The assembly also saw her role as one of hospitality and care for the persecuted. Anthony Burgess (who was against the proposition) said that she was nevertheless a servant who "at the church's command, [was] to entertain strangers and the persecuted."[71] In this model of functional office, the widow-deacon's home could serve as a safe house for those who were in need, including abused women needing a haven from persecution. Her home would also guarantee that those traveling would enjoy ministry and respite at the home of the widow-deacon.

The following list shows the work of the widow-deacon that was discussed during the course of the debates concerning her function:

The Work of the Widow-Deacon

Administer mercy
Minister to and visit the sick
Minister to postpartum women
Distribute alms to the poor
Attendance on the poor
Prayers and supplications for those under her care.
Entertain strangers (hospitality)
Care for the persecuted

Widow-Deacon Duties Promoted During the Assembly's Debate

The labors of her office are varied yet focused on women's ministry and those who are in great need of mercy. The concept of the widow-deacon was affirmed by

63. Lightfoot, *Journal,* 95.
64. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 1.110.
65. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 95.
66. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 96.
67. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 1.120.
68. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 1.120.
69. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 96.
70. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 95.
71. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 96.

Westminster. This unordained office of function, in the tradition of Calvin and the early church, affirmed by both independents and presbyterians, was to be included in the final documents of Westminster. The proposition was sustained, even if by one vote only. "At last it was called to the question," according to Lightfoot, "and was voted affirmatively, only by one voice odds."[72]

Now for the Assembly, only one more proposition would need to be voted upon and then the widow-deacon could make her way into the final documents as being "under the name deacon." The debate now rested on Phoebe.

Was Phoebe a Widow-Deacon?

The final proposition that needed to be determined for the inclusion of the widow-deacon under the office of deacon was the question of the best exegetical evidence for that approved proposition. If the widow-deacon was to be included as one of the offices of the church, what would be the best scriptural proofs to determine this?

Monday, January 1, 1644 began with a sermon by a theological student, a "probationer." Following the morning devotions, the Westminster Assembly turned its attention to the question of Phoebe. Lightfoot says, "then we fell upon Romans 16:1–2."[73] Bridge argued that Phoebe was the same widow-deacon that was found in 1 Timothy 5. He proved this in part by citing church fathers, Calvin, and others who claimed that Phoebe was an officer of the church.

Thomas Temple, called "the least known among the assembly's leaders"[74] disagreed that Phoebe was a widow-deacon, as the widow-deacon lives off the eleemosynary service of the church. He said, "She carried Paul's epistle. Now it is strange a poor old woman should be sent with that epistle!"[75] On whether Phoebe was a widow-deacon, the Westminster Assembly was more unified than the question of whether widow-deacons were included under the name deacon. The assembly voted that it could not be proved from Scripture that Phoebe held an office or was included in the widow-diaconate. John Lightfoot noted, "After a very long debate the business was put to the question and voted negatively, that [Phoebe] shall not be brought to prove the proposition; and so we adjourned."[76] Phoebe, the servant commended by Paul to the Roman church, was not enough evidence to support the concept of an eleemosynary women's ministry. The proposition failed.

Lasting Legacy

Without Phoebe being upheld as a widow-deacon, what did the Westminster Assembly have to favorably show that the concept of a widow-deacon from 1 Timothy was more than theoretical? There was no New Testament evidence that the assembly could agree on that would defend the apostle's widow of 1 Timothy 5 as being a widow-deacon, rather than merely a poor widow lived off church alms because she was unable to support herself. In history, it seems that without Phoebe, the widow-deacon would not be included under the office of deacon in the reformation churches.

Wayne Spear says:

> In the process of editing, the only significant change that was made in the section was that this reference to widows was quietly dropped. Although technically this amounted to changing a previous vote of the Assembly, it was not objected to, undoubtedly because of the divided opinion in the assembly when the proposition was originally passed. As far as can be determined, the existence of deaconesses in the church was no more than a matter of theory, even for the advocates of their inclusion.[77]

Without Phoebe as a positive demonstration of the widow-deacon, 1 Timothy 5 did not provide a New Testament example. This put the assembly in a difficult situation, as they would have to affirm a functional office but not have exegetical evidence to defend the proposition.

It appears that quietly—and without dissent—the widow-deacon would remain in the historical record as a debate that happened and was affirmed; yet never brought beyond "a matter of theory." Specific women's ministry would continue to be a need in the churches in the reformation and presbyterian tradition, but there would be no eleemosynary officer under the name deacon to function in the formal role of hospitalier. The proposition was essentially overturned in the fight for Phoebe. Specific ministry to women would have to be fulfilled in some other way.▪

72. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 97.
73. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 97.
74. Van Dixhoorn, *Minutes and Papers*, 1.139.
75. Lightfoot, *Journal,* 98.
76. Lightfoot, *Journal*, 98.
77. Spear, *Covenanted Uniformity*, 121.

Alexander Shields, the Revolution Settlement and the Unity of the Visible Church

By Matthew Vogan

I. History and General Principles

Alexander Shields (1660?–1700) is less well known in comparison with other Covenanter field preachers such as Donald Cargill, Richard Cameron and James Renwick.[1] As Mark Jardine notes: "Considering his later importance as an ideologue for the Societies' cause in *A Hind Let Loose* (1687) and his later leadership of the Societies, his biography has attracted comparatively little attention."[2] His life is uniquely interesting, however. It spans the entire period of persecution and most of the subsequent reign of William III. One of the last of the field preachers and a close associate of James Renwick, Shields was also a prisoner on the Bass Rock. After the Glorious Revolution, he was the chaplain to the Cameronian regiment fighting in the Low Countries against France in defence of Holland and the Protestant cause. In 1699, he was also among the first foreign missionaries of the Church of Scotland in the infamous Darien venture to what is now known as Panama.[3] He died and was buried in Jamaica in 1700 at the age of forty.[4] John Macleod well describes him as "one of the most striking figures of his epoch."[5]

This article gives consideration to Alexander Shields and the position that he adopted in relation to the Revolution Church of Scotland in 1690, which brought him into disagreement with some of his former colleagues among the United Societies. The first part of the article focuses on the events leading up to the Revolution Settlement of 1690 and then the period until the death of Alexander Shields in 1700. In particular, it considers the ways in which the various parties engaged in the discussions concerning uniting fragmented Presbyterians

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1. This article assumes a rudimentary knowledge of the period of persecution of the Covenanters due to their rejection of the claims of Charles II. Charles declared himself supreme in ecclesiastical as well as civil matters, and imposed the acceptance of episcopacy on the ministers of the Church of Scotland. He also ensured the rescinding of both the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant together with all the reforming legislation of the previous twenty-three years. A concise, readable but thorough introduction is provided in J. G. Vos, *The Scottish Covenanters (*Kilsyth, 2018). This article, however, provides an alternative to Vos's assessment of the Revolution Settlement of 1690. The reflections that the book makes on Shields and his conduct are not well weighed.

2. Mark Jardine, "The United Societies: Militancy, Martyrdom and the Presbyterian Movement in Late-Restoration Scotland, 1679 to 1688," University of Edinburgh, PhD Thesis, 2009, p. 165. During the time of persecution the most resolute Covenanters had no settled congregations or Church structures. Instead they met in local meetings for prayer fellowship known as societies. These were organised and connected together under the United Societies who held national meetings and came to joint decisions.

3. In this venture known as the Darien Scheme, Scotland attempted to found a colony called Caledonia on the Isthmus of Panama to create an overland route between the Pacific and Atlantic.

4. The main accounts of Shields' life are Hector Macpherson, *The Cameronian Philosopher: Alexander Shields* (Edinburgh and London, 1932); a chapter in John Howie of Lochgoin, *The Scots Worthies: their lives and testimonies,* edited by J.A. Wylie (London, 1875); and Michael Jinkins, "Shields, Alexander (1659/60–1700)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004). Patrick Walker stated that he intended to publish "Mr. *Shields's* own Life and Death" in his "next Parcel, according as I proposed in my former Preface to the Passages of Mr. *Peden's* Life and Death." *Biographia Presbyteriana,* 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1827), 1.251, cf. pp. xxi, 34. Sadly, however, the intention was never realised. A new concise popular biography is Matthew Vogan, *Alexander Shields* (Edinburgh, 2018).

5. *Scottish Theology in relation to Church History since the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1943), 109.

within the national Church. These are compared with the commonly accepted principles on union and separation established by James Durham—principles which were very much in the minds of those engaged in the union deliberations of 1689–90. Alexander Shields defended his position in relation to the Revolution Church in the book *Church-Communion enquired into*, but this was not published until 1706. The book made a notable contribution to the elucidation of the Scottish view of the visible Church and is considered in the second part of this article.[6]

1. Alexander Shields and the United Societies

Shields went to London in 1684, where he served as amanuensis or scribe to the Puritan theologian John Owen. He was licensed to preach by Scottish Presbyterian ministers in London. This was without any conditions in relation to disputed matters that would wound his conscience (such as not preaching against the Indulgence offered to ministers by the government). A controversy soon arose, however, in relation to the Oath of Allegiance enforced by the authorities after 1684. Shields believed that it was sinful to take the Oath of Allegiance and he preached against it, but this brought him into conflict with the Scottish ministers in London. This conflict did not prevent him, however, from being the regular preacher to a congregation meeting in the Embroiderers' Hall in Cheapside. In January of the following year he was arrested there by the city marshal in the act of preaching at an "illegal conventicle."

His initial trial coincided with the death of Charles II in February 1685 and it was determined to send Shields back to Scotland for full trial and sentencing. He defended himself ably but succumbed to pressure to sign a document disowning the *Apologetical Declaration* issued by the United Societies in November 1684.[7] This step saved his life but it cost Shields much sorrow. He was sentenced to imprisonment on the Bass Rock. Many Covenanters were held on this sea-beat prison, located a mile or so from the Scottish coast, near North Berwick. After some time, the prisoners were brought to Edinburgh. This offered better opportunities for escape and in October 1686 a successful plan was effected.

After his escape from prison, the Privy Council described Shields as "a person of most dangerous principles, a trumpet of sedition and rebellion," "a rebellious field preacher debauched unto ill principles and practices."[8] He joined himself with the United Societies and his brother Michael who was the clerk of the Societies' General Convention (1682 to 1690). With a £100 price upon their heads, both Shields and James Renwick were hunted by the government.[9]

In 1687 Shields went to Utrecht to ensure the publication of *An Informatory vindication* together with his own book, *A Hind Let Loose*.[10] *An Informatory vindication* was a carefully drafted definitive defence of the position adopted by the United Societies in disowning the lawful authority of tyrannical civil magistrates who broke established law. It also justified separation from Presbyterian ministers who had defected from the most faithful Covenanting position and complied in some way with the Stuart claim to have supremacy over the Church (e.g. accepting the Indulgence). Thomson in the *Cloud of Witnesses* gives his opinion that "The first eighteen, or perhaps the first thirty, of its 108 pages bear traces of Alexander Shields, but the rest is evidently from Renwick himself."[11]

Hector Macpherson regards *A Hind Let Loose* as "the reasoned exposition of Cameronian thought", implicitly contrasting its "logical, challenging, thought-provoking" character with the embattled tone of *An Informatory vindication*.[12] *A Hind Let Loose* gave an articulate voice to the suffering remnant and certainly holds its own place amongst closely-reasoned political treatises in the line of Calvin, Knox, Buchanan and Rutherford in defining the biblical limits of the power of the civil magistrate and maintaining that tyranny must be resisted.

The work is remarkable given the conditions of imprisonment and persecution in which it was written, even allowing for the several months' stay in Utrecht, where it was completed with the help of his brother

6. The treatise is sometimes referred to as *Enquiry into Church Communion* since this was its published title in 1747.

7. One particular feature of this declaration was that it strongly asserted the right of Covenanters to self-defence against the persecuting armies of the State.

8. Macpherson, *The Cameronian Philosopher*, p. 52.

9. Macpherson, *The Cameronian Philosopher*, p. 65.

10. *An Informatory vindication of a poor, wasted, misrepresented, remnant of the suffering, anti-popish, anti-prelatick, anti-erastian, anti-sectarian, true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland, united together in a generall correspondence; by way of reply to various accusations, in letters, informations & conferences, given forth against them.* The document took around a year to draft and was approved by the General Meeting on 4 March 1687, published in Utrecht in July 1687 and available in Scotland by the end of that year.

11. J. H. Thomson, *A cloud of witnesses, for the royal prerogatives of Jesus Christ: being the last speeches and testimonies of those who have suffered for the truth in Scotland, since the year 1680* (Edinburgh, 1871), 481. Patrick Walker (*Biographia Presbyteriana*, vol. 1, p. 231) also refers to it as a joint production by Renwick and Shields. Mark Jardine notes that it was initially drafted as a six-page document by William Boyd before being revised by James Renwick and Michael Shields (Jardine, p. 176).

12. Macpherson, *The Cameronian Philosopher,* p. 215.

Michael. It "must have been written with extraordinary rapidity, and reveals a mind of no common power."[13] The only limit upon the impact of *A Hind Let Loose* was the short period between its publication and the end of persecution, at which point it came to serve as a vigorous record of the sufferings endured by the Scottish people and a testimony against the tyranny of their persecutors. It seems to have had significant influence upon William of Orange and William Carstares who was the King's chief adviser in Scotland.[14]

After his return to Scotland, Shields was also involved in the publication of *The Testimony Against Toleration*.[15] Although authored by James Renwick, it was evidently a combined effort and Shields wrote the preface after Renwick's death.[16] Shields was probably one of the two friends with James Renwick when the latter was captured and arrested.[17] After Renwick's execution at the Grassmarket, Edinburgh, on 17 February 1688, the mantle of leader and preacher fell upon him. At Crawford moor on 11 March 1688 and Galston in April 1688, he denounced the judicial murder of Renwick, speaking of how the "blood of that faithful servant of Jesus Christ, Mr. James Renwick, hath a cry to the heavens against this generation." He went on to detail six ways in which that blood was crying out.[18] He had a strong affection for Renwick and besides publishing *An Elegy upon the Death of Mr. James Renwick*, he began to work upon a biography. *The Life and Death of Mr. James Renwick* was complete by September 1688.[19]

2. The Glorious Revolution 1688–90 and the United Societies

The Glorious Revolution appeared to take place with astonishing speed considering that it occurred in the same year in which James Renwick was arrested and executed. Covenanters were still being imprisoned and martyred in the summer of 1688. Michael Shields wrote in August 1688 that the persecution was still "very hot, and in many respects harder and heavier to conflict with than before the Toleration … Prisons are daily filling, some threatened with death. One hath lately been murdered in the fields. Courts are holding up and down the country for taking a roll of our names … interdicting under the pain of death, either to countenance our meetings in the fields whither their fury hath forced us, or to converse or supply us with so much as a drink of water."[20] The reference to one recently murdered, is to the last of the Covenanting martyrs, a sixteen-year-old Ayrshire boy named George Wood, who in July 1688 was shot dead in the fields near the village of Sorn, Ayrshire. His only crime was that he had been in possession of a Bible when apprehended.

It began to be rumoured in the autumn, however, that deliverance might be possible. According to Michael Shields, the country was "full of commotions and rumours of war; everyone looking for changes and revolutions, some hoping for, and others fearing the same; and almost all were expecting the ensuing of these calamities that attend war, as its inseparable companion." The heightening climate of opinion speculated that the Dutch might land in Scotland in order to lead a rising of British Protestants against their Roman Catholic oppressors.[21] This was realised in the invasion at Torbay in November. Michael Shields describes the sudden transformation: "Behold on a sudden a very wonderful alteration. He who not long before claimed an absolute power and prerogative royal, which all were to obey without reserve, was made to flee, and could get few to obey him, yea, despised by many of those whom he exalted. The wicked were ensnared in the work of their own hands, and the counsel of the heathen brought to nought. Those who formerly were persecuted were now in quiet, and those who had been persecutors are in fear and glad to hide themselves. Those who formerly were a terror to many, are now feared for those whom they

13. M. Hutchison, *The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland; its origin and history 1680–1876* (Paisley, 1893), 109.

14. See discussion below in relation to William's "Declaration to the People of Scotland"; cf. also David Osborne Christie, "Bible and Sword: the Cameronian Contribution to Freedom of Religion," University of Stellenbosch, ThD Thesis, 2008, p. 202.

15 *The Testimony, of Some Persecuted Presbyterian Ministers of the Gospel, unto the Covenanted Reformation of the Church of Scotland, and to the Present Expediencie of Continuing to Preach the Gospel in the Fields, and Against the Present Antichristian Toleration in its Nature and Design.*

16. *The Letters of James Renwick, the last of Scotland's Covenanted Martyrs,* ed. Thomas Houston (Paisley, 1865), 261.

17. This speculation is made on the basis that books and papers belonging to Shields were violently seized by a merchant John Justice from the house of John Lockup on the Castlehill in Edinburgh. It is possible that this happened during the raid to catch Renwick and therefore that Shields was present. See Petition of Alexander Shields and Others, 1689 (from the Laing Collection), printed in Patrick Walker, *Six Saints of the Covenant: Peden, Semple, Welwood, Cameron, Cargill, Smith*, ed. D. Hay Fleming, 2 vols. (London, 1901), 1.232.

18. *Notes or heads of a preface and of a lecture, preached at Distinckorn-Hill, in the parish of Gaastoun, April 15, 1688* (n.p.,1688), 3.

19. It was, however, never published in Shields' own lifetime, but eventually published in 1724 by John M'Main, a schoolmaster at Liberton's Wynd, Edinburgh.

20. *Faithful Contendings Displayed* (Glasgow, 1780), 355. *Faithful Contendings* (hereafter *FCD*) is an account of the actions and events relating to the United Societies written by Michael Shields.

21. *FCD*, p. 360.

made afraid before. These are the doings of the Lord, and should be wondrous in our eyes."[22]

It has been observed that the convictions of Richard Cameron and James Renwick regarding the lawfulness of disowning tyrannical rulers were vindicated in the Glorious Revolution. The welcome that their successors in the United Societies gave to this event was not, however, without reserve. Indeed, they were divided as to the appropriate response to this dramatic turn of events. On 25 December members of the United Societies proclaimed their support for the "Protestant Protector" William of Orange and his "Declaration to the People of Scotland" in Glasgow. This was led by William Boyd and was probably the first public response to the Declaration.[23] This declaration to the Scottish people on 10 October 1688 echoes the famous frontispiece of Shields' book *A Hind Let Loose*, in recalling the destruction of "the poor people" "by hanging, shooting and drowning them, without any form of law or respect to sex or age." Despite this, however, Boyd's action was not supported by all within the United Societies.

A Remonstrance was drafted which was intended to be presented to William of Orange by a delegation who would be sent to London. It was to be a document "warning him of his deuty", requesting a covenanted settlement of Church and State and asserting the testimony maintained by the Societies in order "that forraingers may have ane information of the state of our cause."[24] This endeavour had to be delayed, however, because the key men who would deliver the petition in person to the Prince were urgently required in the fast-moving events that were now unfolding.

The Societies were also quick to respond to the political vacuum in other ways during the interregnum, when King James VII had fled the country and no succeeding monarch had been proclaimed. They decided to use the opportunity in order to purge the Church of Scotland; as Patrick Walker relates, they determined "to go to all popish houses, and destroy their monuments of idolatry."[25] An insurrection under the leadership of Daniel Ker of Kersland involved forcibly removing or "rabbling" the curates of churches in the south-west and also destroying any "Romish wares" within churches. All idolatrous images discovered (some in the houses of ministers) were burnt at the market crosses of Dumfries and Peebles.

Elsewhere, the process of expelling the curates was being carried out in a more disorderly way. This began at Glasgow on 27 December where a number decided "to take the Prelate and his Curates there, and tear their canonical coats off their backs." Alexander Shields sent a letter to restrain them; reasoning with them that the time was not right and that it would be detrimental. They ought "first, to set apart some time for humiliation," then petition the Prince of Orange, and finally give warning to the curates to remove.[26] A meeting of the Societies on 13 February agreed on the form of a letter that could be given to the curates giving them notice to quit under threat of force.[27]

On 4 January 1689, a gathering of representatives of the United Societies convened at the market cross of Douglas, Lanarkshire, in order to defend their role in these activities. Shields first proposed the singing of Metrical Psalm 76, a psalm praising God's remarkable triumph over his raging enemies in the deliverance of His Church. It is hard to think of more appropriate words of praise that might have been used at this time. In commenting upon the psalm he recalled that it had been "sweetly sung by famous Mr. *Robert Bruce* at the Cross of *Edinburgh*" when news was received of the defeat of the Spanish Armada one hundred years before.[28]

There was a General Meeting at Douglas where the spirit was less united and protests, led by James Wilson, were presented condemning Boyd's declaration. It was resolved that Boyd's reading of the Declaration was "rashly gone about without common consent" and that to "espouse" it "so abruptly" as their declaration, when it made no mention of the Covenants, was "lame and defective."[29] It is significant that despite this, however, that there was no official repudiation of the action or the Declaration. It was not until the Sanquhar Declaration of 1692 by the Hamiltonian remnant that William's authority was publicly repudiated.[30] Alexander Gordon

22. *FCD*, p. 367.

23. Boyd studied at Glasgow and went to Holland for ordination by the Classis of Groningen in 1686. He was inducted to the parish of Dalry in 1690.

24. Robert Wodrow, *Analecta,* 4 vols. (Glasgow, 1842–3), 1.186; *FCD*, pp. 375, 380, 386–7.

25. *Biographia Presbyteriana*, 1.279–80.

26. Wodrow, *Analecta,* 1.186.

27. Instances of "rabblings" are discussed more fully by Jardine, pp. 236–8.

28. *Biographia Presbyteriana*, 1.282. The same psalm had also been sung ten years earlier at the Battle of Drumclog, one of the few military successes for Covenanters bearing arms.

29. *FCD*, p. 370.

30. The references to Hamiltonians and Macmillanites in this article are not intended to be pejorative. The name of "United Societies" was dropped after the Revolution and the new name was either "The Societies of the South-West" or "The General Meeting of the Witnessing Remnant of Presbyterians in Scotland." There are several groups who had their roots in the Societies but declined a connection with the Church of Scotland after the Revolution. These are generally known by their leaders, e.g. Adamites, Harlites, Howdenites, etc.

of Earlstoun moved that Boyd and any others who had joined with him in the Declaration should be excluded from the General Meeting, but this was not carried.

The Societies had also mustered arms, gathering a force comprising at least 800 men formed into companies with officers appointed over them. They were sent to guard the Convention of Estates in Edinburgh from a potential Jacobite attack led by Claverhouse. Ultimately, the Cameronian regiment would be formed within the army loyal to William, but some in the United Societies dissented from this as constituting a sinful association with malignants.[31] At a General Meeting of the Societies in Douglas on the 29 April, Shields preached on a text which revealed his inclination for extending such support: "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty" (Judges 5:23). Various qualifications were proposed and ultimately a regiment was raised, which Shields accompanied, but contention persisted. The regiment played a critical role at the battle of Dunkeld in August which brought the Jacobite rebellion to an end.

The Societies decided to renew publicly the signing of the National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant, with appropriate alterations to suit the changed times. On 2 March 1689, a day of humiliation and preparation was observed at Boreland Hill or the Black Hill, Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire.[32] Shields preached from Deuteronomy 29:25 to a vast congregation and then read a solemn acknowledgement of national sins, but as darkness fell he could not finish it. On the following day Shields "began and publickly read the Nationall Covenant, and Solemn League and Covenant, with some short notes of explication, and apologys for some alterations of the expressions, where they [were] accomodate to [the] times."[33] William Boyd preached on Jeremiah 50:5, after which Thomas Linning[34] read a "Solemn Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties, as now composed for and applied to the present times." There was then an opportunity for confession of personal defections which included hearing the curates, paying the cess,[35] and taking the Oath of Abjuration. This was done with notable expressions of grief.[36] Shields himself declared his own sorrow for his former sins in relation to the Oath. There was no time for a further sermon and after prayer seeking pardon and grace, Linning read the Covenants which were sworn to with uplifted hands. At night, the Covenants were then subscribed after a sermon by Shields on Deuteronomy 26:16 and prayer, with the whole exercise concluding at 2 a.m. The Covenants were further subscribed in parishes across the south of Scotland, especially in the south west.[37]

It was a significant event which was to be referred to in later discussion of the various positions adopted in relation to the Revolution Settlement. According to John Howie, its significance was acknowledged by Alexander Shields who said at the time: "From this day shall be dated either our reformation, or deformation."[38] Hector Macpherson considers that the event was a public demonstration of the strength of the Societies to William of

31. The Macmillanite party later vehemently condemned such support, especially in the Auchensaugh Renovation of the Covenants in 1712. It rejected "sinful union and confederacy in terms prejudicial to truth; as our joinings in the *Angus regiment*, at the *Revolution*, and our guarding and supplicating that corrupt *Convention of Estates*, which consisted mostly of such as had been directly or indirectly guilty of the murder of the Lord's people."

32. Lesmahagow provides a central location and Boreland hill gives a commanding view across the whole countryside. Shields states that it was "within sight of Lanrik." It is possible that covenant renewal in a hillside location was intended to reflect biblical precedent (Deut. 27:9–13). It was evidently a district where there was strong support for the Societies: conventicles were common in the vicinity and the United Societies had been established here in 1681. There may have been some historical considerations in selecting this location. It also appears to have been along the route taken by the army involved in the Pentland Rising of 1666. Their intention was to renew the covenants in the vicinity of Lesmahagow on Saturday 24 November "at some Kirk by the way towards Lanark" but when put to the vote it was decided to be "neither safe nor convenient." Thomas Reid, "Fords, Ferries, Floats and Bridges Near Lanark." *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Vol. 47 (1912–13), 209–56, 228.

33. *Analecta,* 1.187.

34. Linning, also Lining or Linen (c.1657–1733) studied at Glasgow and then studied theology at Emden, Holland. He was ordained by the Classis of Emden in early 1688, and was admitted to Lesmahagow parish in May 1691. He was appointed Chaplain-in-Ordinary to the King in Scotland in 1727. He has been described as "one of the most eminent clergy in his day, and an able defender of the rights and privileges of the Church: scrupulously honest in his principles, and well skilled in Church discipline." *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae: The Succession of Ministers in the Church Of Scotland from the Reformation*, ed. Hew Scott and Donald Farquhar Macdonald (Edinburgh, 1915), vol. 3, p. 314. There are manuscript sermons in Glasgow University Library: MS Gen 938, Item 48/2, Sermon at Kirkintilloch, 2 August 1714, Song 3:4; and MS Gen 938, Item 29/4, Sermon at Provan, 2 July 1705, 1 Corinthians 9:24.

35. The cess was a tax specifically levied to provide for troops persecuting the Covenanters.

36. Evidently there were a significant number of Gibbites (described as "gracious women") who made confession. For more on this group see the article by Douglas Somerset, "Walter Ker and the 'Sweet Singers,'" *Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal* 2 (2012): 85–108, and Maurice Grant, *No King But Christ: the Story of Donald Cargill* (Darlington, 1988), 158–64.

37. *Analecta,* 1.188.

38. *FCD*, p. 382.

Orange.[39] Shields, Linning and Boyd stated in *Account of the Methods and Motives* that they had hoped that the Covenant renewal would prepare the Societies for union with the Revolution Church.[40]

While the connection between those two events might not appear to be very obvious, it becomes clearer on closer consideration. In his book *Church-Communion enquired into* (posthumously published), Shields refers to the "Engagement to Duties", which, together with the "Solemn Acknowledgment of Sins," was "composed for and applied to the present times." Shields cites Article 2.4, "To wit, that we shall guard against all Schism or sinful Separation from any part of the Communion of the true Reformed Covenanted Church of Scotland, holding Purely and Intirely the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the same, in Principles and Exercise, According to the Rule of Christ, and the Standing Acts and Constitutions of this Church … And shall study to Maintain Union and Communion in Truth and Duty, with all Ministers and Members of the said Church, that do, and in so far as they do follow the Institutions of Christ."[41] Shields argued that this engagement committed the Societies to union with those who were now pursuing a course of Reformation in the Church of Scotland.

There were long debates in the General Meeting of the United Societies throughout 1689. Shields records in his diary that the opinion of some at a General Meeting in Douglas on 13 May 1689, was that "without acknouledgment of these defections, there could be noe communion." Further questions were put to the objectors in debate in order to understand the full implications of their position.

> Whither, if they should find a Minister confessing all defections, yet still abiding in the communion of the Church, would they joyn with him, and whither with us, if we should doe so? Whither they required confession in ane united way, or divided? And whither they would suspend their communion untill all confessed, or would they hear any one confessing without respect to the rest? In answer to which they did not agree; though it was said by the forsaid messengers they did; but still pleaded some way or other. Noe communion without confession, some way or other; and argued, [if] scandalouse Elders must be urged to confesse, why not Ministers? and if Ministers doe not, hou can they urge others to doe it? It was replyed, Ministers' scandals are epidemick, and not convicted. It was urged, that this would bury the Testimony. Replyed, it would rather bury the Testimony to have it to degenerate into schisme, and would be for its glory to have it recorded, that a people continoued it while defections stood, but as soon as ever they could be in a capacity to joyn with Ministers, without sin, they had such respect to the ordinances and the peace of the Church, that they would noe longer separate; and notwithstanding all former provocations.[42]

It was decided in August that some of the key leaders of the Societies, including Shields and Hamilton, should go to London to present the previously delayed petition to the King. Hamilton disapproved of the petition, refused to address the King as "King" and objected to accompanying Shields whom he said "had receded from the former testimony in the matter of association, &c."[43] Only Shields was able to go to London for this purpose and he was not willing to go alone. The errand was, therefore, never fulfilled.

With episcopacy abolished on 22 July 1689, Presbyterian union was becoming a live issue. In the General Meeting on 25 September 1689, Thomas Linning informed the meeting that he, together with Shields and William Boyd, had met with some other Presbyterian ministers on 16 August in order to discuss union.[44] This occasioned serious debate at the General Meeting, with the field preachers responding to vigorous opposition.

> Generally, they concluded it could not be admitted, without their acknouledgment of their defections. It was replyed [by the field preachers], We will alwise plead for, and presse the necessity of that, by contending, testifying, and protesting against their defections, (which Mr Linning, repeating the condescentions of the Ministers at the late Conference at Edinburgh, said would

39. Macpherson, *The Cameronian Philosopher*, p. 83.

40. Thomas Linning, Alexander Shields, William Boyd, *An Account of the Methods and Motives of the late Union and Submission to the Assembly* ([London?], 1691), 11.

41. *Church-Communion enquired into* (Glasgow, 1706), 27–8. Thomas Boston lays similar stress on this clause of the Solemn League and Covenant in challenge to those separating from the Church of Scotland in his sermon "The Evil and Danger of Schism" (1708).

42. *Analecta,* 1.194.

43. *Analecta,* 1.192.

44. Shields records in his diary: "I mett with some Ministers, Dr Rule, Mr Kennedy, Mr Lau, Mr Legate, Mr Forbes, &c., with whom we conferred about Overtures for Union." Shields urged that the General Assembly would have to consider the testimony of the United Societies in relation to matters such as "hearing the curats, indulgence, tolleration, &c." The ministers "pleaded the inexpediency of this, affirming it wer necessary to bury these in oblivion, but that they would admit we should represent what grived us to the Assembly, and protest for exoneration of our conscience." Shields desire for union is evident in that he finishes the entry by quoting the first line of Psalm 133 in Latin. *Analecta*, 1.191.

> be allowed to us;) but the want of that being only a shortcoming and difference in judgment, could not be ouned as a ground of separation, while we wer neither required to justify their defections, nor to condemn our testimony, nor to subscribe to any sinfull imposition in the terms of the communion, putting us in hazard of partaking of their sin; and that though these corruptions standing established wer sufficient grounds of withdrauing, yet not nou, when ceasing to be snares.[45]

Evidently Linning was quoting the words of one particular minister amongst the company with whom they had met, who had specified that the way to clear their conscience would be to draw up a protest against the former defections and have it registered in the official records of the General Assembly of the Kirk. Michael Shields recorded these words as quoted: "After you are united, you shall have liberty to debate, remonstrate and protest against everything sinful."[46] This did not quell the opposition which refused to accept anything less than confession on the part of those guilty of former defections. Debate was even stormier at the General Meeting on the following day. "Many arguments wer mutually tossed, and it was like once to turn to great heat; some precipitantly rising and going away."[47] It is evident that Shields sought to be a peacemaker and to maintain unity amongst the various factions.

> Mr Linning and Mr Boyd plainly told they had a mind to unite, though not to setle suddainly. A. S. [Mr Alexander Shields] allayed it a litle, by telling them it was a grave and greatly important matter, not rashly to be determined; protesting nothing might be concluded here at the time, but let dayes of humiliation be set apart for light, and an-other meeting appointed. In the mean time, some might be appointed to try Ministers' freedome in their preaching, to see hou they liked them; and that he would not urge to hear the more grosse hearers of Curats, actually indulged, adressers for Tolleration, &c., but others more free of defection; and to search through all the country for such as would confesse those to be defections. In the mean time, that they should protest alwise against the entry and calling of any that would not confesse them; shouing there was a difference between calling and hearing when called. At lenth [they] came to more calmness and composure….[48]

Shields recorded in his diary at the time that he believed union was possible if the differences were to be removed. This could be effected by various means: "either by having these things doctrinally confessed, or synodically condemned, or at least our Testimony recorded, signifying our nou joyning, is not a receding from it, nor a justifying these things formerly condemned." He was against rash action either way but particularly opposed to "a precipitant concurrence," perhaps conscious of the need to proceed cautiously in order to keep together the differing parties within the Societies.[49] Things took a different turn at the General Meeting on 6 November 1689, however, when Hamilton asserted a position of secondary separation[50] and refused to negotiate:

> after hearing some debates and conferences about union and communion with the Ministers with whom we differed, he arose and gave a verball protestation, which afterwards he put in writing, against the admitting the Prince of Orange to the throne without taking the Covenants; against the sinfull association of Angus' regiment; the admitting the commissioners from that regiment to sitt in the Generall Meeting; the purseuing union with the Ministers; admitting Mr Boyd in the Generall Meeting; admitting some already joyned with the Ministers, in hearing and sitting in sessions with them. This occasioned all the confusion. We offered to discourse and debate with him upon all these heads. He declined, and went away. We promised ane answer. The Meeting was much disturbed, with much heat and rage; resolutly exclaiming against all union on any terms, except the Ministers should confesse their defections; yea, that they would not hear others, nor us that did confesse and witness against these defections, unlesse we should separate from the rest. They brought in papers from some Societys, declaring their minds to the same effect, some of them unsubscribed….They pleaded this should be answered. A. S. [Mr Alexander Shields] answered evry word in it, yet it would not satisfy. We broke up that night very abruptly.

The next day the Meeting reconvened, "but came to noe better conclusion."[51] Harmony declined to the extent that some enquired whether there could now be communion with Shields, Linning and Boyd in view of their position in advocating union. There were fears,

45. *Analecta,* 1.193.
46. *FCD*, p. 415.
47. *Analecta*, 1.194–5.
48. *Analecta,* 1.195.
49. *Analecta,* 1.193.
50. Secondary separation is separating from those with whom we would otherwise associate because they continue to associate with those who are guilty of error or compromise.
51. *Analecta*, 1.195–6.

however, that this would mean that they could no longer attend upon their ministry if this conclusion were to be reached. It was resolved to draw up a form of protest to the Assembly containing their grievances and "plead with ministers, in order to convince them of, and to get them brought to acknowledge, and condemn defection."

Those in favour of union argued that "we had sufficient ground to withdraw from these ministers, in the time of persecution, which was a broken and unsettled time, yet now, when the same was removed, and the church growing up in reformation, the case was altered: And as there was one way of contending then, which was by withdrawing, so there was another way now, which is by joining with a protestation against defection."

In response it was argued that while these ministers had been stopped in their defections by providence, "the tentation had left them, before they had forsaken it; and still they were defending what they had done: And to join with them while they continued so, would hardern them therein, and offend and stumble others: And moreover, the church was not yet constitute, which if it were, and ministers zealously carrying on reformation, (of which there was little appearance) it would then be an encouragement to speak of joining with them."

Michael Shields writes that after "some debates, (wherein were too much heat and passion on both sides)," it was concluded that the ministers should write a paper to "answer the objections which were given in against joining, without confessing and condemning defections, of which they would send copies to the Societies." Howie observes, "Of this writing there is no further account, but it is probable this hath been the original source of a pamphlet called Church Communion, which was published by Mr. Lining a number of years afterward."[52]

Shields further records that "in the interval", "the complaints and discontent amongst the generality of people, was no way abated but rather augmented and increased … and many uttered their fears of matters growing worse." Ultimately, reconciliation never would be reached. Shields had been in contact with James Wallace, the minister of Inchinnann, Renfrewshire, who decided to write an irenic and loving letter to the Societies. He advised them:

> I would have you moving slowly into any formal, settled union with any, until you see what you obtain, lest there be a new rupture, and a worse division, for if this be not granted, which you supplicate for, wherein will you unite? In the mean time, I would have you keeping concord amongst yourselves, unfriends will study to divide you, and so to break you, and do with you what they will, and then laugh at you. In the last place, that with these that you are called to be unite with in the Lord, and with whom you now differ, I earnestly intreat that both in preaching, prayer and practices, you will do nothing to irritate, or make the breach wider, which may consist with a good conscience, not neglecting necessary duties, nor making yourselves partakers of other men's sins.[53]

According to Michael Shields, this helped in "the allaying and hindering of heats and debates, that otherways might have fallen out."[54] Stationed at Montrose, Alexander Shields wrote his own letter in the spirit of reconciliation to be read at the February General Meeting. He felt that the meetings were becoming "nurseries of division and nurseries of disorder." "More love and more humility and more patient watching of the Lord's clearing up the darkness would prevent all these things. It must be darker and darker ere the daybreak, but the sky will clear to them that watch for the morning." Shields also sent a reply to Hamilton's protestation, but due to lack of time and illness it was in an unfinished state.[55] Ironically, however, there was a majority at the meeting who opposed reading the letter from Shields.

The April meeting approved a petition to Parliament which asked for past wrongs to be redressed, the royal supremacy in ecclesiastical matters to be abolished, and Presbyterian government to be restored in order to discipline the ministers that had been intruded since the Restoration and renew the Covenants. Parliament was proceeding with some of these matters, establishing

52. *FCD*, pp. 421–2.

53. *FCD*, p. 424.

54. *FCD*, p. 423.

55. *FCD,* pp. 423–24. The letter is quoted by Macpherson (*The Cameronian Philosopher*, p. 98), and is archived in the Edinburgh University Library, New College Laing collection, Cameronian Papers, EUL MSS La.I.344 (260). The reply to the protestation is archived in the National Library of Scotland, "Alexander Shields's answer to Sir Robert Hamilton's protest," NLS. MSS. Wod. Qu. XVI, fos. 101r., 99r. Howie comments, "Mr. Shields in his Journal, mentions several days in which he was writing an answer to this Protestation, in the last of which he says he was seized with a sweating sickness and fainting which obliged him to lay it aside unperfected." *FCD*, p. 425. This was introduced and transcribed in Justin B. Stodghill, "Alexander Shields' Response to Sir Robert Hamilton in 1690," *Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal* 7 (2017): 73–103. The initial points relate to the validity of William of Orange's monarchy, including his not swearing the Solemn League and Covenant at his coronation. It breaks off in the discussion of the disputed matter of whether the association with Angus' regiment was sinful.

Presbyterian Church government amongst other things, and there is no record of a formal response.

At the June General Meeting, in view of such changes, it was agreed that a paper should be drawn up for submission to the General Assembly "shewing the grounds of our former withdrawing from them, with our earnest desire of union at the time upon good terms."[56] Hamilton refused to participate in the committee set up in order to compose this paper because Shields, Linning and Boyd were involved and they were guilty of "carrying on the late defections."[57] Shields alone became entrusted with the work, but he was delayed through accompanying the Cameronian regiment which was then fighting against the Jacobite rebellion.

3. Shields and the Revolution Settlement of 1690

The first General Assembly since 1653 took place in October 1690. In anticipation of this, there was a General Meeting of the United Societies on 1 October. Some were not in favour of submitting any documents whatsoever to the Assembly; others considered that a protest could be submitted against former defections and if these were not confessed they would not join in communion with them. Shields had drafted the paper, however, which was read and debated with various amendments proposed. It was agreed that copies would be sent to local Societies who could send representatives to Edinburgh.

On 9 October in Glasgow, Shields, Boyd and Linning again met with some of the prominent ministers in advance of the Assembly. These ministers were against specific references to past defections in the paper to be submitted and tried to persuade the field preachers simply to state that "in the general" they "adhered to former testimonies."[58] This could not be acceptable and created some unease.

Linning, Shields, and Boyd submitted a long paper of their grievances to the Committee of Overtures on 16 October. A sub-committee had been appointed in order to confer with Shields and his colleagues in relation to this paper. The committee heard Shields read the paper and then "urged the smoothing of it, the taking out particulars which they called reflections." The three field preachers could not negotiate on this since they desired to clear their consciences. The resolution was that the sub-committee asked them to prepare a shorter version of the paper "showing the scope of the larger," that could be read in the Assembly. The first was to set out their "testimony against the corruption and defection in this Church" and was intended for "the exoneration of their consciences," and the second summarised version would contain their submission to the judicatories of the Church. The substance of this shorter paper is worth quoting.

> With the greatest earnestness of longing we have desired, and yet with a patience perhaps to excess, we have waited for an opportunity to bring our unhappy differences (of which all parties concerned are weary) to a happy and holy close; and for this end, to have access to apply ourselves to a full and free General Assembly of this Church, invested with authority and power, *in foro divino et humano*, to determine and cognosce upon them. The want of which, an Assembly constituted in that vigour to which, through the mercy of God, this venerable national Synod hath arrived, hath been the greatest let and impediment of our composing these differences, in a way, wherein not only we, but all of the same sentiments, would acquiesce. Now, having obtained this much longed and long prayed for privilege, we cannot forbear any longer humbly to accost and address this venerable Assembly, with a free and ingenuous representation of our minds and desires. The scope of which is, to represent these things which have been most stumbling to us, for the exoneration of our consciences; and to declare our design, after we have exhibited our testimony against these courses, which we understand to have been corruptions and defections in this Church, and laid it down at the Assembly's feet to be disposed of as their Wisdoms shall think fit, that we shall, in all required submission, subject ourselves, our lives and doctrine, to the cognizance of the judicatories of this Church, and shall equally oppose schism and defection, in any capacity that we shall be found capable of. And here, by these presents, we bind and oblige ourselves faithfully to live in union, communion, and entire subjection, and due obedience in the Lord, to the authority of this Church, in her respective judicatories.[59]

The Committee of Overtures met with the field preachers the same day and heard Shields "read the large paper with a loud voice." The verdict of the Committee was that while they agreed "that it conteaned a great many sad truths," they felt that it also contained "several grosse and peremptory mistakes, injurious reflections on godly Ministers, and some unseasonable and impracticable

56. *FCD*, p. 439.
57. *FCD*, p. 440.
58. *Analecta,* 1.198.
59. From: "Acts, 1690," *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1638–1842* (Edinburgh, 1843), 221–235.

Overtures; and, therefore, could not be presented to the Assembly." Shields and his colleagues responded that they "wer not sensible of any of these, nor hou the things there could be otherwise represented." The Committee decided to remit the matter again to the sub-committee with further members added. As Shields records, there was a vigorous discussion for and against reading the full paper before the General Assembly. "They laboured to perswade us to sist, and urge it noe further, with many arguments. Mr William Ker gave me in a paper full of arguments for it. We wer peremptory to have it exhibited in full Assembly, and let them read it, or not read it." Again the matter came before the Committee on Overtures on 17 October where they were "pressed to forbear."[60] Shields writes:

> We answered we could not, except the Comitty would assume to themselves, or get devolved upon them, the pouer of the Assembly to cognosce upon that matter; then we would sist; otherwise, our business was at the Assembly, and we pleaded the papers might be given in. Heirupon they dreu Overtures, first, that we should be received into union; nixt, that the large paper should not be read, for the reasons formerly given … We opposed these reasons, but could not prevail.[61]

Both papers were transmitted to the Assembly on the 25 October. The overtures of the Committee were read together with the shorter paper. Two motions were submitted which could be summarised as "Read the large paper or not" and "Approve the overtures with reasons or not." The vote to receive the field preachers was unanimous and no vote was taken upon whether or not to read the larger paper. It seems to have been assumed generally that the second motion was carried which would have adopted a refusal to read the larger paper together with the Committee's criticism of it. Shields sought to correct this:

> It is commonly reported and belived the vote went soe [i.e. not to read the larger paper]; but when I challenged it afterwards, as being very illegall to vote a paper should not be read for such and such reasons, giving a character of and condemning the paper, when the Assembly kneu not what was in the paper. Mr Kirkton informed me that the vote did not goe soe, but that he stood up and proposed that it should be voted concerning the first Overture only, touching our being received; and the other that the paper should not be read, Aprove these, or Not; the whole Assembly voted Aprove, *nemine contradicente*.[62]

Linning maintained that the confusion arose from wording of the Assembly minutes which read that the Assembly "did conclude, by one single vote, that the foresaid longer paper should not be read." "The blame why that affair is so printed in the Acts of the Assembly is to be laid upon the revisers of the minutes, who printed more than was in the extract given out under the Clerk's hand of that Assembly, a considerable time before the Acts of that Assembly were printed, which authentic paper I have to this day ready to produce, if need be."[63] Shields, Linning and Boyd were called back into the Assembly and addressed by the Moderator.

> The Moderator had ane exortation to us to live orderly; and, reflecting on our extravagancys, exorted us to be as instrumentall in healing as we had been in breaking. Mr Linning gave a short answer, disouning the injuriouse reflections said to be in the paper; and asserting we wer not consciouse to ourselves of these extravagancys charged; wishing the Assembly had thought fitt to read the paper; but seeing it could not be obteaned, we should submitt. I began to speak, saying, "Is it desired or expected I should speak?" All said, "Noe." The Moderator said, "Misken nou, misken nou! I request you forbear. We all knou what you would say!" whereto I succumbed. Then several nixt us took us by the hand, and we wer desired to sitt doun. Some of our freinds there present wer exceedingly offended at my silence.[64]

There remained to consider the petition submitted by the United Societies, which was similar in content to that of the field preachers and was also presented to the Committee on Overtures by Alexander Shields on 28 October. They were met by a sub-committee comprising Gabriel Semple, James Fraser of Brea and the laird of Glanderstoun. The delegation had complained that the paper presented by the field preachers did not appear to have been read in the hearing of the Assembly. They were told that "the reason wherefore it was not read in open Assembly, was, that if the same had been done, several members of the Assembly would have risen in a heat at it, and likewise there were many Gilli-Crankie

60. *Analecta*, 1.198–99.
61. *Analecta,* 1.199.
62. *Analecta,* 1.199.
63. *Church-Communion enquired into*, pp. iv–v.
64. *Analecta,* 1.200. Patrick Walker says that "Mr. Shields much lamented his silence before the Assembly, and coming so far short of his former resolutions, 'that if ever he saw such an occasion, he should not be tongue-tacked.'" *Six Saints of the Covenant,* 2 vols. (London, 1901), 1.260.

blades waiting on, who if they had heard any thing like a debate in the Assembly, would have presently spread it abroad that the Assembly were all by the ears amongst themselves."[65]

The petition was read and certain points were discussed. It was considered that due to the similarity to the paper previously presented by the field preachers there was no need to read it in the Assembly. The subcommittee "desired the men to be tender of the church's peace, and to do nothing that might tend to the renting of it; also they said, As ye have somewhat against us, so we have somewhat against you; forgive ye us, and we will forgive you, and let us unite." The Committee moved that the papers should be "given in to these who were to draw up the Monitory Letter and Causes of the Fast, that they might make their own use thereof in drawing up the same." A letter was issued to the Societies to advise them of this.[66]

There was a General Meeting of the United Societies at Douglas on 3 December when these events and the various documents were rehearsed. Alexander Shields records that the "Meeting generally disrelished the whole affair, and objected much against union and communion on these terms; yet some were more sober."[67] The question remained now as to how the Society members should proceed. Shields, Linning and Boyd advised members "to hear those ministers who were most free and faithful, that they could have the opportunity of, and to have a care of running upon extremes on the right hand."

Shields produced "a form of a Protestation to be given in to Kirk Sessions and Presbitrys; after the exhibition wherof, we proposed they might joyn with the Congregation where they lived.[68] The Protestation was "against the defections of the ministers they were to hear … and what induced them to join at the time; as also, that their joining at present, *was neither a condemning of, nor receding from our former testimony and contendings, nor approving of these defections they witnessed against before*." There were "different sentiments about it"; "not coming to any agreement, it was left to people's liberty and freedom to give it or not as they thought fit."[69] Alexander Shields noted that while the "most part refused; some accepted, and made use of it."[70]

4. After the Revolution

Sir Robert Hamilton was determined to remain separate both from Church and State. It has been estimated that around one third of the membership of the United Societies adopted this position. Patrick Walker writes that "it was but the least Part of it that belonged to them: All know that it was the fewest Number of the united Societies, that was led off with *Robert Hamilton* to the disowning of King *William* as King of *Britain,* and his Government; the greater Part reckoned it their Duty, to take a legal unite Way of witnessing, by humble Pleadings, Representations, and Protestations, pleading for and with their Mother, to put away her Whoredoms."[71] They did so using the paper drawn up by Shields. As early as December 1690, the presbytery of Paisley recorded in its minutes a protest received from thirty male members from the Societies who intended to join the Church of Scotland.[72]

In acknowledging (together with all "who truely Fear God") the mixed character of the Church of Scotland after 1690, Thomas Linning observed, "Christ hath sowed good Seed in his Church in this Land…. But it is as true, That the Enemy hath sowed Tares also, and that while Men Slept."[73] Though conscious of the shortcomings of the Revolution Settlement, some later recalled it as a time of spiritual revival. Writing in 1744, John Willison of Dundee extols the benefits of the Revolution Settlement in that "the church enjoyed the freedom of gospel ordinances; the Lord gave large testimony to the word of his grace, and there were great days of the *Son of man* in many places of the land, and multitudes of souls were brought in to Jesus Christ their Saviour."[74]

Any mixture was, however, unacceptable to Hamilton and his supporters. One of the first public actions taken by Robert Hamilton was in conjunction with members of the Tinwald Society. They produced

65. *FCD*, p. 455.
66. *FCD*, p. 456.
67. *Analecta,* 1.202.
68. *Analecta,* 1.202.
69. *FCD*, p. 460.
70. *Analecta,* 1.202.
71. *Biographia Presbyteriana*, 1.126. Elsewhere Walker also states that "The greater part of the gleanings of that persecution were for humbly pleading for the good old way, in a legal manner representing these grievances to judicatories of both kinds : this, we thought, was a legal testimony against them and exoneration of us, and that nothing more was required of us, in our stations and capacities, but to mourn before the Lord for the great and grievous wrongs in the State, but especially in the Church: the snares being broke, and the practices of these defections stopt by this merciful Revolution-dispensation, tho' the sin of the tyranny and defections of that time did and do still ly as a dead weight upon this sinful land." *Six Saints of the Covenant*, 1.260.
72. NLS, Societies members' statement on entering communion with the Church of Scotland, Dec. 1690, Wod. Fol. XXVIII, fos. 144–5, cited by Alasdair Raffe, *Religious Controversy and Scottish Society, c.1679–1714*, University of Edinburgh, PhD Thesis, 2007, p. 167.
73. *Church-Communion*, p. ii.
74. *A Fair and Impartial Testimony* (Glasgow, 1765), 26.

a paper denouncing the "defection" of Shields, Linning and Boyd.[75] The United Societies were reconvened in a general correspondence as "The Societies of the South-West" or "The General Meeting of the Witnessing Remnant of Presbyterians in Scotland." There were various further issues of controversy and William McMillan observes that "The Societies seem to have done very little without causing controversy in their own ranks."

All who paid taxes or had any interaction with Church and State were barred from membership. In effect, this meant that Society members could not obtain marriage let alone baptism; it also inevitably involved the Societies in smuggling and illicit trade.[76] They were also forbidden from appearing at civil courts and applying for licences. Still less could they attend any part of a wedding celebration where a minister of the Established Church had officiated or even plough the glebe land belonging to a minister.[77]

McMillan reckons that a "considerable portion of the body" must have been purged due to these terms of communion.[78] Further declarations were issued in 1692 (at Sanquhar) and 1695. Hamilton and others were arrested and imprisoned for six months after issuing the 1692 Sanquhar declaration which repudiated the authority of the Privy Council as a "pretended" court. In the same year members of the Tinwald Society kidnapped the Episcopalian ministers in Dumfries in order to intimidate them into abandoning their office. They burned the prayer books belonging to the ministers at the mercat cross. Hamilton praised these efforts.[79] After Hamilton died at Bo'ness on 21 October 1701, the group that had formed around him continued in societies for prayer and discussion without leader or minister until 1706 when they issued a call to John Macmillan, the deposed minister of Balmaghie parish, to minister to them.[80]

The Hamiltonians were not, however, the only party to dissent from the Revolution Church of Scotland. There were those such as the Russellites (followers of James Russell), who had divided from the Societies in the early 1680s, but there were also the Coat-muir Folk, as well as followers of John Hepburn, John Halden, and William Wilson. Ian B. Cowan observes that: "Divisions continued and at least eight identifiable parties were to be found by 1725."[81] Later Reformed Presbyterians were perhaps not especially interested in highlighting the fact that the Hamiltonians were only one group amongst many. "Dr Hay Fleming states that in Hutchison's work *The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland*, one may look in vain even for the names of the small sections whom Walker calls, Adamites, Harlites, Howdenites and Russelites."[82]

There was considerable antagonism between these parties. The Coat-muir Folk, for their part, attacked the Macmillanites in their treatise called *The Ravished Maid in the Wilderness.*[83] In their second edition of *An Informatory Vindication*, updated to reflect their grievances, the Hamiltonians in turn accused the Hebronites (followers of John Hepburn), of seeking to bring division

75. *FCD*, first part, pp. 467–8.

76. The Hamiltonian General Meeting also condemned those who worshipped or obtained marriage under David Houston and Hugh McHenry, the suspended minister of Dalton, Dumfries-shire. Cf. NAS, Conclusions of the United Societies" general meeting, 1681–1724, CH3/269/1, pp. 3, 5–6, 11, cited by Raffe, p. 163. Matthew Hutchison candidly acknowledges "recourse to contraband trade." *The Reformed Presbyterian Church*, p. 128. He also notes that the minutes of the Hamiltonian General Meeting record a "duty to recover by force poynds taken for supplies, or other taxation when in a capacity." This refers to a duty to resist by force when goods were seized for non-payment of taxes.

77. Hutchison, p. 127.

78. William McMillan, "The Covenanters after the Revolution of 1688," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, Vol. 10 (1950), 141–53 (quotation, p. 146).

79. NAS, Collection of Sir Robert Hamilton's letters, 1682–1701, CH3/269/16/3, pp. 7–8, quoted by Raffe, p. 127.

80. Most Separatists had no ministers to hear or ordinances to wait upon, although according to Patrick Walker the Harley brothers set themselves up as preachers. Walker, *Six Saints of the Covenant,* 1.242. William Wilson left his "witness and testimony against the sinful intrusion of John and Andrew Harlaws, once in Cotmuir, who, after they had fallen into several doting delusions, did usurp the holy office of the ministry of the Gospel, without being any way qualified for the same; without the trial and ordination of any presbytery, and without any lawful call thereunto, either ordinary or extraordinary." *A Collection of the Dying-Testimonies of some Holy and Pious Christians*, ed. J. Calderwood (Kilmarnock, 1806), 375–76.

81. Ian B. Cowan, *The Scottish Covenanters: 1660–1688* (London, 1976), 145.

82. William McMillan, p. 146. Patrick Walker runs the names of the various groups together frequently as if to emphasise the number of them.

83. *The Ravished Maid in the Wilderness, or, A True Account of the Raise, Causes and Continuence of the Difference between a Suffering Party of Presbyterians, commonly called Cotmure Folk, and these that follow Mr John Mackmillan, commonly called Mountain Men* ([Edinburgh?], 1708), 2–5, 35–6, quoted by Raffe, p. 165. In 1697, Widow Cleghorn alias Isobel Wright, left a testimony upon her death-bed "against those who are commonly called the Cotemuir-folk." "I never saw any in my time that professed godliness have such a practice as they; or of such exasperate spirits, and so full of revenge in all their writings and scribblings. I never saw [in them] anything that was Christ-exalting, or self-abasing; or that was for the credit of truth, or godliness, but that was for the credit of themselves. And they stand not to say, and constantly to maintain, that the testimony of Jesus is in their hands, and in the hands of no other but them and such as adhere to them." *A Collection of the Dying-Testimonies*, pp. 38–9. Wodrow reports from those acquainted with the Harleys, that there was some hypocrisy in their practices (*Analecta*, 1.272).

among the ranks of those who rejected the Revolution Settlement.[84] Thomas Linning wrote that it is "to be Lamented that bitter Reflections, and Ungoverned passion are every where too much used, as weapons among Different Parties, to the great Offence of all Serious and Judicious Christians, and to the Scandal of Religion itself."[85]

John Hepburn was minister in Urr, Dumfries-shire but exercised an itinerant ministry that was highly critical of the Established Church and resisted the discipline of Church courts. As a minister he represented a greater threat than the various groups with no stated ministry; he also had wider support amongst Church of Scotland ministers such as Thomas Linning and other former Society men such as Patrick Walker.[86] It is likely that this was in part because Hepburn had not pursued complete separation in contrast to the Hamiltonians and Macmillan of Balmaghie, but continued consistently to bring petitions of grievances before the Church courts. The separatist spectrum therefore comprised a variety of shades, which may have presented complex challenges to those in the Established Church.

In December 1698, the Commission of the General Assembly approved a pamphlet entitled *A Seasonable Admonition and Exhortation to some who Separate from the Communion of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1699). This resisted the central principle of separatism by acknowledging that the Church of Scotland contained weak and sinful men, but that it was unscriptural to think that they could contract guilt and pollution by any communion involving sinful men amongst others. They lamented that religious division "tempts some to turn *Papists*, and some to turn *Atheists*."[87] Deism was becoming a significant threat with its concomitant message of latitudinarian toleration and its outright attack on spiritual religion which it denounced as "enthusiasm." Their apprehensions were indeed apt; John Locke for instance published in January 1699 an additional chapter dismissing enthusiasm in his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. The General Assembly had previously warned in January 1696 that there were "not a few" people, "of Atheistical principles, who go under the name of Deists, and for the time refuse the odious character of Atheist, maintain and disseminate pernicious principles tending to Scepticism and Atheism."[88] There were significant battles to be fought apart from the internecine troubles with Separatists in various parts.

A Seasonable Admonition also denied the imputation of Erastianism in relation to the Revolution Settlement by asserting the headship of Christ over the Church, the divine origin of Presbytery and the intrinsic powers of the Church. The debate was now about to be swept along, however, by a strong tide of general interest and opinion in political issues of national consequence in the period between the Darien crisis of 1699–1700 and the Treaty of Union in 1707.

5. The commonly accepted principles of Church union

Shields frequently refers to principles regarding Church union, schism, and separation that were commonly accepted amongst Scottish Presbyterians. He speaks of the "general Truths granted on all hands." The first section of *Church-Communion enquired into*, as announced on the title page, deals with "Some Truths confessed on all Hands, are held forth, which if Rightly considered would do much to End the present Controversie." The truths were widely acknowledged, but it was the "solid and practical impression" of them that was lacking.[89] They are principles that were outlined by Samuel Rutherford and George Gillespie in an earlier generation. Writers such as Robert MacWard and John Brown of Wamphray further restated and elucidated them in the intervening decades of the Restoration.[90]

The most notable discussion of these principles, however, was James Durham's *The dying man's testament to the Church of Scotland; or, A Treatise on Scandal* (Edinburgh, 1659).[91] The context for Durham's book was the division between Protesters and Resolutoners in the 1650s concerning the Church's approvals of Parliament's Public Resolutions. Durham sought to remain neutral in the division and aimed to unite

84. *An Informatory Vindication of a Poor, Wasted, Misrepresented Remnant* ([Edinburgh?], 1707) sig. [¶¶¶3]v, quoted by Raffe, p. 170.

85. *The friendly conference, or, a discourse between the country man and his nephew, who having fallen off from hearing, hath for some years been a follower of Mr. M'Millan* (Edinburgh, 1711), 9, quoted by Raffe, p. 252.

86. It is worth noting that all Presbyterians, whether separatists or within the Revolution Church, were firmly committed to the abiding obligations of the Covenants.

87. *A Seasonable Admonition and Exhortation to some who Separate from the Communion of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1699), 23.

88. From "Acts: 1695–6," *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1638–1842*, pp. 245–256. There were also growing concerns that in some instances the philosophy curriculum in the universities was becoming infected with rationalism and heterodox opinions (cf. Raffe, pp. 232–33).

89. *Church-Communion*, p. 3.

90. They are also a significant aspect of the *Informatory Vindication*.

91. The contents and parallels of Durham's *Concerning Scandal* and Shields' *Church-communion* are noted in Edwin Nisbet Moore, *Our Covenant Heritage: The Covenanters Struggle for Unity in Truth* (Tain: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 268–277.

both parties. [92] The title of Durham's book owed to the fact that it was completed on his deathbed. The book was frequently referred to during the discussions concerning union in 1689–90, without always being explicitly named. Perhaps this is why Shields uses key phrases from Durham's book without direct reference, yet evidently without fear of being accused of plagiarism since they were so well-known. In *Church-Communion*, Shields emphasises several major principles: (1) union is an absolutely essential duty; (2) division, contention and schism are great evils; (3) the causes of division need to be addressed in order to bring about union; (4) separation is only warranted when union would require one to sin.

It is evident that Durham's treatise was vitally important to Renwick and Shields in defending their distinct position during the time of persecution. Renwick wrote to Shields in January 1688, detailing the changes to be made to *The Testimony Against Toleration,* including transcribing certain passages from James Durham's *Treatise on Scandal*.[93] *An Informatory vindication* alludes to some of Durham's points under Head IV. It also emphasises that the grounds of withdrawing from fellowship in the "broken and declining" state of the Church that obtained at that time could not be sustained in a settled period. Later, Patrick Walker, who was a important figure in the United Societies before 1690, records in one place his assessment of Durham and the practical significance of his principles. "Great Durham says, Before he were the Member of no Church, he would rather be a Member of a corrupt Church."[94] Walker's remark was of course intended to reflect upon the fact that the Hamiltonians did not constitute an ecclesiastical body but rather praying societies.

In reviewing the course of action and discussions during 1689–90, it is possible to witness the influence of many of the principles outlined by Durham which relate to the causes of Church divisions, their consequences and the methods necessary to resolve them. A number of observations of practical value may be derived from considering these events in this light.

1. There is (as Durham puts it) "An absolute necessity laid upon a rent church to unite."[95] Durham immediately goes on to show how union and edification are joined together. He states this principle very succinctly in a sermon preached on the subject. "If union be the great step to edification as dissention and strife are the door that lets in distraction, then division and separation cannot be the cure, but union is the first and great step of edification. Therefore separation cannot be the cure. Separation has ever been the greatest enemy of edification and reformation."[96] Shields expresses it similarly in *Church communion.* Division, "is an Evil which produces the saddest Effects, as in its own Nature it is apt to produce no good Effects, however Men improve it, being not a Mean of Edification of the Lord's Appointment, and therefore cannot be used in Faith and Expectation of the Lord's Blessing…."[97] The difference between the attitude of Shields and Hamilton arose in part from whether and how far they were prepared to act on this principle.

2. Frequently it can be observed in church history, that divisions between those otherwise fully agreed in their principles often arise by virtue of the necessity of adopting a position towards the position or actions of a third party. As Durham puts it, divisions "may arise from different apprehensions about some persons, or from a different manner of doing the same thing, or from the use-making of different persons."[98] At the Revolution, the third party were those ministers who were deemed to have complied with the usurped State supremacy over the Church during the time of persecution. The question was whether there could be any union which involved them without their having first confessed the defections of which they had been guilty. This was the key matter that occasioned long and heated debates at the General Meetings of the United Societies during 1689–90. Some were prepared to suspend union with all other Presbyterians until these ministers would confess their defection. Their motto, as expressed in May 1689, became "Noe communion with-out confession." Others, led by the field preachers, maintained that

92. The division is explored in detail in Kyle D. Holfelder, Factionalism in the Kirk during the Cromwellian Invasion and Occupation of Scotland, 1650 to 1660: The Protester-Resolutioner Controversy, Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Edinburgh (1998). For a shorter explanation and background see "*Antiquary:* A Transcription of James Durham's Sermon on Ephesians 4:11–12," Introduction, *The Confessional Presbyterian* 12 (2016): 263 and "*Antiquary:* The James Durham MS III: James Durham's 228 Sermons on Song of Solomon 2–8," Introduction, *The Confessional Presbyterian* 13 (2017): 224–226.

93. Renwick writes: "I have added what was to be transcribed out of Durham upon Scandal, and did oversee the writing of the most difficult places." *The Letters of James Renwick, The last of Scotland's Covenanted Martyrs*, p. 261

94. *Biographia Presbyteriana*, 1.255.

95. *Scandal* (1659), 285; Durham, *Concerning Scandal*, edited by Christopher Coldwell with an Introduction by David C. Lachman (Dallas, TX, 1990), 257.

96. *Collected Sermons of James Durham*, vol. 1 (Naphtali Press and Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), 933. See the introduction and transcription in "*Antiquary:* A Transcription of James Durham's Sermon on Ephesians 4:11–12," 279.

97. *Church-communion*, p. 12.

98. *Scandal* (1659), 283; (1990), 235.

they would be free to protest against such defections but that it was a matter for the Church courts whether or not they proceeded to any discipline in such cases. As long as faithful Presbyterians were not being "required to justify their defections," there were no grounds for separation.

3. Sometimes the issues that give rise to division relate to matters not explicitly ecclesiastical. Association with the Angus regiment and whether or not William of Orange could be acknowledged as a lawful king generated considerable contention. Durham identifies a sad precedent of division arising from "the Churches meddling in extrinsick or unnecessary things" and "when Churchmen have become too pragmatick in civil things, or affairs of the world." He says that "seldome Churchmen have been too much taken up and occupied about such things, but it hath had such a consequent."[99] We might include under this category, the danger of defining too closely, through terms of ecclesiastical communion, the civil duties and responsibilities of Church members. We refer here to the terms of communion established by the Hamiltonian party after the Revolution. Although a Reformed Presbyterian, Matthew Hutchison asks, "was it not an overstraining of Church power to prescribe for the civil or political action of the members?… is it right … to make a certain civil or political attitude towards Government, even though that be assumed on religious grounds, an essential pre-requisite to communion. If it is, where would it end? Would it not degrade the Church into a political organization?"[100] Such detailed requirements in civil matters within terms of communion also serve to erect significant barriers to unity with other bodies that are not of an essentially ecclesiastical nature.

4. It is evident from the various debates amongst the United Societies concerning union that the central issue was whether or not uniting with the Church of Scotland would entail partaking of the guilt of those who had in some way complied with the royal supremacy over the Church claimed by the Stuarts. The 1698 Commission of the General Assembly, in their pamphlet *A Seasonable Admonition and Exhortation*, identified the root of separation with the concern about contracting guilt from association with those guilty of certain past defections. The question was whether or not communion with the Church in its ordinances and government could be sinful in the light of this. In May 1689 Shields and his colleagues maintained that "as soon as ever they could be in a capacity to joyn with Ministers, without sin, they had such respect to the ordinances and the peace of the Church, that they would noe longer separate; and notwithstanding all former provocations." They considered that the only way in which they would be sinning in uniting was if they were to be compelled to give formal approval to the former defections; this was not, however, being required of them.

Durham gives the example of the necessity of separating from corruption in one ordinance, yet argues that if on the basis of this someone were to separate from all ordinances "that were to exceed the ground given."[101] He asserts very strongly that such "defects as do not make communion in, a Church, and in its Ordinances sinfull, will not warrant a separation or division from the same…. It is acknowledged by all, that there is no separation from a true Church in such Ordinances, as men may without sin communicate into, although others may be guilty therein." In this respect there is a danger of extending separation beyond the warrantable grounds where there is "a defect in the Church, but not such as doth make communion therein sinfull."[102]

5. It is easy to see from the historical account of the Presbyterian cause in Scotland, both before and after the Revolution, that it was very difficult to attain unity once divisions had taken place. Such divisions are not easily or quickly removed and "may continue long"; as time passes they become more difficult to heal. Each side tends to justify itself and time serves to add new obstacles as opposing parties develop and entrench their position. Several declarations were published on the Hamiltonian side and later a considerable number of pamphlets were being exchanged in debate. This also serves to increase the severity of the reflections. *A Collection of the Dying-Testimonies of some Holy and Pious Christians* reveals the tendency in the Hamiltonian party after the Revolution to leave dying testimonies inveighing bitterly against the actions of Shields and his colleagues at the Revolution.

Durham observes, "Though it be frequent to them [divisions] to come to an height, yet they are not easily removed, even amongst the best."[103] Frequently, if opportunities for healing divisions are not grasped the "breach will grow greater and wider, and be more difficultly removable. In such a case men ought to

99. *Scandal* (1659), 289; (1990), 239. Sometimes the civil government may be seeking the Church to adopt a certain position or declare their mind on a specific matter. Such "extrinsic" matters can introduce significant division, as was the case in the Resolutioner-Protester divisions of the 1650s.

100. Hutchison, p. 123.

101. *Scandal* (1659), 277; (1990), 229.

.*Scandal* (1659), 277; (1990), 229.

102. *Scandal* (1659), 320; (1990), 266.

103. *Scandal* (1659), 281–2; (1990), 232–3.

stretch themselves *with all the moderation that is possible* (as Calvins expression is) if they may now, at least, through Gods good hand upon them, come to some agreement."[104] The Presbyterian cause splintered into a considerable number of separate groups after the Revolution. This demonstrates that not only is separation often maintained over many generations but inevitably appears to generate further separation.[105]

6. We can note that the very real concern at the development and strengthening of atheistic principles during the 1690s in Scotland was connected with the degree of open division amongst Presbyterians. Shields refers to this danger in *Church-Communion*: "And thus the World comes to be Plagued with Atheism, being tempted to think Religion but a Fancy. Therefore the Lord Jesus Prayeth for Unity amongst his Disciples, *John* 17.21,23. *That the World might believe that Christ was sent*."[106] Durham had earlier observed that division is "often a great snare to many carnall Professors; for, thereby some are hardened in profanity, and become Atheists, as if all that is spoken by Ministers concerning Religion, were not to be believed; Therefore the Lord prayeth for unity, and against differences amongst His Disciples, for this cause, That the World might believe that Christ was sent by God, and that these are loved of him, Joh. 17.23. which importeth, that this plague of Atheism followeth in the world upon such divisions. Again, others are stumbled so, as they cast at the Truth preached by them, and thereby become a prey to be carried about with every wind of doctrine; for preventing of which, Ministers, and union among Ministers are required."[107]

7. The union effected between the Societies (particularly the three field preachers) and the Revolution Church of Scotland is often passed over without calling attention to its significance. A considerable number of people were reconciled on the basis of the principles advanced by Durham. This is all the more significant when we consider that the Protester-Resolutioner divisions were never formally resolved and that later ecclesiastical unions in Scotland were often only achieved through the abandonment of principles formerly held. The union achieved in 1690 shows that while there may be some significant differences of opinion in matters of practice, unity is nevertheless possible while there are means available for conscience to be exonerated. While division is something that is "hardly cured," it is important to have the conviction that unity is attainable. It is common to yield to a counsel of despair which regards unity as impossible. Durham says that "if men will do their duty, there can be no division amongst Orthodox Divines or Ministers, but it is possible also to compose it, and union is a thing attainable."[108]

8. Union is possible even though there may be differences in opinion, as there were between the field preachers and many of the rest of the ministers in the Church of Scotland respecting past duty during the time of persecution. The field preachers considered that the lack of confession on the part of the those guilty of these former defections "being only a shortcoming and difference in judgment, could not be ouned as a ground of separation, while we wer neither required to justify their defections, nor to condemn our testimony, nor to subscribe to any sinfull imposition in the terms of the communion, putting us in hazard of partaking of their sin; and that though these corruptions standing established wer sufficient grounds of withdrauing, yet not nou, when ceasing to be snares."[109]

According to Durham, union is especially possible if we do not insist upon "an universall union in every thing, in judgement and practice." Differences in judgement must, however, be "such things that are consistent with the foundation, and edification; and such a forbearance." Clearly, things that do not relate directly to present duty may be included here. Union is also possible where there "may be dissatisfaction with many persons, whether Officers or Members; and to expect

104. *Scandal* (1659), 427; (1990), 356. Durham adds: "how actively should men, zealous for God and His precious Ordinances, and tender of the edification of souls, bestir themselves to follow after peace in such a vehemently urging case." Durham is citing Calvin's letter to the English at Frankfurt. See *Works of John Calvin: Tracts and Letters,* edited by Henry Beveridge and Jules Bonnet, 7 vols. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), 3.117.

105. Durham asks very strikingly: "what may be the thoughts of the generation that shall succeed? Shall such a division be propagated to them, and they made heirs thereto? Shall not they either continue miserable under such a condition, and that for ever, with such heightening circumstances as cannot but follow?… Or they must endeavour the recovery of union with much more difficulty than it may now be; and if so, certainly that generation will be in hazard to curse these that went before them, who did bring them forth under the necessity of continuing under the sin, snare, and torturing-plague of divisions; or, at least, of being in so greatly-puzling and perplexing straits, ere they could expede themselves out of the same." *Scandal* (1659), 430, cf. also p. 350; (1990), 291.

106. *Church-Communion*, p. 10.

107. *Scandal* (1659), p. 296. Durham speaks of the extra necessity and duty of expediting union when "a Church by division, is laid open to grosse hereticks, who wait the occasion of such a division, that they may make (as it were) an infall upon her. Division should be shunned at any time, but in such a case, union should be at any rate, of warrantable condescendency, purchased." *Scandal* (1659), 426; (1990), 355.

108. *Scandal* (1659), 314; (1990), 325.

109. *Analecta,* 1.193.

a Church free of unworthy Officers, or Members, and to defer Church union thereupon, is to expect the barn floor shall be without chaff, and to frustrate the many commands whereby this duty is pressed."

Significantly, Durham notes that "bypast failings, and miscarriages "are frequently a point of contention after a period of "darknesse, or persecution, when men, being in the dark, and in a distemper, were led away by tentation, and overtaken with many faults, and sometimes amongst others, made to jussle with, and trample one upon another (as it were) not knowing what they were doing; and when this time was over, some were ready to carp at what was past in the dark, and to quarrell at others for such jussling, when they were so through-other."[110]

Shields and his colleagues believed that those guilty of grosser defection during the time of persecution should now be disciplined in some way. They did not believe, however, that this was an absolute impediment to union, but that they could rather testify to their own conviction before the General Assembly and leave it there. Similarly Durham had asserted previously that union "may also be consistent with many particular failings, and defects in the exercise of government. as possibly the sparing of some corrupt Officers and Members…. These indeed are faults, but they are not such as make a Church to be no Church; and though these have sometimes been pretended to be the causes of schisms and divisions in the Church in practice, yet were they never defended to be just grounds of schisms and divisions, but were ever condemned by all Councels and Fathers, and cannot be in reason sustained."[111] Durham also asserts that "union is to be preferred to the censuring of some unfaithfull men" and ought not to be delayed upon condition of discipline or until it is exercised.[112]

9. There was a concern, particularly on the part of Shields, to proceed slowly and cautiously so as to carry everyone in the process of deliberating union. He believed "it was a grave and greatly important matter, not rashly to be determined." His desire for days of humiliation formally agreed by the United Societies for this purpose does not seem to have been entirely successful, however. James Wallace, the minister of Inchinnan also counselled that the Societies should proceed "slowly into any formal, settled union with any." As Durham puts it "time may do many things, and that may be easie ere long which is difficult now." Durham sees the need of "many brotherly consultations, and conferences." Such conferences ought to involve delegated individuals, as with the delegated sub-committee that met with Shields and his colleagues.[113] This allows more time to bring difficult matters to a "cordial close" between "fretted spirits" than is available in the higher Church courts and avoids the feeling that the hearing of grievances is being hastened. "Matters of difficulty would rather be committed to deputed persons than instantly decided", says Durham.[114]

10. Shields emphasised mutual forgiveness. "As long as there are differences and distances between us and our Brethren not removed by Reconciliation, our Acceptance, Profit and Edification is marred: And if Reconciliation cannot be obtained by any other way, there must be mutual *Forgiveness*; Not Judiciary to take away the Guilt, that is GOD's Prerogative; But Charitative, which must be extended to many more Offences and Trespasses than are confessed and acknowledged to us."[115] This was a point also urged by James Fraser of Brea and Gabriel Semple: "As ye have somewhat against us, so we have somewhat against you; forgive us and we will forgive you, and let us unite."[116] It is also a very common requirement following periods of persecution or trial where there is usually a sense that everyone has not stood together and some have been less faithful than others. Durham gives much consideration to the spirit in which the discussion of proposals for union should be conducted. He commends "mutual forgiving" and "mutual condescending."[117] This was the spirit of some who were deputed to confer with the Society men, as seen above. What Durham calls a "conviction of singleness," the rightness of one's own cause and actions, may dissuade from condescending in order to seek an accommodation.[118] It is possible that these sentiments were held by Sir Robert Hamilton and other Society men in their reluctance to confer about union. "Too much peremptorinesse where there may be some condescending, hath much hand in this; when men become not all things (so far as is lawfull) unto others."[119] Shields also highlights this point: "Peremptoriness without condescending on either hand in things that might be condescended unto, hath a great hand in keeping up Divisions. The Remedy of this, and a great help to make Union Easy, were mutual Condescending."[120]

110. *Scandal* (1659), 363; (1990), 302.
111. *Scandal* (1659), 318–9; (1990), 264.
112. *Scandal* (1659), 405–8; (1990), 335–38.
113. *Scandal* (1659), 415; (1990), 346.
114. *Scandal* (1659), 416; (1990), 346.
115. *Church-Communion*, p. 4.
116. *FCD,* p. 456.
117. *Scandal* (1659), 367; (1990), 306; and (1659), 324; (1990), 269.
118. *Scandal* (1659), 309–10; (1990), 256.
119. *Scandal* (1659), 288; (1990), 239.
120. *Church-Communion*, p. 14.

11. In managing these events, Shields embodied well a principle of selflessness of which we would do well to take account. Howie acknowledges that Shields was "of a public spirit" and "full of zeal whatever way he intended … in arguing very ready, only somewhat fiery."[121] It is interesting, however, that nothing of this fiery nature appears to have been recorded in the debates concerning union, although the general temperature of these meetings was evidently very high. On the contrary his influence appears to have been mostly intended to pacify and his book *Church-Communion* manifests an irenic spirit. David Allan describes him rather inappropriately as "the irascible Covenanter."[122]

In *A Hind Let Loose* Shields himself commends "a public spirit, the true spirit of all Christ's zealous lovers and votaries", those who have "a Gallant greatness & generosity of a Publick spirit, having their designs & desires not limited to their own interests, even Spiritual, but aiming at no less than Christs's Publick Glory, the Churches publick good, the Saints publick Comfort, having a publick Concern for all Christs Interests, Publick Sympathie for all Christs Friends, and a Publick declared Opposition to all Christs Enemies."[123]

It is of course easier to consider these matters as illustrated by the past than as pressed upon us by the present; particularly when the Presbyterian cause in Scotland has never been so divided and weakened as it is in our own day. In a North American context too, there may be a temptation to substitute good relations between divided denominations instead of biblical union. Durham's concluding words are very relevant to such considerations:

> we shall leave the judicious, conscienciously, and tender Reader, to answer these and many such things to himself, and accordingly to do; and if any, out of prejudice, (as we hope none will, and heartily wish none may) shall not conscienciously ponder the same, we leave him to consider that he must reckon to God therefore, and shall only obtest him that he will have more respect to the Churches peace, than to his own inclination; and that he Will at least by some other lawfull, possible and probable mean essay the removing, or at least the prevention of the growth of such divisions; and that he would withall construct well of the essayes of others, till we come all before the common Judge, who, we are persswaded, loveth the Truth in peace, and hath joyned these together, which therefore ought by no man to be put asunder.[124]

6. The critical role played by Alexander Shields

Mark Jardine aptly describes the United Societies as "one of the midwives of the Revolution."[125] The Glorious Revolution and a Protestant royal succession would both have been seriously endangered without the Cameronian defence of the Convention of Estates and the victory at Dunkeld which "secured the protestant revolution in Scotland."[126] This provided the secure conditions for a Presbyterian establishment of the Church of Scotland. Interestingly, Jardine also observes that "the integration of the Society men alongside their former presbyterian brethren in Lord Angus's Regiment effectively marked the rebirth of a unified presbyterian movement."[127] It could be argued further that the Revolution Settlement would not have been as far reaching in Presbyterian terms or as well-established without the significant presence of the United Societies in Scotland at this time.

David Christie argues persuasively that the United Societies "made four significant contributions to freedom of religion in Scotland." Firstly, their struggle during the Killing Times secured the freedoms obtained in 1690. Secondly, their military role ensured that there was no external threat to the key legislation passed by Church and Parliament. Thirdly, through their reconciliation with the Church of Scotland they were "catalytic in the establishment of a [virtually] united Presbyterian front in Scotland." Fourthly, "Alexander Shields stands out as catalytic" in the achievement of these last two contributions. "It can be argued that his behaviour, in itself, was a significant contribution to Freedom of Religion."[128] The role that Alexander Shields played in ensuring the success of the civil and ecclesiastical consequences of the Glorious Revolution is not widely acknowledged. Shields had a crucial input, however, within each of these contributions made by the United Societies. At the time, some felt that the Societies were "madd men not to be governed even by mastr Sheils ther orachle."[129] While his influence was not universally decisive for all of the Society men, there can be

121. J. Howie, *Biographia Scoticana: or a brief historical account of the lives, characters, and memorable transactions of the most eminent Scots Worthies, noblemen, gentlemen, ministers, and others* (Glasgow, 1781), 476.
122. D. Allan *Virtue, Learning, and the Scottish Enlightenment: Ideas of Scholarship in Early Modern History* (Edinburgh, 1993), 36.
123. *A Hind Let Loose* (1687), 554.
124. *Scandal* (1659), 430; (1990), 360.
125. Jardine, p. 244.
126. Cowan, p. 144.
127. Jardine, p. 243.
128. Christie, pp. ii–iii.
129. William Fraser, *The Melvilles Earls of Melville and Leslie Earls of Leven,* 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1890), 2.115–6, cited by Jardine, p. 231.

no doubt that his leadership in these events provided the main catalyst. The times required both his zeal and public spirit.

II: *Church-Communion enquired into*

The first part of this article focused on the position that Alexander Shields (1660?–1700) adopted in relation to the Revolution Church of Scotland in 1690 which brought him into disagreement with some of his former colleagues among the United Societies. This part continues to follow the course of events from 1703 onward in considering the treatise *Church-Communion enquired into* which Shields had left in manuscript. This was published in 1706 by Thomas Linning during a significant moment in the history of Church and nation in Scotland and a time of intense speculation and debate.[130] James Walker describes this book as "once well known and often referred to," but both its contents and context now require extensive description. It is a significant contribution to the Scottish view of the unity of the visible Church which continues the work of James Durham (see above) in defining and applying these principles codified in *A Treatise Concerning Scandal*. The modern relevance of these views is considered at the close of the article, together with a brief assessment of Shields as an author.

7. The Publication of *Church-Communion enquired into*

The movement of dissent against the Church of Scotland appeared only to be growing in impetus in the early years of the eighteenth century, arising partly from the oath of allegiance to Queen Anne in 1703, but then more especially as the Anglo-Scottish union of 1707 began to be discussed. In the period between 1699 and 1707, Karin Bowie has suggested, "popular participation in Scottish national affairs increased dramatically" to a level "remarkable for the time, whether assessed in a Scottish, British or European context." One harbinger of the enormous popular opposition to the union was the petitioning campaign of late 1699 and early 1700, organised by the leaders of the country party in order to exert pressure on the court over the failure of the Darien scheme (in which Alexander Shields had been engaged).[131]

This is the context for the publication of *Church-Communion* in 1706. Thomas Linning himself was playing a key role lobbying parliamentarians in seeking the security of the Presbyterian establishment in the event of union.[132] He dates the preface to *Church-Communion* only a day or two before the meeting of the General Assembly on 4–16 April 1706. Immediately following the Assembly, on 18 April, treaty negotiations began in London.[133] While public debate had been running on the theme of union since at least 1699, a vigorous pamphlet war was now being waged during 1706 and 1707. Karin Bowie estimates that during 1706–7 "a lack of effective censorship meant that the volume of print appearing in Scotland exceeded anything seen before in the kingdom." Parliament ordered the burning of only one Scottish pamphlet; significantly, it was by Archibald Foyer, a Church of Scotland minister, advancing a robust Covenanting viewpoint on the matters in hand.[134] Key issues in the debate were: the status of the Scottish Church; the Solemn League and Covenant, and the degree to which union involved tacit acceptance of Episcopalianism in England. It was a unique moment for separatists to muster strength and support against the Revolution Church of Scotland.[135]

In a printed address to the High Commissioner and Parliament from "a Considerable Number of People of

130. *Church-Communion enquired into: or a treatise against separation from this National Church of Scotland. Wherein I. Some truths confessed on all hands are held forth which if rightly considered would do much to end the present controversie. II. Some concessions are laid down for clearing the present debate III. The controversie is stated and truth vindicated. IV. The objections are solidly and clearly answered. Which was left in manuscripts by the reverend and worthy Mr. Alexander Shields, minister of the Gospel at St Andrews, when he was sent by the Church of Scotland unto Caledonia*. (Edinburgh, 1706). The treatise is sometimes referred to by the title *Enquiry into Church Communion* under which it was republished in 1747.

131. Karin Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion and the Anglo-Scottish Union, 1699–1707* (Woodbridge, 2007), 7, 30–3.

132. Jeffrey Stephen, "Defending the Revolution: The Church of Scotland and the Scottish Parliament, 1689–95," *Scottish Historical Review* 89:1 (April 2010):19–53 (see pp. 22, 30, 32).

133. Jeffrey Stephen, *Scottish Presbyterians and the Act of Union 1707* (Edinburgh, 2007), 226.

134. Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion,* pp. 92, 124. Foyer was minister of Stonehouse, Lanarkshire, which was relatively near to Lesmahagow where Linning ministered. Both were in the Presbytery of Hamilton which presented a strongly assertive address to Parliament. Bowie, pp. 124–25 and 127. They reported that the "disposition of the people" in their Presbytery was "generally most averse from the Union." Another minister in the same Presbytery who was leading something of a campaign against the union was Robert Wyllie of Hamilton, a correspondent of Wodrow's. Cf. Michael Fry, *The Union: England, Scotland and the Treaty of 1707* (Edinburgh, 2006), 235.

135. One leading unionist, Sir John Clerk, wrote (no doubt hyperbolically) in 1706 that "in a corner of the street one may see a Presbyterian minister, a popish priest and an Episcopal prelate all agreeing together in their discourse against the Union but upon quite different views and contradictory reasons…." [John Clerk of Penicuik], *A Letter to a Friend giving an Account how the Treaty of Union has been received here* (Edinburgh, 1706), 7; quoted by Richard Holmes, "James Arbuckle and the Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707," *Journal of Irish Scottish Studies* 1:2 (March 2008): 45–57 (see p. 45).

the South and Western Shires," the Hebronites declared their opposition to the union on the basis that the Covenants obliged them to maintain the Scottish Parliament and that England had broken the Solemn League and Covenant.[136] Other separatist pamphlets were promoting "collective action against the treaty, often in violent terms."[137] The pamphlet entitled *A speech in season against the union, or a Smoaking Furnace and a Burning Lamp* (thought to be authored by Patrick Grant) may be taken as representative of these, which called upon "all true Presbyterians in heart" to be ready to "sacrifice all your Lives and die in a good cause."[138] Other such pamphlets published in 1706 include one probably by the Harley brothers, *The smoaking flax unquenchable: Where the Union Betwixt the two Kingdoms is Dissecated, Anatomized, Confuted and Annuled*. There were also pamphlets directly addressed to the parliamentarians such as *To the loyal and religious hearts in parliament, some few effects of the union, proposed between Scotland and England*, and *We heard that the parliament is sitting at Edinburgh … A word to the Unioners and their confederats thee parliamenters*.[139]

The Presbytery of Dumfries complained that before "long we shall have independencie set up in these bounds."[140] The Presbyteries of Penpont and Kirkcudbright were evidently feeling the heat of Separatist fervour when they overtured the Assembly in the same year for renewal of the Covenants and "all o[the] r effectuall Means […] for removing [th]e Grievances of these amongst us who separate from the Com[m] union of this Church."[141] By 1707, the moderator of Penpont Presbytery later reported significantly heightened concern that "Discontent and heart burnings are so increased against the Union, that a very small Incendiary may soon Ruine our Ministery."[142] Alasdair Raffe notes considerable concerns amongst the ministry of the Church that national union would in fact mean ecclesiastical division. John Bannatyne, minister of Lanark, feared that union "may beget a Schisme and Convulsion, both in Church and State, that may be attended with fatal Consequences."[143] James MacDougal, minister of Mearns, related his concerns to Robert Wodrow that "instead of union with our nighbours we are like to have sad divisions among ourselves."[144] Later in 1706, James Forrester, moderator of Biggar Presbytery, wrote to the Commission of the General Assembly approving its first two addresses, and requested "a suitable expedient for the preservatione of unity and concord in this Nationall Church [so] that separate courses" could be avoided.[145]

Hepburn had been deposed by the General Assembly in 1705, an event that did nothing to undermine his popularity. He was joined in 1706 by James Farquhar, minister of Tyrie, and their preaching was attended by great multitudes. In August 1706, Farquhar was censured but received no more severe disciplinary action from the Commission of the General Assembly.[146] This may give an indication, together with references above, that significant parts of the Church were opposed to the union and certainly wary of increasing the separatist cause which was being bolstered by anti-union feeling. As late as October 1706, the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr arranged a private fast which appeared to some to be a show of feeling against the proposed union.[147]

By April 1706, when Linning completed the manuscript of *Church-Communion*, it appeared very likely that the deposed minister, John Macmillan of Balmaghie would be accepted as minister to the Hamiltonians. Once accepted, his preaching forays enjoyed significant popularity. In early 1707 the Commission of the General Assembly were aware that Macmillan was preaching "to great multitudes of people who flock to him up and down the whole Countrey."[148]

The success of this preaching tour was no doubt

136. Bowie, p. 100. "We incorporate with a nation deeply guilty of many national abominations, who have openly broke and burnt their Covenant with God, and league with us, their public and established worship corrupted with superstition and idolatry." Quoted by Fry, p. 236.

137. Bowie, pp. 147–8, 152–3.

138. Bowie, p. 101.

139. Bowie, p. 101. See also Alasdair Raffe, Religious Controversy and Scottish Society, c.1679–1714 (University of Edinburgh, PhD Thesis, 2007), 166, 257–9.

140. National Archives of Scotland [NAS], Letter of Dumfries Presbytery to the Commission of the General Assembly, 1706, CH1/2/26/1, fo. 85r; quoted by Raffe, p. 174.

141. NAS, Penpont Presbytery instructions to the General Assembly, 1705, CH1/2/5/1, fo. 34r, quoted by Raffe, p. 177.

142. NAS, Penpont Presbytery letter, 22 January 1707, CH1/2/5/4, fo. 255r; quoted by Raffe, p. 189.

143. [J. Bannatyne], *Some Queries proposed to Consideration relative to the Union now intended* ([Edinburgh], [1706]), 3; quoted by Raffe, p. 188.

144. National Library of Scotland, James MacDougal to Robert Wodrow, 30 November 1706, Wodrow Letters, Qu. IV, fo. 160r.

145. NAS, Biggar Presbytery letter to the Commission, 28 November 1706, CH1/2/5/4, fo. 228r; quoted by Raffe, p. 188

146. Raffe, pp. 171, 175–6.

147. Cf. A. Ian Dunlop, *William Carstares and the Kirk by Law Established* (Edinburgh, 1967), 115. Ultimately, however much the ministers feared or disliked the union, it must have become clear that the Church would be exposed to greater danger from the Jacobite cause if Scotland remained independent than if it joined in a union with England.

148. NAS, Register of the Commission, CH1/3/9, p. 72; quoted by Raffe, p. 189.

viewed in the light of the militaristic threat that the group posed. By 27 December 1706, the Scottish Parliament had issued the third proclamation within three months forbidding anti-union "meetings and gatherings of the subjects as unwarrantable and contrair to law."[149] The threats of armed insurrection were close to being realised in late 1706, with a concomitant rumoured rising of Jacobite Highlanders under the leadership of the Duke of Atholl.[150] According to Christopher Whatley and Derek Patrick, support for bearing arms in resistance to the union had now narrowed down solely to the Macmillanites (as the Hamiltonians were soon called).[151] Handbills were circulating in Lesmahagow (where Linning ministered) and the area around, summoning Presbyterians to arms. There had been rioting in Edinburgh in October, followed by riots in Glasgow, Kirkcudbright, Dumfries and other areas in November and December 1706.[152] On 20 November 1706, three hundred armed separatists, probably Macmillanites, entered Dumfries, ceremonially burnt the articles of union as "utterly destructive of the nation's independency, crown rights, and our constitute laws, both civil and sacred," and denounced those in the Scots Parliament who "shall presume to carry on the said Union by a supream power, over the belly of the generality of this nation."[153]

It appears that as time went on, significant numbers of people moved backwards and forwards between hearing separating ministers such as Hepburn or Macmillan and the parish minister. In the longer term, this initial separatist success was not, however, to materialise as sustained and consistent support, but this could not necessarily be predicted at the time.[154]

The Correspondences of Eskdale and Ettrick Forrest had seceded from the Societies of the South-West after disagreement with Hamilton following the publication of the Sanquhar Declaration of 1695. In 1707, these now rejoined the Societies after the admission of Macmillan and quickly availed themselves of the privilege of baptism for their children.[155]

Thomas Boston entered upon his charge at Ettrick in the midst of these events and actually upon the same day that the union was effected in May 1707. He notes in his diary that the numbers and influence of Macmillanites near Ettrick exercised "a dead weight on my ministry in the place" and were "continually buzzing in their ears something to the disparagement of the church and the ministry. Moreover, the union with England, which they were violently set against, trysted with my settling among them, and brought in an unacceptable change of the state of affairs."

Boston was surprised to find an ignorance of biblical truth among the dissenters and "the prevalency of the sin of profane swearing" amongst those who made such protests about public oaths.[156] He had a higher opinion of the Hebronites than the Macmillanites and describes a particular encounter that he had with the former.

> I found them to be men having a sense of religion on their own spirits, much affected with their circumstances

149. NAS, PA3/7, Printed Minutes No.46, 1 or NAS, PA6/36, 204, f.46–46v. "Proclamation against unlawful convocation of the lieges debated," in "Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707," http://www.rps.ac.uk. The Scottish Parliament issued previous proclamations against such "tumultuary meetings" on 25 October 1706 and 29 November 1706.

150. Bowie fully describes the threat of arms during this period, pp. 142–57. See also the full account of Macmillanite involvement in Stephen, *Scottish Presbyterians and the Act of Union 1707*, pp. 168ff.

151. C.A. Whatley and D.J. Patrick, *The Scots and the Union* (Edinburgh, 2006), 294.

152. Cf. Fry, p. 244.

153. William Ferguson, *Scotland's Relations with England: A Survey to 1707* (Edinburgh, 1977), 267–8. The Scottish Parliament responded on 30 November 1706 by ordering that the pamphlet *An account of the burning of the articles of union at Dumfries, bearing the declaration read and affixed at the market cross thereof by the tumult assembled on that occasion,* "be burned by the hand of the hangman." On 12 December 1706, Parliament also ordered the public burning of the pamphlet entitled *Queries to the presbyterian noblemen, barons, burgesses, ministers and commoners in Scotland who are for the scheme of an incorporating union with England according to the articles agreed upon by the commissioners of both nations,* "Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707," http://www.rps.ac.uk.

154. Some have claimed that "the old tradition of radical Presbyterian nationalism … was emasculated after 1707." Bruce Lenman, *The Jacobite Risings in Britain, 1689–1746* (1980: Dalkeith, 2004 edn), 285, quoted by Valerie Wallace, "Presbyterian Moral Economy: The Covenanting Tradition and Popular Protest in Lowland Scotland, 1707–c.1746," *The Scottish Historical Review* 89:1 (April 2010): 54–72. There was a split amongst the Macmillanites in 1715 following disagreement over a declaration made regarding the accession of George I. The splinter group was led by William Wilson, a school master from Douglas. See William McMillan, "The Covenanters after the Revolution of 1688," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, Vol. 10, pp. 141–53 (pp. 147–8). Thomas Boston states that "at length [Hepburn's] own party broke among themselves, and many of them left him: so that this day, though he still continues his schism, his affairs and reputation are in a sorry situation." Another separatist group was led by John Adamson (also Addison) an itinerant preacher whom William McMillan believes to have been the leader of the Adamite group. Hepburn would not unite with Adamson because the latter did not have a license to preach from a Presbytery. The Societies likewise apparently regarded Adamson as a "greater snare" than other opponents (cf. McMillan, p. 146). See also Robert Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3.337.

155. McMillan, "The Covenanters after the Revolution of 1688", pp. 145–6.

156. Thomas Boston, *Memoirs of the life, times and writings of the Rev. Thomas Boston of Ettrick (*Aberdeen, 1852), 197–98.

> as destitute of a minister, endowed with a good measure of Christian charity and love, and of a very different temper from that of Mr. Macmillan's followers. I perceived their separation ultimately to resolve into that unwarrantable principle, viz. That joining in communion with the church, in the ordinances of God, is an approbation of the corruptions in her; the very same from which all the rest of the separations do spring; some carrying that principle farther than others, in different degrees. I understood, that the abjuration-oath straitened them, as to addressing the general assemblies any more. I shewed a readiness to administer ordinances to them, on testimonials from their ministers; but found, they scrupled to seek them; and I had no freedom to do it on testimonials from their meeting; since I could not in conscience approve of their separation, and had seen and felt so much of the mischief of separating. So we parted on the morrow after; but with great affection, and much heaviness on both sides.[157]

On 12 December 1708 Boston preached a sermon entitled "The Evil and Danger of Schism," on 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgment." Boston relates in his *Memoirs* that the sermon was preached "Upon public reading of the act of the commission of the General Assembly, against Mr John Macmillan and Mr John Macneill, the two preachers of the separation."[158] Boston establishes several key doctrines.

- That schism and division is an evil incident to the churches of Christ while in this world.

- That professors ought to beware of schism and division, as they tender the authority and honour of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Where schism and division enter into a church, there will be great heats, diversity, yea, contrariety of opinions, people contradicting one another in matters of religion, "That ye all speak the same things," etc.

- That however hard it be, yet it is possible to get a rent church healed.

- That it is the duty of all church members to endeavour the unity of the church, and the cure of schisms: and particularly, it is the duty of disjointed members to take their own places in the body again.

- That schisms and divisions, as they are grievous to all the sons of peace, so they are in a special manner heavy and afflicting to faithful ministers of the gospel of peace.[159]

The sermon outlines the nature of schism and, as Boston indicates, "was directed precisely against the separation," refuting separatist objections against uniting with the Church of Scotland. He transcribed it, "allowed to be given out: and it was of some use for a time." He says that "Mr Macmillan preached within a mile of this parish in February thereafter … a sermon, on design to confute that sermon of mine, producing the copy of my sermon, and reading parcels of it before the people … I understood after, that several who were there were disgusted, and that it had done their cause little service. He left this country, leaving no copy of his sermon behind him; which has been taken notice of by judicious persons. I waited a while, till I should see whether any copy of it appeared or not: at length none appearing, I spoke a little of it in the pulpit, desiring the people to believe what I had taught them, till they should see it confuted by scripture, etc."[160]

Church-Communion appeared within this general context of debate and commotion. More and more perhaps, it must have seemed essential to Linning that a voice of authority and sanity such as that of Shields should be heard, even at the risk of being drowned out in the apoplexy surrounding the treaty. There is a sense in which *Church-Communion* bears comparison with Durham's *Treatise on Scandal* which was subtitled "A Dying Man's Testament to the Church of Scotland." Dying in 1700 and having left his manuscripts to Linning, Shields had bequeathed something similar for the benefit of the Church of Scotland.

157. Boston, *Memoirs*, p. 419.

158. Boston later discovered that he had been mistaken in thinking that he was required to read the act of commission to his congregation. His view, however, was that it should have been obligatory and that his reading of "it was a happy mistake, ordered by the good Providence of God." *Memoirs*, pp. 207, 218.

159. *The Whole Works of the late Reverend Thomas Boston of Ettrick,* ed. Samuel M'Millan, 12 vols. (Aberdeen, 1850), 7.593–613.

160. Boston, *Memoirs*, p. 207. John Macpherson opines regarding this sermon: "I am not sure but it is one which Renwick, had he survived so long, would have been quite prepared to preach." "The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology," *An Anthology of Presbyterian & Reformed Literature*, ed. Christopher Coldwell, volume 5 (Dallas, TX: Naphtali Prress, 1992), p. 165. See also, Macpherson, *The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology,* Sixth Series of the Chalmers Lectures, ed. C. G. McCrie (Edinburgh: MacNiven & Wallace, 1903), 124.

In acknowledging (together with all "who truely Fear God") the mixed character of the Church of Scotland after 1690, in the prefatory epistle Linning makes use of the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. 13:25, a classic proof text against separatism). "Christ hath sowed good Seed in his Church in this Land…. But it is as true, That the Enemy hath sowed Tares also, and that while Men Slept." The Enemy was also assaulting the Church "on Right and Left Hand."

Linning was not the first to use the biblical allusion to right hand and left hand defections (cf. 2 Cor. 6:4–7). Most notably it was used by Robert McWard to describe the early divisions amongst the most resolute Covenanters in Rotterdam. In 1679 McWard refused to separate from Robert Fleming who in turn refused to separate from indulged ministers. This position was opposed by Robert Hamilton and James Boig who believed that secondary separation was essential. Donald Cargill sided with McWard.

McWard sent a letter to Scotland in late 1679 expressing his fear of Satan's devices "who, since he cannot carry you aside to the left hand snares, will see by all means if he can fling you … to excesses on the right hand," which would "prove most … destructive of the whole of the old cause of the Church of Scotland." His great concern was that the right hand excesses of Hamilton and Boig were resulting in a view that was not only separating them from every minister but undermining the very basis of Church union and communion. He felt a greater fear that by this the "cause of the whole frame of Presbyterianism may be more certainly destroyed, than by the other" as the "poor remnant may run down one another with division." "Whosoever adopts this principle," he warned, "hath not the mind of Christ; for there are other patent and obvious ways to witness against all the evils of our way besides these."[161] Significantly, he states the following:

> I told them then, so it has proved too true since, and will prove more true every day, that if the principle whereby they defend their practice were owned, it would not only infer the dissolution of the united visible church, but also of all Christian society.[162]

Linning does not make explicit reference to McWard, but since he too is applying the language of right-hand defections to the Hamiltonian party, the resemblance is surely significant. The troubles in Rotterdam and the issues at stake were all too similar compared with the situation faced a decade later. It may be that some were tracing the root of the later divisions to this point. Linning refers to left and right hand opposition frequently within the "Epistle to the Reader" and Shields also makes use of it in the main treatise.

> Prelatists, upon the one hand, are pressing Separation from this Church…. And some on the other hand, who profess themselves Presbyterians, are continuing in a stated Schism from this Church, which yet is the Purest in the World for Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, even those People themselves being Judges.[163]

Linning makes the case that all of the most resolute Covenanter ministers and martyrs who witnessed against the Indulgence would not have adopted the same position as Hamilton towards the Revolution Church, but would have united with it. He refers to Richard Cameron, Donald Cargill and James Renwick, drawing upon a specific relevant quotation from Cargill. The latter

> often declared that his Soul hated Separation, and obtested his Hearers to pray for Faithful Ministers, adding particularly this Reason (in a Preaching on a week day at Loudoun hill) that People could not be long kept free of Schism or Heresie, if they wanted Spiritual Guides, to which I was Ear Witness: And the worthy Martyr *Mr. Richard Cameron* Minister of the Gospel, is said often to have had the like Expressions.[164]

161. McWard, *Epagonismoi; or, Earnest Contendings for the Faith. Being the answers written to Mr. Robert Fleming's first and second paper of proposals, for union with the indulged; the first paper printed Anno 1681. In which Answers, more sound and solid proposals for a safe and lasting Union are offered, and a solemn Appeal thereanent made. Whereunto some of the Author's Letters relative to the Sins and Duties of the day are annexed. By that faithful servant of Jesus Christ, Mr Robert M'Ward, some time Minister of the Gospel in Glasgow* (Edinburgh, 1723), 369–74, cf. also pp. 375–84.

162. McWard also says that he was "brought to the gates of death" by these "cause-destroying excesses." Quoted by Maurice Grant, *No King but Christ: the story of Donald Cargill* (Darlington, 1988), 252. Shields expresses sentiments similar to McWard when he asks how the principle of separatism would work out in the future. "Shall it be in these that for every Scandal, Defection and Corruption not confessed there must be a Rupture, Division and Separation again? Then how long shall that Church last?… Must there be endless Divisions and Withdrawings?" *Church-Communion*, p. 68.

163. *Church-Communion*, pp. 9, 16. Patrick Walker records: "It was one of the Sayings of worthy *John Livingstoun* a Sailer in *Borrowstounness,* and which he said to my self. That when he was any Time at Home, he saw many Defects and Faults amongst us; but when he went abroad into another Nation, he thought there was a goodly Number in *Scotland,* without either Spot or Wrinkle." *Biographia Presbyteriana,* 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1827), 1.254.

164. *Church-Communion*, pp. ii-iii.

Cargill is said to have remarked in his lecture that "of necessity we cannot do without [ministers] … Leaders we must have, for it is not come to that yet, that we shall be able to lead and guide ourselves."[165]

These remarks were spoken against the excesses of the Gibbites who disowned all of the current ministers, including Cargill, for various degrees of defection. Instead they were led to extremes by one who was not a minister, John Gibb.[166] It is likely, though not explicit, that Linning intended some reflection upon the Hamiltonians who likewise had been led by one who was not a minister to disown all current ministers.

8. The Authorship of *Church-Communion* enquired into

There does not appear to have been a direct response to *Church-Communion* in terms of a publication refuting its claims.[167] One response to the book was to issue a new edition of *An Informatory Vindication* together with various pamphlets. Incorporated within this publication was a postscript asserting that Alexander Shields was not the author of *Church-Communion,* but that Thomas Linning himself had written the work and published it under the name of Alexander Shields. This entails a serious allegation of fraud and indicates the opprobrium with which Linning was now regarded amongst the Societies since they believed him to be capable of such an act.

> As for that pamphlet, entitled *Church Communion*, emitted by Mr. Linning and fathered on Mr. Shields, we say that our thoughts of it is, though that the once worthy Mr. Shields was turned off his feet by cunning and slight of Messrs. Linning and Boyd, so that he could not easily recover them again; yet that he was a man more consonant to his principles, than so openly to condemn by his pen that which he had so openly avouched before, as may be clearly seen both in the *Vindication* and *Hind let loose*: for we having had the occasion to know the judgment, humour and temper of the three men, as much as any in the nation, must say, (that abstract from Mr. Shield's parts) for faithfulness, zeal, love, and constancy to the cause of God, we found him by many degrees preferable to the other two, although he was (as said above) stolen off his feet by his false brethren: and as for Mr. Thomas's pamphlet, as we judge him to be the author, so as the swatch is not pleasing, being *round spun linning indeed*,[168] we shall suffer the author to make the best hand of it he can: and as for what bitterness he hath kithed against the poor remnant by words and deeds, in hindering them to get the gospel faithfully preached: he being the principal man that instigated his brethren to write to the colleges abroad, that all doors of hope might be shut as to the poor remnant's bettering their condition, we say, it ill became him to have stood so cross in the way of their mercy of the preached gospel, for it was to their purses he was beholden for what advancements he attained unto when abroad.[169]

Patrick Walker knew Shields better than the author of this postscript and he refutes the allegation in his own characteristic language. Walker recommends "that compendious Treatise written by worthy Mr. *Shields* upon Church-Communion, and against Separation from the

165. Quoted by Maurice Grant, *No King but Christ*, pp. 166–7. Grant asserts with good justification that Cargill would have entered the Revolution Church of Scotland, given his steadfast adherence to Rutherford and Durham's opposition to Separatism (pp. 208–9). Cargill also sought to reconcile differences between John Welch and Robert Hamilton at Bothwell (pp. 96–97) and refused to associate with Hamilton's withdrawal from Robert McWard at Rotterdam (p. 106).

166. Walker also refers to this: "Mr. *Cargil,* preaching at *Lothianhill,* upon the 5th *May* 1681" warned against casting off ministers in the way that the Gibbites were doing. "Oh! for the Lord's Sake, pray for faithful Ministers to your selves, and never content your selves without them; for ye will not continue long sound in the Faith, and straight in the Way, if ye want faithful Guides." *Biographia Presbyteriana*, Vol. 1, p. 255.

167. Linning himself published *A Letter from a Friend to Mr John Mackmillan, wherein is Demonstrate the Contrariety of his Principles and Practices to the Scripture, our Covenants, Confession of Faith, and Practice of Christ* ([Edinburgh?], [1709]), together with a pamphlet in the form of a dialogue called *The friendly conference, or, a discourse between the country man and his nephew, who having fallen off from hearing, hath for some years been a follower of Mr. M'Millan* (Edinburgh, 1711). Evidently there was something of a pamphlet war at the time with a response to Linning entitled *A Modest Reply to a Pamphlet Intituled A Letter from a Friend to Mr John M'millan* (1710), and a response to this: [Gavin Hamilton], *Just Reflections upon a Pamphlet, entitled, A Modest Reply to a Letter from a Friend to Mr John M'millan* ([Edinburgh?], 1712). There was also a reply to *The friendly conference* which was entitled *The survey, of the friendly conference: Or The discourse between the countrie man and his nephew: breiflie examined…In a letter from the countrie-man his surveyer* (Edinburgh, 1712).

168. A verbal pun on Linning (Linen). According to Hew Scott, he wrote his own name as Linen in 1691. The material linen was also sometimes spelt "linning." *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ: The Succession of Ministers in the Church Of Scotland from the Reformation,* ed. Hew Scott, second edition, 7 vols. (Edinburgh, 1915–28), *Vol. 3, Synod of Glasgow and Ayr*, p. 314.

169. Hay Fleming states that this postscript "may be found in the 1707 edition of the *Informatory Vindication*, pp. 230–32." *Six Saints of the Covenant,* 2.151. This seems to be the same as the source described by Hector Macpherson as "Pamphlets bound up with Informatory Vindication," p. 231. *The Cameronian Philosopher*, 217. The postscript also appears to be titled "A Preface Introductory to the following Sheets," written as a preface to *Declarations of the United Societies 1692–1707*.

Church of *Scotland;* which they say, in a slanderous, fool, lying Postscript to their Pamphlets, That Mr. *Linning,* who was the Publisher, had fathered it upon him." Walker identifies the characteristic style of Alexander Shields in the treatise: "it is plain to all (that it fathers itself) who have read his Writings, and heard him preach, reason and debate." There is in Shields a distinct manner of close reasoning and semi-poetic flights that would be difficult to imitate. The preface, authored by Linning, is manifestly an entirely different style to that of the treatise itself which compares closely with *A Hind let loose*. Walker is in no doubt due to these considerations, but even more so on considering the nature of the arguments which are consistent with those used by Shields "as soon as we entered into this Period, under other Dispensations and Circumstances," i.e. following the Revolution when there were significant debates in the General Meetings of the United Societies. Walker refers to the publication of *Methods and Motives of Union* which was issued to clarify the views of Shields, Boyd and Linning on this subject in 1691. Shields published

> *Methods and Motives* that induced him and others to unite with the Church at that Time, considering his Answers to their Objections; and there are some yet alive, worthy of all Credit, who were Witnesses to his publick Conference with them on these Heads, who can testify that he spake with the same Breath that now is published [i.e. in *Church-Communion*].[170]

Walker confirms the impression given by the diaries left by Alexander Shields and the record produced by Michael Shields in *Faithful Contendings Displayed* that the entrenched opposition adopted by Hamilton ensured a permanent irreconcilable breach between the different factions of the United Societies:

> when *Robert Hamilton* came from abroad among them, they got a Brow of Brass, calling him a Liar, and upbraided him to his Face, saying, Altho' he used these Arguments to draw them out of the Way of the Lord, yet you dare not publish them. I well remember, he [Shields] said, Dare I not? dare I not? I promise before you all, I both dare and will, and avow it before the World. But alas! they still gave us a deaf Ear, and now will not be spoken to, nor pled with.[171]

Walker regards the disputed authorship as a tactic that allowed the Macmillanites to evade rather than answer the treatise:[172]

> that which hath induced them to publish that lying Postscript, was, to evite the Dint of Mr. *Shields's* unanswerable Answers to their Objections against Communion with this Church, now when they know he is not to answer for himself; if he had been spared to this Day, he would have owned and avowed all that is in it.

It seems likely that the confrontation between Hamilton and Shields referred to above was at the General Meeting of 6 November 1689 when Hamilton delivered a protest that Shields gave a promise to answer.[173] Walker notes that Shields proceeded to work upon this immediately and that this was the commencement of *Church-Communion*. "I was Witness to his Writing of it in *Corsick,* in the Parish of *Carmichael,* shortly after that Promise in a publick Meeting in the Kirk of *Douglas;* and I well remember the best Chamber he then had, when he wrote it, was an old Kiln, and a Pickle of his Horse's Hay for his Chair, and his Feet below his Horse's Belly." Shields himself refers to the promise in *Church-Communion*: "being under the bond of a Promise, extorted from me some years ago at a Meeting at *Douglass*, so here I shall essay to give my poor Thoughts upon this Subject."[174]

170. Walker, *Biographia Presbyteriana*, 1.125 -7.

171. Walker is keen also to refute the idea that Linning was maintained financially by the Societies when abroad. "They say, in the End of that lying Postscript, That it ill became Mr.*Linning* to oppose them; for it was to their Purses he was beholden for what Advances he attained to when abroad. I know none now alive who was more concerned, both in Contributions and Distributions, than I was in these Years; and yet I ingenuously declare, I never heard Mr. *Linning's* Name mentioned amongst us as a Person in these Circumstances; and I know assuredly, that he was supplied in and by the honourable Laird of *Kersland's* Family." "If the Lord spare," he adds, "I resolve to give the World a more surprising Account of the rude Treatment and unheard-of Ingratitude Mr. *Shields, Linning,* and others received at that Time, and since, at their Hands." This would have been included in the projected biography of Shields which was never published.

172. The same tactic was employed later in 1731 in Andrew Clarkson's *Plain Reasons for Presbyterians Dissenting from the Revolution-church.* Amongst other charges it was suggested that John Carstares had corrupted places in Durham's *Concerning Scandal*. The attack on Carstares' character is as easily refuted as the one against Linning. See Introduction, "A Defense of John Carstares," in *Collected Sermons of James Durham,* volume 1 (Naphtali Press and Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), 34–37.

173. See page @ fn 50.

174. *Church-Communion,* p. 3. It is evident that the "Answer to the protest" to which Walker refers is not of identical extent with the eventual treatise, the manuscript "Answer" having only twenty-six pages single and double sided. "Alexander Shields's answer to Sir Robert Hamilton's protest", Wod. Qu. XVI, ff. 99r–113r. The "Answer" expanded upon the issue of sinful associations, which is not reiterated in *Church-Communion*. Shields emphasised that not all associations with the ungodly are sinful, *Church-Communion*, p. 22.

It is worth noting that this reference allows a rough dating to when Shields wrote these words. "Some years ago" implies that a handful of years at least had passed since 1689. It seems unlikely that, in the midst of the field of war in the Low Countries, Shields would have had the appropriate conditions or opportunities to work upon this treatise, despite maintaining his diary. The greater likelihood is therefore that it was being worked upon no sooner than the latter part of 1695 when he returned to Scotland in order to consider the five calls that he had received from various congregations. Three of the calls that he received were from the strong Covenanting areas in Lanarkshire and the west. Shields felt, however, that his presence there would be more of a hindrance than a help to healing divisions. In his answer to the Hamilton Presbytery he stated that he believed that the work of healing "requires a more skilful hand than mine, that had the unhappiness all my days to be involved in contentions and divisions, but could never had either satisfaction in them nor success in endeavours to heal them."[175]

Shields has an aside in *Church-Communion* containing similar sentiments to the effect that he had previously feared "that my moving in them [i.e. contentions] might make them worse, and in the hope that forbearance for a while might contribute to the sooner cooling and quenching the heat of them."[176] The treatise had become a necessity due to separatism "Spreading and Growing" rather than cooling. The latter comment suggests that the manuscript reached its final form nearer the period of time when separatism seemed to be gathering more momentum and when the Commission of the General Assembly felt it necessary to issue *A Seasonable Admonition and Exhortation to some who Separate from the Communion of the Church of Scotland* (1699). It seems less likely that Shields would have worked on the substance of the treatise in the period of around two years before he was settled in St Andrews since he shows a reticence for controversy in considering calls to parishes in the southwest.

Frequently, the successors of the Macmillanites in the Reformed Presbyterian Churches either imply or state without justification that Shields repented of entering the Revolution Church of Scotland.[177] It is evident in the extracts from the diary left by Shields (reproduced in Wodrow's *Analecta*), however, that *Church-Communion* does indeed reflect his views accurately in relation to union with the Revolution Church of Scotland.[178] Shields himself says that "tho' my Sentiments are shallow and changeable, as other Mens are, having the imperfection of Mutability as well as Fallibility; yet I know no change of Principles that these Contentions need drive me to."[179] Linning seeks to show in the preface to the treatise that this was always the position held by Shields.

> in the Year 1687 … when he came to Utrecht, in Discourse with me, among other things, he positively owned, that none of these things, which were in Controversy betwixt us and some other Presbyterian Ministers, could be owned as sufficient Grounds of Separation, if the Lord should send deliverance to his Church, and give us access to present our Grievances to Church Judicatories, with personal Safety, (which we could never have, until the late happy Revolution).[180]

In June 1685 Shields had written a very irenic letter "to the prisoners of Christ at Dunottar Castle." The letter addresses the issue of what sort of communion ought to be among fellow Presbyterian prisoners who, though they were being similarly persecuted for their opposition to tyranny, did not hold the same separate position as the Societies. In a phrase that was to reappear in *Church-Communion*, Shields said that the "want of peaceableness as well as the want of truth will make our salt to lose its savour"; though difficult to obtain, peace must be pursued. He maintained that it would be lawful to hear ministers "holding the same Presbyterian testimony against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism,

175. D. Hay Fleming, "Alexander Shields and his five calls in 1696," *Original Secession Magazine* 29 (1931): 363–71 (see p. 369).

176. *Church-Communion*, pp. 2–3.

177. "Mr. Alexander Shields was prevailed upon by his two brethren to join in communion with the established Church. He repented of this compliance, but not in time to recover, what he lost, his character." *Reformation Principles Exhibited by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York, 1807), 96. John Howie states: "This compromise … caused Shields much self-reproach and many a sorrowful day. A gloom settled upon his spirit which does not seem ever to have passed away." John Howie of Lochgoin and James Kerr (eds), *Sermons Delivered in the Times of Persecution in Scotland By Sufferers For The Royal Prerogatives of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh, 1880), 580.

178. "Alexander Shields' Memoires" in Wodrow, *Analecta*, Vol. 1, pp. 177–205.

179. *Church-Communion,* p. 2. This was a point also emphasised in the answer to Hamilton's protestation. It is worth noting that Linning did not abandon his own views either and continued to protest against former sins within the Revolution Church. In December 1695, he preached at the Tolbooth church in Edinburgh. George Home of Kimmerghame recorded in his diary that Linning "insisted upon the sins of the land, particularly covenant breaking, bloodguiltiness, and persecution." National Archives of Scotland, Copy of George Home of Kimmerghame's diary, 1694–1696, GD1/649/1, pp. 147–8, quoted by Raffe, p. 150.

180. *Church-Communion,* p. 3.

Sectarianism, tyranny and malignancy … having liberty withal to protest against their former defections and offices, and to withdraw from them again if they shall be stated in the same circumstances wherein they were before, when we maintained a separation from them."[181] This is the essential argument of *Church-Communion.*

Contrary to the author of the postscript as quoted above, the substance as well as the style of *A Hind let loose* compares directly with *Church-Communion*. Shields enlarges upon the subject of unity and schism considerably in *A Hind let loose*, laying down similar principles. In very forthright terms Shields asserts that "to dissolve or break off Communion with a true Church, whereof we are Members, were an unnatural *Schism,* which is horrid sin." He also expresses reluctance to withdraw fellowship but concedes that "in some cases, as we are warranted, so are necessitated to *withdraw:* yet neither do we allow it upon slight or slender grounds." Shields also opposes separation from ministers on account of their personal failings.[182]

Walker also demonstrates from firsthand knowledge that these were the views that Shields continued to hold until the end of his life, implicitly refuting those who have asserted that he repented after the Revolution.

> Mr. *Shields* said to me, in our last Parting at *Edinburgh,* before he went abroad, Altho' ye have many naughty Ministers in this Church, yet ye have some worthy Men; cleave to the Best, for it is not only dreadfully dangerous to separate from all, but utterly unwarrantable, and cannot be defended*;* wait on, for I am perswaded there is somewhat coming upon this Church, that will pull you out of Doubts of withdrawing from the most Part.[183]

Having considered the evidence in favour, Hector MacPherson's conclusions on the authorship of *Church-Communion* are well worth quoting.

> There seems no reason to doubt the genuineness of the "Enquiry into Church Communion", or to suspect Lining of tampering with his friend's manuscript. Although Shields was dissatisfied with the Revolution settlement, he vehemently denied that he had betrayed any fundamental principle in entering the reconstituted Church.[184]

9. The Motivation for *Church-Communion enquired into*

The motives and context for publication of the treatise by Thomas Linning have been discussed above. He states in signing his name at the conclusion of the preface that he "*desires to see Peace and Truth flourish in the Church of Christ.*"[185] Allusion has also been made to the likelihood that Shields completed the manuscript against the context of a growing movement of separatism in the late 1690s. At the conclusion of the book, Shields opens up the motivation and spirit in which it was written. He reveals a pastoral spirit as one that formerly ministered to the Hamiltonians together with a genuine concern for their spiritual profit as sheep scattered without a shepherd.[186] The book concludes with a pleading and passionate address containing an earnest offer of spiritual benefit to their souls.

> *Dearly Beloved*, our Witness is in Heaven, that the Design of what is here said, is neither to Irritat nor Expose you, but out of sincere Love to your Souls Welfare, to Undeceive you, and Reclaim you from your sad Mistakes. We do therefore Beseech, Exort, and Obtest you, as you Love your Souls, and the Church's Peace, consider without prejudice, what is here offered to you.[187]

Shields was also concerned for the land and the Church as a whole in that continued division is both a symptom and a provocation of the wrath of God. "Be not stiffnecked, but yield your selves unto the Lord, and enter into his Sanctuary, which he hath Sanctified for ever, and serve the Lord your God, that the Fierceness of his Wrath may turn away." This is the theme taken up in the striking lament with which *Church-Communion* opens.

181. Quoted by Hector Macpherson, p. 225. It seems likely that Macpherson was quoting from the manuscript copy rather than the published version (p. 37). The letter was printed in 1726 as *A letter concerning the due boundaries of Christian fellowship; specially, with whom "tis lawful to join in divine worship, and from whom "tis duty to withdraw: written to the prisoners for conscience, in Dunnottar-Castle, who then were many, in Summer 1685.*

182. *A Hind let loose, or an historical representation of the testimonies, of the Church of Scotland … with the true state thereof in all its periods: together with a vindication of the present testimonie, against the popish, prelatical, & malignant enemies of that church … wherein several controversies of greatest consequence are enquired into* (Utrecht, 1687), 228, 232.

183. Walker, *Biographia Presbyteriana*, 1.256.

184. Hector Macpherson, p. 218.

185. *Church-Communion*, p. v.

186. Many sadly acknowledged that this was their condition. In 1697 some Separatists in Hamilton mentioned in their correspondence with the Kirk Session, their "sighing over our silent Sabbath as sheep without a sheepherd," but were committed to withdrawing due to what they regarded as the defections of the ministry. NLS, Separatists' papers, c.1697, Wod. Fol. XXXIV, ff. 137–40, quotations at ff. 137r., 139r., quoted by Raffe, p. 165.

187. *Church-Communion*, p. 77.

> In such a Day of Trouble and Perplexity in the Valley of Vision, they must be blind that do not see, and very brutish that have not the sense of the Wrath of an Holy GOD, so many ways evidenc'd and threatned against this Sinful Church and Nation.[188]

This wrath could be felt in the "Withdrawings of the Shinings of his Power and Glory, that used to be seen and felt in his Sanctuary Solemnities" and "in Plaguing this Land more sensibly than any other, with pinching Penury and Want." Previously the fires of persecution had been endured but now, although these had been extinguished, the wrath of God "hath set us on fire round about, yet we know not it burns us, yet we lay it not to Heart." The evidences of this could be witnessed clearly in abounding sin, error and lukewarmness.

Shields highlights the aspect of this which occasioned greatest grief and pain to the godly. "But the most affecting Symptom, and most astonishing Prognostick of Wrath imminent, is this woful Division and Schism still continuing" not only between the Presbyterians and Episcopalians "but now among them that were United before, in Adhering to, and Contending for the first established and Covenanted Work of Reformation … For all this, his Anger is not turned away, but his Hand is stretched out still … The Anger of the Lord hath Divided them, and if it be not Appeased, he threatens no more to Regard them."[189] An aggravating feature of these divisions was the "Unseasonable" timing of it and its potential to hinder and harm the work of Reformation when the Church was at an infant stage. It was an ungrateful response to the merciful providence of God in the deliverances bestowed upon the land at the Revolution. The danger was that things had come to such a "Shock and Crisis, that if there be not present Endeavours used for Union, the Breach in all probability, will grow Wider and more Incurable."[190]

These references seem to further date the manuscript to the later 1690s when the famine of 1694–99 was most severe and when the threat from separatism was growing. Karen Cullen observes that "the worst years of mortality and high prices occurred in 1697 and 1699 after the poor harvests of 1696 and 1698."[191] In language similar to that used by Shields, the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale traced it to God's wrath against:

> a great Contempt of the Gospell, much ignorance and ungodliness in the land, and self-seeking, and lukewarmness in the matter of God among all Ranks of persons and profaneness and wickedness grow. The shamefull sins of Drunkenness and uncleaness swearing, sabbath breaking The total neglect by some and superficial performing by others, of the worship of God, Both in secret and in families, abound in City and Countrey, and by frequent murders Blood Toucheth Blood … That for these and other sins The wrath and displeasure of God is visible against us in the unkindly cold and winter-like spring, wherby God blast our expectations and hopes, of the fruits of the Earth, and cutt off man and beast by famine and That already a great dearth arisen.[192]

Destitution was therefore greatly increased and a very serious stage was reached in the spring of 1698. We may not be dogmatic in dating the completion of the manuscript of *Church-Communion*, but it seems likely from these references that it was after Shields was settled at St Andrews and possibly as late as 1698, when the Commission of Assembly decided to publish its pamphlet refuting separatist arguments. The reference that Shields makes to imminent wrath also seems to anticipate the virtual ruin of the nation following the Darien venture in which Shields himself was to take part in 1699.

10. The General Principles of *Church-Communion* enquired into

Church-Communion rises above its immediate historical context in a number of respects. It is sometimes said that it is difficult to know how to apply the principles outlined by James Durham in *A Treatise Concerning Scandal* regarding the unity of the visible Church and schism to a denominational setting. This is because the latter was written in the context of a single national established Church.[193] It is a questionable claim since any writing on the subject of the unity of the visible Church and schism after Durham was published in the context of a broken state of church association. Thomas Boston and Thomas M'Crie have made significant contributions in particular. Although James Walker describes *Church-Communion* as influential

188. *Church-Communion*, p. 1.
189. *Church-Communion*, pp. 1–2.
190. *Church-Communion*, p. 2.
191. Karen J. Cullen, *Famine in Scotland – the "ill Years" of the 1690s* (Edinburgh, 2010), 13. Cullen states that it was "one of the most serious famines to occur in Scotland since the medieval period" (p. 30). Between 5 and 15 per cent of the population was lost (pp. 1–2).
192. NAS PC1/51, Privy Council Register of Acts 1696–9, 6 May 1698, quoted by Cullen, p. 102.
193. Iain H. Murray states that this is "an aspect of the church question which appears to have received less attention, namely, what is the relation between the churches, considered as denominations, and the unity of the church universal?" *A Scottish Christian Heritage* (Edinburgh, 2006), 279. We discuss this subject below.

and widely read in subsequent generations, it has been comparatively neglected in the more recent past. It has its own significance, however, as the first treatment to arise from a context where some Presbyterians were formally separate from a national established Presbyterian Church.

The major principles outlined and emphasised in *Church-Communion* may be summarised as follows: (1) union is an absolutely essential duty; (2) division, contention and schism are great evils; (3) the causes of division need to be addressed in order to bring about union; (4) separation is only warranted when union would require one to sin.

As both Walker and John Macleod note, Shields summarises and restates the general principles formulated most notably by Durham. Shields refers frequently to these as principles that were commonly accepted amongst Scottish Presbyterians. Writers such as Robert McWard and John Brown of Wamphray had restated and elucidated them further in the intervening decades of the Restoration. The contribution made by Shields is to apply these principles to a specific situation. Shields also elaborates very fully and clearly the scriptural basis for the principles laid down by Durham.

It is notable, however, that in contrast to Durham, Shields eschews learned references to noted or international writers and to the Church Fathers. This is in itself remarkable since the situation after 1690 was entirely similar to the Novatian and Donatist schisms.[194] Perhaps this was due to the circumstances in which Shields wrote the treatise, without access to many books. A more likely explanation is that the target audience was the ordinary members of the Hamiltonian party, with whom scriptural arguments would be the only significant consideration.[195] Perhaps with this partly in mind, Patrick Walker said of *Church-Communion* that "no humane Writing strikes more directly against the Measures and Methods they [the Hamiltonians] have taken since the Revolution, particularly the 80, 81, 82, 83, 84 Pages, which they look upon as insufficient Grounds of Withdrawing from either Ministers or Members of this Covenanted Church."[196]

The principles of Church unity and schism that Shields restates were widely acknowledged, but a "solid and practical impression" of them that was lacking at that time.[197] The first principle is that there is an absolute duty of unity where division exists, and that this duty cannot be disputed any more than other commanded duties in Scripture, such as praying, preaching and keeping the Sabbath. Shields then proceeds to show exactly more extensively how Scripture commands this duty than had Durham on this point in *Concerning Scandal*.

Firstly, he notes that certain other duties that are commanded among Christians necessarily infer and require this duty of uniting. These are (1) Love; (2) Reconciliation; (3) Peaceableness.[198] Secondly, he shows how "Oneness of Interest, Affection, Judgment and Practice, Profession and Worship, is more expressly commanded and commended in Scripture" in relation to: (1) the Christian's calling; (2) the brotherly relationship between Christians and the oneness of the visible Church; (3) the promised blessing of unity under the

194. Novatianism concerned whether those who had avoided persecution under Decius in 250 A.D. by offering sacrifice to pagan deities could be restored to communion. Novatianus was consecrated as a rival bishop of Rome and his party claimed to be the true holy Catholic Church. Donatism focused upon those bishops who handed over copies of the Scriptures to the civil authorities for destruction under the Diocletian persecution in 303 A.D. It was maintained that the ministerial acts of such bishops were invalidated by their guilt and that the whole Catholic Church, by tolerating them, also contracted guilt and ceased to be the Church. Rival bishops were therefore appointed and schism took place. The separation lasted until around the middle of the sixth century.

195. John Stevenson of Daily has left a first-hand account as an ordinary member of the Societies who had suffered during the times of persecution and now wrestled with his duty at the Revolution. The only arguments that weighed with him were from Scripture. "After it pleased Zion's God to bring back our captivity, and Presbytery was established in this Church, I had great difficulty about my joining in communion with her, and that because I thought our covenants were not renewed, and all guilty of sad defection not duly censured; it was difficult to me what to determine, therefore I set apart a day to ask counsel of the Lord, and went at some distance to the fields both to pray and think on what I should do … I consulted my Bible, to see what had been the practice of the Church of God in the like case, both under the Old and New Testament dispensation." He considered chiefly the example and teaching of Christ, citing various examples, "from all which I concluded, that it was my unquestionable duty to join in communion with the Church of Scotland, though our covenants were not renewed, seeing she had all the essentials of a true Church, her doctrine pure and uncorrupt, her government, discipline, and worship, according to the word of God, and the sacraments administered according to the pattern shown in the mount." He states that he never regretted this decision. "A Rare Soul-Strengthening and Comforting Cordial for Old and Young Christians by John Stevenson, Land-Labourer in the Parish of Daily in Carrick, who died in the year 1728," *Select Biographies,* ed. W. K. Tweedie, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1845–7), 2.447–9. See also the experience of James Nisbet of Hardhill as related in Edwin Nisbet Moore, *Our Covenant Heritage,* 155–164, or James Nisbet, *Private Life of the Persecuted: or memoirs of the first years of James Nisbet, one of the Scottish Covenanters. Written by himself* (W. Oliphant, 1827), 230–242.

196. *Biographia Presbyteriana*, Vol. 1, p. 231.

197. *Church-Communion*, p. 3.

198. Shields says strikingly: "The want of Peaceableness, as well as the want of Truth, will make our Salt to lose its savour." *Church-Communion*, p. 5.

New Covenant; (4) the frequency with which it is a subject of prayer. "If all these Scriptures were considered, pressing Union as much as any Duty, the endeavours of Establishing it would be very easy and pleasant, and Debates would soon be composed."

Secondly, Shields establishes that "Division, Contention, and Schism in the Church are great Evils, concerning which the Scriptures clearly hold forth" that they are: (1) exceedingly sinful; (2) foolish; (3) the cause and effect of the Lord's wrath; (4) the cause of the saddest effects, such as "spoiling the Church of its Purity and Peace, Government, Order and Beauty of Ordinances, marring the Gospel's Success, bringing the Ministry into Contempt, jumbling, torturing and racking the Minds and Consciences of those that are ingaged in the Contest, obstructing the Power, diverting the Practice and Spiritual Exercise, and wearing out the Life of Religion, making Christians Carnal."[199]

Thirdly, it is necessary to identify the causes of division in order that they may be removed. These generally are: (1) the holy cause of God's sovereign use of it for chastisement; (2) the sinful cause of defection on the right hand or left; (3) fomenting causes that protract and strengthen division such as ignorance or blindness to faults, factious party spirit, unwillingness to lose face, pride, intemperate language, suspicion and refusing to condescend where it is possible without sinning.

The second key principle advanced by Shields contains some necessary qualifications of the absolute duty of uniting. (1) It is not a union upon any terms whatsoever; union cannot be contemplated where it would require one to sin by approving what is sinful, relinquishing any truth, or being obstructed from duty.[200] (2) Confessing faults is the best way of removing division, though not the only way since offences may cease to be a valid cause of division when circumstances change and because union is more likely to pave the way for later confession. (3) There are some general grounds for lawful separation, in part at least, such as heresy in doctrine, idolatry ("Breach of the second Command in the Matter and Manner of Worship"), intrusion or tyranny of government and schism. One cannot contemplate communion that obliges us to sin or to homologate the sins of others.

(4) Although these may be lawful grounds of separation at one time, there may not continue to be a necessity of separation when the circumstances change. He notes that as opposed to the Hamiltonian active separation from the Church after the Revolution, the former separation during the Killing Times was passive and negative in simply refusing to follow a course of defection when the Church was not settled but in a broken and declining condition.

(5) It is also important to distinguish between our duty in different times and conditions of the Church. When a Church is in its infancy and not yet mature in Reformation (as Shields regards the Revolution Church to be) certain things can be borne with that would be serious in a more mature state. Likewise distinctions are to be made if the Church is reforming or backsliding; if it is settled or in a broken and persecuted state. Reformation is best advanced by different means at different times and the rules and practices of one time and set of circumstances are not to be taken as absolute rules for all time coming.

11. Stating the Question

Various arguments for rejecting the Revolution Settlement have been made in subsequent generations on behalf of the Hamiltonian party.[201] It is evident from the records of the time (including Shields' book *Church-Communion*), that dissent was focused upon the Separatist conviction that uniting with the Church of Scotland would entail partaking of the guilt of those who had in some way complied with the royal supremacy over the Church claimed by the Stuarts. The essential case made by Hamilton against joining the Revolution Church of Scotland in 1690 was that it would involve union and communion with those guilty of various degrees of defection during the persecuting times and, by implication, put an end to the testimony maintained by the United Societies during the times of persecution. Hamilton believed that those who were thus guilty should confess their defection before any union or communion could be considered.

199. "For, in experience it is alwise found, and in our Day sadly felt, to have produced many Disorders, spoiling the Church of its Purity and Peace, Government, Order and Beauty of Ordinances, marring the Gospel's Success, bringing the Ministry into Contempt, jumbling, jarring, torturing, and racking the Minds and Consciences of those that are ingaged in the Contest, obstructing the Power, diverting the Practice and Spiritual Exercise, and wearing out the Life of Religion, making Christians Carnal." These things grieve the Holy Spirit into withdrawing "his gracious Presence and Countenance from Ordinances." "It is inconsistent with the Thriving, yea or Standing of the Church or Kingdom, where it continues long." It produces blind zeal on one hand and lukewarmness on the other and inevitably after it is established leads to errors (*Church-Communion*, pp. 9–10).

200. Shields emphasises of course that none of these obtain in relation to the Revolution Church of Scotland.

201. These include arguments about implicit aspects of the Revolution Settlement such as whether the process for settling the Church was Erastian, failed to include the Covenants explicitly, etc. The defects of the Revolution Settlement have frequently been acknowledged by those who nevertheless did not believe that it was sinful.

The object of *Church-Communion* is not simply to state these principles in the abstract, but to apply them to these arguments sustaining the current situation of division. In the third section of the treatise, Shields therefore comes to state the question under debate, initially defining what it is not. Firstly, it was not being debated whether or not to have "Union or Communion with Hereticks, Idolaters, or such Apostats as oppose our Common Confession of Orthodox Principles." The question was rather, whether or not to have "Union and Communion with Presbyterian Ministers, whom we love in the Lord, and acknowledge to be Ministers of this Church of Scotland, with whom we sometimes had sweet Fellowship, And with whom again we would desire to have Communion in Ordinances, if our Exceptions were removed." Here Shields is quoting from *An Informatory Vindication*. The difference with these ministers was whether they would now own all of the testimony of the United Societies in relation to matters of compliance that were now past.

Secondly, the question was not whether there could be union or communion with those actively "carrying on Courses of Complyances and Defections, Involving all in Sin." This justified withdrawing communion during the time of persecution, but now the Church was reforming. Shields refers to the Engagement to Duties entered upon when the Covenant was renewed at Lesmahagow where the Societies had sworn to "guard against all Schism, or sinful Separation from any part of the true Reformed Covenanted Church of Scotland" holding its former doctrine, worship, discipline and government and positively "maintain Union and Communion" with all that did so.

Thirdly, it was not under debate whether there should be union with the Church of Scotland on the condition that the Societies would approve of former defections or condemn their own former testimonies. "[I]f it were," says Shields, "I should be yet as much for Separation as ever." The question was whether they would unite with those who while not confessing or condemning the defections, would permit the Society men to keep their "Opinion, and to Protest against them." He notes that *An Informatory Vindication* maintains the lawfulness of James Renwick seeking ordination from a Dutch Classis since the Classis did not "object against our Testimony," while they were aware of the differences and Renwick and the Societies were protesting against certain defections. Shields regards the situation in 1690 as identical with this set of circumstances under which Renwick obtained ordination.

Fourthly, the question was not whether or not they would "continue to Condemn and Testify against" former defections, but rather continuing this protest either in communion or total separation from all of the other ministers.

Fifthly, the question was whether there could be union and communion with those who would not confess the sinfulness of former defections or else with those who condemned such defections but did not think them a sufficient ground for separation because they could continue to protest within the Church.

After this careful distinction and clarification, Shields was ready to define the "Hinge of the Controversie" and outline the "Complex Question" under dispute with the Hamiltonians, which is certainly not summarised easily.

> Whether or not may we have so much Respect to the Ordinances and Peace of the Church in the Present Circumstances, as no longer to withdraw from, but join in Union and Communion with the Presbyterian Ministers of the Church of *Scotland*, that do own and adhere unto the true received Principles of the said Church, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, grounded upon, and consonant unto the Written Word of God; who being guilty of Defections in times of Tentation, will not now acknowledge the same, or acknowledging and Condemning them, will not separate themselves from the rest that will not Confess them, thinking this no Ground of Withdrawing at such a Time, and in such a Case, when these Defections and Corruptions are not in the Constitution of the Church, and do not continue to be Snares, when none are required to Justifie them, nor to Condemn any Testimonies against them, And Liberty is granted to Protest against them, and to continue to plead for Confessing and Condemning them; When also several Guilty of the grossest Degrees of Defections are excepted from being United with?[202]

Shields supports the case for affirming this question by reverting to the "common Rules of Union approved of all, and confirmed at length by Mr. *Durham* on *Scandal*, *Part* 4. *Chap*.7." These principles relating to union and schism distinguish between sufficient and warrantable grounds for lawful separation and insufficient grounds which in turn constitute schism.

Firstly, it is both possible and required to have union and communion between differing parties where this does not entail sin, and where the differences are not about "Pernicious" and dangerous errors. Such union must be achieved by "Mutual Condescension" or

202. *Church-Communion*, p. 29.

"mutual forbearance in things Controverted." Shields points to the way in which differences were settled at the Synod of Jerusalem in Acts 15 by mutual condescension without division and the counsel of Paul in Romans 14:1 and 15:1, 7. The significant problems and differences of opinion and practice among the Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians and Hebrews were to be managed by faithfulness and forbearance but never by separation. These points are made by the *Informatory Vindication*. He lays down the significant principle: "If Differences in Judgment and Practice were a sufficient Ground of Withdrawing, then there shall never be Unity in the World in any Church."[203]

> The Question is, whether we may join in Union and Communion with others, besides these that either will not (because they cannot be Convinced of the Guilt of them) *Confess* and *Condemn* the sinfulness of the former Defections of the Times; Or will Confess and Condemn the sinfulness of them, but in an united way, not in a separat way, *not separating from the rest*, because they do not think it a Ground sufficient for withdrawing?[204]

Secondly, there may be union with ministers and members who are subject to various personal faults and infirmities where these have not been confessed. Though this may cause dissatisfaction it is not a valid ground for separation since there is no requirement to approve of them. There will always be personal faults on both sides in times of division. Union is to be effected "by leaving these doubtful Faults to God and their own Conscience; To obtain Peace in Meekness, Tenderness, Condescending and Forbearing." The question is not whether they are guilty of scandalous defections or "an *Official* or *Ministerial* Sin, affecting the Exercise of their Ministry … but now only Personal" in not confessing former defections.

Thirdly, there may be union with ministers and members who are not only guilty of past failings but "*many Scandals* even not confessed." There are indeed some instances where there must be separation due to the dangerous nature of scandals, but in general Shields seeks to establish from Scripture the point previously advanced by Durham that union is not to be deferred until unfaithful men have been censured, but that this should follow union.

Fourthly, there may be union with ministers and members where there is toleration and not reformation of many corruptions in doctrine, worship and government. This is not possible where it would clash with the four lawful grounds of separation mentioned above or where there is a requirement to sin or homologate the sins of others. There may, however, be differences of mind and dissatisfaction with other aspects and yet uniting is a duty to be pursued.

In the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth places, Shields indicates that Christ and His disciples did not follow a course of absolute separation from the Jewish Church of their day despite the fact that it was "a most Perverse and corrupted Church." The Church of Corinth remained a true Church despite its evident "many gross Corruptions," as was the case with the Church of Galatia and some of the seven Churches of Asia. No one was, however, commanded to separate from these Churches.

12. Countering Dissenting Objections

In the fourth and final section of the treatise Shields answers fifteen distinct objections against union with the Revolution Church of Scotland relating to this central question under debate; to these he adds answers to three further objections arising from the nature of the Settlement. Many of the objections make use of arguments drawn from *An Informatory Vindication* — a document that Shields himself authored alongside Renwick. He maintains that these arguments remain valid for the context in which they were written but no longer apply to the new circumstances of a settled Presbyterian Church. Shields is therefore able to reconcile the principles stated in *An Informatory Vindication* with his joining in communion with the Church of Scotland as settled after the Revolution.

The objections centre upon the failure to confess past faults on the part of some ministers in the Revolution Church. Shields emphasises that while there were valid reasons to separate in the past, there was now no basis for separating since there was no corruption in the constitution of the Church or in the exercise of the ministry within its bounds. The objectors believed that it was possible to be defiled through partaking of ordinances from those they judged guilty of past defection. Shields counters the scripture texts advanced to support this and denies that there is such a thing as ceremonial defilement under the New Testament. The Donatists made an identical case which was answered by Augustine: "He is Sinfully joined with them, whose commits any Evil with them, or Favours and Connives with them that do commit it, but if he do neither, he is no way Sinfully joined."[205] Shields goes on to outline ten ways that individuals can be guilty of participating

203. *Church-Communion*, p. 32.
204. *Church-Communion*, p. 29.
205. *Church-Communion*, p. 64.

in sin. He does this in the context of arguing that no divine judgement could be expected from being associated with those guilty of past compliances. Uniting with them would not necessarily harden them in their sin because those uniting should still plead and protest against those defections in order to urge them to consider their ways.

A significant concern on the part of dissenters was that the former testimony would be buried. Even though circumstances had changed, there was a reluctance to be seen to abandon anything that had been testified against during the time of persecution. Shields shows that there was no real concern of the testimony being buried since it had been recorded formally in Church records and the essence of it continued to be maintained; the manner of defending a testimony must change as circumstances alter. "Let us have a care," he warns, "least a contending for Keeping up our Testimony against Defection in Unadvised ways, we do not Bury our Testimony against Schism."[206]

Patrick Walker refers to the fact, frequently emphasised by Shields, that in focusing upon certain issues that were no longer active, the Hamiltonians were failing to assess the changed circumstances after the Revolution. Walker demonstrates how they were using such issues as terms of communion and as a basis for separation.

> It is a Piece of dimented Infatuation, to make little or no Difference betwixt that Period and this, and to follow the same Methods that the Lord's People were obliged to take against Tyranny and Defections. Let all who desire to be truly informed of the Beginning, Rise, Height and Length, of the Tyranny of that 28 Years Persecution, read the Sufferings and Grievances of Presbyterians, especially those of them nicknamed *Cameronians,* written by famous Mr. *Shields;* he sometimes said since the Revolution, That he was as clear and free to write and preach in the Defence of the Lawfulness of paying the Cess to this Government, as ever he was to write or preach against the Unlawfulness of Paying of it, under the former Reigns; notwithstanding I can instruct Place and Persons, where Mr. *M'millan* refused Baptism to an honest Man's Child, asking no other Question, but, If he paid the Cess? He said, It was not required of him: Mr. *M'millan* said, If it were, would you pay it? He answered, He would, for he did not look upon the Paying of it now, as in the Time of Persecution: He said, He would administer Church-Privileges to none who were of that Judgment. Disowning, Disowning of the State; Separation, Separation, Separation, is their Testimony, even amongst themselves from one another, and from all who dare not go their unheard-of Lengths, both Ministers and Professors, who are as free of the Defections of the Day as any of them can pretend to. I wish from my very Heart, that all of them would bethink themselves, and consider the Sins, Snares, and Dangers of these disowning, dividing Courses, and what may be their sad Effects and Consequences to themselves and others.[207]

It was the question of such consequences that arose in relation to the last objection that Shields countered, which spoke of the apparent inconveniences of union. Would it really work and last or would there not still continue to be distinct and divided parties within the Church of Scotland? Shields responds with one of the commonly accepted rules concerning unity and schism, that when the disadvantages or inconveniences of division are greater than those of uniting, then the lesser disadvantages ought to be embraced. Although there were some disadvantages in uniting, conscience could be at rest that the way for greater advantages to edification had been chosen. The disadvantages of separation were certainly greater. "Can we live without Ordinances to our selves, and Baptism to our Children? Shall they be as Heathens within the visible Church, as if they were without?"[208]

At the conclusion of the treatise Shields addresses three further objections that need to be considered which draw upon events following the Revolution. Shields denies that the Church of Scotland is "under the Bondage of an Erastian Yoke." "It is our Mercy, that we are required to submit to nothing, but what our Fathers, and all the Reformed Churches would have gladly yielded unto." He goes on to show that the power of the civil magistrate to call General Assemblies has never been considered Erastian.[209]

The second objection related to the admission of former curates under Episcopalianism into the ministry of the Church of Scotland. Shields shows that the worst of these men were censured and removed from office. There were, however, many good and able men who had conformed but were now willing to embrace a restored Presbyterian Church. Even if it could be shown that the

206. *Church-Communion*, p. 66.

207. Walker, *Biographia Presbyteriana*, 1.123.

208. *Church-Communion,* p. 67.

209. Shields echoes the document published by the Commission of the General Assembly in 1698 entitled *A Seasonable Admonition*. In response to Hamiltonian accusations, this document asserted the headship of Christ over the Church, the divine right of Presbyterian Church government and the intrinsic powers of the Church independent from the civil power.

Church had been defective in not removing unfaithful men, this was not accepted grounds for separation.

The last objection related to the controversial oath of allegiance which was to become still more controversial under Queen Anne. Although clearly Shields had evident misgivings about some aspects of this, he argues at length that the oath only related to civil allegiance to the king and that it was lawful to require it from ministers. In any case, it did not constitute grounds for separation from the Church.

Divisions can be accompanied by a carnal spirit that is obsessed with witness-bearing for one's own party and diminishes a focus upon the matters of first importance. These issues were becoming increasingly intertwined with questions of national and political significance which were rapidly moving to a boiling point. Shields could discern a growing spirit of zeal for these outward points that was not balanced with spiritual concerns. In his last few paragraphs, he counsels separatists in relation to this.

> Be more Spiritual and Exercised in the Pursuit of Communion with God, and you shall have a greater Desire to entertain Communion with the Church. If you would know where he Feeds, and makes his Flocks to rest at Noon, you must go to the Shepherds Tents … Get more Love to Christ and his People and this will natively lead you to Union and Communion, with all that keep his way, and will remove that Spirit of Factiousness, and Prejudice, and Jealousie that nourishes Division. Keep your Zeal lively against all sin, but let it have two Edges, to resent the Dishonour done to God, by Schism as well as Defection; let it be balanced with Charity and managed with Discretion. And we request you, that you study Uniformity in your Zeal, that you be not live Cakes unturned, hot for some lesser Points in Religion, and cold for others that are greater and more weighty. Be fervent for all Truths, and in all Duties, but with a regular Proportion to their Concern in the Vitals of Religion. Let Religion be more in your Heart than Head, in Practice than in Controversie.[210]

13. Modern Relevance

Although the central issues of *Church-Communion* are specific to debates about the Revolution Church of Scotland and historical events which followed in subsequent decades, this treatise has continued significance and value in the way that Shields draws his treatment of the various questions at stake back to key principles of Church unity. In this way, the circumstances to which the questions relate serve as concrete examples of the principles. The separate meetings for worship, government and discipline that Shields witnessed were to widen into denominational separation; a process that has intensified in recent decades in Scotland. As James Walker put it in 1872, "this whole question of the visible Church … seems to demand our earnest study … Is there such a thing as schism? If so, what does it mean or imply?"[211]

The key principles that Shields advances have, however, come under assault recently in an essay by Iain H. Murray entitled "The Churches and Christian Unity in Scottish History."[212] Murray's essay does not refer to Shields but seeks to consider the view of the unity of the visible Church maintained by the older Scottish divines. As we have already quoted, Murray gives his opinion that there is "an aspect of the church question which appears to have received less attention, namely, what is the relation between the churches, considered as denominations, and the unity of the church universal?"

This is highly relevant to our subject since *Church-Communion* may be considered as the very first work to address some aspects of this in depth. Although the Societies dissenting from the Revolution Settlement were not constituted as congregations or Presbyteries within a denomination, they nevertheless called themselves "the true Presbyterian church of Christ in Scotland" and the principle of separation was the central issue which led to separate denominations at a later stage when this became possible due to the accession of ministers.[213] Shields is emphatic that an independent Church, gathered and constituted and "not Subordinate unto the National Church" with its own officers and "invested with all Church Power" is "Schism, if ever there was any in the World." "For then, what shall become of Presbyterian Government and our Testimony for that against Independency, Sectarianism and Schism?[214]

Of the same period is the sermon by Thomas Boston on "The Evils of Schism" which addresses the same

210. *Church-Communion*, pp. 77–8.

211. James Walker, *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland: Chiefly Of The Seventeenth And Eighteenth Centuries* (Edinburgh, 1888), 116.

212. Murray, pp. 277–310.

213. Cf. the Sanquhar Declarations of 1692, 1695, 1703 and 1707; see Matthew Hutchison *The Reformed Presbyterian Church: Its Origin and History 1680–1876* (Paisley, 1893), 116, 160. Cf. also Jeffrey Stephen, *Scottish Presbyterians and the Act of Union 1707, p.* 5.

214. *Church-Communion*, p. 68. It is not unfair to say that Murray considers the subject from a congregational level, with denominations being mere "parachurch structures" which are at best voluntary associations for individual congregations. The Scottish doctrine of the unity of the visible Church presupposes that as an organic body, the visible Church is originally one with a common government appointed by Christ as Head.

point. An equally well-known treatment of the subject from a century later is *Two Discourses on the Unity of the Church, her Divisions and their removal* by Thomas M'Crie. Murray notes that as "a historical subject the matter is interesting but it might scarcely warrant time and renewed thought if it was not also relevant to present problems." He believes that the subject is therefore "both relevant and important."[215]

Murray implies that the older writers distinguished between the Church as visible and the Church as invisible as though they were separate entities.[216] It is worth noting, however, that seventeenth-century Scots did not believe that these were two separate entities but rather "a distinct uptaking of the same whole, (viz. the Church) under two considerations."[217] Durham notes that scripture frequently and ordinarily conjoins these two aspects, "as when an epistle is written to a church, some things are said of it, and to it, as visible, some things again are peculiarly applicable to believers, who are members of the invisible church in it."[218] Durham speaks of the visible Church as one in the New Testament in the same way as it was under the Old Testament because Romans 11 demonstrates that the "Jewish Church, and the Gospel-church, materially and in essential things are one."[219] Shields maintains that "as the Church Triumphant is but one in Heaven, so the Church Militant is but one in Earth; Therefore all the true Members thereof should study Unity, This Truth of the Oneness of the Catholick Visible Church, being the Ground of all the Union and Communion in the Ordinances thereof … If the Church be One, Divisions and divided Communions in her must either infer that this one Church is many, made up of Heterogenous parts, or that the Church divided from is not a part of that one Church, and hath broken off from that which compacts the Body together."[220] It is not the case that Shields and fellow Scottish divines sharply separate the visible aspects of the Church from its invisible aspects. On the contrary, it is those that believe that the unity of the invisible Church can be a replacement for visible unity that are imposing a dislocation. For Shields, lack of visible unity undermines the reality of belief in the unity of the invisible Church.[221]

Schism is also sometimes incorrectly defined as a breach of charity. The Scriptural use of the word is, however, objective and refers to a breach of unity in practice, government and worship. Dishonesty and uncharitableness are not essential qualities of schism, but things that make it far worse when they are associated with it. To make schism only a breach of charity leaves it as a matter of individual perception as to whether uncharitable behaviour and therefore schism exists.

Murray believes that "the argument" for a single united visible Church within a nation inevitably "failed."[222] It failed by "upholding the wrong priority", "because it elevated the form of church government as a truth of primary importance." This might of course be challenged. The truth of primary importance for the older divines was the Headship of Christ. Any attempt to introduce anything other than what He had ordained in His own Church was an assault upon that Headship. The logic of Murray's assertion would extend to dismissing noble contentions made by the Covenanters and those who made sacrifices at the time of the Disruption, since these were also related to church government, which he does not suppose to be of primary importance.[223] This distinction between truths of primary and secondary importance may easily be challenged as unbiblical. As Thomas M'Crie indicates, while there are truths highlighted by Scripture as foundational, their "priority or posteriority in point of order, in conception or instruction, does not determine the relative importance of doctrines, or their necessity in order to salvation, far less does it determine the propriety of their being made to enter into the religious profession of Christians and Christian churches."[224]

Further, it is not necessarily the case that the Scottish

215. Murray, p. 279.
216. Murray, p. 287.
217. James Durham, *An Exposition of the Song of Solomon* (Edinburgh, 1982), 37.
218. Durham, *An Exposition of the Song of Solomon*, p. 38.
219. James Durham, *A Commentary on Revelation*, introduction by David C. Lachman (Willow Street PA, 2000), 685.
220. *Church-Communion,* p. 7.
221. John Murray writes that "the unity of the body of Christ is not a tenet that may be relegated to the transcendental realm of invisible, spiritual relationship, but a truth that governs, regulates and conditions the behaviour of the people of God in that communal, covenant relationship which they sustain to Christ in the institute of the church." ("The Nature and Unity of the Church," in *Collected Writings,* volume 2 [Edinburgh; Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 1977], 331–32).
222. Iain Murray, p. 288. It is not clear from the essay exactly how and when this "failure" took place. Presumably it was at some point following the Glorious Revolution where it was no longer the goal to "bring all the Christians of a nation under one common church government," p. 302.
223. p. 289. It is possible that Murray's view of unity approximates to that of Martyn Lloyd-Jones who envisaged an association of evangelical churches rather than real organic unity. Association without embodiment is not a biblical idea, however, "to maintain that the unity belonging to the church does not entail ecumenical embodiment, is to deny the catholicity of the church of Christ. If the church is catholic, then unity is catholic" (John Murray, "The Nature and Unity of the Church," pp. 332–33).
224. Thomas M'Crie, *Two Discourses on the Unity of the Church, her Divisions and their Removal* (Edinburgh, 1821), 90.

doctrine took "its starting point at the organizational and institutional level." Shields, in fact, begins his discussion by speaking of the duties of love, forgiveness and peace. The motivations expressed in *Church-Communion* reveal that the Scottish doctrine of the visible Church had spiritual realities in view, such as the Headship of Christ; it also had the gospel and principles relating to the gospel in view in regarding the purpose of the Church visible as the gathering and perfecting of the elect. Shields, together with the other divines of his era, believed that there must be a visible unity because this was the way in which Scripture itself defines unity.[225] "Union, Unity and Oneness in Interest, Affection, Judgment and Practice, Profession and Worship is more expressly commanded and commended in Scripture."[226]

Murray also believes that the "argument" "had to fail" due to an impossible deduction. The impossible deduction is that if "only one church can claim to represent the unity of the body of Christ then those who remain outside her fellowship have to be regarded as in a condition of schism and so public cooperation with them is not to be permitted or encouraged. Before there can be communion between two parties thus divided the side at fault has to acknowledge their error. This is not a theoretical possibility."[227] As noted in the first part of this article, reconciliation of the majority of the Societies to the Church of Scotland took place in 1690; thus what Murray describes as impossible took place expressly upon the principles of visible Church unity that he is attacking. It happened because this view of Church unity does not in fact demand that in every circumstance either side has to acknowledge fault: it asserts that both sides must condescend as far as possible without sinning and that no one should be pressed to condemn their convictions. This is a theoretical and scriptural possibility that Shields had himself experienced in reality and was encouraging in *Church-Communion*.

It is true that for Shields and Durham, full communion was predicated upon organic union, but it is also interesting that in at least four separate publications Shields distinguishes the different kinds and levels of unity that one can have in ever decreasing circles of fellowship.[228] *An Informatory Vindication* outlined the distinction "betwixt a Joining, which we may call Catholick or Universal among Christians, considered as such, and an Ecclesiastical joining among Members of one particular Organical Church, considered as Members of that Church." Shields qualifies what he means by "Communion Catholick in its several degrees." It might mean joining in a united testimony with other Christians, Protestants, and Reformed believers if one was to be in other lands, though not with heretics.[229] Contrary to Murray's claims, it should be clear that these divines were able to distinguish between the communion of saints on the personal level and ecclesiastical organic union and communion.[230] This does not betray "an exclusiveness contrary to the spirit of the gospel" but rather inclusiveness governed by discernment.[231] The various levels are best defined as follows in *A Hind let loose*.

> 1. Universal. There is a "*Catholick.* Communion with all Christian Ministers & Members Of the Catholick Church, considered as such; holding the Head Christ, and the foundation sure" (not heretics) in order to meet for worship with them in other lands.
>
> 2. Protestantism. There is "Communion with all *Protestant* Ministers & members of the *Reformed* Church" holding "the General Testimony of *Protestants*" provided that they maintain "the Protestant Testimony, against *Poperie* & all Herefie" and are not "declining from their oun Reformation, by Defection or Schisme." "But with the *Sectarians* or *Schismaticks* or *apostates* among them, we cannot oune that special Communion."
>
> 3. Covenanted Nations. "We may have a more *Particular* Communion upon yet stricter conditions, with all our *Covenanted* Brethren, Ministers & Members of the Churches of *Britain* & *Ireland"* provided that they maintain "the *Covenanted* Testimony for the Reformation in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, & Government, against Poperie, Prelacy, Superstition, Heresie, Schisme, & Profanness, according to the *Covenant*."
>
> 4. National. "We may have yet a nearer *Organical* Communion, upon stricter conditions still, with all the Ministers & Members of the *National* Church of *Scotland,* constitute & confederate under one Reformed Government" provided that they maintain "the *Presbyterian* Testimony as stated in the Ecclesiastical Constitutions, and sworn to in the National Covenants & Engagements

225. Shields points to 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 3:16; 1 Peter 3:8; Ephesians 4:3; Jeremiah 32:39; Romans 15:5, 7; Ezekiel 11:19. *Church-Communion,* pp. 6–7.
226. *Church-Communion,* p. 6.
227. Murray, p. 294.
228. *Church-Communion*, pp. 25–6; *A letter concerning the due boundaries of Christian fellowship,* pp. 6ff (see quotation above); *Informatory Vindication*, Head 7; and *A Hind*, pp. 224–5.
229. *Church-Communion*, pp. 25–6.
230. Cf. Murray, pp. 295–6.
231. Cf. Murray, p. 294.

of that Church, founded upon the Word of God, against Poperie, Prelacy, Erastianisme, Sectarianisme, Toleration, Schisme & Defection."

5. Congregational. This relates to the ministry and individual members with which one has closest communion. It was at this level alone that the Societies maintained a temporary separation during the times of persecution when others were contravening the testimony by complying with some of the evils outlined above which the National Church had been committed to resist.

14. Conclusion

It is important to acknowledge the real achievements of the legacy left by Alexander Shields. John Macleod well describes Shields as "one of the most striking figures of his epoch" and notes that Thomas Halyburton looked back upon the ministry exercised by Shields as having a particular glory.[232] His skills as a writer are assessed briefly below, but his influence and example together with the principles for which he contended are worth our close consideration. Patrick Walker records the following highly relevant quotation from Alexander Shields: "I have sometimes heard the never to be forgotten Mr. *Shields* say, *We are much obliged to our worthy Ancestors: And shall none be the better of us? If we have no Precedent or Example, let us be good Ones to them who come after us.*"[233]

In Shields we have an admirable balance of faithfulness in principle combined with an irenic spirit towards fellow brethren with whom he differed. While it is evident that they proceed from the same pen, it is notable that the spirit of denunciation of tyranny and frequent sarcasm that characterise *A Hind let loose* do not appear in *Church-Communion*. It is a very relevant example for those that find themselves in the midst of controversy.

Shields left writings that had been produced under the most difficult and challenging of circumstances. In them he has left to this generation as well as others that have intervened, the biblical basis for the Scottish view of the unity of the visible Church within the nation and the evil of schism. Rather than skewing the discussion on these matters, they represent a standard of careful understanding and principle that we need to recover in our own day more than ever. What is certain to "skew" discussions in this area is indefinite views that do not cohere with Presbyterianism. We will only be the better of both his example and work if we put them to practical use.

Sadly, the nature of the Revolution Settlement still divides after all these years, but is only one of many reasons for continuing divisions in our own day. At present there are nine different Presbyterian bodies in Scotland, while the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) has thirteen members with at least a further half dozen Reformed or Presbyterian Churches outside. Does this level of division matter or is it merely a circumstance of history and the natural consequence of different perspectives and distinctives? Is it merely regrettable or is it in fact a sinful state of affairs? Everyone acknowledges that Presbyterianism is connectional but the question is how connectional?

National established churches were only an aspect of the way that the older Scottish divines understood the unity of the visible Church.[234] Their view did not depend on that point, it went further to the very essence of Presbyterianism itself. It also reached back to the early Church confession of "one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church." Durham notes that the "truth of the unity of the catholic visible church is the main ground of all church-union and communion." It is the foundation of Presbyterian government. Those who are comfortable with and seek to defend a plurality of denominations base their arguments on a Congregational rather than a Presbyterian view of the Church. Congregationalists believe that the Visible Church is essentially confined to the local congregation and that there is no necessary connection or government beyond it.

Presbyterianism has drifted very far from the true concern of the Westminster Divines and the Second Reformation (represented by James Durham, Samuel Rutherford and George Gillespie) for the unity of the visible Church. Merely exchanging greetings amongst competing denominations would not have satisfied these men because it is a practice that avoids any confrontation with the fact of schism and never seems to work towards genuine unity. The Westminster Divines were of an entirely different view. They proposed to accommodate the Congregationalists and their opinions within a national Presbyterian Church. The Congregationalists at the Westminster Assembly proposed a friendly co-existence and occasional communion with the Presbyterians which, while separate in government, would they claimed be a "plain and total separation."

232. *Scottish Theology in relation to Church History since the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1943), 109.

233. *Biographia Presbyteriana*, Vol, 1, p. 254

234. New Testament national Churches are clearly referred to in Scripture (Isaiah 55:5; Psalm 22:27; Psalm 72:11; Psalm 86:9; Matthew 28:19; Revelation 11:15).

This was resolutely declined with an explanation that might easily have come from Durham:

> So, might the Donatists and Novatians have pled, and indeed almost all the separatists who have figured in the Church's history. Such separation was unknown in the apostles' time, unless it were used by false teachers: all who professed Christianity then held communion together as one Church. If you can join with us occasionally in acts of worship, you ought to act with us in joint communion, not in separated congregations. God's way of revealing truth to such as are otherwise minded, is not by setting men at a distance from each other. That you should be a distinct Christian organization, taking members from our Churches who may have scruples of conscience, is schism undoubted in the body of Christ.[235]

Congregationalism was regarded as a schismatic principle. This is the view that the Presbyterians at Westminster had in mind when they confessed the catholic visible church and formulated Presbyterian Church government.

Thomas M'Crie goes so far as to assert that to regard a variety of denominations as acceptable is to adopt "a principle of difformity which, however congenial to the system of polytheism, is utterly eversive of a religion founded on the unity of the divine nature and will, and on a revelation which teaches us what we are to believe concerning God and what duty he requires of us."[236] Presbyterianism is antithetical to the idea of competing denominations side by side in the same villages, towns and cities. Durham spoke of "diverse supreme and independent governments" side by side as a schismatical situation, "where there ought to be one Church, it becometh as it were two."[237]

Shields approached the vexed problem of division with deep concern. It is easy to become indifferent to the scandal of division or to belittle it as unimportant. He also demonstrated humility. There is no place for pride if these matters are truly appreciated. Yet Shields also acted without compromise, he sought a way to clear his conscience but also to heal division without sinning. He was prepared to accept certain things in a Church that was in process of reforming. Despite our desire for genuine unity, we ought to beware of the danger of schemes of unity which compromise the truth. Scripture will never justify us in abandoning truth for the sake of unity.

What practical steps could be taken in relation to these principles in our generation? The following arise from Durham's principles. First, we need a firm understanding of the absolute duty of union and the sinfulness of schism and the evils it brings. Second, we need to understand the various reasons that there may be for ongoing division; they need to be stated clearly. Third, we need to be persuaded that the only lawful reasons for separation are if union would entail sinning. Fourth, we are not to expect one side to concede everything. Fifth, we are not to expect perfection in the process. Coming to appreciate the importance of this matter is a vital initial step.

We can conclude with a particularly beautiful passage in *A Hind let loose* that commends the doctrine of the unity of the visible Church for which Shields contended in a balanced manner, yet also in a way that ought to attract us strongly to be of one mind with his principles and pursue them earnestly.

> The Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, ought to be the Endeavour of all that are members of the *One Body* of Christ, Partakers of his *Spirit,* called in *One Hope,* Professing *One Lord,* Confessing *One Faith,* sealed with *One Baptisme Eph.* 4.3. &c. And for *Brethren* to dwel together in *Unity,* is good & pleasant, and like the precious Oyntment upon the head, that ran doun upon *Aarons* beard *Psal.* 133. 1, 2. A fragrant Oyntment indeed, if it be composed aright of *Gospel-simples,* according to Divine art, and the Wisdom that is from above, which is first pure & then peacable; and not made up of Adulterate *Politicks:* that Union that hath the Spirit for its Author, the Scripture for its Rule, Peace for its bond & beauty, love for its Cement, Faith for its foment, Christ for its foundation, and Truth & holiness for its constant Companions, cannot but be intensely desired, enixely endeavoured, and fervently followed, by all the Professors of the Gospel of Peace, & Subjects of the

235. James Walker, *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland,* 98. See also *The Grand Debate: The Reasons Presented by the Dissenting Brethren against Certain Propositions Concerning Presbyterian Government*, ed. Chris Coldwell (Dallas, 2014), 331, 345 and 375

236. M'Crie, *Two Discourses,* 89. There is a view that champions "pluriformity" over against uniformity and so disregards the idea of schism as sinful. This view is particularly associated with the Dutch leader Abraham Kuyper. It maintains that Church differences and competing distinctives are a good thing and that divisions based upon differences are not to be viewed as negative because diversity is a strength. Yet the New Testament emphasises uniformity very strongly (1 Corinthians 11:1, 16; 14:29, 33, 34, 35, 40; 16:1, 2) and exhorts us to "walk by the same rule" (Philippians 3:16) and to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27). "I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me" (Jeremiah 32:29).

237. Durham, *Scandal* (1659), 273; (1990), 226.

> Prince of Peace: Which makes *Division* & *Schisme* not only a great Miserie, but a Grand sin. But it must be in the way of Truth & Duty, and consistent with holiness & the honour of Christ, otherwise if it be in the way of Apostasie & defection, it is but a Confederacy & Conspiracy against the Lord. And true Union can neither be attained, nor retained, nor recovered; except the sinful Cause of Division, *Defection;* and the holy overruling Cause, the *Anger of the Lord* be removed, in turning to & following him.[238]

Postscript - Alexander Shields as an author

In his preface to *Church-Communion*, Thomas Linning hints at the possibility of publishing other manuscript works by Shields. "Only if the Work be well Entertained, any other Papers, which are in my hand, left by the Worthy Mr. Alexander Shields, for the use of the publick, shall not be concealed, when it shall be thought needful that they see the Light."[239] It is likely that Linning was thinking of the letter to the prisoners at Dunottar, as well as the biography of Renwick written by Shields and the account produced of his own sufferings, for it is difficult to confirm that there are many other works left unpublished in manuscript besides various sermons and letters.

Undoubtedly, Shields was the most significant and prolific author among the Covenanting field-preachers. His abilities as a preacher can only be judged from sermons constructed from the notes taken down by hearers, while his writings can speak for themselves. As Hector Macpherson observes, "there is considerable difficulty in estimating Shields' style as a preacher." He notes, however, that Robert Wodrow's assessment of him as a "successful, serious and solid preacher" does not appear to emphasise an extraordinary gift in preaching. Wodrow does speak of Shields as "a minister of extraordinary talents and usefulness … well seen in most branches of valuable learning, of a most quick and piercing wit."[240] This seems to be reflected in his commendation of Shields' writings for their "strong reasoning, and quickness in argument."[241] Howie summarises similar points acutely, saying that in ""The Hind Let Loose," and other treatises, Shields left behind him the marks of his varied acquirements, ability, zeal, and public-spiritedness."[242] Walker describes him as famous and learned.

The scurrilous Episcopalian tract *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Displayd* is scarcely a reliable and commendable source of information, but the author describes Shields as "One of their [i.e. the Presbyterians] honestest and best Writers."[243] This is a very telling assessment and high praise considering the source from which it emanates, which was intent on undermining Presbyterian preachers as unlearned. An equally high compliment was paid from an unfriendly source when the authorities ordered that *A Hind let loose* be publicly burned. Macpherson was of the opinion that this reveals that they regarded its author as "in the front rank of thinkers and propagandists."[244]

Macpherson believes that *A Hind let loose* may have contributed to changing the course of history and "had no small influence in Holland" and the future King William III.[245] Shields opens up the relevance of the imagery of the title selected for the book in a strong and at times lyrical manner.[246] The persecuted Covenanters are appropriately compared to the hind let loose

> being *a hind* (called *wild* by nick-name in the scorn of them that are at ease, but) truly *weak* in their present wilderness Condition, to *wrestle* against the force & fraud of their Cruel & cunning *hunters,* who cease not (when they have now got the rest of the *Roes and hinds of the field* made fast asleep, under the bondage of the *Lions dens & Mountains of Leopards,* by a pretence of a falsely so called *Liberty of Conscience)* to seek and pursue the chase of them for a prey; Yet, really they are *let loose,* and not only suffered to run loose, as a prey to the hunters by the unwatchfullness of their keepers, but made to escape loose, by the mercy of the *Mighty one of Jacob,* from the nets of the hunter, and snares of the foulers and from the yoke of the bondage of these beasts of prey to whose *Authority* they will not *oune* a willing subjection: And being such *hinds,* so *let loose,* they make it their work, to *give goodly words ,* for the worth and honour and Royalties of their Princely Master, and for the precious Liberties wherewith he hath endoted and entrusted his

238. *A Hind*, p. 224.
239. *Church-Communion*, p. v.
240. Robert Wodrow, *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland,* 4 vols. (Glasgow, 1833), 4.233.
241. *The Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Wodrow,* ed. Thomas M'Crie, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1842–3), 1.87.
242. *Sermons Delivered in the Times of Persecution in Scotland By Sufferers For The Royal Prerogatives of Jesus Christ*, p. 580.
243. *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Displayd* (London, 1693), 34.
244. Hector Macpherson, p. 157. In a characteristically vivid paragraph Shields anticipates the book being "sent to the flames to be confuted; and to enflame the fury of these firebrands, already hell-hot, into the utmost extremity of rage against the Author." *A Hind*, p. iv.
245. Hector Macpherson, p. 215.
246. The poetic elegy that Shields penned on the death of James Renwick reveals that his gifts went even beyond spirited prose.

> Spouse and Children, and to keep *the goodly -words* of his patience, untill he return a *Roe or a young Hart, upon the Mountains of Bether.*[247]

There is a vivid, impassioned power in the style that Shields frequently employs in the book which brings a peculiar immediacy to the reader in relation to the times. In one passage he says, "O Heavens be astonished at this, & horribly afraid! for *Scotland* hath changed her Glory, and the Crown hath fallen from off her head, by an unparalelled Apostasie, a free & voluntary, wilfull & deliberate Apostasie, an avoued & declared & Authorized Apostasie, Tyrannically carried on by Militarie violence & cruelty, a most universal & every way unprecedented Apostasie!"[248] Later he describes the climax to which this apostasy reached:

> the Blasphemous Supremacy was now advanced to its summity; the Churches Priviledges all overturned; Religion and the Work of Reformation trampled under foot; the Peoples Rights & Liberties destroyed, and Lawes all subverted; and no shadow of Government left but arbitrary Absoluteness, obtruding the Tyrants will for Reason, and his Letter for the Supreme Law.[249]

From these few brief quotations it is possible to see the evidence of Howie's observations on Shields' particular skills as an author: "pretty well seen in most branches of learning, in arguing very ready, only somewhat fiery; but in writing on controversy, he exceeded most men in that age."[250]

Provisional Bibliography of Writings by Alexander Shields

Published Works

1. *A Hind let loose, or An Historical Representation of the Testimonies, of the Church of Scotland, for the interest of Christ, with the true state thereof in all its periods: together with a vindication of the present testimonie, against the Popish, prelatical, & malignant enemies of that church, … and liberties of mankind, and sealed by the sufferings of a reproached remnant of Presbyterians there, witnessing against the corruptions of the time. Wherein several controversies of greatest consequence are enquired into, and in some measure cleared; concerning hearing of the curats, owning of the present tyrannie, taking of ensnaring oaths & bonds, frequenting of field meetings, defensive resistence of tyrannical violence, with several other subordinate questions useful for these times. / By a lover of true liberty* ([Utrecht], 1687). Reprinted 1770, 1797.

2. *March 11. 1688. Some notes or heads of a preface, lecture and sermon, preached at the Lothers in Crafoord Moor / by Mr. Alexander Shields, preacher of the gospel* (n.p., 1688).

3. *Notes or heads of a preface and of a lecture, preached at Distinckorn-Hill, in the parish of Gaastoun, April 15, 1688* (n.p., 1688).

4. *Antipas, or, The dying testimony of Mr. James Renwick & An elegy upon the death of that famous and faithful minister and Martyr, Mr James Renwick composed immediately after his execution at Edinburgh, 17th Feb, 1688* (n.p.,1688). Reprinted by George Morison (Glasgow, 1760).

5. *The Scotish Inquisition; or, a Short Account of the Proceedings of the Scotish Privy Counsel* ([Edinburgh?], 1689). This pamphlet was republished with additional material under Shields' name as *The Scots Inquisition* (Edinburgh, 1745).

6. *The Renovation of the Covenant at Boreland* (Edinburgh, 1689).

7. *A Short Memorial of the Sufferings and Grievances, Past and Present, of the Presbyterians in Scotland, Particularly of those of them called Nick-name Cameronians* (Edinburgh, 1690).

8. *A Letter from Alexander Shields, Minister to the Regiment whereof the Late Noble Earl of Angus was Colonel … Directed to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland which was to have met at Edinburgh in December 1693* ([Edinburgh?], 1693).

9. *A Sermon preached by Mr Alexander Shields in the Cannongate Meeting House, February 10, 1691, being his last public sermon before going to Flanders* ([Edinburgh?], 1702).

10. *Church-Communion enquired into: or a treatise against separation from this National Church of Scotland. Wherein I. Some truths confessed on all hands are held forth which if rightly considered would do much to end the present controversie. II. Some concessions are laid down for clearing the present debate. III. The controversie is stated and truth vindicated. IV. The objections are solidly and clearly answered. Which was left in manuscripts by the reverend and worthy Mr. Alexander Shields, minister of the Gospel at St Andrews, when he was sent by the Church of Scotland unto Caledonia* (Edinburgh, 1706). Reprinted by William Gray (Edinburgh, 1747).

247. *A Hind, p.* ii-iii.
248. *A Hind, p.* 97.
249. *A Hind, p.* 132.
250. Howie, *Biographia Scoticana,* 476.

11. *A true and faithful relation of the sufferings of the Reverend and learned, Mr. Alexander Shields, minister of the Gospel. Written with his own hand. Containing an account of his examinations and imprisonment at London; his being sent down to Scotland; … Together with a large and elaborate defence of the doctrine of resistance, … Never before published* (Edinburgh, printed in the year [1715]).

12. *The life and death of that eminently pious, free and faithful minister and martyr of Jesus Christ, Mr James Renwick.; written by … Mr Alexander Shields. Whereunto is subjoined, the manner of admission, or ordaining of ruling-Elders, by Mr James Renwick.; and some few of his many religious letters* (Edinburgh, 1724).

13. *A letter concerning the due boundaries of Christian fellowship; specially, with whom 'tis lawful to join in divine worship, and from whom 'tis duty to withdraw: written to the prisoners for conscience, in Dunnottar-Castle, who then were many, in Summer 1685. By Mr. Alexander Shields, Preacher of the Gospel, then prisoner at Edinburgh. Diligently compared with the best manuscripts* (Edinburgh, 1726).

14. "The Perpetual Obligation of our Covenants," in R. Ward (ed.), *Explanation … of the Solemn League* (n.p., 1737).

15. John Howie (ed.), *Collection of lectures and sermons, preached upon several subjects, mostly in the time of the late persecution: Wherein a faithful doctrinal testimony is transmitted to posterity for the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of the Church of Scotland against popery, prelacy, erastianism, &c. By these faithful and eminent servants of Jesus Christ; Messrs. William Guthrie, Michael Bruce, John Welwood, Richard Cameron, Donald Cargill, Alexander Peden and Alexander shields. To which are added, some sacramental discourses by Mr. John Livingston and Mr John Welch, and a sermon on the breach of covenant, by Mr John Guthrie. Carefully collected and transcribed from several manuscripts by J.H.; and now published at the desire of the owners of that cause, which some of the worthy authors sealed with their blood* (Glasgow, 1779); reprinted as John Howie and James Kerr (eds), *Sermons Delivered in the Times of Persecution in Scotland By Sufferers For The Royal Prerogatives of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh, 1880). Shields' sermon on 2 Corinthians 5:11, preface and lecture on Revelation 2:12–13, and sermon on John 3:3–5, pp. 580–618.

16. Alexander Shields' Letter to his Mother, 1700 (from the Laing Collection), printed in Patrick Walker, *Six Saints of the Covenant: Peden, Semple, Welwood, Cameron, Cargill, Smith*, ed. D. Hay Fleming, 2 vols. (London, 1901), 1.234.

17. *A serious inquiry into the nature and method of praying for tyrants, kings, or magistrates, that are anti-covenanters, not constitute according to the preceptive will of God, or contrary thereto* (Glasgow, 1770), reprinted for Adam Bapty.

18. "Alexander Shields' Memoires," in *Analecta: or Materials for a history of remarkable providences mostly relating to Scotch ministers and Christians,* 4 vols. (Glasgow, 1842–3), 1.177–205 (extracts from Shields' private diary).

Collaborative Writings

1. *An Informatory Vindication of a poor, wasted, misrepresented, remnant of the suffering, anti-popish, anti-prelatick, anti-erastian, anti-sectarian, true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland, united together in a generall correspondence; by way of reply to various accusations, in letters, informations & conferences, given forth against them* ([Utrecht], 1687), co-authored with James Renwick, Michael Shields, and William Boyd. Reprinted Edinburgh, 1707 and 1744.

2. *The Testimony, of Some Persecuted Presbyterian Ministers of the Gospel, unto the Covenanted Reformation of the Church of Scotland, and to the Present Expediencie of Continuing to Preach the Gospel in the Fields, and Against the Present Antichristian Toleration in its Nature and Design* (n.p.,1688). This was authored by James Renwick but was evidently a combined effort and Shields wrote the preface after Renwick's death.

3. *An account of the methods and motives of the late union and submission to the assembly offered and subscribed by Mr. Thomas Lining, Mr. Allexander Shields, Mr. William Boyd* (London, 1691).

4. Petition of Alexander Shields and Others, 1689 (from the Laing Collection), printed in Patrick Walker, *Six Saints of the Covenant,* 1.232.

5. *A Proper Project for Scotland* ([Edinburgh], 1699). Adam Blackadder is identified as the author on the title-page of NLS 1.445(13). The work has often been attributed to both Alexander Shields and George Ridpath. Macpherson notes that the latter part is in a "vein strongly reminiscent of Shields."[251]

6. *The History of Scotch-Presbytery: Being an Epitome of The Hind Let Loose by Mr Shields* (London, 1692). James Canaries published these extracts from *A Hind Let Loose*. It is likely that the preface was authored by Alexander Monro.

251. Macpherson, *The Cameronian Philosopher*, p. 232.

Unpublished Manuscripts

New College, Edinburgh

1. "Letter of Alexander Shields to Monsieur Rosin, minister at Emden. [1687]," Box 4.2.13.

Laing Collection, University of Edinburgh Library

2. EUL MSS. La.III.344 and 350. Correspondence and manuscripts 1681–1686.

Glasgow University

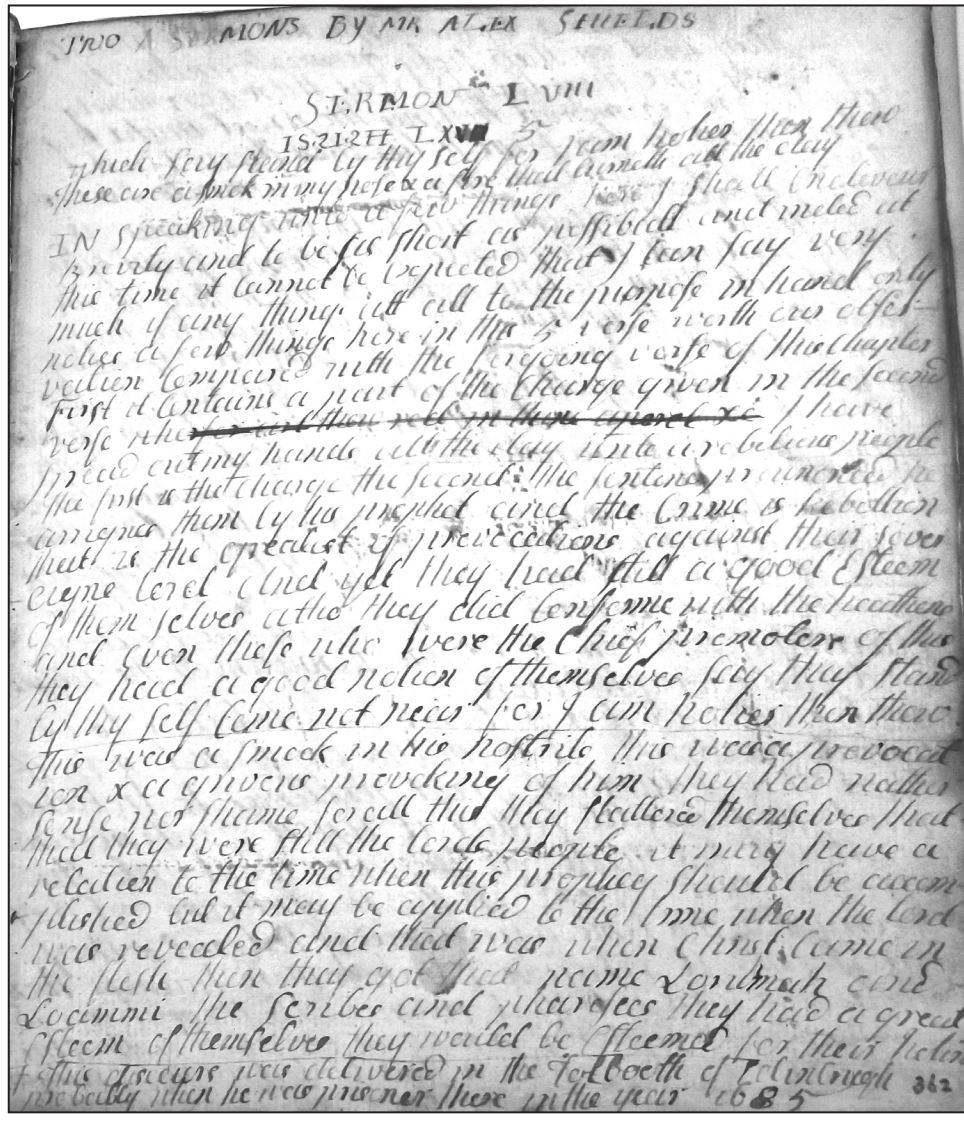
3. Ms Gen 32, 1009 Societies' letters.
4. Ms Gen 32, Sermon on Isaiah 57:5.
5. Ms Gen 32, Sermon on 2 Sam 15:26.
6. MS Gen 1685, Item:15. [Contemporary?] copy of an unfinished letter by Shields. From on board the Rising Sun in Caledonia Bay Decr: 25th 1699. Relates to Darien Scheme. Refers to a letter sent from Montserrat and continues an account of the second expedition to date.

National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh

7. JC39/7,3 Papers relating to Alexander Shields, 1685.
8. GD184/11/3, Sermon notebook apparently containing notes of a sermon preached in Edinburgh in April 1698 by Alexander Shields.

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

9. "Manuscripts of Alexander Shields's *A True and Faithful Relation of the sufferings of Mr Alexander Shields* (1715) and *Life of James Renwick* (1724)," Wod. Qu. LV.
10. "Alexander Shields's answer to Sir Robert Hamilton's protest," Wod. Qu. XVI, ff. 99r-113r.▪



Ms Gen 32, Sermon on 2 Sam 15:26, first page. Reproduced with permission of University of Glasgow Library, Special Collections. Photograph by Matthew Vogan.

Desert Rose:
Thomas Chalmers' West Port Experiment (1844–1847)

By Michael J. Ives

On April 27, 1847, just over a month before Thomas Chalmers died, he wrote to a good friend and supporter, "I wish to communicate what to me is the most joyful event of my life. I have been intent for thirty years on the completion of a territorial experiment, and I have now to bless God for the consummation of it."[1] During those "thirty years," Chalmers had become Scotland's premier preacher, celebrated by such figures as William Wilberforce who once exclaimed, "The world is wild about Chalmers."[2] He rose to prominence in the Church of Scotland and taught a generation of divinity students at the University of St. Andrews and the University of Edinburgh. While in the latter post, he successfully spearheaded an effort to raise funds for 220 new church buildings in poor, working-class areas of Scotland. Having championed the spiritual independence of the Church against state intrusion, in 1843, he courageously led more than 400 ministers out of the establishment in what would be called "the Disruption." He then provided masterful administrative guidance of the new fledgling denomination, the Free Church of Scotland, setting it on a sound financial footing. It was not without reason, then, that Karl Marx dubbed him the "arch-Parson."[3] But the opening quote above shows us where his great ambition lay, that is, to complete a "territorial experiment." This essay retells the story of Chalmers' home missionary efforts in the slums of the West Port, Edinburgh, and then turns to explain how he advocated his territorial model.

The West Port Story

First, some back-story. This final chapter in Chalmers' evangelical career ends where it began. Having first rediscovered and practiced the parish model in idyllic, rural Kilmany, Fifeshire, after his conversion to evangelicalism in 1812, and having dedicated many years promoting it, he returned once again to practicing the parish as a means to Christianize the land. "Yet such do I hold to the efficacy of the method with the divine blessing that, perhaps as the concluding act of my public life, I shall make the effort to exemplify what as yet have only expounded."[4] At the age of 64, the renowned evangelical churchman threw himself into a final effort to transplant "Kilmany," that is, the communal parish ideal, into the slums of Industrial Britain. Or, to use a popular 19th century Isaianic metaphor, he went to make the desert "blossom as the rose."

In many respects, this experiment would be a reiteration of the same model he deployed in St. John's in Glasgow from 1819–1823 and in the Water of Leith of Edinburgh from 1833–1836. As before, Chalmers was not interested in conducting this missionary experiment in middle-class or upper-class communities of Scotland. Rather, his great concern was for the economically blighted and morally abandoned "wastes" of "home heathenism."[5] And by the 1840s, the plight of urban industrial Scotland had gone from bad to worse. In May of 1844, the British Parliament's Royal Commission of Inquiry into Scottish poor relief shocked the public conscience with reports of unthinkable working-class living conditions. The public soon demanded that Scotland

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1. Thomas Chalmers to James Lenox, August 9, 1844, James Lenox Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. Lenox was a wealthy New York philanthropist and fellow Presbyterian.
2. *The Life of William Wilberforce,* ed. Robert Wilberforce, Isaac Wilberforce, and Samuel Wilberforce (London: Seeley, Burnside and Seeley, 1843), 4:324.
3. Karl Marx, *Capital* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), 1:617.
4. Chalmers to Lenox, July 26, 1844, James Lenox Papers.
5. Thomas Chalmers, *The Collected Works of Thomas Chalmers* (Glasgow: W. Collins, 1836–42), 10:377, 18:73.

remedy the situation by adopting its version of the English poor laws, that is, legalized poor relief by taxation. In June, Adam Black, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, further responded to this outcry by appealing to churches to throw themselves into the fight against this plague wasting its population.[6] Further, this grim assessment only mirrored the religious condition of the poor. Parliament had also instituted the Royal Commission on Religious Instruction in the previous decade, which revealed that one third of the entire population of Edinburgh was wholly unchurched, while in the working-class areas that number rose to three-fourths. Nor was Edinburgh alone—these numbers basically matched those of London.[7]

Religious and social needs cried all the more loudly for intervention. And yet, this experiment of Chalmers would be different. From one angle, the Disruption severed the Kirk from all state support, a tremendous sacrifice he and his fellow evangelicals made in the cause of spiritual independence. Nevertheless, he could now pursue his project unhindered by the complexities of Church patronage and an uncooperative government bureaucracy. Moreover, while he ended up losing the battle against the poor laws—a battle he had vigorously fought—he could certainly now absolve himself from any burden of dispensing any monetary aid.[8] Finally, a new avenue now seemed opened for greater ecumenical partnership. There had been bitter rivalries between Dissenters and Church of Scotland evangelicals in the 1830s over whether there should be church establishments at all. But now Free Churchmen were *de facto* Dissenters, having left the state church. Chalmers was now hopeful that previous hostility could be put aside and all could join together to fight the monster of irreligion and debilitating poverty.

Chalmers' final experiment formally began with a series of lectures in June and July of 1844, printed in *The Witness,* a popular periodical managed by Free Churchman Hugh Miller. In them, he decried British Christendom's abandonment of its working-class poor, restated his cherished principles of territorialism as the best solution for their religious and social ills, expressed his determination to spearhead the creation of sixty-six new working-class churches, and summoned a band of volunteers to join the effort.[9] Specifically, he proposed the formation of societies comprising twenty volunteers each. Each society would adopt a needy, working-class district. That district would in turn be divided into twenty sections or "proportions" of twenty "contiguous" households each, and each of the twenty society members would be assigned to one of the proportions. It would be that member's duty to pay weekly visits to its residents, familiarizing himself with its families. His job would be to "ingratiate" himself with them that he might effectually promote their spiritual and temporal well-being. Being an explicitly missionary endeavor, the emphasis was on spiritual care, and so the great aim of the visitor would be to get the people into church. Yet they would seek to raise the outward condition of the population through education. They would spearhead the formation of a school for its children, hire a school teacher, and recruit students who would receive a quality, heavily subsidized education. And they would, of course, facilitate the establishment of public "ordinances" on the Sabbath, hiring a full-time missionary.[10]

While Chalmers himself would work to establish a Free Church of Scotland territorial church, this scheme was overtly ecumenical. Dissenters and Free Churchmen would collaborate; each society would work towards the formation of a congregation belonging to its respective denomination. On the one hand, this method would stifle petty jealousies and the acrimony of the Voluntary Controversy of the 1830s.[11] And yet at the same time, the scheme would cultivate a healthy, fraternal competition—all would strive to outdo each other in love and good deeds for Scotland's poor and neglected. "Woe betide the hin'most! Let us all set forth,—let us strive to outrun each other in this good work,—see who will get congregations formed soonest, and who will form most." He even explicitly expressed his hopes that this endeavor would result in the blurring and eventual elimination of denominational lines.[12]

6. Stewart J. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 350.

7. William Hanna, *Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers, D.D. LL.D.* (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable and Co., 1849–52), 4:391.

8. This alternative was arguably more viable during Chalmers' earlier ministry, when Scotland was in the earlier stages of moving from a voluntary and communal to a statutory system of poor relief. During his St. John's experiment in Glasgow, he secured from the city a special exemption from their obligatory contribution to its centralized poor fund. The deacons of the St. John's parish would then in turn manage its own resources according to Chalmers' more sparing methods, distributing poor relief to those deemed genuinely needy.

9. Thomas Chalmers, "Dr Chalmers' Lecture," *The Witness*, June 19, 1844; Thomas Chalmers, "Dr Chalmers' Second Lecture," *The Witness*, June 26, 1844; Thomas Chalmers, "Dr Chalmers' Third Lecture," *The Witness*, July 13, 1844; Thomas Chalmers, "Dr Chalmers' Fourth Lecture," *The Witness*, July 27, 1844.

10. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 19, 1844; Brown, *Chalmers,* 351.

11. This controversy emerged in the late 1820s, when evangelicals outside the establishment began publicly to challenge the propriety of a state-supported church. This prompted evangelicals within it, including Chalmers, to come to its defense.

12. Chalmers, *The Witness*, July 27, 1844.

But Chalmers was not content just to motivate—he would participate, leading the vanguard. To make his experiment truly worthwhile, he picked arguably the worst cesspool of Industrialized Scotland that he could find—the West Port of Edinburgh. This was the district that had not long before been the scene of the horrific butchery of Burke and Hare,[13] a cesspool of almost unimaginable squalor, disease, illiteracy, and crime. There seemed no better place to demonstrate the viability of the urban parish without an establishment. By late July, he had recruited ten volunteers, seven of whom were middle-class men from outside the West Port and three from within it. Together with James Ewan, a Dissenting missionary with the Edinburgh City Mission, Chalmers divided the district into twenty proportions of one hundred contiguous households each. By January, he had finally enlisted the services of more than twenty workers, thus giving each proportion at least one if not two devoted laborers.[14]

A survey his "agents" conducted that September in the West Port only confirmed the perception of need. Of 411 families and a gross population of 2000, only 45 families belonged to a Protestant church—a tenth of the population; and 70 families were Roman Catholics. Consequently, 296 households had absolutely no church connection whatsoever, while most could hear the church bells of several services. A quarter of the entire population were paupers (those on the public roll for poor relief), and a full quarter were given to thievery and prostitution. There were more than 400 children in the West Port, yet only 122 attended school.[15]

But these agents saw much more than just disappointing statistics in a ledger. Their walks through the West Port exposed them to heart-wrenching inhumanity. William Hanna, Thomas Chalmers' son-in-law and biographer, wrote that it was "no uncommon thing" for William Tasker, the eventual minister of the West Port, when first making his rounds,

> … to find from twenty to thirty men, women, and children, huddled together in one putrid dwelling, lying indiscriminately on the floor, waiting the return of the bearer of some well-concocted begging letter, or the coming on of that darkness under which they might sally out, to earn by fair means or by foul, the purchase-money of renewed debauchery. Upon one occasion he entered a tenement with from twelve to twenty apartments, where every human being, man and woman, were so drunk they could not hear their own squalid infants crying in vain to them for food. He purchased some bread for the children, and entering a few minutes afterwards a neighbouring dram-shop [tavern], he found a half-drunk mother driving a bargain for more whiskey with the very bread which her famishing children should have been eating. He went once to a funeral, and found the assembled company all so drunk around the corpse, that he had to go and beg some sober neighbours to come and carry the coffin to the grave.[16]

The bottom had evidently fallen out in the West Port. As Stewart Brown, the modern Chalmers' biographer, put it, "The West Port exhibited the collapse of the traditional Christian community ideal in urban Scotland."[17]

Every week, this small band of volunteer philanthropists walked through their proportions, dealing mainly in the "one thing needful." As Chalmers advised, they read Scripture, distributed religious literature, prayed with the inhabitants, and urged them to attend the services on the Sabbath.[18] Then they would convene on Saturday evenings to compare notes and to discuss successes and failures.

Having strongly dissuaded them from offering financial assistance on their visits, he yet encouraged them to be sensitive to real-life living conditions and needs. They could certainly assist those unemployed in finding work, and they could advocate for them with local authorities to clamp down on public nuisances that fostered waste and vice.[19] Further, they definitely should be creative; Chalmers didn't want to micromanage the operations. The more the agents did their own work, the more it would be obvious that territorial operations didn't depend on charismatic leaders like Chalmers, and so were repeatable *en masse.* Yet above all, they concentrated their temporal efforts on fostering the classic Scottish means of self-improvement—education. While distributing the "bread of life," they sought to arouse interest and commitment in the coming district school. They would make education available to the poorest of the

13. In 1828, this notorious duo lured a series of unfortunate victims in Edinburgh into dark alleys, where they dispatched them and subsequently sold their corpses to the University of Edinburgh for the 'benefit of science.'

14. West Port Local Society minutes [hereafter WPLS minutes], July 27, 1844, January 11, 1845. Records of Free, United Presbyterian, United Free and Other Protestant Churches, National Records of Scotland; Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* 354.

15. Ibid.; Hanna, *Memoirs,* 4:394–95.

16. Hanna, *Memoirs,* 4:395.

17. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* 354.

18. WPLS minutes, Finlay MacPherson to the Countess of Effingham, December 15, 1845.

19. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* 356.

poor, because all children have the innate potential for academic achievement given the opportunity.[20]

The minutes of the West Port Local Society capture the reports of the district visitors in the opening years of its operation and provide a window into their weekly efforts. Frequently, the visitors would share about prayer meetings they had established and how they fared. Often, they would convey something of their spiritual instructions. "In going round one Sabbath, [Mr. Wilson] found one family incivil, but proceeded to read the Bible, spoke pointedly & in prayer alluded to their spiritual condition, which he believes to have been the cause of their dryness. The next family he saw were quite the opposite."[21] A later report was more uplifting:

> Mr. Wilson had many encouragements in his district. In one family there are evident marks of a work of grace, especially in the case of the mother, concerning whom he is entitled to speak in a decided manner & though he cannot say the same of the father, there are considerable hopes of him also. They both attend the Sabbath services regularly, & the husband seems much affected with the anxious state of his wife. The children attend school & are doing remarkably well. He might also mention the case of a man, Alexander, who has made a decided sacrifice rather than accept of employment which though very advantageous in a pecuniary point of view, required him to violate the Sabbath.[22]

They often noted their interactions with Roman Catholics among the population, and frequently the comments were positive, "Tracts are cheerfully received & perused by Roman Catholics; & in some instances they do not dislike or discourage religious conversations founded on a passage of Scripture—they even come to the district prayer meetings & the Sabbath public service.[23] But they did at times meet resistance, such as one fellow that claimed that he, like many others, "though formerly in the practice of attending church on Sabbath, yet having imbibed infidel principles from books which he perused, no longer frequented the house of God."[24] They also lamented their encounters with drunkenness and its collateral damage and deliberated as to the best methods to attack the vice.

Yet, ultimately, they knew "the only effectual remedy against [it] seemed to be the more diligent & prayerful use of the means of grace."[25]

Soon, the West Port Local Society secured a schoolroom. It was a fitting emblem of the district it would serve. William Hanna again writes,

> It lay at the end of the very close down which Burke and Hare and his associates decoyed their unconscious victims. Fronting the den in which those horrid murders were committed, stood an old deserted tannery, whose upper storeloft, approached from without by a flight of projecting wooden stairs, was selected as affording the best accommodation which the neighborhood could supply. Low-roofed and roughly floored, its raw unplastered walls pierced at irregular intervals with windows in unshapely form, it had little either of the scholastic or the ecclesiastical in its aspect.[26]

Into this dingy hovel of a schoolhouse Chalmers called the inhabitants of the West Port to an opening public informational meeting on November 6, 1844. In this meeting, he shared that the society offered each genuinely West Port family a subsidized, quality education for their children. Yet he made clear that each family must contribute a certain amount towards the cost of the schooling. They had to be personally invested in order to appreciate the value of this true, long-term boon to their community.[27] Indeed, the society's whole experiment would fail in proportion to the degree in which residents did not respond to these volunteer efforts, cooperate, and become eventual net contributors to the success of their own community.[28] The school then opened the following week, on November 11, with 121 students between day and evening classes. The students pursued the subjects of reading, writing, natural science, geography, and the Bible, while the more proficient could further pursue English grammar, Latin, and mathematics.[29]

Sabbath services commenced in the tan-loft on December 12. Initially, there was a sense of anti-climax. Only twelve from the community were in attendance, and most of them were older ladies. Yet they persevered with three services each Sabbath, until Mr. William Tasker, a particularly gifted and coveted Free Church student responded to Chalmers' personal invitation to serve as the congregation's missionary—and eventual

20. Hanna, *Memoirs*, 4:396–99, 418.
21. WPLS minutes, July 5, 1845.
22. WPLS minutes, September 6, 1845.
23. WPLS minutes, Finlay MacPherson to the Countess of Effingham, September 23, 1844.
24. WPLS minutes, April 5, 1845.
25. WPLS minutes, May 24, 1845.
26. Hanna, *Memoirs,* 4:401.
27. Hanna, *Memoirs,* 4:402.
28. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 26, 1844; Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* 355.
29. Hanna, *Memoirs,* 4:403.

minister. Tasker began in April of 1845 and immediately joined Chalmers' side at the head of the West Port experiment.[30] The two became close comrades-in-arms, and Chalmers found himself enthused once again to be among the working-class.[31]

The society spearheaded other related projects to help address the temporal needs of the West Port poor. These included a savings bank, a library, a public bath, barbering services for the children, a wash house for laundering, a school to teach females domestic skills, and three Sabbath schools. All of these, of course, were founded exclusively for the benefit of the West Port population, not indiscriminately for any of Edinburgh's poor. Should others wish to help such living outside the West Port, Chalmers replied that they might by all means form new territorial societies to "go and do likewise" for them.[32]

As time progressed, there were most encouraging signs of success. Within a year, the number of day school students had nearly quadrupled to 250.[33] By March of 1846, the Sabbath schools had increased to 150 students.[34] On August 6, 1845, the West Port Local Society held a public exhibition in the tannery for a number of prominent Edinburgh citizens, where they toured the facilities and enjoyed a display of the children's academic proficiency. Stewart Brown writes, "The day went beautifully. The children performed well, and afterwards Chalmers joined them for strawberries and cream—a look of benign contentment upon his face as he sat amid the noise and confusion of the excited youngsters."[35] Hugh Miller wrote in *The Witness* the following week, "Smile as one might, there is no mistaking the fact that the minds of these children, which save for this school, would in all probability have slept on for life, were fully awakened."[36]

And in spiritual terms, things were brightening as well. By November of 1845, William Tasker reported that in one section comprising 27 families, 22 of which had lived without any church connection, church attendance at their services sharply increased to seven families, approaching a third of that population. And yet a still more "gladdening" index of success follows, as Tasker reported:

> … that of these 32 individuals, there are a number who give evidence that they have been *born again,* and are now, upon the strength of that conviction, in communion with the visible church, and living epistles of Christ, giving light in the darkness. Besides these seven families, there are six or seven occasional hearers, giving good reason to hope, that they will by and by become regular attendants. Thus one half of the moral desert here has been made to blossom; fruit, we trust, well pleasing to God, is brought forth; and, reasoning from analogy, the remaining half will not be so difficult, seeing that coadjutors in such a goodly proportion are now raised up in the midst of themselves.[37]

Thus on both main fronts, church and school, the experiment was moving in a positive direction.

Chalmers originally hoped to have seen funds raised from within the West Port for the residents' own church building. Self-reliance was the goal. But as that goal seemed as yet a far way off by the summer of 1845, Chalmers, eager to exhibit a completed experiment for the nation, decided to purchase land with funds from the society. In January of 1846, he began fundraising in earnest for a building that would adequately accommodate the congregation, school, and the other social programs already underway. The building would be a kind of multi-purpose facility, the fountainhead of ministry to the community and its social center of gravity.[38] Finally, on Friday, February 19, 1847, the completed building was opened for its first service of worship. He wrote to Tasker that next Monday, "I have got now the desire of my heart—the church is finished, the schools are flourishing, our ecclesiastical machinery is about complete, and all in good working order. God has indeed heard my prayer, and I could now lay down my head in peace and die." On April 25, the church observed its first communion. It was two days later when he wrote to James Lenox about this "most joyful event of [his] life."

> Our church was opened on the 19th of February, and in one month my anxieties respecting an attendance have been set at rest. Five-sixth of the sittings have been let; but the best part of it is, that three-fourths of these are from the West Port, a locality which, two years ago, had not one in ten church-goers from the whole population.

30. Hanna, *Memoirs,* 4:404.
31. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* 360.
32. WPLS minutes, October 30, 1844; Hugh Miller, "The West Port Mission," *The Witness*, August 9, 1845; Hanna, *Memoirs,* 4:404; Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* 356–7.
33. WPLS minutes, November 16, 1844, November 8, 1845; Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* 358.
34. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* 358.
35. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* 358–59.
36. "The West Port Mission," *The Witness*, August 9, 1845.
37. Thomas Chalmers, *Churches and Schools for the Working Classes* (Edinburgh: John D. Lowe, 1846), 18–19.
38. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* 360.

> I presided myself, on Sabbath last, over its first sacrament. There were 132 communicants, and 100 of them from the West Port.[39]

Chalmers felt vindicated. But what is more, he was completely satisfied; for as he saw it, the Kilmany ideal had been transplanted into the worst 'moral desert' of Edinburgh's slums.

Now, it should be said that contemporary scholarship challenges the success Chalmers claimed for his philanthropic efforts, including the West Port experiment. Brown points out that Chalmers significantly underestimated the actual money required for the enterprise. He also contends that the district remained just as socially and economically impoverished as before the experiment and that his band of volunteers over time lost heart and retreated from the cause.[40] It certainly is possible that Chalmers underestimated the systemic problems unique to his age in the throes of the Industrial Revolution; a purely voluntary initiative may not have been the answer to poverty in its modern shape. Yet Brown also concedes that Chalmers was limited by his declining health and only had two and a half years to be actively involved in such a formidable project. He also pursued it even while events such as the Scottish Poor Law Act of 1845 and the famine in 1846 were drawing public opinion "away from the old faith in voluntary charity and parochial Christian communities as viable means for social organisation and improvement."[41] In any case, it is beyond the scope of this article to reconsider the question.[42] But from an ecclesiastical point of view, Chalmers' West Port operation has been recognized as an impressive success.

As he had anticipated, the West Port experiment was indeed Chalmers' last great tribute to the parish ideal. The very next month, on May 31, 1847, he was found in bed having passed in his sleep, his face showing signs only of complacency and peace. A nation, forever changed, mourned the passing of their loyal son.

The West Port Method

Now, how did Chalmers advocate his territorial model? What was it that so captured Chalmers' imagination and drove him to persuade others similarly to adopt it? While he expressed himself on this subject many times throughout his career, it would be fitting to focus on the public lectures that he gave in 1844 to drum up interest in his great final project.

First, we consider its main design. It has been argued in contemporary scholarship that it served to promote the restoration of "the godly commonwealth" within a secularizing Britain and to revive the old communal ideal shattered from the strains of the Industrial Age.[43] The method has also been considered as a vehicle of evangelical activism, in which both clergy and laity busied themselves with worthy causes[44] or an expression of typical, evangelical doctrines of the day, such as natural theology, divine providence and retribution, and substitutionary atonement.[45] Often, it is considered as an agency of philanthropy, typically construed as a quixotic if not a calloused attempt to impose an outdated model of poor relief on a hapless population or,[46] relatedly, as a paternalist upper- and middle-class tool to civilize the working-class.[47] Last, it has been

39. Chalmers to Lenox, April 29, 1847, James Lenox Papers.

40. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* 361–3.

41. Stewart J. Brown, "The Disruption and Urban Poverty: Thomas Chalmers and the West Port Operation in Edinburgh, 1844–47," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 20, no. 1 (1978), 86.

42. Some contemporary thinkers sympathetic to Chalmers' religious and political outlook have continued to argue in favor of older, voluntary models of poor relief over the modern welfare state. See Marvin N. Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1995), 24–26, 47–48.

43. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* xiii-xviii, 350–51; Stewart J. Brown, "Thomas Chalmers and the Communal Ideal in Victorian Scotland," in *Victorian Values: A Joint Symposium of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the British Academy, December 1990,* ed. T. C. Smout (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1992): 61–80.

44. David William Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin and Hyman, 1989), 10–12.

45. Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785–1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 55–63, 88–9.

46. R. O. Cage and E. O. A. Checkland, "Thomas Chalmers and Urban Poverty: The St. John's Parish Experiment in Glasgow, 1819–1837," *The Philosophical Journal* 13, no. 1 (1976): 37–56; Brian Dickey, "'Going About and Doing Good': Evangelicals and Poverty *c.* 1815–1870," in *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal: Evangelicals and Society in Britain, 1780–1980,* ed. John Wolffe (London: SPCK, 1995), 45–6; John F. McCaffrey, "Thomas Chalmers and Social Change," *Scottish Historical Review* 60, no. 169 (1981): 32–60; Mary T. Furgol, "Thomas Chalmers' Poor Relief Theories and Their Implementation in the Early Nineteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1987); Atsuko Betchaku, "Thomas Chalmers, David Stow and the St. John's Experiment: A Study in Educational Influence in Scotland and Beyond, 1819—c. 1850," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 27, no. 2 (2007): 170–90; Alec C. Cheyne, "Thomas Chalmers: Then and Now," in Studies in Scottish Church History (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999): 79–106.

47. Lauren M. E. Goodlad, "'Making the Working Man Like Me': Charity, Pastorship, and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain. Thomas Chalmers and Dr. James Phillips Kay," *Victorian Studies* 43, no. 4 (2001): 591–617; David Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 1; Alison Twells, *The Civilising Mission and the English Middle Class, 1792–1850: The 'Heathen' at Home and Overseas* (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 53, 78, 153.

interpreted as the fruit of secularization theory, where the agency was contrived to combat the putative 'unholy city' threatening to swallow up the old Christian order of pre-industrial, rural Britain.[48] But while all of these interpretations help situate and explain Chalmers' territorial method, we must not neglect what he himself deemed its foremost purpose—evangelism:

> I ought not to speak of it as an innovation; for it is the precious system of the olden time, though it has been grievously departed from. Let me call it now a great Home Mission; for it is, to all intents and purposes, a missionary enterprise. There are a number of people who will not encourage the work, unless it is work across the ocean, or over vast continents. But let me remind you, that though the distance of the heathen be in this case but half a mile from your own doors, yet, morally speaking, it is as great as if they lived in the wilds of Tartary, or in the South Sea Islands.[49]

Chalmers had long been passionate about foreign missions. He personally trained many missionaries at the University of St. Andrews and later at the University of Edinburgh, inspiring them with his zeal.[50] Yet all along, he was tireless about the cause of missions right on the Scottish doorstep. The proximity of lost sinners living within a Christian land can easily beguile. In reality, an abundance of churches among them matters nothing if the people themselves are spiritually "alienated" from the things of God.[51] For Chalmers, such was the case with the lower classes in Britian. Consequently, only an explicitly missionary effort could overcome the "great moral distance" of the home heathen. "You must go to them, and perform essentially the work of a missionary. The object of the local [territorial] system is a series of missionary operations."[52] Its paramount concern was "the saving of the souls of a district."[53] Admittedly, scholarship has recognized this spiritual dimension of Chalmers' parish model[54] and even its priority over things temporal.[55] Yet since it has not been explored in any depth, further study is warranted. And the subject should be of all the more interest, given the fact that no other figure before him had argued at such length for the ecclesiastical parish, nor so uniquely, construing it as a mission agency within the confines of Christendom.

Chalmers has frequently been quoted, "I should count the salvation of a single soul more important than the rescue of a whole empire from pauperism."[56] Such hyperbole could mislead, for the missionary nature of Chalmers' territorial method cannot simply be reduced to the salvation of souls. In the first case, there was the socio-ecclesiastical dimension. Since the habit of church-going among the target population had bottomed out, the immediate aim of the missionary enterprise was to restore that habit. Reflecting a Reformed view of salvation and the means of grace, this method endeavored to recruit "hearers,"[57] such as would be in the way of salvation through a regular attendance on the preaching of the Gospel. "Then let all our teaching and all our testimony be on the side of the Church-going—let it be our great endeavour to bring them to the habit of submitting themselves Sabbath after Sabbath to attendance on the services of a Christian minister . . ."[58] To be sure, this made it a species of paternalist social reform, an attempt to civilize a population. But it was viewed as a necessary means to the end of personal salvation.

Then there was the socio-economic aspect of the mission. While his uppermost concern was personal salvation, Chalmers advocated the territorial method particularly for the benefit Britain's impoverished "masses" who had been cruelly neglected by their betters.[59] Fast on the heels of their spiritual well-being

48. Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800–2000,* second ed. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 18–30, 43–48.

49. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 19, 1844.

50. Stuart Piggin and John Roxborogh, *The St. Andrews Seven: The Finest Flowering of Missionary Zeal in Scottish History* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1985).

51. Chalmers, *Works,* 6:271, 16:196.

52. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 26, 1844.

53. Chalmers, *The Witness*, July 27, 1844.

54. H. D. Rack, "Domestic Visitation: A Chapter in Early Nineteenth Century Evangelism," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 24, no. 4 (1973): 357–76; John Roxborogh, *Thomas Chalmers, Enthusiast for Mission: The Christian Good of Scotland and the Rise of the Missionary Movement*, Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Publishing, 1999); Ian J. Shaw, "Thomas Chalmers, David Nasmith, and the Origins of the City Mission Movement," *Evangelical Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (2004): 31–46. Further, several of those cited in footnotes 31–34 also refer to it.

55. Mary T. Furgol, "Chalmers and Poor Relief: An Incidental Sideline?" in *The Practical and the Pious: Essays on Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847),* ed. Alec C. Cheyne (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1985), 115–29.

56. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers,* 138; Cheyne, "Then and Now," 88; Hilton, *Age of Atonement*, 88; Harald Beutel, *Die Sozialtheologie Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847) und ihre Bedeutung für die Freikirchen*: *eine Studie zur Diakonie der Erweckungsbewegung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 106. Chalmers nearly repeats the quote again in his lectures; Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 26, 1844. "Pauperism" was a term commonly used at the time to refer to the degraded condition of the poor as recipients of statutory relief.

57. Chalmers, *Works,* 18:71, 164, 271.

58. Chalmers, *The Witness*, July 13, 1844.

59. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 19, 1844.

came their moral and physical well-being, so such an endeavor should seek to ameliorate their wretchedness. Even if the mission should fall short in conversions, he contended, yet the byproduct of the religious efforts would invariably elevate their outward condition. In purely sociological terms, religion moralizes. And morality pays. Further, the collateral benefit of a single conversion is far-reaching:

> Give me a real spiritual convert,—one, it may be, out of fifty,—and though not one more of the fifty be savingly converted but himself, yet his example has a certain reflex influence on the neighborhood in which he lives, and has the effect of elevating the general standard of morals in that neighborhood. Christians are the salt of the earth. Salt bears but a small proportion to the thing which it preserves; and in like manner, a pure and healthy Christianity sheds an influence on more than those who have believed in it to the salvation of their souls.[60]

Now, while Chalmers made much of the byproduct argument, he did not stop there. As we shall see below, he promoted a rather developed "machinery" for the alleviation of poverty.

Having, then, treated the design of the territorial method, we now turn to its two cardinal principles—locality and aggression. "The local system," embodying the first of these two principles, stands opposite the "the general system." The latter system offers its services indiscriminately to a general population lying at all points of the compass. Whoever likes may avail himself of the church. The local system, however, operates with a very specific remit, a geographically defined neighborhood. While not excluding any coming from afar, the church operating on the local system gives preference to those within the particular district.[61] Clearly, Chalmers was pushing for the return of ecclesiastical domains, a kind of parish system for the modern age. Yet such a system would be far less authoritarian and much more voluntary than its Medieval and Reformational antecedent. Chalmers' was a soft paternalism.

The second governing principle is aggression. The general system contravenes this, proceeding instead upon the principle of attraction. It aims to attract whomever from wherever by the force of its minister's eloquence. Its fatal flaw, however, is that it only attracts those with a "predisposition for Christian instruction." In other words, it only attracts those who are already Christians. Such a preacher, "with great powers of oratory, eloquence, and impressive preaching," draws many and packs his church. "But with whom?" Chalmers queries. "With the people who were formerly attending other churches; so that he fills his church at the expense of previous congregations. There is no increase of church goers, in this process; there is no creation of new worshippers; it is mere transference of the old worshippers to a new place of worship." The general system, then, is not only an exercise in futility. It is irresponsible. It fosters an uncatholic jockeying over the same pool of Christians, and even more damning, tends to "float over the mass of practical heathenism beneath them."[62]

The local system, on the other hand, works on the conviction that the masses had no natural predisposition for Christianity. They had lapsed into an "inert, lethargic, sluggish carelessness to the importance of spiritual things."[63] Such was their natural bent, for it was the natural bent of mankind. Clearly, Chalmers here held the line of strict, Calvinist orthodoxy. Because this population was impervious to mere attraction, it must aggressively be pursued. Chalmers was wholly supportive of *laissez faire* in economics, but not at all in religion. While there was always a natural demand in the marketplace for the necessities of the body, not so with the necessities for the soul. Such a demand, then, must be created.

These two principles merge to form the territorial system. When applied, it means in the first case adopting a particular locality. A minister working on this system "chalks out" *de novo* a modest-sized urban district of "contiguous households" to win souls and build a Christian community. It is his own, manageable "territorial vineyard," to be cared for and cultivated spiritually. He must endeavor to fill his church not with anyone from anywhere by the charm of his charisma, but with these. And because he cannot expect them to darken the doors of the church otherwise, he must with his elders aggressively ply them at their doorsteps and in their homes by routine household visits. They must overcome their spiritual lethargy and create a demand where none exists.[64]

60. Chalmers, *The Witness*, July 13, 1844.

61. The language of "preference" alludes to the standard practice of the day of charging worshipers a fee to rent a seat in the church during services. As a means of guaranteeing the maintenance of the ministry and the upkeep of the property, Chalmers had no objection to it. Only, he strenuously fought the practice of pricing out the poor and appealed for giving "preference" of parishioners to sittings in their own parish church.

62. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 19, 1844.

63. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 19, 1844.

64. Ibid.; Chalmers, *The Witness*, July 27, 1844.

Ever practical, Chalmers touted his method's many benefits. Foremost is its efficiency.

Even a well-intentioned minister on the general system finds that he simply has no time to reach out to the unchurched since he feels that he must favor his regular "hearers" in pastoral visitations. As he travels to all points of the city to visit his little diaspora, the unchurched fall through the cracks. On Chalmers' system, however, the physician of souls has but to do with one modest neighborhood, his pastoral and evangelistic spheres being coterminous. Moving from door to door, he pastors any resident faithful, evangelizes and recruits hearers, and gradually transforms a mission field into a Christian community, a microcosm of Christendom.[65] Again, Chalmers was thus unashamedly endeavoring to rehabilitate—or rather re-create—the parish system, "the precious system of the olden time,"[66] in which every minister was simultaneously pastor and missionary.

The method also capitalizes on the power of moral influence. Now, as we have seen already, the very doctrinal keystone of Chalmers' model was the stern, Calvinist doctrine of human depravity. Attraction might work, if men were not half bad. But because they are altogether bad—spiritually speaking—there must be aggression. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, the aggression must be gentle. The laborer must go among the people and "ingratiate" himself in their affections by his manifest care for them, body and soul, parents and children:

> … he is to watch every opportunity, to go to them especially at those seasons when, through sickness or death in their houses, their hearts are peculiarly open and susceptible to impressions from one who comes to them in the character of a friend and comforter, as interesting himself in the education of their families, and by a thousand nameless offices and topics of introduction by which you may make a pretext or a real occasion of visiting them: and you will infallibly, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, meet with a cordial welcome from this alienated population.[67]

This aggression is the force of moral suasion, or as he wrote elsewhere, the "omnipotence of Christian charity."[68] That the people are thus susceptible highlights Chalmers' convictions of a certain abiding goodness in human nature, which the territorial method exploits.[69] Even among the most degraded, "it is an invariable law of nature that love begets love."[70] It may not always result in conversion, but it should very well restore a population to regular church attendance—a more hopeful prelude to conversion.[71]

Related, the method harnesses the power of sympathy, or "the gregarious principle."[72] Not only is it a much more efficient use of the pastor's time to visit contiguous households, but the physical proximity of his parishioners also offers potential for the power of natural, human sympathy to augment the pastor's moral suasion. Speaking of "the influence of neighborhood," he writes, imagine if

> … one family is persuaded to go to a well-known church, to hear a minister who is also well known in the neighborhood. If one family thus gives in, it furnishes a common topic of talk to all the neighborhood; sympathy is excited, for there is much sympathy in the mere fact of juxtaposition. There can be no sympathy between hearers who are half a mile distant from each other; but there is much sympathy among next-door neighbours. This brings the gregarious principle into play; what people will not do singly they do with delight and readiness in a flock.[73]

Juxtaposition is ready kindling for the flame of sympathy to spread. The general system quite misses this opportunity with its non-local approach to visitation.

65. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 19, 1844. Chalmers elsewhere dealt with the question as to how a church operating on the general system might adopt these principles without spurning its own membership base. He essentially answered that the minister ought still to adopt a district, preferably adjacent the church, and incrementally draw in souls from it into the habit of attendance on the church. "Extra-parochial" hearers would eventually relocate or die off. And so partly by attrition, the target population would gradually displace it, and the church would finally be "localized." See Chalmers, *Works,* 14:132, 182–4, 356–7.

66. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 19, 1844.

67. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 19, 1844.

68. Chalmers, *Works*, 11:293.

69. It could be argued that Chalmers' optimism about the human situation was a holdover from the Enlightenment influence of his Moderate days and so sat uneasily with his darker, evangelical outlook. Yet it should be noted that the concept of *justitia civilis* (civil righteousness) had long been a mediating doctrine within Reformed theology; see Zacharias Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism,* trans. G. W. Williard (Columbus: Scott & Bascom, Printers, 1852), 32, 479; Johannes Althusius, *Politica: An Abridged Translation of Politics Methodically Set Forth and Illustrated with Sacred and Profane Examples*, ed. and trans. Frederick S. Carney (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1964), 147; Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* 3 vols., trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1992), 1:669, 2:4.

70. Chalmers, *The Witness*, July 13, 1844.

71. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 19, 1844.

72. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 19, 1844.

73. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 19, 1844.

How exactly, then, would the method work? How should they go about it? Chalmers gave his listeners several lines of advice. They must begin visiting the households throughout their adopted district. They should familiarize themselves with its inhabitants, gleaning information from them, especially whether they attend a church and their children a school. Let the statisics be recorded. Reconaissance is crucial. And they should return again and again, making such visits routine. Nor should the laborer be daunted by the greatness of the responsibility. "Little and often" can carry the day. "I have, as I have often said, great faith in the accumulation of littles." Should the district not yet have a church or a school, the association should seek to raise the required funds and build them. In the meantime, a preaching station should be secured.[74]

As we have already considered before, the visitors should "ply them with ... moral suasion." If welcomed in, they should aim to speak "forcibly and familiarly" to them "in their own houses." They should especially urge them to the practice of church going, using "affectionate invitations and remonstrances." Other tactics would help "ingratiate" them into the hearts of the people. They should pay attention to the children, showing genuine care and concern. If they are in school, the visitor might inquire into their proficiency and even have them display their attainments then and there. He might also give books as constructive rewards. He should visit the sick and comfort the mourning. To that end, he should keep his ear to the ground, ever on the lookout for such tender moments of doing good and thus winning hearts. While he should not indiscriminately give out money, he might pay for such necessities as medical care or medicines.

The visitors, while endeavoring to recruit the people to regular church attendance, might also conduct prayer meetings or simply convene family worship in the houses of those open to it. Should someone fail to keep a promise to attend the services, Chalmers even boldly recommended holding a little service in the home of the "defaulters" and inviting the neighbors to it. But was this moral suasion or moral alienation? Chalmers countered, "Depend upon it, they will take it very well. They will of course feel themselves caught … but still they will tolerate you, and make their escape next Sabbath, by going to the place of worship."[75] The visitors should also compare notes with each other. He recommended that they gather once per week to share their successes and failures, further honing workable strategies for gaining the district. The deliberations should be minuted, furnishing a manual for the benefit of others who would operate on the same principles elsewhere.[76]

Now, what kind of advice did Chalmers give for managing the care of the poor? He testified from painful experience that they ought to start on the right foot and stick to it. That is, make the purpose of the mission explicitly spiritual in nature, and cause the people to understand it. Let them know that they deal "only in one article," Christianity, not in the distribution of material benevolence. If the purpose is confused or the signals are mixed, the effect will surely lead to morally disastrous results. The resulting "evil is, that many people have their hearts filled with a host of sordid, mercenary expectations,"[77] counteracting whatever spiritual good is intended.

Nevertheless, the mission should seek to relieve temporal want. In addition to the spiritual effort of personal, household visitation, funds are best used not for handouts, but mainly for the erection and maintenance of churches, schools, and other beneficial institutions. Education ennobles. And it is never degrading to contribute to or underwrite medical care. To be sure, Jesus fed the crowds twice. But he healed each and every one who came to him throughout His ministry. Chalmers made much of this contrast. When Jesus

> saw the sordid expectations of the people, did he then bring them food by miracle? No. He said, 'Verily, verily, ye seek me not because ye saw the miracle, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled;' and he put them off with a spiritual advice, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endures to everlasting life.' So he treated the case of hunger. Now, take the case of disease. He never sent away the applications of the diseased. Petitions were brought to him from the maimed, the halt, the lame, and the blind; and it is said repeatedly that he looked with compassion upon them and healed them all.[78]

Thus, Christ left us this example to shape our philanthropy. Prioritize the spiritual and lavishly care for the temporal needs of the poor in ways that will not degrade them.

So how should the visitors respond to solicitations? First, kindly repeat the mission's spiritual purpose. Second, tell the individual that you do not as yet know him well enough, that you need to develop confidence that

74. Chalmers, *The Witness*, July 13, 1844.
75. Chalmers, *The Witness*, July 13, 1844.
76. Chalmers, *The Witness*, July 13, 1844.
77. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 26, 1844.
78. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 26, 1844.

a cash gift would truly be in his best interest. In order to give conscientiously, you must meaningfully know something of his "case" and "conduct." So explain that if he is patient and you are able to become acquainted with him, it might well be different down the road. Third, does he have any relatives? If so, you would like to meet them and press upon them the plight of their own family. You could also inform him that, should you give now to him and others like him, it would detract from those higher causes that will most benefit the entire community. And ultimately, let him know that the "best way of helping people is to put them in the way of helping themselves."[79] Such things said in sincerity should prevail over time, especially when actions corroborate claims.

Last, who should engage in this work? At the vanguard is the minister, who ideally takes up his residence in the district itself. His home "is to be considered as the missionary station, from whence he emanates among the people." He also welcomes elders from other congregations, provided they can spare a fraction of their time on a neglected field. In fact, any large-hearted volunteer is welcome, including the laity:

> We shall never be able to make a great impression, unless we avail ourselves of the lay part of the people: and many there are who, though they have not received the advantage of a University education, and are not accustomed to public speaking, yet, feeling the love of Christ in their hearts, are able to go forth to collect a few people in a room, and perform the Sabbath services in the midst of them.

The net is even further widened to include volunteers from any evangelical denomination. And the more overlap of labor, the better, as collaboration will bring down needless barriers. Nor should the agents be restricted to the middle- or upper-classes. Ideally, he desired a good number of recruits from among the "operatives." In fact, many of the former might be ill-suited for work in the slums. "I suppose that a person may be so accustomed to the luxuries and elegancies of life that he is apt to be overwhelmed with the aspect of general and extreme wretchedness."[80]

Lest Chalmers be thought to approach evangelism in a mechanistic way, he made it clear that the territorial method was no failsafe recipe. The Spirit of God must bless the work. Earnest prayer must accompany the labor throughout. That being said, a quietistic indifference to method and effort is equally wrong. There must be a middle way:

> It is in some respects like a steam engine. It is not a matter of indifference what kind of steam engine we employ; one steam engine will do its work better than another, but in all of them, the moving force is indispensable. A steam engine, however perfect, is useless if it have not a moving force; but then that does not supersede the question as to the best kind of steam engine.[81]

It has been said that Chalmers was a pragmatist. If true, then Chalmers was not just any pragmatist, but an evangelical pragmatist. For the sake of the lost, he cared about what works. But only God's saving intervention can make what works work.

More than 150 years has passed since the West Port experiment began at the close of Thomas Chalmers' career. Western society has only accelerated further from the days in which the old parish model flourished; social, demographic, and technological changes, to name a few, have remade the landscape. And what is more, ours is a secularizing if not a wholly secularized Christendom. Arguably, it is a Christendom no more, which would seem to make it an all the more inhospitable environment for such Chalmers-style experiments. But those sharing his viewpoint would contend that human nature has not changed, nor has the spiritual plight of modern man. And if today's Westerner still assumes an embodied existence, takes up space, residing in some "locality," and if he is still susceptible to the moral suasion of someone who will care for his soul, then territorial experiments are yet worth attempting. Or at least dreaming about.▪

79. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 26, 1844.
80. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 26, 1844.
81. Chalmers, *The Witness*, June 26, 1844.

Wisdom & Folly in Pastoral Ministry:
Samuel Miller's Use of Antithesis in His Published Lectures

By Zachary Groff

In His Word, God has characterized the worship He requires as reverent, joyful, truthful, spiritual, and covenantal.[1] God speaks to His gathered people in certain elements of worship (the Call, Scripture Readings, Assurance of Pardon, Preaching, the Benediction, etc…), and His people speak to Him in certain other elements (Singing, Confession of Faith/Sin, Prayer, Offering, Taking of Oaths, etc…). His directive commanding us to pray in corporate worship especially demonstrates the covenantal, or dialogical, nature of well-regulated worship. In fact, there is a confessional basis for approaching the task (and privilege) of public prayer with both care and diligence. The Westminster Confession of Faith devotes two full paragraphs to prayer, but lists the remaining elements of public worship together in a single paragraph. Westminster Confession of Faith XXI.3–4 (Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day) give the following instructions regarding prayer:

> 3. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all men: and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of his Spirit, according to his will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue.
>
> 4. Prayer is to be made for things lawful; and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter: but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.

Mentioned before either the preaching of the Word or the administration of the sacraments, prayer occupies a conspicuously important position in the Confession's description of worship. Though the Larger and Shorter Catechisms pose questions about preaching (WLC 155–160; WSC 89–90) and sacraments (WLC 161–178; WSC 91–97) before prayer is introduced (WLC 178), both catechisms devote more questions to prayer (WLC 178–196; WSC 98–107) than to preaching and sacraments combined. Though a topic's frequency of mention or position within the Westminster Standards do not necessarily denote its relative importance,[2] it is clear that anyone who would identify as a confessional Presbyterian must have a keen interest in prayer.

Nineteenth Century American Presbyterian minister Samuel Miller (1769–1850) understood the importance of prayer in the church's public worship of God. As a pastor, Miller labored primarily in New York, and he afterwards served as one of the original faculty members of Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey.[3] Toward the end of his life, he published a volume to instruct young ministers and seminarians in the practice

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1. While this is not the place for a full literature review, the following books are worth referencing in support of the characterization of worship described above: Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Worship*, ed. Don Kistler, Modern Reprint Edition (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990); Joseph A. Pipa and C.N. Willborn, eds., *The Worship of God* (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2005); G. Van Dooren, *The Beauty of Reformed Liturgy* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Premier Publishing, 1980). For a helpful recent historical illustration of biblical worship, refer to Everett A. Henes, "Less Outward Glory: An Examination of Calvin's Reformation of Worship," *The Confessional Presbyterian Journal* 13 (2017): 121–128, 253.

2. Consider the Standards' treatment of Adoption. This glorious and important doctrine is limited to one paragraph in the Confession, and one question in each of the Catechisms.

3. For a recent book-length treatment of Miller's life and ministry, see James M. Garretson, *An Able and Faithful Ministry: Samuel Miller and the Pastoral Office* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014).

of public prayer. *Thoughts on Public Prayer* (1849) is Samuel Miller's final book-length publication.[4] Due to its subject matter, it remains an important book for any man called to corporately represent (or lead) God's people in prayer.

In the first section of this article, I summarize *Thoughts on Public Prayer*, giving close attention to Miller's use of antithesis in promoting biblical methods of praying in public worship. One result of Miller's use of antithesis is that much of his book expresses a polemical tone against faulty practices. Miller's writing is also filled with an energetic urgency as he pleaded with the next generation of Presbyterian ministers. Considering the importance which Miller assigned to the ministerial duty of public prayer, and the observed weakness of public prayer in the church of his day, his tone and style is not out of place.

In the second section of this article, I illustrate how Miller's adoption of an at-times strident tone in *Thoughts on Public Prayer* compares to his writing style in other books and tracts published during his lifetime. Certainly, Miller's deeply held conviction about the importance of public prayer may have influenced his tone. When *Thoughts on Public Prayer* is analyzed alongside other works published in his lifetime, it is clear that his intended audience had an even greater influence over his writing style. To substantiate this claim, I compare Miller's *Thoughts on Public Prayer* to his published works on *Infant Baptism*[5] and *The Utility and Importance of Creeds and Confessions.*[6] In each of these works, there are points of stylistic continuity and different emphases in tone. Miller's volume on public prayer is especially worthy of close scrutiny not only because it contains helpful advice for men aspiring to serve the church through praying in corporate worship, but because it is his last published work, representing the fruit and maturation of decades of ministry. Any perceived stridency is not born out of youthful zeal, but rather reflects his chosen method of persuasion when addressing seminary students and young ministers about a matter of great significance to the church. He more frequently employed antithesis in his writing in works addressing seminary students and young ministers than in otherwise comparable prepared remarks to laypeople. As an eminent churchman and seminary professor in his day, his uses of contrast, comparison, and antithesis match stylistic features of biblical wisdom literature,[7] befitting his practical and instructional purposes.[8]

The three examples of Miller's writing chosen for examination in this paper were selected for their different audiences, subjects, and dates of publication. The most substantial of the three is *Thoughts on Public Prayer* (1849), which addressed seminary students and young ministers on the topic of a primary means of grace (corporate prayer). The work on infant baptism was published fifteen years prior in 1835, the contents of which were originally delivered to a local congregation on the topic of a different primary means of grace (the sacrament of baptism). The third example on creeds and confessions was originally published ten years earlier still in 1824 for the benefit of seminary students, and did not handle a means of grace for its subject matter. Though Miller's body of work is far more extensive than the three chosen examples,[9] these selections allow for a test of the proposition that Miller's intended audience, more than his topic, influenced his writing style and method of argumentation.

Thoughts on Public Prayer and Samuel Miller's Use of Antithesis

It was Miller's conviction that a ministerial duty as important as representing and leading God's people in public prayer requires special focus, preparation, and planning. One biographer of Miller astutely notes, "That Miller would devote his final literary efforts to this subject evidences the burden he felt for the worship practice of congregations in the corporate communion of their public prayers" (Garretson 130). By addressing those responsible for the public prayer ministry of the

4. Unless otherwise indicated, Samuel Miller quotations in this article are taken from Samuel Miller, *Thoughts on Public Prayer*, Modern Reprint Edition. (1849; repr. Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1985).

5. Samuel Miller, "Infant Baptism Scriptural and Reasonable: And Baptism by Sprinkling or Affusion, the Most Suitable and Edifying Mode," in *Miller on Presbyterianism & Baptism* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1835), 199–318.

6. Samuel Miller, "The Utility and Importance of Creeds and Confessions: Addressed Particularly to Candidates for the Ministry,"(1824); cf. in *Doctrinal Integrity* (Dallas, TX: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1989), 1–72.

7. John A. Kitchen, *Proverbs: A Mentor Commentary*, Mentor Commentary Series (Ross-shire, Scotland: Mentor, 2006), 26–7; James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, Third Edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 63–4; Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 34–5.

8. O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of Wisdom: A Redemptive-Historical Exploration of the Wisdom Books of the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, N.J: P & R Publishing, 2017), 23–24.

9. For a nearly exhaustive accounting of Samuel Miller's writings, see Wayne Sparkman, Samuel Miller, D. D. (1879–1850) An Annotated Bibliography, *The Confessional Presbyterian* 1 (2005): 11–40.

church, he hoped to encourage pastors to regard public prayer with the same esteem in which they held other functions of their ministerial office. Early in *Thoughts on Public Prayer*, Miller elevated the importance of corporate prayer by relating it to the corresponding and complementary duty of preaching. He wrote, "In prayer, we always *speak to God*, in the way of his own appointment; in preaching, *God speaks to us* by his commissioned servant, if that servant preaches the preaching which the Master bids him" (14). Together, prayer and preaching enact the dialogue between God and His people that takes place in corporate worship.

Miller sought to meet a need in the church of his day by writing a volume dealing specifically with issues surrounding corporate prayer during public worship. He did so in six chapters that may be arranged in three topical groupings. The first three chapters provide helpful background information, examine issues surrounding public prayer, and introduce Miller's proposed solution. Chapters three and four continue with a description and denunciation of faulty practices in corporate prayer. The book then closes with two chapters that describe and commend faithful examples of public prayer.

In his preface, Miller introduced his concern that Presbyterian ministers had approached the worship of God through the use of liturgies in such a way so as to fail to cultivate warmth and well-ordered zeal in devotion. "It has even occurred to me to doubt whether the well known doctrine of our beloved Church, with regard to Liturgies, may not have been so rigidly interpreted, and so unskilfully applied, as to lead to practical misapprehension and mischief in regard to the devotional part of the service of our sanctuaries" (4). Miller defined "Liturgy" and identified the issues facing the church with regard to liturgies later in the book, in chapter three. Miller's main concern was that there were men in the church of his day who moved beyond commending liturgies as useful to insist upon requiring strict liturgical plans for properly worshipping God. As noted above, he anticipated that concern—and the antithesis between proper and faulty applications of liturgies—in the beginning of his preface, striking a polemical tone even before starting his introduction into his topic.

In the body proper of the volume, Miller explicitly stated his purpose in three different places. His main goal in writing the book was to impress upon his readers the importance of public prayer, and the need to prepare for it in a variety of ways. He clearly addressed the same audience he taught in his seminary classrooms: young Presbyterian ministers and seminarians.

> I hope, in the following pages to satisfy every impartial reader, that public prayer is not only a divinely prescribed, but an unspeakably important ordinance; and that both the nature and the means of excellence in the dispensation of this ordinance, are such as not only to admit, but to demand appropriate study, and careful moral and mental culture (16).

> My sole object is to impress on the mind of every reader, what I wish to be considered as the leading principle of this volume, viz.: that, even in the hands of the most able and pious men, high excellence in public prayer is not, ordinarily, to be attained without much enlightened attention being directed to the acquirement (35).

> It is one of the main objects of the present volume, to impress upon the mind of every young Presbyterian minister who reads it, this sentiment, that while, on the one hand, the reading or recitation of prescribed prayers is by no means the best method of conducting the devotions of the sanctuary, and is liable to many weighty objections; so, on the other hand, it is a great mistake to imagine that sacred attention to the mode of conducting this service, and preparation for it can be safely neglected, or made the object of only occasional or superficial study; in short, that every Presbyterian minister who wishes to make the most of his services in the sanctuary, for the glory of God, and the best edification of his people, is bound to pay a greatly increased attention to the whole subject of public prayer (139).

However, in the introductory material preceding the statement of his plan, Miller leveled a well-deserved polemic against the liturgical formality of the Roman Catholic Church (12–13), and presented an antithesis between preaching on the one hand, and prayer on the other (13–14). He defined prayer and preaching as twin ordinances in a manner that he himself recognized might suggest unintended opposition of the two against each other. This recognition drove him to qualify his remarks, "It is not wise, however, to exalt either of these exercises at the expense of the other" (14). Later in the book, he employed antithesis not to highlight complementarity, but rather to commend certain practices at the expense of faulty innovations and ill-formed habits.

The introduction also included a comparison between those who give a proper esteem to public prayer and those who do not. Miller described the antithesis between "an humble, penitent, fervently pious Christian" (36) and the insincere man who adopts anything

"adapted to meet any other ear than that of the God of mercy, or to answer any other purpose than to express repentance toward God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and simple, humble desire for the blessings asked for" (37) in his private prayers. Miller juxtaposed the sincere prayer and the contrived prayer in an antithetical comparison. In doing so, he made application to the personal devotional practices of the young men he addressed in his book. Rather than focusing merely on the outward show of public prayer, he began his project by pushing for a reformation of the heart in personal piety. The thrust and style of his writing clearly demonstrates that he made the heart his target, with public prayer in corporate worship serving as the occasion.

Miller included four other helpful observations as he laid out the background to his topic in the opening chapter. First, he affirmed the blessings of the Holy Spirit working in and through our natural faculties to accomplish God's purposes in and through us. He helpfully wrote, "In all spiritual influence, God deals with us as rational creatures; not by superseding or suspending the use of our natural faculties; but by so quickening, elevating, enriching, and strengthening them, as to make them capable of greatly improved exercise" (18). His point echoes that of Westminster Confession of Faith V.3 (Of Providence), which reads, "God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure." This point is foundational for the argument later in the book that effective extemporaneous public prayer requires careful planning on the part of the minister.

Second, he outlined the two requirements for diligent preparation for public prayer: the spirit or grace of sincere piety, and the gift of natural and spiritual quality of speech (19–23). Third, he provided four examples from history of prominent preachers who evidently neglected preparation for public prayer—William Twisse, Samuel Davies, Robert Hall (Baptist Minister), and Thomas Chalmers (25–35)—giving examples drawn from accounts of the men's personal acquaintances. Fourth, he included a statement on the freedom of conscience that confessional Presbyterians possess to base every aspect of worship on God's Word. He wrote, "Whatever is most agreeable to the word of God, and most edifying to the body of Christ, we are, happily, at full liberty to introduce, and progressively to modify" (40). This again illustrates Miller's theological grounding in the Westminster Confession of Faith, as XX.2 (Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience) reads, "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, in matters of faith, or worship." Such liberty serves as a shield for men's consciences against unbiblical impositions and innovations in worship. The Westminster Confession of Faith continues in XXI.1 (Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day), "But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped 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." Through Scripture, the Holy Spirit is both shield and guide in all areas of faith and practice, including—and especially—in worship.

Miller's second chapter contains a description of the history of the church's practice of public prayer. Miller began by charting the history of known practices of public prayer from the Old Testament church and the Hebrew synagogue setting to the New Testament and early Christian church environment. Early in this section, he drew an antithesis between New Testament prayer on the one hand, and undesirable "restraint and formality" (49) of rigid liturgical forms on the other hand. In the New Testament, Miller observed, "We see a still more marked absence of all confinement to servile forms" (49). Miller left no room for an appeal to the Lord's Prayer as an example of a common prayer to be used on all occasions.

In six points, He demonstrated that the Lord's Prayer was ever always a rubric, or "general directory" (50) for the church to use in framing its own unique prayers; that is, the early church did not regard it as a mandated form to be followed slavishly. First, Christ delivered the Lord's Prayer to His disciples on different occasions for different purposes (50). Second, the exact wording of the Prayer varies from one Gospel to the other (51). Third, Miller observed that the prayer was technically adapted to the condition of the church before Pentecost, when the New Testament church was "set up" (51). Fourth, the biblical record does not include further instructions from Christ (or anyone else) for using the Lord's Prayer subsequent to its delivery to the disciples (52). Fifth, the content of the Prayer itself does not include a clause for giving explicit thanks to God, which is commanded elsewhere (53). Finally, there is no further mention of the Lord's Prayer or its strict use by the Apostles after Christ's Resurrection and Ascension (54). Miller may not have forbidden the use of the Lord's Prayer at this point in the book, but neither did he commend it as even an occasional form for use in public worship.

Through his discussion of the history of public prayer, Miller drew an antithesis between extemporaneous prayer and imposed common prayer according to set forms. He claimed in this chapter, "Prayer according to the taste and ability of each officiating minister, for the time being, without being trammeled by imposed forms, was the only method of public prayer in common use in the Christian Church" (61, see also 81–82). He then listed, described, and examined five activities which seeped into the practice of the church as it experienced spiritual declension and weakness over time. Miller's list includes praying toward the east, prayers for the dead, prayers to the saints and to the Virgin Mary, prayers in an unknown tongue, and responses in public prayer (litanies). These were practices which, like imposed common prayer, Miller viewed as accretions on the practice of the church that compromised its purity, and should be rejected.

Finally, in this section, he discussed four biblical postures for public prayer: prostration (117–118), kneeling (118–119), bowing the head (119–120), and standing (121–127). In the lengthier discussion of standing for public prayer, he offered four reasons in favor of adopting the standing posture for all occasions of public prayer (125), and two objections against such a prescription (126–127). After defending a thesis in favor of standing for public prayer, Miller proceeded to develop his wholesale opposition to sitting for public prayer (127–130). This contrast of standing and sitting for public prayer is another example of Miller's use of antithesis in building his argument for the proper regulation of public prayer. Miller described the abhorrent alternative posture of sitting in stark opposition to the ideal posture of standing.

In the following chapter dealing with arguments in favor of so-called "liturgies," Miller continued to give background information before entering into a focused denunciation of faulty practices in public prayer. He opened this section by offering both lexical and etymological definitions for the term "liturgy." Made up of the Greek words *leit* and *ergos*, "liturgy" may be rendered literally as "public work" (131). He then contrasted Romanist (mysticism-freighted ceremonial forms) and Protestant (public exercises defined by the church) liturgies (131); completely prescribed (Episcopalian), partially prescribed (Continental and Methodist churches), and extemporaneous (Presbyterian and Independent) liturgies (132); and the directory-guided and prescribed forms of worship (135). He wrote of the early Scottish Presbyterian Directory of worship that "it was, in fact, rather a "Directory" for the worship of God, than a liturgy to be verbally and servilely repeated" (135). In this section, Miller argued not for a total ban on prescribed liturgy as-such, but rather he argued against required, common/universal, or preference for imposed liturgies. He asserted that "to impose forms of prayer at all times, and upon all persons who publicly minister in holy things, and to confine them to the use of such forms, is by no means either desirable or wise" (139). On the contrary, ministers must be guaranteed liberty of conscience to obey God's Word in matters of ordering worship.

Miller then presented a lengthy discussion of arguments for and against a prescribed liturgy in thesis-antithesis arrangement (139–149). The arguments for a prescribed liturgy included the alleged practice of the Old Testament covenant community, the value of appropriating the model of the Lord's Prayer, the alleged practice of the church throughout history, the granting of confidence to the worship leader and the congregation, its confessional usefulness, and its function as a guard against bad prayers of the minister's own creation. Through his development of these arguments, he inserted objections that illustrated his method of presenting antithesis to rebut bad thinking. In response to the argument that prescribed liturgies help to foster and confirm a church's confessional identity, he posed the rhetorical (and antithetical) question , "What shall we say of the sovereign power of a liturgy as a barrier against error, when we find orthodox and evangelical men, and the most thoroughly Popish Puseyites that ever entered a sanctuary, repeating the same words every Sabbath with apparent cordiality?" (146). Miller argued for the purging away of the religious externalism that often attends imposed formal prayers, and he did so by contrasting the ideal ("orthodox evangelical men") and the unacceptable ("Popish Puseyites") to show that such prescribed forms did nothing to distinguish them one from another. He was after a reformation of the heart, and not merely a reformation of outward manners that made insincere pastors appear pious and orthodox.

In response to the six arguments in favor of prescribed liturgies, Miller advanced seven arguments against the same (150–169).[10] He argued against prescribed liturgies for public prayer by first using a *reductio ad absurdum* argument in applying the same logic to preaching. He then gave two arguments from

10. Whether or not he intended to answer an imperfect number (six) of arguments with a perfect number (seven) of arguments is impossible to know, absent additional evidence from Miller's personal correspondence.

sola scriptura: negatively, there is "no countenance in the Word of God" for prescribed liturgies for prayers (151). Positively, the practice of the apostolic church excludes any such forms. Miller wrote, "we find testimony which plainly implies that no such forms were either prescribed or in use in the apostolic churches" (152–153). Fourth, prescribed prayers stifle the spirit and gift of prayer, two necessary qualities that Miller commended to readers who aspire to improve in the work of public prayer. Fifth, prescribed prayers naturally lack applicatory value. Sixth, genuine revival begets liberty in worship, not proscription. Finally, Miller argued that prescribed prayers are inadequate in exceptional circumstances for which there is no previously conceived common prayer. He concluded this lengthy attack upon his opponents' position by writing, "These and other allied considerations, satisfy me, beyond a doubt, that the claims of liturgies, as the best method of conducting our public devotions, and, above all, as the *exclusive* method, cannot be sustained" (170). In this remark, Miller's principal contention is clear—he was willing to allow for the use, but not for the exclusive use, of liturgies in public worship. Likewise, he was not opposed to the judicious employment of common prayers, but he utterly rejected the exclusive use of form prayers in public worship.

Before moving into a direct denouncement of faulty practices in public prayer, Miller pitted his concept of the ideal prayer ministry against the supposed usefulness of liturgical forms. He identified the conditions requisite for the success of extempore prayer: a pious and equipped ministry. Only in the absence of a godly and equipped ministry are liturgical forms useful to the church. Conversely, when the ministers of the church are godly and appropriately equipped for the work of the ministry, there is no need for prescribed forms in public prayer. The Westminster Assembly's Directory for Public Worship was intended to strike the balance between imposed forms and "opening the door too wide to irregular and undigested effusions in public worship" (172–173). One issue that Miller's presentation raises is whether or not it is appropriate to view the Directory as a concession, or even as a crutch, for inferior ministers. Whether or not he might have conceded that the Directory was indeed a crutch or so-called "necessary evil" for the church and its ministers, he regarded the Directory as a helpful guide to ministers in the work of preparing for Lord's Day worship.

As is made clear above, Miller spilled a great deal of ink refuting faulty practices in public worship, and particularly those that used prescribed forms in public prayer. There is no need to repeat that analysis at this point, but it is important to recognize that Miller continued his polemical method and tone into the two following sections of the book, where he condemned faulty practices and commended faithful practices in public prayer.

Miller first listed 18 frequent faults of public prayer that he had observed in a lifetime of ministry (177–215). His concrete examples are helpful and cautionary. He condemned the repetition of pet words and phrases, undue hesitation in speech, and low-brow, or ungrammatical speech. On this last point, he wisely advised his readers to show love to their cultured and educated congregants by avoiding offense resulting from poor grammar. He wrote, "he who undertakes to be the leader and helper of others in their devotions, ought to remember that he is a debtor to the wise, as well as the unwise, to the learned as well as the illiterate" (182). He also cautioned against irregularity and lack of orderliness, inappropriate fixation upon minute details, excessive length, and excessive use of figurative speech. His specific advice against a too liberal use of figurative speech is just as important to keep in mind nearly 170 years after its original publication. He wrote of figurative speech, that "some greatly admire it and call it an eloquent prayer. But the fervent utterance of the heart is always simple" (190).

Continuing his catalog of faulty practices, he forbade any mention of partisan politics and celebrities, writing that "in the house of God persons of all political opinions may meet, harmoniously and affectionately meet, provided they all agree in acknowledging the same Saviour, and glorying in the same hope of Divine mercy" (191). He declaimed sentimentality as resulting in "expressions of the amatory class" (194), and he corrected flippant, frivolous speech by calling for meekness in preference to cleverness. He strictly forbade excessive didactic language and allusion to hard doctrines that would rile up unbelievers in the midst of the assembly. Consider Westminster Confession of Faith III.8 (Of God's Eternal Decree):

> The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men, attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

Not surprisingly, Miller's advice repeatedly echoes the confessional standards of the Presbyterian Church. He abominated irreverent familiarity of language, unseasonable (and insincere) humility and self-deprecation, flattery (particularly of guests and visitors), lack of focus, hasty endings, and quick delivery in speech. Miller summed up the antithesis to these 18 faults within the last few pages of this section. He wrote, "Words 'few,' 'well considered,' and 'well ordered,' are the inspired characteristics of a good prayer" (211). He then moved on in the next section to elaborate upon this brief characterization.

In the third section of the book, comprising the last two chapters, Miller described and promoted faithful practices in public prayer. He first described 15 traits of faithful prayer in public worship, frequently illustrating the good practices by comparing them to their antitheses in bad practices. First, public prayers ought to be scriptural in content, for such language is always right, safe, edifying, simple, tender, experimental, and hospitable to those in the congregation. On the other hand, scriptural prayer must not result in a servile and obtuse constraint, for that would take Scripture out of context, and would misapply it in an embarrassing manner (219–225).

Effective prayer is also orderly, comprehensive (general in nature), and appropriately succinct. Miller provided a helpful motivation for succinctness when he wrote, "The fact is, it ought to be our aim in prayer, as well as in preaching, to leave off before weariness approaches, and in that full tide of elevated feeling which becomes the later as well as the earlier stages of that solemn exercise" (231). Well-ordered public prayer is seasonable and appropriate to the occasion upon which it is offered, and marked by an evangelical tone and instructiveness in the gospel. Miller testified, "Truth is the food of the soul. Gospel truth is that on which the Christian lives and grows from day to day" (233). Good public prayer covers a variety of topics, incorporates a variety of doxologies, includes evangelistic petitions for the spread of the gospel, uses the various names and titles of God, expresses the confident hope of the Christian believer, evidences clear purpose, and incorporates the appropriate and occasional use of the Lord's Prayer. Miller wrote of the Lord's Prayer, "We believe and teach that the occasional, the frequent use of it, is proper, and sufficient to meet every demand that the most scrupulous regard to the principle of Christian obligation can lay upon us" (249). Of central importance for good public prayer is humility. Miller contended that "we can only hope to succeed by having the heart right" (252). Finally, public prayer should conclude with a strong "Amen."

The next chapter includes Miller's advice for attaining excellence in public prayer. First, personal devotional exercise is absolutely necessary. By way of contrast, Miller wrote, "It is an old maxim, that no one was ever truly eloquent who did not really and deeply *feel*; who did not truly and heartily enter into the spirit of the subject concerning which he undertook to speak" (262). After describing the man lacking in sincere personal devotion to God, Miller then proceeded to describe men in his life who demonstrated warm relationship with God in their public prayers. Samuel Miller the seminary professor here put on full display his concern for the hearts of his students. Though the historical groundwork and catalog of faulty practices were important to the development of his argument against strict imposition of liturgical forms and common prayers, Miller's experiential motivation is at the heart of the book.

Miller was opposed to mandated liturgies because he saw them as a stifling influence that also allowed men to grow lazy in their spiritual communion with God. He was personally acquainted with the great privilege of special intimacy with God that accompanies tending to the church, and he abhorred any extra-biblical requirement that would threaten that privilege. Rather, Miller pushed an agenda that would cultivate intimacy with God in the lives of his readers. He poignantly observed, "I have been sometimes surprised and delighted to find plain unlettered men performing this duty with a readiness and richness both of thought and expression, superior to those exhibited by many learned and eloquent divines; convincing every fellow-worshipper that they had acquired the precious gift not by literary study or discipline, but by habitual and intimate communion with God" (265). Miller recommended several measures to be taken for the cultivation of a vibrant spiritual life.

First, personal devotion to God frequently involves the reading of good books, and Miller understood that. His second point of advice was for men engaged in public prayer to study good instructional material on the subject (268). He specifically recommended *A Discourse concerning the Gift of Prayer* (1670) by Bishop Wilkins, *A Method for Prayer* (1710) by Matthew Henry, *The Spirit of Prayer* (1677) by Rev. Nathaniel Vincent, *A Guide to Prayer* (1730) by Dr. Isaac Watts, and a number of collections of forms of prayer (by Jenks, Bishop Andrews, Bishop Kenn, Bennet, Jeremy Taylor, Scott, and Jay).He also recommended the devotional use of historical Reformed and Presbyterian confessions, catechisms, and

commentaries on the same, including Thomas Vincent's *Commentary on the Shorter Catechism.*[11]

He directed his readers to memorize lengthy portions of Scripture, prioritizing passages from the Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, and the New Testament Epistles, including Revelation (280). Next, those responsible for praying in assemblies of public worship must be always mindful and alert to events and providences worthy of public prayer (284). The odious alternative is the man who either neglects to bring such matters to the throne of grace in public prayer when everyone in the room has them on their mind, or even worse, does so improperly and clumsily. Miller wrote, "How worthy of censure is that minister who, in the midst of occurrences which occupy every heart, and dwell upon every tongue, will not spend a thought in preparing to present before the throne in the most acceptable manner those petitions which so many around him feel a deep and tender interest!" (288–289). Another useful exercise for developing effectiveness and excellence in public prayer is the practice of writing out devotional compositions (prayers) on a regular basis. Miller believed that "the true plan is to write often; to write much; to store the mind with ample furniture for the exercise; but to leave the utterance of the moment to the impulses of a feeling, gushing heart" (300). This discipline of writing out devotional material is just as helpful in seasons of life that do not involve frequent opportunities for public prayer as it is in times of regular praying ministry.

In his conclusion, Miller returned to the antithesis between careful preparation in preaching and negligent laziness in public prayers. This is seen clearly in a rhetorical question he posed, asking,

> How shall we estimate either the judgment or the fidelity of him, who spares no pains to improve, enrich, and elevate the character of his sermons, from week to week, while that of his public prayers seems to engage but little thought; to call forth little or no effort; is marked with little or no improvement; and goes on from year to year, in the same dull routine as a mere secondary concern? (304–305)

Yet, as he did earlier in his treatise, Miller deftly handled the antithesis so as not to pit these two ordinances—preaching and prayer—against each other, but rather to lift prayer to the rank of preaching in the estimation of his audience. In this project, he made a valiant effort worthy of study and emulation.

Samuel Miller's Audiences and His Use of Antithesis

As noted above, Miller's style of writing in *Thoughts on Public Prayer* resembles the style of biblical wisdom literature in highlighting the way of righteousness by juxtaposing to it the way of foolishness. This characteristic of his last published work matches his purpose in that he sought to give practical and persuasive instruction to the next generation of ministers as they led congregations of Christ's church in public prayer. This stylistic quality also distinguishes his work on public prayer from another work of his dealing with a means of grace, his *Infant Baptism, Scriptural and Reasonable: and Baptism by Sprinkling or Affusion, the Most Suitable and Edifying Mode*, first published in July, 1834.

The prefatory remarks on *Infant Baptism* make clear that Miller's audience was popular and his purpose apologetic. Miller delivered the original lectures that served as the basis of the published work at a church in Freehold, NJ, and he sought "to present the subject in that brief, plain, popular manner which is adapted to the case of those who read but little … for the use of those Presbyterians who are continually assaulted, and sometimes perplexed, by their Baptist neighbours" (*Infant Baptism,* 200). Though his subject might have invited a polemical tone marked by sharp contrasts between right and wrong, the work rather bears a didactic, lecture-like quality to it. In four lengthy discourses, and five shorter notes, he presented the case for infant baptism, defended it against objections, presented the case for sprinkling/pouring as being the proper mode of baptism, drew practical conclusions, and took up brief explorations of several theological, practical, and historical issues of interest in relation to baptism.

There are some examples of contrast and antithesis peppered throughout the work. However, they are not marked by the same urgent tone as the examples in

11. The less familiar works cited are: Benjamin Jenks, *Prayers and Offices of Devotion* (1697). Lancelot Andrewes, *The Private Prayers of Bishop Andrews* (1675; New manual of private devotions, 1810). Thomas Kenn (Ken), *A Manual of Prayers for the use of the scholars of Winchester College : and all other devout Christians* (1686). Thomas Bennet, *Devotions: viz. Confessions, petitions, intercessions, and thanksgivings, for every day of the week* (1702). Jeremy Taylor, *The rvle and exercises of holy living … together with prayers containing the whole duty of a Christian and the parts of devotion fitted to all occasions and furnish'd for all necessities* (1650). John Scott, *The Christian Life … with directions for private devotion and forms of prayer fitted to the several states of Christians* (1681). William Jay, *The Domestic Minister's Assistant* (1820). Miller may have had in mind various collections made up of several of these men's work.

Thoughts on Public Prayer. Toward the beginning of the first discourse, Miller introduced the anthropological basis[12] for his biblical sacramentology with an aphorism which stands as an example of his milder style in *Infant Baptism*. "For, as our bodies in this world of sin and death, often become sources of moral mischief and pain, so, by the grace of God, they are made inlets to the most refined moral pleasures, and means of advancement in the divine life" (Miller, *Infant Baptism,* 201). He presented before his listeners two alternatives, "moral mischief and pain" or "moral pleasures, and means of advancement in the divine life." Conspicuously, this is the clearest example of contrast or antithesis in the work, not otherwise required by the context. Additional examples[13] from *Infant Baptism* may be attributed more to the demands of context (meeting specific objections phrased in terms of contrast) than to stylistic decisions. Though both *Thoughts on Public Prayer* and *Infant Baptism* offer defenses of Presbyterian practices of the means of grace against divergent traditions, they differ in terms of style. Other differences between them concern their original audiences and their dates of publication. A brief consideration of one of Miller's earlier works shows that the matter of audience more greatly influenced Miller's style than the circumstance of publication (or composition) date.

As disagreements over confessional subscription flared up in the courts of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) during the 1820s and 1830s, Samuel Miller emerged as a champion of the pro-confessional stance of the Old School wing of the denomination, even as he sought to maintain ecclesiastical union with his erring brothers (see Garretson, 113–129). Through the course of the controversy, he produced several written works for public consumption in defense of strictly maintaining the Presbyterian Church's doctrinal standards. He based *The Utility and Importance of Creeds and Confessions* (1824; reprinted 1833) on material from a lecture delivered to seminary students at Princeton Theological Seminary, and the stylistic commonalities with *Thoughts on Public Prayer* are striking.

Miller divided his remarks in *Creeds and Confessions* into four parts. In the first, he presented arguments in favor of publishing and maintaining creeds. He then proceeded to answer common objections to the use of creeds. He briefly defended the thoroughness of Reformed creeds and confessions before finally delivering concluding practical remarks. The practical nature of creeds and confessions is made clear in Miller's common definition for each of them as

> an exhibition, in human language, of those great doctrines which are believed by the framers of it to be taught in the Holy Scriptures; and which are drawn out in regular order, for the purpose of ascertaining how far those who wish to unite in church fellowship are really agreed in the fundamental principles of Christianity (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions*, 5).

His principal argument which he developed throughout the course of the lecture demonstrates the importance of creeds and confessions: "The adoption of such a creed is not only lawful and expedient, but also indispensably necessary to the harmony and purity of the visible Church" (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions*, 6). For Miller, a faithful church is by necessity also a confessional church.

In making his case for the church's duty to produce and promote creeds and confessions, Miller presented seven complementary arguments. Throughout, he employed antithesis in illustrating both the need and desirability for doctrinal standards. First, he argued, creeds and confessions are necessary for the maintenance of unity in a church. Miller pointed out that the two alternatives of subscribing to the Bible alone or perpetuating an unspoken understanding are equally unworkable and result in chaos. However, the proper employment of sound creeds and confessions provides a way out of doctrinal error and confusion. He wrote in support of doctrinal standards for church membership, "As long as such a test is faithfully applied, she cannot fail of being in some good degree united and harmonious. And when nothing of the kind is employed, I see not how she can be expected, without a miracle, to escape all the evils of discord and corruption" (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions*, 11). The overall picture is one of two alternatives—standard or no standard—with two results—agreement or disagreement. Miller appended this antithetical presentation of two competing options as a closing illustration toward the end of the section in which he developed the argument that creeds and confessions are necessary for unity in the church. Throughout the course of the lecture, he followed this same pattern, closing his individual arguments with a comparative illustration.

Miller's second argument proceeded to demonstrate that without a stabilizing creed, the church would

12. He describes the holistic nature of the human person as both body and soul, distinct but inseparably united.

13. I count five possible examples on pages 230, 233, 257–8, 274–5, and 277–8.

inevitably fall into compromise. Such compromise necessarily follows dependence upon a variable standard for pronouncing judgement or making decisions. He wrote of churches in a common denomination that "they must either have such "a form of sound words," which they have voluntarily adopted, and pledged themselves to one another to "hold fast," or they can have no security that any two or more successive decisions concerning soundness in the faith will be alike" (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions,* 13). The two options set before the church are clear: creed or compromise. He went on to illustrate this in the fifth argument in this section, that church history (experience) proves that creedal statements and standards are necessary to maintain purity of doctrine, and to filter out heretics.

After describing creeds as obligatory for a church's doctrinal transparency in his third argument in this section, Miller then argued that published confessional documents and diligent theological research promote one another. He wrote,

> The fact is, when men love gospel truth well enough to study it with care, they will soon learn to estimate its value; they will soon be disposed to "contend for it" against its enemies, who are numerous in every age; and this will inevitably lead them to adopt and defend that "form of sound words" which they think they find in the sacred Scriptures. On the other hand, let any man imbibe the notion that creeds and confessions are unscriptural, and of course unlawful, and he will naturally and speedily pass to the conclusion, that all contending for doctrines is useless, and even criminal.… if, in a word, they consider it as unnecessary, and even criminal, to select from the mass of scriptural truth, and to defend, as such, the fundamental doctrines of the gospel; then, nothing short of miracle can prevent them from sinking into that coldness and sloth with respect to the study of doctrine, and finally into the deplorable "lack of knowledge" by which millions are constantly "destroyed" (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions,* 17, 19).

Miller here presented a picture in which the nurturing of confessional commitments works in a kind of feedback loop with sincere study into the things of God. As a believer becomes more familiar with Scripture, his esteem for God's truth becomes increasingly pronounced, to the point that he would defend it against injury and confusion. For Miller, an effective defense of God's truth must be maintained through summarization and systematization of that truth into confessional documents. Such documents also promote the further exploration and study of the truth (in all its implications) which they serve to defend.

Miller gave further evidence for his fourth argument in his sixth argument, which is that the most forceful opponents of creedal formulations are latitudinarians and heretics. Whereas lovers of doctrinal truth are wholly comfortable with subscribing to a confession of the truth, those who eschew confessional subscription seek to downplay distinctions that would label differing views as either true or false. He wrote,

> It is an invariable characteristic of the orthodox that they lay great stress on the knowledge and reception of truth; that they consider it as necessary to holiness; that they deem an essential part of fidelity to their Master in heaven to consist in contending for it and maintaining it in opposition to all the forms of error. On the contrary, it is almost as invariable a characteristic of modern heretics, and more especially of those who fall under the general denomination of Unitarians, that they profess lightly to esteem modes of faith; that they manifest a marked indifference to truth; they, for the most part, maintain, in so many words, the innocence of error; and hence very naturally reprobate, and even vilify, all faithful attempts to oppose heresy, and to separate heretics from the Church (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions*, 24–25).

Again, Miller compared two alternatives in a presentation of irreconcilable thesis and antithesis. He presented to his students two paths which they could follow. In this argument, any middle-ground would end in latitudinarian compromise. Concluding this section of arguments in favor of using creeds and confessions, Miller simply pointed out that creeds are inescapable in controversies of religion and ecclesiastical practice. Even the harshest detractors against creedal statements must set a standard for public teaching. To require a man to forsake all confessions is nothing less than to impose upon him a self-contradicting creed.

In the second section of his lecture, Miller answered five common objections to creeds and confessions. In his answers to the first three objections, he employed comparison, contrast, and stark antithesis to demonstrate the absurdity of the objections and to illustrate his counterarguments. To the objection that creeds will eclipse the Bible in thoroughly confessional churches, Miller directed his audience to consider the Reformed churches of Scotland, the Netherlands, France, and Geneva at the height of their spiritual vitality and confessional concern, comparing them to the rest of church

history. He inquired as to whether "any churches, since the days of the Apostles, ever discovered more reverence for the Scriptures, or treated them with more devout regard, as the only perfect standard of faith and practice, than they" (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions,* 33–34). In Miller's estimation, there exist no better examples of high regard for Scripture in history than those found in thoroughly confessional and creedal churches.

Miller turned the objection that strict confessionalism interferes with the individual's liberty of conscience around on its head by illustrating how the absence of confessional fidelity injures the church. He did this by presenting two options that lay before the church with regards to maintaining a creedal standard in the examination of candidates for the ministry. He wrote in relation to strict confessional subscription,

> It is so far from encroaching on the "rights" of others; so far from being chargeable with "oppression;" that it is really, in the most enlightened manner, and on the largest scale, maintaining the rights of conscience; and that for such a church, instead of doing this, to give up its own testimony to the truth and order of God's house; to surrender its own comfort, peace, and edification, for the sake of complying with the unreasonable demands of a corrupt individual, would be to subject itself to the worst of slavery (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions,* 42).

The church either may maintain a high standard or may surrender it. The result of the former is the ensuring of churchwide Christian liberty; the result of the latter is the giving up of several crucial requisites for ecclesiastical vitality. As in the previous section of *Creeds and Confessions*, Miller employed these antithetical propositions and illustrations as closing statements for each of his arguments.

The third objection claimed that the enforcement of subscription to creeds and confessions discourages intellectual honesty in the pursuit of knowledge that may, it is assumed, contradict the confession to which one has subscribed. Miller proceeded first to make the point that any candidate for the ministry should be sufficiently settled in his theological convictions before taking up a call to the ministry. Having done that, he then demonstrated that the issue in this objection is not so much subscription to a confession as it is individual honesty. He wrote, "Truly upright and pious men will always follow their convictions; while, with regard to those of an opposite character, their light, whether they remain or depart, will be found to be of no value, either to themselves, or the Church of God" (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions*, 47). For seminary students and young ministers, Miller presented an antithesis that pitted the righteous man against the unrighteous man. Not only does this antithesis evoke biblical passages comparing the proverbial honest man with the proverbial charlatan, but it also forcefully impresses upon the minds of young and aspiring clergymen the need to constantly examine themselves and their views in the maintenance of their ordination vows. The fourth and fifth objections in this section concern the supposed real effects of confessions, that, negatively, they have failed to fulfill their purpose, or positively, they have produced heightened discord and strife. To the former, Miller pointed out, "This objection evidently proceeds on the principle, that a remedy which does not accomplish everything, is worth nothing" (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions*, 48). Such a principle, he went on to prove, is faulty and does nothing to contradict the usefulness of creeds and confessions. To the fifth objection, Miller provided three responses questioning the objection's veracity and arguing in favor of the desirability of defending truth against error. The alternative to defending the truth is to surrender it and to fall into error, which is unacceptable to the church as an institution founded upon the truth.

In the next brief section, Miller addressed the issue of how extensive creeds ought to be. Arguing for creeds that go beyond bare fundamentals of Christian religion, Miller drew several denominational comparisons. First, he compared Presbyterians to Independents and Congregationalists in matters of polity, such as the licensing of preachers and the administration of the sacraments. Then, he compared paedobaptists to antipaedobaptists in their opposing views of the proper recipients of baptism. Finally, he distinguished Presbyterians from Prelatists (Episcopalians, Anglicans, etc.) in their views of ordination. In each of Miller's illustrations, he used comparison to support his point that creeds and confessions need to be extensive enough to settle these differences. A sufficiently extensive confession of faith will maintain ecclesiastical unity by providing definition and transparency of conviction. By necessity, the adoption of a sufficiently extensive confession of faith will not be all-inclusive of every genuine Christian believer. However, public adoption of extensive confessional standards will help believers to align themselves with that particular expression of Christ's church which they believe to be truest to the Bible's teaching on these contested—but important—doctrinal issues.

In his concluding remarks, Miller offered six practical applications that follow from the rest of his lecture. At the opening of this section, Miller observed concerning

confessional subscription, "The subject, beloved pupils, on which I have been addressing you, is eminently a practical one. It enters deeply into many questions of personal and official duty" (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions,* 58). Miller's concluding remarks in this section prove again that his writing style and the tone of his argumentation depend more on his audience ("beloved pupils") than on his subject matter ("a practical one"). His first practical observation is that creeds do not oppress the truth at all, but the so-called "liberty" of those who oppose the use of creeds results in enslaving chaos. Too lengthy to quote here, Miller extensively developed this antithetical comparison to substantiate his observation (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions,* 58–59). His second application to his audience—seminary students aspiring to ordained church leadership—was a forceful reminder that subscription to a confession or creed is no mere formality, but a solemn act of obligation.

He then answered the question of how to proceed considering the entirety of his lecture up to that point. In reference to the man who changes his views and cannot continue in good conscience with a particular body, Miller wrote, "When he ceases to be able to do this, without sinning against God, he will, if he is an honest man, immediately withdraw. If he remains, and suffers himself habitually to violate his engagement, under the pretence of benefitting the body to which he has vowed allegiance, he will be chargeable with the sin of treacherously and basely 'doing evil that good may come'" (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions,* 63). Again, Miller presented a pair of antithetical options—one truthful and the other dishonest—to admonish his pupils to choose the way of honesty and integrity. His fourth observation further developed his view of the effects on the church of dishonest clergymen. He wrote,

> Ministers, my young friends, may be said to hold in their hands the interests of the Church, to a degree which no other class of men do; and which ought to make them tremble under a sense of their responsibility!... On the one hand, if the ministers of religion be generally enlightened, orthodox, holy, diligent, and faithful men, the church to which they belong will never fail to display the influence of this character in happy results. On the other hand, never was the Church, in any country or age, corrupted, divided, and ruined, but the mischief was done by its ministers (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions,* 65).

Pressing home his point, Miller contrasted not only the divergent characters but the divergent influences of two alternatives. In his fifth observation—that members and ministers alike are duty-bound to promote the doctrinal standards of their chosen church—Miller employed antithesis to call his audience to harbor affection for cherished creedal formulations and confessional standards. He wrote, "Resist always, to the utmost of your power, the littleness of sectarian bigotry, and strive to banish it from the church. But, at the same time, cherish among her members an enlightened attachment to that particular branch of the family of Christ in which their lot is cast" (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions,* 69). Rather than expressing fondness for a particular church by levying uncharitable attacks on those without, it is incumbent upon the devoted churchman to cultivate a heightened sense of commitment to the ecclesiastical tradition with which he most closely identifies. Miller's final observation in this section is that anti-creedal sentiment does great harm to the church, and is to be lamented by all those who come across it.

Repeating his pattern from individual sections of the lecture, Miller closed the whole with a benediction in the pattern of Psalm 1, numerous Proverbs, or Christ's Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount, using antithesis to bless and spur on his readers to good deeds. He wrote,

> Happy are they who, taking the word of God for their guide, and walking in "the footsteps of the flock," continually seek the purity, the peace, and the edification of the Master's family; who, listening with more respect to the unerring Oracle, and to the sober lessons of Christian experience, than to the delusions of fashionable error, hold on their way, "turning neither to the right hand nor the left," and considering it as their highest honor and happiness to be employed as humble, peaceful instruments in building up that "kingdom which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!" May God grant to each of us this best of all honors! And to his name be the praise, forever! Amen! (Miller, *Creeds and Confessions*, 72).

Though Miller originally composed his lecture on the use of creeds and confessions over twenty years before his book on public prayer, his use of antithesis from beginning to end stands out as a stylistic continuity. In giving parting thoughts to seminary students in both works, he used antithesis to leave them with something that was both memorable and easy to call to mind. In the case of *Thoughts on Public Prayer*, Miller urged his reading audience to remember that public prayer is just as important for the spiritual vitality of the church as faithful preaching of God's Word. In *Creeds and Confessions*,

Miller placed before his listeners a choice between competing sources of practical instruction: "the unerring Oracle" of God's Word and "the delusions of fashionable error." In both works, Miller employed antithesis for the sake of his audience, to spur them on to faithful service in their high calling as ministers of prayer, Word, and sacrament.

Conclusion

The importance of Miller's rhetorical style in these works goes beyond mere literary curiosity. Miller's use of antithesis to contrast biblically faithful ecclesiastical and liturgical practices with unscriptural alternatives matches biblical warnings against following the way of the fool. Like a concerned father offering sound advice founded on biblical wisdom to his sons, Miller addressed his students with a deep concern for both their ministries and their own souls. Those offering doctrinal rebuke in the church today would do well to imitate Miller insofar as he himself faithfully adopted biblical rhetoric in his persuasive argumentation.

Particularly in the areas of public worship and public theology, Miller's example ought to be heeded. Whereas most Christian fathers will never preach to their children from a pulpit and should not administer sacraments in the context of private family worship, they are commanded to pray with their families, to confess the faith with their children, and to sing praises to God in their homes. Insofar as ministers serve as examples to the men in their congregations, they must equip fathers to lead their families in prayer, profession, and praise. When a minister stands before a congregation to pray, he not only speaks before God on behalf of the congregation, but he also provides a model of prayer to the families and individuals that make up the flock under his care. Likewise, a congregation's corporate confession of faith will be only as strong as the conviction of its officers. The effect of doctrinal compromise in the teaching office of the church will make its way into the homes of families.

Considering the relationship between prayer, confession of faith, and spiritual well-being in Christian families, Miller's use of antithesis and contrast is not only persuasive, but biblical. The identification and subsequent rejection of sinful foolishness always accompanies the promotion of wisdom in faith and practice in the church. In his addresses before the rising generation of preachers, pastors, and churchmen of his day, Samuel Miller echoed both the message and style of Proverbs 15:7–9. "The lips of the wise spread knowledge, but the hearts of fools are not so. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is His delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but He loves one who pursues righteousness."▪

In Brief: Samuel Miller: Prayer Prior to Preaching

4. Go From Your Knees To The Pulpit. The more thoroughly your mind is steeped, if I may be allowed the expression, in the spirit of prayer, and of communion with God, when you ascend the sacred desk, the more easy and delightful will it be to preach, the more rich and spiritual will your preaching be, the more fervent and natural your eloquence, and the greater the probability that what you say will be made a blessing. Be assured, my dear young friend, after all the rules and instructions which have been given on the subject of pulpit eloquence—and which in their place have great value—that which unspeakably outweighs all the rest in importance, is that you go to the sanctuary with a heart full of your subject, warmed with love to your Master, and to immortal souls, remembering too, that the eye of that Master is upon you, and that of the sermon which you are about to deliver, you must soon give an account before His judgment seat. With these sentiments in full force, it is always desirable, both for your own sake and that of others, that you should enter the pulpit. And I know of no means more likely to produce them, than humble importunity before the throne of grace. Samuel Miller, D. D. Hughes Oliphant Old, *Letters on Clerical Manners and Habits. Addressed to a Student in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, N.J.* (1827; Third Edition, Princeton: Published by Moore Baker, 1835) 257–258; Revised edition (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1852), 249. This work was "perhaps the most popular and and [*sic*] widely circulated production of his pen, if we except his tracts on Presbyterianism and Baptism. It had no doubt occupied his thoughts, more or less definitely, for a number of years; and the subject which it unfolded had, evidently, been with him a life-long and favorite study. His observation of successive classes of students in the Seminary had, certainly, deepened all his impressions of the importance of much more attention to this subject, on the part especially of ministers of the Gospel, than they usually gave, or considered needful." Beginning in 1852, this work was placed in "the catalogue of the Presbyterian Board of Publication, for permanent issue." Samuel Miller, *Life of Samuel Miller, D. D.*, volume 2 (1869), 123.▪

John DeWitt: New School Presbyterian at an Old School Seminary

By Joshua Brownfield

Introduction

The questions, "What do we believe?" and "How do we consistently confess what we believe?" are perennial for any ecclesiastical body. Those inquiries relate not only to confessions and creeds, but also polity. For those Christian denominations that bear the label, "confessional," creed and polity intersect at the point of subscription.[1] Those ecclesiastical bodies must give careful thought to the standard to which office-bearers must be held accountable, the proper course of action if an office-bearer deviates from that standard, and what portion, if any, of that same standard, can be deemed "optional." The history of American Presbyterianism is the story of an ecclesiastical tradition that has grappled, sometimes dramatically, with those questions. The controversy concerning the revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith (hereafter WCF) in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (hereafter PCUSA) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries offers a compelling glimpse into the nature of those struggles, and there was perhaps no more intriguing player in that drama than John DeWitt (1842–1923), the sixth professor of church history at Princeton Theological Seminary.[2]

One might expect a professor of church history at an avowedly Old School seminary to urge his fellow Presbyterians to maintain the integrity of the WCF as well as require strict fidelity in their standards for subscription. However, DeWitt opted for an entirely different approach. Though he initially advised against revision, DeWitt ultimately approved of the alterations to the WCF that arguably precipitated the doctrinal controversies of the 1920s. DeWitt's actions may seem surprising, given his affiliation with Princeton. However, his New School Presbyterian background, along with his stated understanding of the function of church history, help illuminate his actions. Before discussing his life and role in the revision controversy, however, some understanding of his context and background are necessary.

Ecclesiastical Context

John DeWitt lived in consequential days for American Presbyterianism. In the decade prior to DeWitt's birth, the "tensions within the Presbyterian Church over confessionalism, polity, voluntary societies, revivalism, theology, and slavery were reaching a boiling point."[3] Since Presbyterianism's founding in 1729, it had been no stranger to conflict, but matters seemed to come to a head in the 1830s as Presbyterianism polarized into the Old and New Schools.[4] The Old School Presbyterians were concerned over the consequences of the 1801 Plan of Union, believing that the partnership with Congregationalists to plant churches in the American west had watered down Presbyterian polity and doctrine.[5] Prior to the 1837 General Assembly, the Old School party determined to act. Holding the majority in the assembly that year, the Old School "voted on a measure to abrogate the 1801 Plan of Union," and "exscinded four synods of churches formed under the Plan of Union."[6] The New School countered that Old School fears about

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1. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo: Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2006), 98.

2. David C. Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary,* vol. 2, *The Majestic Testimony, 1869–1929* (Edinburgh; Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1996), 134.

3. Bradley J. Longfield, *Presbyterians and American Culture: A History* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 90.

4. Longfield, 92.

5. D. G. Hart and John R. Muether, *Seeking a Better Country: 300 Years of American Presbyterianism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2007), 122.

6. Hart and Muether, 125.

heresy were overblown and produced the Auburn Declaration to make their case. Unfortunately for the New School, it proved the Old School concerns, because the Auburn Declaration "allowed moderate New England teachings that would not necessarily contradict the essentials of the Westminster Confession, while it clearly excluded the most objectionable errors alleged by the Old School."[7] Attempts at the 1838 General Assembly by the New School to reinstate themselves ended in failure, and a new assembly was born.[8]

Between 1838 and 1869 the Old and New School assemblies existed parallel with one another, but took on different characteristics. Within the New School assembly, internal conflicts as well as a deteriorating partnership with Congregationalists forced it to become more self-consciously Presbyterian.[9] However, a series of tracts produced with denominational imprimatur in the 1850s revealed the New School desire to modify doctrines such as particular redemption in an attempt to "express the traditionalist Calvinist dogma in moderate terms that allow a practical application."[10] The increasing prominence of theologian Henry B. Smith's (somewhat mitigated) mediating theology at Union Seminary signaled that the New School was "working within a Calvinistic framework but sought to channel their theology in directions that would blend Reformed doctrine with present-day realities. As such, the New School tended to avoid the seemingly harsher teachings of Calvinism, or smooth its rough edges, to the end of participating in the evangelization and reform of the expanding nation."[11] Meanwhile, as the New School worked to nuance their Calvinism, the Old School was gaining "a reputation as arguably the strictest and most doctrinally precise denomination in the United States."[12]

The American Civil War brought division to the Old School Presbyterians, as southern Presbyterians rapidly seceded over the 1861 General Assembly's vote to support the United States government.[13] The New School was not exempt from division either, as it too experienced the secession of the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church over the slavery issue.[14] The reunification of the nation after the Civil War meant that unity was in the air in 1860s America. Though northern and southern churches were still a century away from returning to one another, there were efforts to bring the Old and New School back together in the northern church.[15] Princeton theologian Charles Hodge argued vociferously against any reunion, because of what he perceived to be the New School's "lax principle of subscription."[16] Henry Smith objected that the New School "understood subscription to the Westminster Confession to entail adoption 'of the Reformed or Calvinistic system.'"[17] In the end, it would be Smith and not Hodge who would prevail, and in 1869 the Old and New School assemblies reunited.[18] It was into these ecclesiastical circumstances that DeWitt was born.

Biography

Early Life

John DeWitt was born five years after the Old and New School split, on October 10, 1842 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.[19] DeWitt's father William Radcliffe DeWitt, was the pastor of the Market Square Presbyterian Church.[20] The elder DeWitt sided enthusiastically with the New School in the Schism of the 1830s, a fact that his son would later recall with pride.[21] William DeWitt personally saw to his son's education, and John DeWitt would later attribute his knowledge of Greek and Latin to his father's daily instruction.[22] John attended Harrisburg Academy to prepare for college, but it seems the "private instruction from both his mother and his father" was substantial enough for him to enter Princeton College in 1858 at age sixteen.[23] Unlike his contemporary

7. George M. Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America*, Yale Publications in American Studies 20 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 84.

8. Hart and Muether, 125–26.

9. Hart and Muether, 133, 135.

10. Marsden, 139; Hart and Muether, 135–36.

11. Hart and Muether, 137.

12. Hart and Muether, 143.

13. Longfield, 107; Hart and Muether, 150.

14. Hart and Muether, 153.

15. Longfield, 114.

16. Charles Hodge, "Presbyterian Reunion," *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 40, no. 1 (1868): 54, accessed May 13, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu.

17. As quoted in Longfield, 114.

18. Longfield, 114.

19. Frederick W. Loetscher, "John DeWitt," *The Princeton Theological Review* 22, no. 2 (1924): 181, accessed March 6, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu.

20. Loetscher, 179.

21. Loetscher, 179; Longfield, 91; John DeWitt, *A Speech, in Support of the Motion to Dismiss the Subject of Confessional Revision, Made at Philadelphia in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, May Twenty-Fourth Nineteen Hundred and One, by the Rev. John De Witt, a Commissioner of the New Brunswick Presbytery* (Princeton, NJ: The University Press, 1901), 9.

22. Princeton Theological Seminary, "General Catalogue of Princeton Seminary," 1881, 1, The John DeWitt Manuscript Collection. Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Library.

23. Frederick W. Loetscher, "John DeWitt, D.D., LL.D.," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 17, no. 3 (1923): 14; Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 181.

B. B. Warfield, John DeWitt did not find an aptitude for the sciences, but instead took a more "literary" path.[24] DeWitt was graduated in 1861, and returned to Pennsylvania to pursue a career in law.[25]

Princeton Seminary and Union Seminary

Though he read law for eight months in Harrisburg, DeWitt's initial choice for vocation would not be a permanent one. At some point his thoughts turned to theological studies.[26] His successor at Princeton Seminary, Frederick Loetscher, indicated that the reasons for DeWitt's sudden change of vocation were not entirely clear, but, given the fact that it was timed with his profession of faith it seems to have been the result of a religious change.[27] He returned to New Jersey to attend Princeton Theological Seminary in 1862 and entered his course of study quite late in the year, March 10.[28] DeWitt was very interested in his courses in church history with James C. Moffat, and systematic theology with the embodiment of Princeton itself, Charles Hodge.[29] He was graduated in 1864 and licensed to preach by the Old School Presbytery of New York.[30] He also determined to study for another year at Union Seminary in New York because he started late at Princeton and was ill during his final term.[31]

Henry B. Smith

DeWitt's year at Union would prove to be quite influential, largely due to two of his professors, Henry Boynton Smith and William Greenough Thayer Shedd.[32] DeWitt later referred to these two "as his 'revered' teachers."[33] Smith himself was already a prominent theologian in the New School Presbyterian church, an unsurprising fact given his background and education.[34] Smith studied in Germany and was exposed to the "mediating theology," which "sought to mediate between traditional Christian affirmations on the one hand and philosophy and the spirit of scientific inquiry on the other, by combining a supernatural, emphatically biblical faith with the notion of an inner principle [the incarnation] expressing itself in organic historical development."[35]

Smith was particularly influenced by the historian Augustus Neander, whom Smith referred to as "a venerable and beloved teacher" and "the most eminent church historian of our day."[36] Neander was a major figure in German mediating theology, but he was thought to be somewhat vague in his own doctrinal commitments. Mercersburg historian Philip Schaff claimed that Neander could not, for reasons that were not entirely clear, sign the Augsburg Confession in good faith.[37] He was, however, an individual of great "piety," and clearly won the admiration of his student Henry Smith.[38]

William G. T. Shedd

The other professor to whom DeWitt expressed his own intellectual debt was William Greenough Thayer Shedd, whose presence at Union Seminary was nothing short of an enigma, given the fact that he was an Old School Presbyterian and was thought to be much more "hard-line" theologically than Henry B. Smith.[39] Shedd did not study in Europe, but did train under Joseph Torrey, translator of some of Neander's works into English.[40] DeWitt would later write of Shedd that he found through Neander's works a firm commitment to the reformed faith, because it "had shown its vitality by its persistence." Shedd, however, seems to have been a more critical admirer of the German historian than DeWitt believed.[41] Shedd wrote,

> The historian [Neander] does not exhibit with sufficient fullness, the influence which the inspired canon

24. Ethelbert D. Warfield, "Biographical Sketch of Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield," in *Revelation and Inspiration*, by Benjamin B. Warfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1927), vi; Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 182.

25. Loetscher, "John DeWitt, D.D., LL.D.," 14; Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 182.

26. Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 182.

27. Loetscher, 183.

28. Loetscher, 183.

29. Loetscher, 183.

30. Princeton Theological Seminary, "General Catalogue of Princeton Seminary," 1.

31. Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 185.

32. James H. Moorhead, *Princeton Seminary in American Religion and Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2012), 298.

33. As quoted in Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 186.

34. Longfield, 111.

35. William K. B. Stoever, "Henry Boynton Smith and the German Theology of History," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 24, no. 1 (September 1, 1968): 72, accessed March 24, 2014. http://ebscohost.com.

36. Henry Boynton Smith, "Nature and Worth of the Science of Church History," in *Faith and Philosophy: Discourses and Essays*, ed. George Lewis Prentiss (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Company, 1877), 70, accessed March 24, 2014, http://archive.org/details/faithphilosophydoosmit.

37. Philip Schaff, *Saint Augustin, Melanchthon, Neander: Three Biographies* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1886), 153.

38. Schaff, 153.

39. Moorhead, 299; Elizabeth A. Clark, *Founding the Fathers: Early Church History and Protestant Professors in Nineteenth-Century America*, Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 41.

40. John DeWitt, "William Greenough Thayer Shedd," *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 6, no. 22 (1895): 300.

41. DeWitt, 302.

> has exerted upon the unfolding of the christian life. The process of Sacred History is regarded, too much, as self-directed. Hence, the general undervaluation of strict dogmatic statements, as cramping the movement of the free christian spirit, the leniency towards certain heretical tendencies, and the occasional hesitating tone as well as vagueness of vision in respect to scientific orthodoxy, which characterize the best complete history of the christian religion and church that has yet been written.[42]

In terms of visible influence, William Shedd's impact on DeWitt would shortly manifest itself in his pulpit rhetoric. [43] Though DeWitt was more explicit about his appreciation for Shedd, the influence of Smith on his historical methods would later find expression as well.[44]

Pastoral Career

John DeWitt was ordained by the Third Presbytery (New School) of New York on June 9, 1865.[45] The same month DeWitt was called to pastor the Presbyterian Church (New School) of Irvington, New York.[46] It would not be a particularly long pastorate, however, as he was called to Central Congregational Church, in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1869.[47] He then moved to the very Old School Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, in 1876.[48] The new pastor established a reputation for eloquent preaching, but also for his "popular Sunday afternoon lectures in church history."[49]

> Having cultivated for years his natural fondness for historical reading, he now sought to give to his congregation the benefits of his broad and intensive studies in this field. He therefore made it his practice to deliver, at his Sunday afternoon service during successive winters, brief series of sermons on some of the outstanding personalities and movements in the history of the Church.[50]

Lane and McCormick

His time at Tenth was not long, however. He left in 1882 to join the faculty of the Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio.[51] DeWitt's teaching career would take on the same ecclesiastical eclecticism as his pastoral years. He first became Professor of Biblical and Ecclesiastical History at Lane Theological Seminary, a New School seminary that had been founded in 1829.[52] In 1888 DeWitt was invited to become chair of Apologetics and Missions at the Old School-affiliated McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois.[53] McCormick was an interesting choice, but DeWitt's subsequent career move was perhaps the most surprising of all.

Princeton

In 1892 John DeWitt became the sixth Chair of Church History at Princeton Theological Seminary.[54] Here he would teach for the next two decades.[55] Like his predecessors, DeWitt was not a specialist.[56] Clarence Macartney would later recall that DeWitt was not in possession of what he termed the "technical research" he believed

42. William Greenough Thayer Shedd, *Lectures upon the Philosophy of History* (Andover, MA: W. F. Draper, 1857), 126, accessed May 16, 2014, http://archive.org/details/lecturesuponphilo1shed. Spelling and punctuation are retained from the original.

43. Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 193.

44. Loetscher, 230.

45. Princeton Theological Seminary, "General Catalogue of Princeton Seminary," 1.

46. Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 187. He seems to have had a pleasant experience in his first pastorate, remarking at the time, "My leading encouragements have been my own increased interest in the study of the Gospel; the good attendance of my people upon the ordinances of the House of God, and their diligent attention to the word preached. I think the ministerial life proves as favorable to heart culture as I expected." George L. Shearer and Selden J. Coffin, eds., *A History of the Class That Graduated at Princeton Theological Seminary, in the Year 1864 : With an Account of the Triennial Re-Union of the Class, and Biographical Sketches of Its Eighty Members* (Easton, PA: Wood & Bunstein, 1868), 27, accessed April 1, 2014, http://archive.org/details/historyofclassth00prin.

47. Loetscher, 188.

48. Allen C. Guelzo, "The First Three 'B's,'" in *Tenth Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia: 175 Years of Thinking and Acting Biblically*, ed. Philip Graham Ryken (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Company, 2004), 66.

49. Calhoun, 134.

50. Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 199. Though these biographical sermons were quite popular, none of the manuscripts survived. Loetscher, 201n18.

51. Loetscher, 203.

52. Calhoun, 134; Lefferts Augustine Loetscher, *The Broadening Church: A Study of Theological Issues in the Presbyterian Church since 1869* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), 15; Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 203.

53. Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 207.

54. Loetscher, 211; Calhoun, 134. He had been reticent to move from McCormick, but the death of his wife apparently caused him to reconsider. Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 211.

55. Calhoun, 280.

56. Clark, 12. Samuel Miller, Princeton's first professor of church history, was nearly self-taught in church history. James W. Alexander and Alexander McGill were more or less pastors who had been pressed into teaching the subject. John DeWitt, "The Memorial Tablet to Dr. James C. Moffat," *The Princeton Theological Review* 1, no. 4 (1903): 627, accessed February 28, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu. Joseph Addison Alexander's specialty was exegesis. Moorhead, 110. James C. Moffat, DeWitt's immediate predecessor, had previously taught Latin and Greek for Princeton College. DeWitt, 628.

was consistent with teaching ecclesiastical history.[57] Loetscher would also write that DeWitt did not have "the knowledge of a scientific and thoroughgoing specialist in his field."[58] He lacked facility in French or German for research, and was not given to "the exploration of sources, even in good translations, nor for the laborious making of notes and excerpts from acknowledged authorities."[59] What he did possess, Loetscher argued, was "the knowledge of an assiduous, independent, and thoughtful reader who kept his eye well on the salient features of a story, on the main bearings of a discussion, on the underlying principles of a scheme of thought, on the outstanding achievements of a great leader, on the abiding historical values of a given epoch, but who cared little for the minute details of an elaborately documented learning."[60]

DeWitt taught church history at Princeton for twenty years. DeWitt's lectures and general classroom presence made an impression on those who heard them. He distributed the titles of the lectures for church history to the students on large sheets of paper so they could post them in their quarters and study the headings frequently. He recommended the purchase of a good general work of church history, Neander among them, and required the presentation of two monographs for the course.[61] He also offered electives that were conducted like seminars that met in his home.[62] DeWitt retired from teaching in May 1912 and died in 1923.[63] His legacy has proven difficult to assess in part because he burned his lectures and his attempt at an autobiography.[64] However, the event that stands out in a long academic and pastoral career is the role DeWitt played in the revision of the Westminster standards.

DeWitt and Confessional Revision

Background

The end of the nineteenth-century was a complex time for most American denominations, and that was certainly the case for the PCUSA. Increasing social and economic changes in America post-Civil War presented challenges to Christian groups that had not been encountered heretofore. There was a growing concern over the number of Catholic immigrants coming into the country, as well as the social ills that accompany rapid urbanization.[65] The nation that the PCUSA existed to serve was changing rapidly, and there was a growing perception that the church (and its confession) needed to change with it.[66] Lefferts Loetscher, the son of DeWitt's successor Frederick, located the beginnings of WCF revision movement after the 1869 reunion.[67] Other reformed communions in other nations were revising their confessions, and so it was thought the PCUSA should join them.[68]

Re-writing the doctrinal standards for the church seemed plausible, because the gravity of the social challenges seemed to require a greater ecumenism. With that came a reduced emphasis on doctrinal and confessional identity.[69] Hart and Muether have written of this period as one in which "these concerns moved Presbyterians to conceive of the work of the church more as social than as spiritual. It was the New School's idea of the church prevailing over the Old School's. Public morality and civic righteousness pushed aside Word and sacrament. Practical results rather than doctrinal standards became the measurement of churches."[70] In an atmosphere in which doctrine was increasingly seen as an obstacle to the church's mission, it is unsurprising that there was a "growing consensus in the church…to soften the harder Calvinistic edge of the confession."[71] Beginning in 1887 articles began to appear in the *New York Evangelist* on the question, and the 1888 General Assembly received an overture from the Presbytery of Nassau, Long Island, on the matter.[72] The groundswell for confessional revision had begun, and John DeWitt, as a professor at McCormick and then Princeton, was called upon to offer his counsel.

57. Clarence E. Macartney, *The Making of a Minister: The Autobiography of Clarence E. Macartney*, ed. J. Clyde Henry (Great Neck, NY: Channel Press, Inc., 1961), 124.

58. Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 217.

59. Loetscher, 216. Loetscher's comment seems to ring true on the whole, but some of DeWitt's articles give evidence of extensive research of a kind, e.g. his 1897 article "The Planting of Princeton College" gives some indication that DeWitt was researching the correspondence of early Princeton figures. John DeWitt, "The Planting of Princeton College," *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 8, no. 30 (1897): 194, accessed February 28, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu. He also gives an extensive description of the physical dimensions of the first building at the College of New Jersey. DeWitt, "Princeton College Administrations in the Eighteenth Century," 396.

60. Loetscher, 217.

61. John DeWitt, "Princeton Theological Seminary. Course in Church History.," n.d., 1, The John DeWitt Manuscript Collection. Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Library.

62. Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 220.

63. Calhoun, 280; Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 234.

64. Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 233.

65. Hart and Muether, 170, 172.

66. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church*, 40.

67. Loetscher, 41.

68. Loetscher, 41.

69. Hart and Muether, 173.

70. Hart and Muether, 173.

71. Hart and Muether, 183.

72. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church*, 41.

Revision in 1890s

DeWitt's engagement in the early stages of the controversy was primarily in print. In 1889 *The Presbyterian Review* published his article, "Revision of the Confession of Faith." DeWitt's conclusion was that, though he was unaware of any specific proposals for changes, he was not in favor of revising the WCF.[73] His line of reasoning, however, was somewhat uncharacteristic for what one might expect from a professor at an Old School seminary (then McCormick).[74]

DeWitt attempted to walk a fine line between his desire to retain (in the main) the integrity of the WCF, while also leaving intact the freedom that ordained ministers had to claim exceptions. Picking up concepts from William G. T. Shedd, DeWitt placed himself firmly in favor of retaining the WCF because of what he termed its "antiquity and its survival."[75] However, he also cited Henry B. Smith, who stated that Scripture, not the WCF, is the "'rule of faith and life'" for Presbyterians, and that what ministers subscribe to in the Westminster standards is the system that stands behind it, not "every statement in the confession."[76] DeWitt was quite concerned about the possibility of *ipsissima verba* subscription, and did not wish to see it come to the PCUSA.[77]

Interestingly (in light of his subsequent actions) he gave several large quotations from B. B. Warfield, William G. T. Shedd, and R. M. Patterson arguing against what he described as "the proposal to amend the Confession so that it shall assert, more explicitly than it now does, the love of God to all men, the universal sufficiency and adaptation of the atonement, and the universal invitation; as though it were defective at these points."[78]

The 1890 book *Ought the Confession of Faith to Be Revised?* was the next round of published engagement in which DeWitt participated on the revision question. This work was composed of contributions from four authors: William G. T. Shedd; B. B. Warfield; Henry Van Dyke, who was one of the primary campaigners for confessional revision; and DeWitt.[79] Most of their chapters were letters sent to the *New York Evangelist* in response to the others.[80] Answering DeWitt's opening salvo in which he called upon revision advocates to make specific proposals, Henry Van Dyke responded by stating three concerns: that Chapter III of the WCF had a "*supralapsarian* bias [emphasis his]" that needed to be removed, that the confession was lacking an "explicit declaration of the infinite love of God, revealed in the fullness of the Gospel salvation as sufficient for, adapted to, and freely offered to all men," and that the fate of those who die in infancy as described in Chapter X needed to be more explicit.[81] DeWitt's response to Van Dyke was not that he disagreed with the proposed changes *per se*, but that they would make the PCUSA's doctrinal standards "less liberal" than they were hither thereunto.[82] In contrast with his previous article, "Revision of the Confession of Faith," DeWitt did not make a case against the revision, but argued that the broad subscription policy be maintained.

Revision in 1900s

For all the talk of a groundswell of support, the confessional revision movement of the 1890s did not initially effect any change. The number of presbyteries needed to approve the proposed amendments did not meet the necessary two-thirds majority.[83] The issue would not go away, however, and it reemerged at the 1901 General Assembly. DeWitt had been on record as stating that he was not in favor of this round of revision because of the threats to Presbyterian unity, and gave a speech in support of a motion to dismiss the revision proposal.[84] The content of the speech is illuminating. In a manner unlike his Princeton colleagues B. B. Warfield or Geerhardus Vos, who seemed to have understood confessional revision as a kind of compromise with current trends, DeWitt argued against revision by appealing to

73. John DeWitt, "Revision of the Confession of Faith," *The Presbyterian Review* 10, no. 40 (1889): 553, 566. DeWitt mentioned some of the issues that were being discussed at the time, including the status of those who die in infancy as elect or not, the nature of the decrees, the love of God, and the extent of the atonement as being the matters up for debate. DeWitt, 567, 571, 587. But, he was also quick to point out that he could not see "the evidence of any movement, certainly any movement entitled to be called considerable" in favor of revision. DeWitt, "Revision of the Confession of Faith," 556.

74. DeWitt was still teaching apologetics and missions at McCormick in Chicago.

75. DeWitt, "Revision of the Confession of Faith," 558; DeWitt, "William Greenough Thayer Shedd," 302; William Greenough Thayer Shedd, "The Nature, and Influence, of the Historic Spirit," in *Theological Essays* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Company, 1877), 76.

76. DeWitt, "Revision of the Confession of Faith," 565.

77. DeWitt, 574.

78. DeWitt, 587–88.

79. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church*, 43.

80. John DeWitt et al., *Ought the Confession of Faith to Be Revised?* (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph & Company, 1890), 5–6, accessed February 28, 2014, http://archive.org/details/oughtconfessionooodewi_0.

81. DeWitt et al., 10–12. Van Dyke wished the WCF to be revised to either indicate that all who die in infancy are elect, or to repudiate "a doctrine which no Presbyterian minister holds, or would dare to preach if he did," if it was found to be the other. DeWitt et al., 12.

82. DeWitt et al., 16–17.

83. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church*, 47.

84. Loetscher, 86; DeWitt, *A Speech, in Support of the Motion to Dismiss*, 2.

the subscription formula used in the New School Presbyterian church.[85] He concluded his remarks by stating "I do not accept the *ipsissima verba* of the Confession. There are statements in that document with which I disagree."[86] He went further to say that he believed that he held to the "system of doctrine of which [it] is an expression."[87] DeWitt's speech failed to stem the tide, and the motion to dismiss was defeated.[88]

Despite his public opposition, DeWitt was called upon to serve on the twenty-one member revision committee. The committee was convened to write a "… brief statement of the Reformed Faith, expressed as far as possible in untechnical terms," to revise, either through change in wording or by a "Declaratory Statement," Chapters III, X.3, XVI.7, XXII.3, XXV.6 of the WCF, and to write "statements concerning the love of God for all men, Missions and the Holy Spirit."[89] At the 1902 General Assembly, the committee presented its report.[90] Among other things the proposed changes included language that stated that eternal punishment is held in harmony with the fact that God "has provided in Christ a salvation sufficient for all, adapted to all and freely offered in the Gospel to all;" and that "…no man is condemned except on the ground of his sin."[91] New chapters were also added on the Holy Spirit and the love of God, the latter of which stated that salvation is "sufficient for and adapted to the whole race of man."[92] DeWitt signed the committee's report that was entered into the record, but it came with an amendment that he disagreed with the changes to Chapter XVI about the works of the unregenerate, the notion that all infants who die go to heaven, and Article X of the untechnical statement, second sentence.[93] The emendations to the WCF were approved at the 1903 General Assembly.[94]

Revision Consequences

Time would tell what the impact of the confessional revision would be. In the immediate aftermath it was thought that the changes had allowed the church to maintain a kind of "basic theological conservatism."[95] Even Warfield seemed to think that the changes were not substantial.[96] However, the declaratory statements that characterized the atonement in nearly Arminian terms generated discussion in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church about a reunion.[97] This reunion would eventually occur, and signaled further ecumenical efforts to come, including PCUSA involvement in the Federal Council of Churches.[98] In Hart and Muether's reading of Presbyterian history, the confessional revision altered the nature of doctrinal conflicts to come, because it would become necessary for conservative Presbyterians to resort to defining what would be "'necessary and essential.'"[99] "By doing so, they sought to italicize certain doctrines as the Bible's truly nonnegotiables, rather than the Standards themselves, as containing the system of doctrine found in the Scriptures."[100]

Understanding DeWitt's Opposition

None of this would have been known to DeWitt at the time. There has been some questioning in the secondary literature as to why DeWitt, a professor at an unashamedly Old School seminary, would speak out against revision in the 1880s and 1890s, then serve on the committee for revision in 1901 and 1902. James Moorhead seems to

85. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church*, 86; Hart and Muether, 183; DeWitt, *A Speech, in Support of the Motion to Dismiss*, 11. Curiously, DeWitt's mentor Shedd used similar logic a decade earlier. DeWitt, et al., *Ought the Confession of Faith to be Revised?*, 85.

86. DeWitt, *A Speech, in Support of the Motion to Dismiss*, 15.

87. DeWitt, 16. DeWitt was apparently unaware that his remarks were being recorded. Rev. Charles A. Dickey had a stenographer copy down DeWitt's remarks, and they were subsequently sent to DeWitt so he could edit and revise them for publication. Ibid., 1.

88. DeWitt, 2.

89. William Henry Roberts, ed., *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: Proceedings, Etc., of the 114th General Assembly* (Philadelphia: Office of the General Assembly, 1902), 87.

90. The report included a "brief statement of the Reformed Faith, expressed as far as possible in untechnical terms," in addition to a number of proposed changes to the Westminster standards. Roberts, 87. In addition to changes with regard to eternal punishment, Chapter X was altered so as to indicate that all children who die in infancy are elect. To Chapter XVI, Section 7, language was changed to indicate that works of the unregenerate are "in themselves praiseworthy and useful." Roberts, 89.

91. Roberts, 89.

92. Roberts, 91.

93. Roberts, 97. The sentence in the brief statement that DeWitt objected to was as follows: "We believe that He has spoken by holy men of God in making known His truth to men for their salvation; that, through our exalted Saviour, He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable them to obey the call of the Gospel; and that He abides with the Church, dwelling in every believer as the Spirit of truth, of holiness, and of comfort." Roberts, 95.

94. Hart and Muether, 184.

95. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church*, 89.

96. Benjamin B. Warfield, "The Confession of Faith as Revised in 1903," in *Selected Shorter Writings*, ed. John E. Meeter, vol. 2 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Company, 2001), 396.

97. Warfield, 406. "The Cumberland Church had at its birth rejected the doctrines of double predestination and limited atonement, and several Cumberland leaders interpreted the recent confessional revision of the Presbyterian Church as bringing the two churches into essential doctrinal accord." Longfield, 139.

98. Hart and Muether, 184–85.

99. Hart and Muether, 186.

100. Hart and Muether, 186.

see DeWitt's actions as a change in stance on the question of revision from 1890 to 1902.[101] It is somewhat ambiguous as to why DeWitt initially argued against the insertion of God's love and the extent of the atonement in 1889 and then signed his name to them in 1902. However, it is arguably the case that DeWitt would not have been ultimately concerned about the integrity of the WCF given his confidence in a broad subscription policy. Though the full nature of the reasons for his actions remains inscrutable, some illumination in understanding his actions can be found, arguably, in his New School sympathies and his understanding of the function of church history.

New School Affinities

DeWitt was a very loyal New School Presbyterian, and given the New School's attitude toward doctrinal particulars, his actions are somewhat unsurprising. Even apart from his writings on the revision controversy, DeWitt's works exhibit a New School slant. He reveals a considerable degree of sympathy for revivals and revivalism. For example, in his 1887 address *The First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* he argued that the Evangelical Revival was a "greater religious revolution" than the Reformation, and that it was the means by which Deism was refuted.[102]

DeWitt's perspective on the value of the WCF is also both indicative of a New School outlook and is highly intriguing given its timing. In "The Place of the Westminster Assembly in Modern History," written in 1898 (and thus in the midst of the controversy), he asks the question as to whether Presbyterian "theology and polity have not, by this time, exhausted themselves as great and beneficent forces; and whether, standing at the beginning of a new era, we would not better revise them out of our intellectual beliefs, and contemplate them only with historical interest."[103] He answered in the negative, but not because he believed the WCF presented the system of doctrine contained in the Scriptures, but because of its social implications. In DeWitt's mind, it was the Reformed faith as expressed in the WCF that stood behind the civic freedoms enjoyed by citizens of Great Britain and the United States.[104] DeWitt feared a repeat of the French Revolution with the substantial economic and cultural forces that were at work in nineteenth-century America, and saw the theology of the WCF as the answer.[105] DeWitt seems to have stood in the vein of New School Presbyterianism that prioritized the social implications of Christianity over its truth. Thus, trimming the Calvinistic edges from the WCF would not seem such a leap, given the fact that there was work to be done.

Church History and the Catholic Spirit

DeWitt's view of the purpose of studying history would seem to have also played a role in the confessional revision controversy. Identifying John DeWitt as a technical, academic historian would arguably be erroneous, and it is possible that he would have agreed.[106] DeWitt was, in the tradition of Princeton Seminary, a generalist and a pastor who had found his *niche*, as it were, by preaching biographical and historical sermons. It is tempting, given his status as a teacher of church history, to locate an impetus for his actions in a technical view of history. However, the kinds of historical writing that DeWitt produced were not necessarily of an academic nature. Many of his biographical messages were commemorative in terms of their purpose.[107]

101. Moorhead, 299.

102. John DeWitt, *The First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1887), 17. See also John DeWitt, "Princeton College Administrations in the Nineteenth Century," *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 8, no. 32 (1897): 636, accessed February 28, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu; John DeWitt, "Princeton College Administrations in the Eighteenth Century," *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 8, no. 31 (1897): 401, accessed February 28, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu; John DeWitt, "The Testimony of the Holy Spirit to the Bible," *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 6, no. 21 (1895): 79, accessed February 28, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu.

103. John DeWitt, "The Place of the Westminster Assembly in Modern History," *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 9, no. 35 (1898): 381, accessed February 28, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu.

104. DeWitt, 382.

105. DeWitt, 381.

106. See Frederick W. Loetscher's comments above.

107. His essay on Jonathan Edwards was delivered to the Berkshire Conferences of Congregation Churches to commemorate Edwards's birth. Ibid., 189; John DeWitt, "Jonathan Edwards: A Study," *The Princeton Theological Review* 2, no. 5 (1904): 89, accessed February 28, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu. His articles on John Calvin and Philip Melanchthon were given on dates corresponding to the anniversaries of their births. John DeWitt, "John Calvin—The Man," *The Princeton Theological Review* 7, no. 3 (1909): 369, accessed February 28, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu; John DeWitt, "Philip Melanchthon, Scholar and Reformer," *The Presbyterian Quarterly* 11, no. 41 (July 1897): 273. The essays on Samuel Miller and Archibald Alexander were delivered at Princeton Seminary (at opening ceremonies for the academic year in the case of the former) and intended to be edificatory for his hearers. John DeWitt, "Archibald Alexander's Preparation for His Professorship," *The Princeton Theological Review* 3, no. 4 (1905): 573, 575; accessed February 28, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu; John DeWitt, "The Intellectual Life of Samuel Miller," *The Princeton Theological Review* 4, no. 2 (1906): 168, accessed February 28, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu.

Most of his work was done with the intent of edifying his audience in some way, as opposed to advancing research in his field.[108]

However, DeWitt's understanding of what church history *does* for those who learn it is helpful in understanding his role in the revision controversy. DeWitt was quite keen on church history's ability to foster a "catholic spirit."[109] In his 1903 address at the dedication of the memorial for James C. Moffat, his predecessor, DeWitt discussed the place of church history at Princeton from Samuel Miller onward. He noted, "Hence, Church History is the least special, the most nearly encyclopædic of the disciplines. Certainly, whatever else may be said of it, it should be humanizing; and its ideal, I do not say its actual, teacher will be intellectually sensitive on every side, and catholic in his religious sympathies."[110] Four years later in an informal address given to the senior class at Princeton Seminary entitled, "Relations of Church History to Preaching," DeWitt attempted to instill in his pupils the value of continuing to read church history as they assumed their pastoral roles. In the midst of that, he placed church history in the context of the seminary curriculum as "the broadening, the cultivating, the catholicizing department of the Seminary."[111] He went on to say that the study of church history brings to preaching a "catholic and irenic character," so that the preacher can present "the doctrine in a way that does not excite opposition."[112]

In his 1883 inaugural lecture at Lane Seminary, *Church History as a Science, as a Theological Discipline, and as a Mode of the Gospel*, delivered in 1883, DeWitt asserted that the historian examines doctrinal variations differently than a theologian. This is self-evident, but he goes on to state that there is a kind of relativizing quality to studying the history of doctrine and even goes so far as to say,

> Theologically, we are compelled, when loyal to our vision of the truth which God has revealed, to assert that Arminianism is not only an error, but an error at the center of Theology, and at the center of Soteriology. But, historically, we welcome the Arminian Wesleyan, as a brother beloved, to our pulpits and to our meetings for prayer. We acknowledge the validity of his ordination, and of his administration of the sacraments; and we gladly unite with him as one of the host of the elect in labor for the redemption of the world.[113]

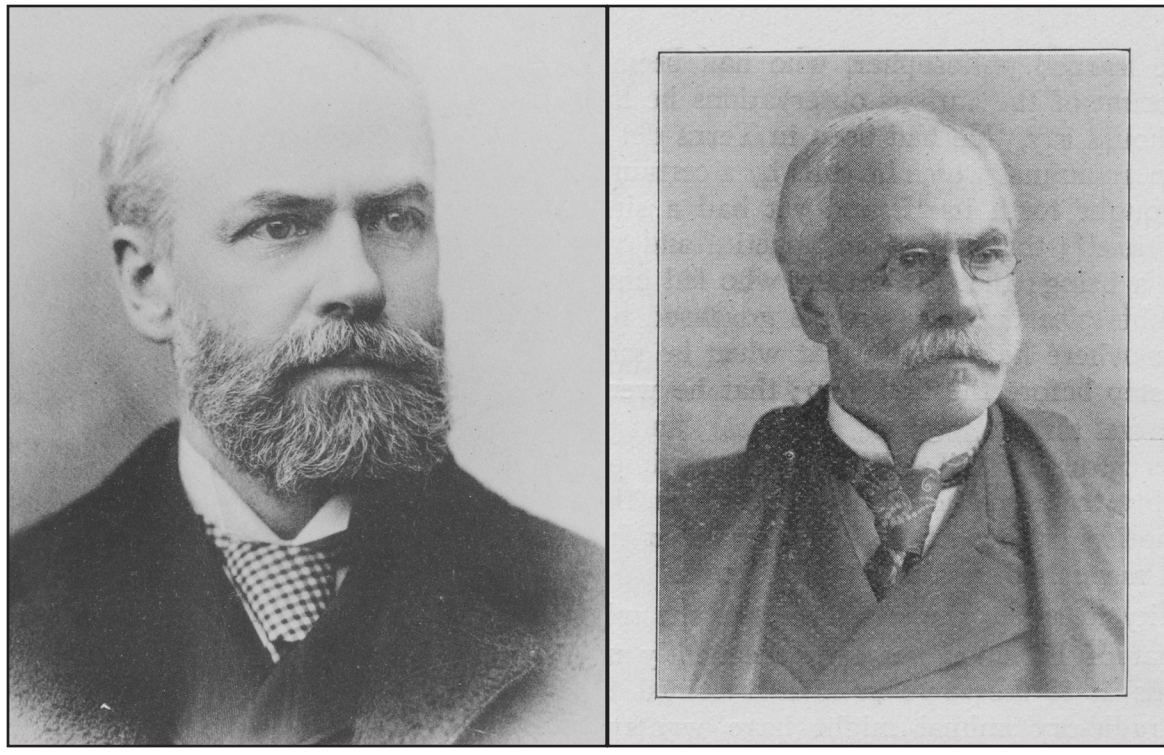
He states further, "This familiar example will serve to bring vividly before us the exact influence exerted by the study of History upon the student of Systematic Theology. Its influence is to imbue the student with the catholic spirit."[114]

There are conceptual affinities between DeWitt's inaugural address and the one delivered by Henry B. Smith in 1854, "Nature and Worth of the Science of Church History."[115] Speaking specifically of the Old/New School divide, Smith argued that church history allowed its student to "distinguish between the essential and the contingent."[116] He further stated that such a student will

> acquire such breadth of vision, that he will not unnecessarily exalt minor points of difference, even for the sake of displaying his own orthodoxy. It is easy to gain the notoriety of a polemic—little knowledge is needed to that; it is easy to exalt the difference between Old School and New, between Presbyterians and Congregationalists; but it is wiser and better to work together for our common good, and against our common foes.[117]

Standing behind both Smith and, somewhat indirectly, John DeWitt, is the imposing figure of Augustus Neander. Smith's intellectual debt to Neander has been noted above. When it comes to DeWitt, references to Neander himself in his writings are sparse.[118] However, in his inaugural address at Lane, he referred to Neander as "the Church's greatest historian."[119] DeWitt recommended students use Neander in his church history classes, and it is known that Neander's works were used as textbooks at Union during DeWitt's time there.[120] In addition, DeWitt praised his predecessor, James C.

108. Loetscher, "John DeWitt," 222.
109. John DeWitt, *Church History as a Science, as a Theological Discipline, and as a Mode of the Gospel : An Inaugural Discourse* (Cincinnati: Elm Street Printing, 1883), 35, accessed March 1, 2014, http://archive.org/details/churchhistoryassoodewi.
110. DeWitt, "The Memorial Tablet to Dr. James C. Moffat," 627.
111. John DeWitt, "Relations of Church History to Preaching," *The Princeton Theological Review* 5, no. 1 (1907): 104, accessed February 28, 2014, http://journals.ptsem.edu.
112. DeWitt, 106.
113. DeWitt, *Church History as a Science, as a Theological Discipline, and as a Mode of the Gospel*, 35.
114. DeWitt, 35.
115. DeWitt quotes Smith's inaugural lecture in his own. DeWitt, 30.
116. Smith, "Science of Church History," 78.
117. Smith, 78–79.
118. DeWitt, "The Memorial Tablet to Dr. James C. Moffat," 629; DeWitt, "William Greenough Thayer Shedd," 300, 302, 317; DeWitt, *Church History as a Science, as a Theological Discipline, and as a Mode of the Gospel*, 6, 21, 37.
119. DeWitt, 37.
120. DeWitt, "Princeton Theological Seminary. Course in Church History.," 1; Clark, 80.



Moffat, for having "dwelt with most delight in the spirit of Neander on the Church's internal life" in his church history courses at Princeton Seminary, which DeWitt would have taken.[121]

In a manner similar to DeWitt, Neander was quite adept at the "art of the monographic treatment of great Christian figures and presented the Christian past as a living source for the present."[122] In another striking parallel, Neander's work was characterized as having "suffered from a lack of careful source criticism and was heavily informed by edificatory and inspirational motives."[123] It should also be noted that Neander was described by Schaff thus: "His extended historical studies had served to enlarge his naturally liberal mind to the most comprehensive catholicity."[124] It is arguably the case that Neander's Christo-centric view of the church's history that stressed the church's internal life, having been modified by the more conservative Smith but still retaining many of its features, resonated with the New School DeWitt, who emerged from an ecclesiastical tradition that accented work over doctrine and piety over specifics. This would seemingly have allowed DeWitt, as a professor of church history at Old School Princeton, to acquiesce to the 1903 revisions without fearing the repercussions.

121. DeWitt, "The Memorial Tablet to Dr. James C. Moffat," 629.
122. Stoever, "Henry Boynton Smith and the German Theology of History," 74.
123. Stoever, 74.
124. Schaff, *Saint Augustin, Melanchthon, Neander*, 154.
125. Hart and Muether, 203.
126. Hart and Muether, 203.

Conclusion

John DeWitt's life and career corresponded with a pivotal moment in American Presbyterianism. The confessional boundaries of the PCUSA began to erode as the denomination sought to keep pace with the rapidly changing United States. John DeWitt acted in accordance with his fairly conservative New School convictions in the revision controversy, but the long-term effect for conservatives in the PCUSA was negative. Within two decades the revision of the WCF would come to fruition, "a broad and often incoherent pluralism."[125] It would be another Princeton faculty member, J. Gresham Machen, who would attempt to restore Presbyterian identity.[126]■

Above: John DeWitt, D.D., LL.D. (1842–1923), circa 1893, and later in life. Sources: Le Roy J. Halsey, *A History of The McCormick Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church* (Chicago: Published by the Seminary, 1893), 438. John De Witt, *Jonathan Edwards: Union Meeting of the Berkshire North and South Conferences, Stockbridge, Massachusetts, October Fifth, 1903. Oration.* (Stockbridge, Mass: Berkshire Conferences, 1903). Courtesy and with permission of The Historical Center of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Wartime Sermons: Twelve Pulpit Messages from Georgia Presbyterians During World War II

By Frank J. Smith

Living Echoes

Three quarters of a century ago, Southern Presbyterian pastors were dealing with the challenges and suffering and questions engendered by World War II. How does one find comfort? What is the meaning of it all? In the midst of the carnage, where is God?

At the same time, there were ongoing pastoral matters that needed to be addressed. Because we usually focus on the Second World War, particularly the military dimension, whenever we think of the early to mid-1940s, we often forget that people were still carrying on with their lives. People still graduated from high school; went to proms and to dances at the "Y"; got married and had babies; attended colleges and universities; rooted for their football teams as they competed on the gridiron during the regular season and, perhaps, in bowl games; drank soda and ate popcorn and Neccos while watching Westerns at the movie theater; swung to big-band music from the radio; engaged in the full scope of civilian employment; and had all the usual emotional ups and downs of life. In a similar way, even in wartime, the pastoral ministry continued to deal with the usual spiritual needs and doubts and fears and questions with which men have always wrestled—coupled with anxieties about national security and the safety of loved ones far away.

There was also the backdrop of a theological shift that was occurring, as liberalism was starting to make decisive thrusts into the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS, known informally as the Southern Presbyterian Church). One could argue that that spiritual and theological war would prove to be far more significant and devastating than the destruction wreaked by Stuka dive bombers, U-boats, Sherman tanks, howitzers, and atomic weapons.

In 1943, a small book—a bare 112 pages—was published by John Knox Press, the official publishing arm of the PCUS. It contained a dozen sermons from as many Presbyterian ministers from the state of Georgia. It provides a window into the Southern Presbyterian sanctuary at a critical time not only of world history but also of church history.

The book was entitled, *Living Echoes: Sermons by Twelve Georgia Presbyterian Ministers,*[1] and the editor of the collection was Ferguson Wood, pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church. Located at the time in the Midtown area of Atlanta, a bit over a mile east of Georgia Tech, Westminster was a noteworthy congregation whose previous pastor was Peter Marshall, a native Scotsman who would leave that pulpit for a pastorate in Washington, D.C., and an eventual appointment as the Chaplain of the U.S. Senate.[2]

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1. *Living Echoes: Sermons by Twelve Georgia Presbyterian Ministers* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1943).

2. His wife, Catherine Marshall, was the beloved authoress of the novel *Christy*, set in a fictional Appalachian town in Tennessee. She also wrote a biography of her husband, *A Man Called Peter*.

All of the congregations represented in *Living Echoes* were prestigious. Here is a list of them, along with the respective communicant membership: First Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, 1906; Druid Hills Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, 1703; North Avenue Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, 1209; First Presbyterian Church, Columbus, 1155; Morningside Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, 592; First Presbyterian Church, Thomasville, 569; Westminster Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, 565; First Presbyterian Church, Valdosta, 527; First Presbyterian Church, Marietta, 542; Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church, Augusta, 429; and Pryor Street Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, 419.[3]

Two things immediately stand out via perusing this list. One is that all of them are city churches with significant membership. The other is that the list is heavily tilted toward Atlanta. Of the seven presbyteries in the Synod of Georgia, sermons by ministers from these judicatories were featured in this volume: Atlanta (7); Southwest Georgia (2); Cherokee (1); Augusta (1); Macon (1). Not represented were Athens and Savannah Presbyteries.

What we have, therefore, in this book is a snapshot—or, better yet, we could say an album of snapshots—which may or may or not accurately portray the whole scene of the Presbyterian pulpit in the South or even the state of Georgia seventy-five years ago. For instance, what was being preached in the rural churches and in those urban congregations that were not as wealthy? But, on the other hand, given the influential nature of these congregations, and the fact that the Synod of Georgia was home to Columbia Theological Seminary, and that the state of Georgia was increasingly becoming industrialized and urbanized in earning its moniker of "Empire State of the South," this series of snapshots may, at the very least, portend trends as to where the denomination as a whole was headed.

The first thing to note is the Foreword, penned by Ferguson Wood. He wrote:

> Each week nearly two hundred Presbyterian ministers proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus from the two hundred and fifty-five Presbyterian pulpits within the bounds of the State of Georgia. In this volume we are endeavoring to present a cross section of this great group. The twelve sermons herein were all preached by men not yet forty years of age who are serving, with one exception, churches with at least four hundred members. Sermons like these may be heard any Sabbath. Sermons like these are representative of the whole. Sermons like these have been the means through which many footsore and weary pilgrims have found relief from their pains, balm for healing, and inspiration for nobler and more Christlike living. For the message of the Presbyterian pulpits in Georgia is clear, uplifting, forceful, timely, and courageous. Our earnest prayer is, as we send this volume forth, that sermons like these may prove as rich a blessing and spiritual uplift to their readers as they did to their hearers.

The Editor did state that these sermons were representative of the whole of preaching in Georgia Presbyterian pulpits, and perhaps he was right. However, on the other hand, that fact is hard to demonstrate for two reasons: one, the sample is small; and two, as noted above, only sermons from large and prestigious congregations were included. Furthermore, as Dr. Wood mentioned, every preacher whose sermon is in this volume was relatively young—leaving open the question as to whether there was a generational difference between these sermons and those preached by an older generation.[4] So, while this collection may not be representative of the whole in 1943, it might give us a clue as to where the Southern Church was going—not only because of the influential nature of the congregations, but also because of the fact that all the sermons were preached by men of a younger generation.

Before we consider each of these sermons, let us pause to consider who Ferguson Wood was. He was a leader of the Continuing Church Committee—the conservative group that wanted to preserve traditional Southern Presbyterian theology and piety, by continuing the PCUS as a distinct denomination. This movement, which was associated with the *Southern Presbyterian Journal* (founded in 1942, later renamed the *Presbyterian Journal*), in the 1940s and 1950s strongly enunciated its opposition to merger with the "Northern" Presbyterian Church. In 1945, the *Journal* announced that Dr. Wood was Co-Chairman of the Continuing Church Committee.[5]

We mention Dr. Wood's public commitment to the

3. These figures are taken from the *Minutes of the Eighty-Fourth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States with an Appendix* (Richmond, Va./Dallas, Tex.: Presbyterian Committee of Education, n.d. [1944]), which included the statistics for 1943.

4. Not all of the ministers were under forty when the volume was published: e.g., J. McDowell Richards was born in 1902, while John Calvin Reid was born in 1901. Of course, it is possible that their sermons were actually preached while they were still in their thirties, and published after they turned forty. (The volume was copyrighted on May 18, 1943.) In any case, even if the precise claim is not accurate, the general thrust is true—these ministers were not part of the older generation.

5. "Continuing Church Committee Holds Meet in Atlanta," *Southern Presbyterian Journal* (December 15, 1945), 5–7.

Continuing Church ideology since, as a leader in that movement, one would imagine that he would not have endorsed sermons that were weak or suspect theologically. But we shall see whether that expectation is accurate.

The First Sermon

The first sermon was by James McDowell Richards, D.D., President of Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. A Phi Beta Kappa member, he studied at Davidson College, then at Princeton University, and later was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University. He also graduated from Columbia Theological Seminary.

Entitled "The Inevitable Choice," the message was based on Matthew 6:24 ("No man can serve two masters"). Dr. Richards posited that "life is after all only a continual making of choices. There is never a day which does not offer two or more alternatives between which we must choose; there is hardly a situation which can arise but that we may meet it in at least two different ways…. There are certain things in our lives which must be condemned to die if others are to live, and on the other hand if we choose that these latter things are to live, it becomes necessary that the former things shall die. There is not time enough, nor strength enough, nor steadfastness of purpose sufficient to see all these things through to their full development. If we endeavor to keep them all it is certain that all of them alike must suffer, and that we shall only fail in all directions rather than succeed in a few. Yes, life is a matter of making choices" (11f).

The preacher used the words of Jesus to the rich young ruler to illustrate the truth that in the matter of trying to serve God and hold onto his riches, "the Master told him that day that the one thing or the other must die; there was not love enough in man's heart for both" (12).

Dr. Richards then applied this principle of not serving two masters, in a variety of ways. "In the first place we cannot choose both indolence and accomplishment, both ease and achievement. It matters not how much one may desire to reach the summit of some lofty mountain, he will never succeed by reclining in the shade at its foot and dreaming of the pleasure that would be his if only he were upon those heights…. Labor is the price of success." He continued: "It is so in every department of life. No man or woman has ever become or remained strong physically without exercising the body…. Regular exercise, a sufficient amount of rather strenuous activity, a refusal to indulge oneself in idleness or in intemperance—these are the only means by which we can keep the body strong and well. Physical effort is the price of physical development" (13).

Again, "It is true likewise of the mind. We cannot expect to spend our days in mental inactivity and yet to have brains which shall be worthy of the respect of our fellows. No man ever yet became well educated on fifteen minutes a day—the advertisements to the contrary. There is no other way to a well-developed mind than the way of laborious study…. If you would really be a scholar, a thinker above other men, you must make the choice between your studies and some other things less vital" (14).

He applied his message to "our various callings and professions," arguing that the "man who succeeds best is in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the man who works hardest. Pre-eminence and fame do not come by accident" (14).

"Again," he wrote, "we cannot choose the good and the bad, however much we might like to do so. We may succeed in mixing the two with some degree of seeming success for a time, but in the end we shall find that the evil has prevailed…. The building of character is a constant process of choosing between the beautiful and the ugly; the enduring and the transient; the evil and the good" (14f).

He then argued that "it is eternally true that the good is the enemy of the best. Life is too short and our ability too limited for us to compass all that we would in our brief day. If we make choice of even the second best on any one day, the structure which we build is by that much inferior to what it might have been. We cannot read both the worthless books and the good. In this day when volumes are pouring off the press by the thousands, the process of choosing is difficult enough at beast and we cannot possibly read all. If the cheap book or trashy magazine occupies our attention, some good book must necessarily go unread. We cannot enjoy all" (15).

Similarly, we must choose between "the wholesome amusements and those which degrade as well"; between "good friends and bad"; between "honesty and dishonesty"; between "purity and impurity"; and between "noble and degrading thoughts" (15–16).

And ultimately, "we must choose between the way of selfish desire and the way of Christ." For,

> the final choice is, after all, a choice between the way of selfish desire and the way of Christ. Sin, in whatever form it shows its head, is invariably a form of selfishness. It is selfishness which makes us willing to commit any of the sins that injure our neighbor. It is selfishness

> which makes us willing to commit those sins that injure our own bodies and souls, without pausing to reflect that in so doing we are bringing irreparable injury to our families, to our children, to society, and that we are wronging God Himself. It is selfishness which makes us refuse God those things which are His due. It is selfishness which makes us choose indolence rather than effort; which makes us prefer evil to good; which leads us to choose as our lifework the profession that is easiest or that seems to offer us more opportunity of fame or of fortune rather than that which, though hard, offers an opportunity for service to men and to God. However subtle the form in which it presents itself, the choice always narrows itself down to this. On the one side there is self-interest, saying, "This way there is ease and the approval of men, and good times, and perhaps gold. This way you may be of some benefit to the world without inconveniencing yourself overmuch." And on the other hand there is Christ, with His nail-pierced hands and His cross-crowned way, and with that tone of authority which our hearts recognize in spite of themselves when we pause long enough to listen. He says: "No man can serve two masters. He that will be greatest among you, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Which master will you choose?

There is, of course, much that could be commended in this discourse. Indeed, one might appropriately feel convicted of wasting time and effort on those things that really are not important or are even harmful. However, what struck us as we read the message was this: Where was the gospel? What was distinctly Christian about this sermon? Was there anything in this message that could not have been preached by a promoter of the Social Gospel, or by a denier of the substitutionary atonement? Notice that though there is not an explicit denial of sin as being rebellion against God, the minister emphasized sin as being selfishness—not exactly the type of message one would expect from one standing in the line of Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians.

But, of course, Dr. Richards was not standing solidly in the line of Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians. Even though that was his doctrinal heritage, and even though he did profess belief in many of the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and even though he was not what was considered to be a theological liberal, nevertheless, his perspective represented a diversion from historic Southern Presbyterian theology.

One way to illustrate this point is via the words of a strongly supportive biographer, who, in defending his mentor, actually gives credence to the charges of heresy against Columbia Theological Seminary. For example, Dr. Richards tried to rebut the allegation by Joseph C. Morecraft, III, a student at Columbia Seminary in the 1960s, that there were two radically different views of theology being taught there, viz., Calvinism and Neo-orthodoxy. Those holding to classic Calvinism would believe in the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Bible, inerrant and infallible in the original manuscripts. President Richards' response was as follows: "We do not have the original manuscripts, and in dealing with those we do have, we believe that the teaching of the Bible as a whole, when fully read and understood under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the Word of God to us."[6] Please note that there is no affirmation of the nature of the particular words of Scripture, but only of the Bible as a whole; and furthermore, that there is no affirmation that the Bible objectively speaking is the Word of God, but that it "is the Word of God to us" only after we have read and understood it. The defense by the seminary president was basically a concession that yes, in point of fact, many on the Columbia faculty were indeed Neo-orthodox. As another example, a woman wanted to give a gift to the seminary on this condition: "The institution would continue to teach that the Bible is the Word of God, not part of the Word of God, and part of the word of man, or that it becomes the word of God to the individual." Dr. Richards negotiated with this woman so that she agreed to change the stipulation to the following: that "the view of inspiration of Scripture at Columbia be that taught in the *Confession of Faith* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.) in 1944." The biographer goes on to note: "There is no record of a final resolution to the discussion. Indeed, no commitments could have been made permanently unless they were carefully and legally restricted. The Confession of Faith has been rewritten and revised since that time."[7] Again, if there was no theological disagreement, then why the necessity to negotiate the wording?

In point of fact, Dr. Richards himself confessed his view as being a belief "in the total infallibility of Scripture as a guide to faith and to morals, which I understand to be the teaching of our standards, but that I did not think this necessarily meant that every individual word of Scripture was to be taken literally as it stands. This I believe to be the correct view of Scripture. It is a view which I characterized by saying that I believed in

6. As quoted in James Davison Philips, *Faithful Servant: The Life & Times of James McDowell Richards* (Nashville: Providence House Publishers, 2004), pp. 75–76.

7. *Faithful Servant*, p. 70.

the doctrinal inerrancy of Scripture insofar as all matters of faith and practice are concerned."[8]

Squaring that view of inspiration and inerrancy with the Westminster Standards does not seem possible. The Confession of Faith, I.4 explicitly says that the Holy Scripture "is to be received, because it is the word of God."

Or consider a Christmas message that Dr. Richards preached December 1946 on radio's *The Presbyterian Hour*. The climax of the message came when, in quoting a British minister, he declared, "When a wrong wants righting, a work wants doing, or a truth wants preaching, or a continent wants opening, God sends a baby into the world to do it. That is why, long ago, a baby was born in Bethlehem."

Really? That's the reason why Jesus was born in Bethlehem? There is simply no way that those who held to Reformed thought, including the Southern Presbyterians of the nineteenth century, would have approved of such a notion.

A forthcoming biography of a Columbia Seminary graduate from the 1950s contains the following assessment:

> J. McDowell Richards was regarded as conservative; but, according to Morton Smith, Dr. Richards was willing to tolerate in the seminary the wide variety of views found throughout the denomination. Another student from the 1950s contended that Dr. Richards believed that the Bible contains errors; furthermore, he was "an honest churchman who felt that the seminary should not be out of step with the denomination. Thus he progressively changed the character of the faculty, to drift toward liberalism more and more"—to match the drift of the Southern Presbyterian Church.[9]

Dr. Richards was not a flaming liberal. He disagreed with much of the theology being taught by the professors in his seminary. This fact was confirmed by Joseph Morecraft, who, during a visit with Dr. Richards after his retirement, asked him point-blank whether he agreed with the views of the professors which Dr. Morecraft had pointed out as heretical; Dr. Richards said, "No." [10] He certainly would have professed doctrines such as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, His death on the cross, His bodily resurrection, and the necessity of believing in and accepting Him. And there was enough gospel language in his messages for the elect to be comforted and edified. But at the same time, his messages as a whole did not present the gospel with crystal clarity—a fact illustrated by means of the representative sermon that was in this collection of pulpit messages from 1943.

The Second Sermon

The second sermon, "Behind the Scenes of Suffering," based on Job 23:3, 4, was by Richard Thomas Gillespie, pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Thomasville, and formerly pastor of Atlanta's Rock Springs Presbyterian Church. His B.A. degree was from Presbyterian College. He received an M.A. from Emory University and a B.D. from Columbia Theological Seminary. During his time pastoring in Thomasville, he was granted a leave of absence in Fall 1939, in order to start work on a doctorate in theology at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia—a degree he completed in 1947. Meanwhile, he had vacated the Thomasville pulpit in 1944, in order to become Candidate Secretary of the PCUS Board of World Missions. In 1950, he became homiletics professor at Columbia Theological Seminary until 1956, when he went back into the pastorate.[11] His late father, also named Richard Thomas Gillespie, had been President of Columbia Seminary immediately prior to the tenure of J. McDowell Richards.

Early in the message, Gillespie alluded to the world war: "Surely once again we have come to one of those convulsive hours in the life of men and nations when the cry is going up from many hearts, 'Oh that I knew where I might find him!' It is not unnatural that we should turn to the book of Job for light in our puzzling perplexity" (21).

Gillespie dealt with the answers given by Job's "comforters"; and spoke of a minister from Bournemouth, England, who declared to the people from the pulpit

8. Dr. J. McDowell Richards, *As I Remember It: Columbia Theological Seminary 1932–1971* ([Decatur, Ga.]: CTS Press, 1985), 74–75.

9. Frank J. Smith, *God's Man from Brooklyn: The Story of a Twentieth-Century Minister* (forthcoming). Further confirmation of the leftward theological direction can be seen by consulting a series published by the denominational press, The Presbyterian Presence: The Twentieth-Century Experience. See James H. Moorhead, "Redefining Confessionalism: American Presbyterians in the Twentieth Century," in *The Confessional Mosaic: Presbyterians and Twentieth-Century Theology,* ed. Milton J. Coalter, John M. Mulder, and Louis B. Weeks (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 71; John M. Mulder and Lee A. Wyatt, "The Predicament of Pluralism: The Study of Theology in Presbyterian Seminaries Since the 1920s," in *The Pluralistic Vision: Presbyterians and Mainstream Protestant Education and Leadership,* ed. Milton J. Coalter, John M. Mulder, and Louis B. Weeks (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 42, 47–48.

10. Joseph C. Morecraft, III, telephone interview, August 17, 2018.

11. Lillian Britt Heinsohn, *Saints and Sinners: The History of the First Presbyterian Church, Thomasville, Georgia* (N.p.: n.p., n.d. [1967]), 168.

that "their nation's sufferings are the judgments of God. He reminds them that the people have made Sunday a day for going to the beach and for other motor travel, but that now there is no motor fuel, and the beaches are barred to secure them from invasion. He says that they have left the churches half empty, and that now many of them are in ruins. He says that they have ignored the ringing of church bells and that now they cannot be rung except to warn of mortal danger." Gillespie acknowledged "that in some sense at least, the dreadful things we see across the face of the earth are the judgments of God on a 'wicked and adulterous generation.'" He also quoted Dr. John A. McKay of Princeton Theological Seminary, who said: "Calm reflective thought cannot fail to come to the conclusion those psychopathic men and nations that have plunged the world into the present distress, are the children, albeit the monstrous children, of Christian democratic nations. Nations which today are engaged in conflict with these powers, and who we hope may win the victory over them, must nevertheless admit to the paternity of those terrible sons …. We are listening today to the outraged voice of history" (23).

However, for Gillespie, the answer of Elihu at the end of the book of Job is more accurate than the advice proffered by Job's three friends, by maintaining that with regard to Job, "God is the God of discipline—discipline not in the sense of punishment, but in the sense of instruction and training." Even though Job was "a 'perfect and upright' man … and 'one that feared God, and turned away from evil,'" because he had "never known poverty nor want nor affliction, he had not truly known life" (23).

Gillespie continued:

> We can set it down that it is only when a man has been reduced to the essentials that he can truly understand life. About a hundred years ago, the New England philosopher, Henry David Thoreau, was so convinced of this that he went out to the shores of Walden Pond to live in solitude for two years. "I went out to the woods," he says in his *Walden*, "to front only the essential facts of life, and to see if I could not learn what it had to teach. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live sturdily and so Spartanlike as to put to rout all that was not life, to reduce life to its lowest terms and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience." Toyohiko Kagawa, who has come to the depths of simple living in another way, has this to say: "There is nothing more exhilarating than to walk through the world unencumbered. If possessions abound there is a haunting fear they may be stolen. If you are beautifully gowned you worry lest your garments be soiled. If you are of high rank you are anxious lest you may be thrown down. If you pride yourself on being erudite you are cut to the quick if someone makes light of you. Stripped to the skin! Stripped to the skin! That is the way to walk." (24)

We're all familiar with Thoreau and his thoroughly heterodox views. But who was Toyohiko Kagawa? Born in 1888, he was converted to Christianity by Southern Presbyterian missionaries and baptized in 1904, and later studied at Princeton Theological Seminary. He was a social reformer given over to mysticism. He argued for the necessity of Christianity—but what kind of Christianity was it? In his book *Christ and Japan*, he wrote:

> Are not the economic chaos and the unemployment crisis which today have plunged the nations of the West into unspeakable agony, directly due to the fact that the peoples of these lands have wandered away from Christ's way of life? If men everywhere gave Christ the right of way, toiled as he toiled, loved purity as he loved it, devoted themselves to a service motivated by love and had his passion for peace, would the present problem of unemployment and this economic distress have come upon the world?
>
> The love-divorced reverence of Shinto, the love-divorced other-worldliness of Buddhism and the love-divorced Confucian way of the golden mean doomed me to pass my boyhood in tears. Today the nations of the West are weeping. Why these tears? The cause is clear. Devotion to doctrine stifles love. Scientific civilization crowds love out of life. The economics of capitalism makes love an alien….
>
> If looked upon simply as a compilation of doctrine, the Bible is a dead book. The mission of Christianity in Japan is to put the Bible into life. This is not to say that its doctrine is bad. If it interprets God's love, well and good. When, however, doctrine hides the love of God, and entangles us in a maze of theological theories, Japan is bored by it. Japan is famished for the love of God. She yearns for the Cross.
>
> Unfortunately the Protestant church is giving the nation a Christianity which makes the pulpit and preaching central. Japanese youth, dissatisfied with this emphasis, are drifting away from the church. Their recent flight to communism is caused by this situation. The

communists are bent on realizing love in a social order based on materialism and buttressed by violence as its compelling force. To this the youth of Japan responds. They are on the wrong road. But they will positively not return to a Christianity which deals only in doctrine. It was their recoil from this doctrine that drove them into the communistic fold.

Moreover, doctrine and individualistic Christianity must be held responsible for the spread of materialistic communism in the nations of the West. Needless to say Christ is not responsible for this. It is because Christians have not made redemptive love a living reality in every phase of their lives, and have failed to realize it in all social relations. The over-emphasis on individualism has brought on the present-day phenomenon of a chastising communism that is teaching the church social love.

In Kagawa's view,

> It goes without saying that such a social and economic movement as this is not the whole of Christianity. God's love is revealed not only in the social order but in the life of every individual. The love of God ministers to the individual intellect. It ministers to man's emotions, as in religious art. It ministers to the will of the individual in such virtues as self-control, temperance, courage, diligence, forbearance, love, loyalty and the realization of his highest self. Moreover, it gives an assurance of the immortality of the soul and furnishes for the individual various metaphysical and mystical experiences. I reject none of these individual elements.
>
> I simply insist that these strictly individual experiences of God's grace are not enough. The social life of our day is more complex than any aggregation of individuals. As the correlated activity of five fingers is greater by far and more fundamental than the aggregate activity of each individual finger, so it is not enough to save only the individual and set up no principles for the social order. Unlike Buddhism, the religion of Jesus teaches not only grace for the individual; it also postulates the Kingdom of God. Christ revealed not only the God of creative but of redemptive love.
>
> Christ is able to save not only the individual but society as well. How then can society be saved? By actually realizing, through the development of the cooperative movement, the brotherhood-love and the socialized-love which Christianity in various forms conserved across a period of nineteen hundred years. Then, if we utilize on an international scale, and in the interests of world peace, the benefits derived from such cooperative effort, war will be definitely eliminated from the life of mankind.[12]

Gillespie's use, in the midst of World War II, of a Japanese writer might have seemed unusual for an American audience—even though that author had been imprisoned before the war in Japan for his pacifism and opposition to militarism, and had warned America about Japan's imperialistic intentions. But what is particularly jarring is that Gillespie utilized a staunch supporter of the social gospel in a sermon preached in a modest-sized city (population about 13,000) in Southwest Georgia, in the middle of the Bible Belt. Kagawa's gospel was no gospel at all—there was no atonement and no reconciliation with God; the individual application was man-centered (meeting the individual's needs and feelings of guilt), not appeasing the wrath of God. As he wrote in 1929,

> Why, then, are sinners forgiven? The thought of Christ's atonement as something resembling barter or exchange of commodities is not current in these days. The atonement means a re-creation in which "self" is melted in the perfect crucible called Christ. When the new creation begins, sin is suddenly dissolved and disappears in just the same way that iron and copper are melted in the electric furnace. It is in this sense that I conceive the love of God to have been revealed. Love means, then, exactly this, that God does make new creations.[13]

Toward the close of the message, Gillespie declared that God's "final word is a word of love—the Cross!", and then quoted from a poem/hymn, "In the Cross of Christ I Glory": "… the cross of Christ … Towering o'er the wrecks of time; All the light of sacred story Gathers round its head sublime." That piece of poetry had been penned by John Bowring, a nineteenth century British diplomat, polymath, polyglot, linguist, and political economist who "was among the most famous Unitarians of his time." He was involved in radical politics, including association with Jeremy Bentham. He was also a devotee of Romanticism. Even though he and Lord Byron never

12. Toyohiko Kagawa, *Christ and Japan*, trans. William Axling (New York: Friendship Press, 1934), 111–12, 120–21, 124–25. The Kagawa reference made by Gillespie can be found in James H. Franklin, *The Never Failing Light* (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1933), 77; which itself was quoting from William Axling, *Kagawa* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932), 142.

13. Toyohiko Kagawa, *Love the Law of Life*, trans. J. Fullerton Gressitt (Chicago/Philadelphia/Toronto: The John C. Winston Co., 1929), 58.

met, "through correspondence he influenced Byron to go fight for the liberation of Greece. When Byron died his body was consigned to Bowring in a cask of rum." Through his efforts, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's opium-induced *Kubla Khan* was popularized.[14]

Gillespie's thinking was also revealed in his doctoral thesis, which dealt with the three great missionary conferences of the early-twentieth century—Edinburgh (1910), Jerusalem (1928), and Madras (1938)—gatherings which were, in measure, run in tandem with the ecumenical movement, and where greatly divergent views came to expression.[15] Consider the following examples. Gillespie expressed great appreciation for Hendrik Kraemer as helping him to formulate his views on modern missions and the notion of the kingdom of God; Kraemer was Barthian in his approach. In dealing with two contradictory positions as to how to evaluate Hinduism—the idea "that there were elements in the Hindu faith which paved the way for the preaching and teaching of the Gospel" and the idea that "Hinduism was composed of nothing but beggarly and pagan elements which must needs be swept away before the Gospel of Christ could be preached"—Gillespie averred that the truth "is probably to be found not in either extreme but somewhere in a middle position." He made several favorable references to Toyohiko Kagawa, as well as others with questionable theology. He concluded by saying that the "institutional," the "social," and the "eschatological" concepts are equally significant: "no one is more important than the others. They are all three essential to an understanding of the relationship which exists between the Kingdom of God and the modern Missionary Movement."[16]

So, even though Gillespie posited that we can find God in "His works of judgment, or discipline, and, ultimately, redemption" (25), what kind of redemption did he have in mind? Whatever kind of redemption it was, it was evidently capable of making common cause with a broad ecumenical program and of embracing conferences in which there were presentations by liberals such as Henry Sloane Coffin. Though Gillespie certainly would not have denied that men must believe in Jesus for salvation, the strong emphasis in his doctoral thesis was that of including a social gospel component with that message.

This hybrid way of thinking was anticipated in his master's thesis, completed just a few years previously, during his tenure in Thomasville.[17] Written about and in honor of his father, this work attributed the older Gillespie's "fruitfulness" as being "due in large measure to the fact that his life was based on a definite theology." However, noting that his father "was a strict adherent of the Calvinistic system," he commented that his father "might have given more credence to insights from other points of view."[18]

The young Gillespie affirmed that "to meet the needs of youth today the church's educational program must be based on a theology that will give it coherence and unity and that will keep the church true to her divine mission." But, what was the nature of that theology? Gillespie quoted with approbation Professor Edgar S. Brightman, a Methodist minister who taught at Boston University; and, though he did not specifically embrace Brightman's strange views (he was a progenitor of the movement called Boston Personalism, and believed in a God who is limited), nevertheless, why would Gillespie rely on a source like that? Similarly, Gillespie quoted John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary, who was a missiologist committed to ecumenism. According to a review in a Jesuit journal of Mackay's *A Preface to Christian Theology* (1942), "the book is patently the result of the combined influence" of Søren Kierkegaard as well as Blaise Pascal and Feodor Dostoevsky."[19]

From all appearance, Gillespie regarded himself as a conservative, in contrast and in opposition to flaming liberals. As a matter of fact, in his doctoral thesis, he referenced the condemnation by the 1935 PCUS General Assembly of the radical volume *Rethinking Missions* (1932), as being a denial of the gospel.[20] But his

14. Alan Ruston, "Sir John Bowring," *Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography*; Philip Bowring, *Free Trade's First Missionary: Sir John Bowring in Europe and Asia* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014), 47–48, cited in "John Bowring," Wikipedia.

15. Richard Thomas Gillespie, "Edinburgh, Jerusalem, and Madras in the Light of Kingdom Concepts : A Study of the Official Literature of the Modern Missionary Movement as Related to Various Concepts of the Kingdom of God" (PhD thesis, Union Theological Seminary [Virginia], 1947).

16. Gillespie, pp. xii, 202, 346, 427, 442, 497, 513.

17. Richard Thomas Gillespie, "The Life and Work of Richard T. Gillespie in the Field of Christian Education" (master's thesis, Emory University, 1938).

18. "The Life and Work of Richard T. Gillespie," 201. Curiously, the author quoted with favor Pope Pius XI: "Christian Education comprehends the whole sphere of human life, both earthly and spiritual, both intellectual and moral, both individual, domestic and social; not to diminish it in any way, but to elevate, regulate and perfect it, according to the example and doctrine of Christ" (199). Why not refer to a Reformed thinker in order to speak of Christian Education?

19. "The Life and Work of Richard T. Gillespie," 202–04; Clement Du Muth, S.J., "Review of John A. Mackay, *A Preface of Christian Theology*," *Theological Studies* 3.1 (February 1942).

20. "Edinburgh, Jerusalem, and Madras in the Light of Kingdom Concepts," 480–83.

"conservatism" was more akin to neo-orthodoxy. In subtle ways, Gillespie's thinking was being influenced by not only Barthianism but by the social gospel and the ecumenical movement.

This sermon which he preached around 1943, in and of itself, is not heretical (and therefore the laity in the pew might very well have been edified by it rather than alarmed). But, it was significantly different from the type of sermon that would have been preached in a previous generation. And though it was not an exploding bomb or a flame thrower, in inconspicuous and quiet ways it undermined the traditional understanding.[21]

The Third Sermon

The third sermon, "On Making Your Faith Your Own," based on Psalm 63:1 ("O God, thou art my God"), was preached by William Marion Elliott, Jr., Ph.D., D.D., pastor of the Druid Hills Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. He graduated from Park College (B.A.) and Louisville Theological Seminary (B.D.), was honored with a Doctor of Divinity degree by Davidson College in 1937, and earned a Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh in 1938.

Dr. Elliott began his message by saying, "Here is religion of personal experience. These are more than a theological admission; they are a personal confession. The psalmist is saying here that his faith in God is no academic thing, but a vital, personal relationship." However, even among professing Christians, there are many who "could not join the psalmist in his confession. They belong to the church, they help to support its work, they take part in its worship, and they subscribe to all the basic Christian doctrines, but their faith has never taken hold of them in any vital way. Their religion is institutional, or liturgical, or theological, but it is not personal" (29).

The Atlanta minister quoted from George Eliot, G. K. Chesterton, Frederick Faber, and others in arguing for the personal nature of faith. He cited Dr. John Baillie, who said: "Our doctrines about God are always secondary to our direct finding of God in the realities of our experience…. God does not communicate with us: He does something far batter—He communes with us. Not the communication of propositions, but the communion of spirits is the last word about divine revelation" (30). And he followed that quotation with a poem: "Though Christ a thousand times In Bethlehem be born, If He's not born in thee Thy soul is still forlorn. The Cross on Calvary Will never save thy soul; The cross in thine own heart Alone can make thee whole!" Dr. Elliott set forth four ways by which we can get this kind of faith: "*First, we must want this experience.*" "*Second, we must make a practice of daily communion with God.*" "*Third, you must read and study the Scriptures.*" "*And fourth, we must obediently follow God's will as He makes it known to us*" (33–34, emphases in original).

While it is true that a genuine faith must be personal and the promises of Christ must be personally appropriated, the poem from which Dr. Elliott quoted is problematic—specifically, the suggestion that the cross on which Jesus was crucified was not salvific, and that the cross "in thine own heart" can alone bring salvation. Nevertheless, in his doctoral thesis, Dr. Elliott did champion the views of John Calvin with regard to the holiness of God and the idea of the imputation of Christ's righteousness as the basis of justification by faith alone, while finding the mystical views of Rudolph Otto to be wanting, even dangerous.[22]

The Fourth Sermon

The fourth sermon, "God at Athens—and Everywhere," based on Acts 17:27 ("Though he be not far from every one of us"), was preached by Dr. William Vardman Gardner, D.D., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta. He graduated from Southwestern at Memphis (B.A.), and from Union Theological Seminary in Virginia (B.D. and Th.M.), with an honorary doctorate from Presbyterian College in 1937.

He began his message by referring to a London bomb shelter that had been blasted, and the "plaguing questions" which a minister hears these days:

> Where is God? Where is He? Is He concerned about all this world carnage? If He is concerned, is He impotent to do anything about it? Church folk, those who vote "yes" for religion, are perplexed, and many of them are asking these very questions. We may dismiss the matter

21. Interestingly, two presidents of Columbia Theological Seminary, J. McDowell Richards and his biographer J. Davison Philips, also served as pastors of the Thomasville congregation.

22. William M. Elliott, Jr., "The Holiness of God in John Calvin and Rudolph Otto" (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1938). After World War II, he published a collection of sermons, *Lift High That Banner!* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1950). Also, see his *What About the National Council of Churches?* (Dallas: Highland Park Presbyterian Church, [1960]), in which, ignoring evidence (including testimony given to the House Un-American Activities Committee), he defended that ecumenical organization against the charge that it was influenced by Communism. Perhaps this little booklet illustrates that Dr. Elliott, who was elected Moderator of the PCUS General Assembly in 1958 and pastored prestigious churches in Atlanta and Dallas, can be characterized as being an "establishment" man—one who doesn't rock the boat. If that is an accurate assessment, then one would expect his preaching similarly would not step on toes or demonstrate the piercing type of message of a previous generation.

> by saying that this is another evidence of spiritual illiteracy, but still the mind wonders and the heart is lonely. Darkness is gathering. Hearts are deluged with fear. Faith in God clearly has deadly foes to meet. What are we to do? Is there any light color to be found on the shroud of black that a sorrowing world is wearing? (37)

Dr. Gardner had two major points. The first was Paul's Evidences for God. The first evidence is the existence of the world itself, including the principles of cause and effect and of design. The second evidence is the existence of man. Even though man has "his seamy side" ("What a spectacle it is to see our world of men at the edge of a canyon of engulfing fire, and men ready to push men into it and then to be pulled in themselves"), nevertheless, he is the workmanship of God. "How far then is God from us? No further than our own redeemed hearts and lives! Just as close as our own selves, creatures made by God and for God. This impressed Paul and it impresses us—mother love and sacrifice, heroism and brotherhood, the noble and the true—all of them spiritual values within man" (40). The third, and strongest, evidence was that of Jesus and resurrection. "Paul was assured that God raised Christ from the dead. He died for our sins and rose again for our justification. This assurance was the corner stone of Paul's life and doctrine. It is also the strong arm of Christendom." Furthermore, Paul "is very sure that if this foundation of the Christian creed be shattered, then God's wonder-working power is gone. The apostle does not argue that fact here, he simply declares it. God 'hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.' In the risen Christ God was near us in friendship, and with us as the giver of life" (41).

The second major point was, What Are the Practical Issues for Us? The preacher averred:

> If God is "not far from every one of us" the truth ought to mean a comradeship with all men. Paul said as much, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." The issue is clearly stated: The circle of God's care is drawn so as to include all men. You and I have been zealous to proclaim the supernatural in religion. We have been pathetically diffident to proclaim the supernational [sic] in religion. Thus, our holy religion has become confined and exclusive. It must be expansive…. Shamefully, let us confess that we have sought by our silence to imprison the presence of God. We have created social limits, national limits, racial and creedal limits. We might as well try to break up the Pacific Ocean into allotments. God's presence and care are as broad as life. No man has an orphaned place in the heart of God. Yes, "God is not far from every one of us," and that should mean a new missionary passion in our church that will force us to trumpet that in Him "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." In a day when our loyalties are being nationalized, let us who have named the Lord as our God see Him as the God of all nations (42–43).

The pastor of First Pres mentioned Pastor Martin Niemoeller, a heroic figure in Nazi Germany who "refuses to bow his knees and sell his soul" and who was then in a concentration camp—a reminder of the ongoing world war and the events in Hitler's regime.

Dr. Gardner said:

> Today one sees the multitude who have turned from the worship of God to the worship of self. They are bowing at the altar of their own idolatry and receiving only a benediction of despair. Therefore, let us boldly declare that only the gospel of Christ, personally received and socially applied, will change us and our staggering world. It will restore the broken fragments of shattered homes. It will emancipate our imprisoned wills and lives. It will make sober men of drunkards. It will make honest men from crooks in high and low places. It will stop war and establish brotherhood. It will create tolerance and force us to justice. It will turn men from self to God. Thus changed by the gospel and inspired by Him who is ever near us, a new passion for evangelism ought to impel us. With full assurance let us plan and pray and work, ever conscious that there are forces loose in our land which may make our civilization but a memory (44–45).

Of course, there is much in this paragraph that is true. Certainly the gospel has both personal and societal application. Surely the gospel is able to reform men's lives. Most definitely the gospel has the power to bring about peace.

But, what is missing is an explanation of what the gospel actually is—particularly in terms of its divine aspects, viz., the appeasing of God's wrath and His reconciliation with sinners. Also not present in the message is the explanation of how and why Christ's resurrection—a truth which Dr. Gardner unequivocally affirms—figures into our justification.

And the fact that the full understanding of the gospel is missing is especially significant given the questionable sentiment previously in the sermon, in which he

suggests that in addition to eliminating social limits, national limits, and racial limits, we must also eliminate creedal limits—a statement which hints at a church that is not defined by doctrine.

The Fifth Sermon

The fifth sermon, "Christian Viewpoints," based on three texts, was preached by Cecil Asbury Thompson, who served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Valdosta from 1938 to 1947. He graduated from the University of Florida and then Columbia Theological Seminary. When he went to Valdosta, he brought his new bride Mary, daughter of the late president of Columbia Seminary, Richard T. Gillespie, Jr. Thompson would eventually go back to Columbia as a professor of homiletics.

Thompson's first point was "Look Out!", taken from Philippians 2:4. He began this way: "Christianity is missionary, universal, world-wide. Its attitude is outward. It is a door that opens outward. It has large windows that look outward." Thompson continued: "Christianity opposed all that smacks of the narrow, the selfish, the stagnant, and self-complacent. It is the wine that constantly demands new skins" (49–50).

His second point was "Look Ahead!", based on Luke 9:62. "God is challenging us always to live for the future. The Christian church even in a turbulent, transient time such as ours needs to bring out the telescope of faith and look into the future. How vain are the past and the present if there be nothing prepared for the days to come!" Thompson decried the "tendencies of looking back and looking about" as being "constant threats to personal spiritual development of the individual Christian and to active spiritual expansion of the church. Too many times the church has failed by harking back to a noble past or to empty traditions, or looking about in other directions than that of saving souls and preaching the gospel" (51–52). Of course, Thompson did not specify what he meant by the attack on the church's "noble past" or "empty traditions." Is it possible that he was driving a wedge between traditional church doctrine and practice, and the preaching of the gospel?

His third point was "Look Up!", based on Psalm 123:1. The preacher pondered:

> I wonder what David would say in our day and world when things are rocking and reeling. There is much in your world and mine that is disquieting and that causes us to be cast down. To look out over the sea of strife today is enough to make anyone heartsick and spiritually disquieted.
>
> I pity the people today who can see nothing but the world and the things that are happening in the world and who never behold the Unseen on High. I pity those today who hear nothing but the hourly broadcast of the world's discouraging and disintegrating catastrophes and never hear the triumphant news from an eternal throne that speaks of everlasting victory of righteousness against evil, of salvation, and life, and faith, and hope. This unchanging Word of God continually bids us LOOK UP.…
>
> When the kings and rulers of the nations of the earth once more look up, reason and enlightenment and peace will come. Not only throughout all the Old Testament history but on almost every page of the New Testament and in the life of Jesus and the early apostles, we see the reality of this upward look (53–54).

As noted by Dr. Morton H. Smith in a 2005 telephone interview, Professor Thompson was regarded as a warm-hearted evangelical, but not as much of a scholar—an evaluation that is illustrated by this sermon.

The Sixth Sermon

The sixth sermon, "Debtors to All," was based on three passages: John 17:11; Galatians 3:26–28; and Ephesians 4:4–6, 25. The preacher was Vernon Seba Broyles, Jr., pastor of the North Avenue Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. Dr. Broyles graduated from Davidson College and received his B.D. and Th.M. from Union Theological Seminary in Virginia.

He began his message by speaking of how, during the ongoing war, "our hearts and minds are filled with invitations to hate and despise and distrust our fellow man, the man across the street and across the sea." However,

> Surely it is more imperative than ever before in recent generations for the universal, inclusive gospel of Christ to be preached, for the fact of the holy and universal church of Christ to be kept before all men and declared among all races and nations and individuals.
>
> There is much talk today about winning the peace—most of it unthinking. Nothing can win the peace but a brotherhood in which *all* men share—and there is no such thing outside Christ. Outside of Christ you will witness revenge, reprisal, hatred—seeds from which will flow the next generation's war.
>
> Today God's judgment on history and on nations is raging. Read Amos 1 and 2 for a picture of the impartiality

> of this judgment. In the light of this holy judgment there comes to the Christian church an urgent and realistic challenge to give its message of hope to the men and women and children who make up our nations—to you and to me, and to all like us of all colors and classes and races and nations (59–60).

The minister sounded a "twofold note in this urgency." First, men and women are in need, as they are experiencing "a deep abyss of lostness, fear, despair." One problem is that of "providing a common denominator for men of different cultures and nations that they may sit down in peace…. We must preach the universal gospel as the necessary thing for such a world as this and for such a time as now—to make it perfectly clear that Jesus Christ is sufficient for every need, of any person, and that those who are His are bound in the fellowship of Christian love, regardless of barriers of race or nation, of peace or war" (60).

Secondly, the church is under pressure.

> The church of Christ, you as an individual Christian, must witness to God's whole truth everywhere or suffer spiritual death. You must witness to the universal church as the Body of Christ who loves all men and who welcomes all who confess Him.
>
> Today there is acute danger that we shall be tempted to narrow our witness; to limit our ideas of brotherhood by the barrier of war; to hate and despise our fellow Christians of Japan, Germany, and Italy.
>
> We must face the fact that the breaking of our sense of fellowship in this way excludes no one from God's presence but ourselves. You can exclude no one but yourself from the presence of God. In each country there is a body of believers, seeking to do God's will—aligning themselves with their government as conscientiously as do many Christians here. With these Christians there must be maintained the fellowship of the Body of Christ. The Christian denies his Lord when hatred and the spirit of revenge drive from him his sense of the universal church and so drive him from the universal and eternal church of Christ (60–61).

The preacher noted that the holy catholic church referenced in the creed is not the Roman Church. Nevertheless, "This holy catholic church includes everyone accepting Jesus as Redeemer and Lord," and "includes Roman, Greek, Protestant, German, Japanese, English, Chinese, Russian, and American branches. It is *The Church*, knowing no barriers of denomination" or "of race or of nation or of birth or of talents." He went on to contend:

> If you are not interested in and praying for the conversion of the Japanese, your interest in the Chinese is probably political. If you are consigning the Germans to hell, why should you be interested in giving to save Brazilians and Africans? If your likes and dislikes are simply a matter of political and economic alignments, then why worry about preaching Christ at all? Christ gave and gives no economic panaceas—though hunger was everywhere. He gave and gives no political manifesto, though human liberty was a joke. He gave no plan for the rearrangement of society, though the race was enslaved and conquered, yet this gospel has inspired more men and movements to eradicate human ills and to establish brotherhood than any other force in history, and the method has been the simple proclamation, *everywhere*, of the things seen and heard of Jesus (61–62).

He followed with a quotation from church historian E. T. Thompson, as follows:

> Our duty is to witness for Jesus, who reveals God's love, God's will for all mankind; who by His life and by His death offers to save men from sins which threaten to destroy the individual soul in hell, and to plunge our civilization into the darkness of the abyss. From the heart of suffering, tortured humanity there comes the cry, What must I do to be saved? And to us who have learned to see God in the face of Jesus Christ, to us only, there has been given the answer (62).

Broyles declared that "the rising tide of nationalism is leading many to feel that since you can't weigh and show results of the Church's ministry, the preaching of the gospel can wait till a more convenient season." However, despite all the difficulty and seeming impossibility of preaching the Christian gospel, she must continue to do her duty (63).

Notice that Broyles' quotation of Thompson implies Amyraldianism, as well as a watering down of the effectiveness of Jesus' atonement. Biblically speaking, Jesus' death doesn't merely provide for the possibility of salvation, but actually saves His elect. Nevertheless, he was a minister who boldly preached the necessity of believing in Jesus. As attested by his son, he believed that the Bible is the Word of God and that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior. He was involved in ecumenical activities, including helping to found the Federal Council of

Churches, and participating in the Church World Service, a post-World War II relief agency which included participation by the Catholic Church as well as Protestant churches. However, at least in 1954, he opposed the proposed three-way merger of the PCUS, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and the United Presbyterian Church in North America.[23]

The Seventh Sermon

The seventh sermon, "They That Worship Him," based on John 4:24, was preached by John Butt Dickson at the Morningside Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. Mr. Dickson was educated at Gettysburg College and Columbia Theological Seminary. He served the Morningside congregation from 1937 to 1943.

The message began with the lament that the current age "has minimized and is neglecting the services of public worship in the Christian church." The preacher asserted that

> we have learned from the students of primitive religions and the anthropologists that one of the fundamental characteristics of men was the sense of a presence or only a force, apart from his friends and fellows tribesmen, whom he must satisfy by foods, offerings, attention, etc. He felt that his existence as a man or a part of a family or village would be hazardous without this effort on his part. Thus, there may have developed slowly a sense of relationship between families and tribes who would worship the same "gods" and develop the same means of approach to their deity. The cultus of worship came into being this way. In this manner, we see the ever-present urge of mankind, the most primitive and the most "advanced," attempting to pay his respects to the deity who shapes his destiny.

There is a great leap from that idolatrous worship to "respect for truth and the worship of the One who is the fountain source of all goodness, truth, and beauty. In God's message to men, the opening chapters, we see one day in seven given for re-creation, renewal, pause, rest, and worship" (67).

Dickson proceeded to speak of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. He argued for the importance of worship: "What a curb it can be today, when the forces of evil and unrighteousness are about us, if we take the matter of worship seriously" (68). Noting the Anglo-Saxon origin of the word "worship" as denoting "worth-ship," Dickson spoke of how all the Calvinistic branches of the Reformation discarded "all of the rich pageantry and symbolism of the Roman tradition," in accord with Jesus' words at the well, "They that worship [God] must worship him in spirit and in truth."

> In spirit, we oppose that which is sensual; and in truth, we seek, by the highest wisdom of knowledge, that which man is capable of achieving only by the Spirit. Because of Calvin's view of worship, the churches which bear his name and have followed in his tradition have been sanctuaries of simplicity and with none of the aids of worship admitted. The Presbyterian tradition of spiritual worship is a natural reaction against the present tendency in many branches of the church to a more elaborate ritual and symbolism. However, the Presbyterian when he understands the meaning of his own service of worship has much that can inspire him and challenge him to greater Christian living (68).

Dickson spoke of the prominent place of the pulpit in a Presbyterian church. "The Holy Bible, the Word of God, is our rule of faith and practice." God's revelation teaches us of "His majesty, of the awful and lovely order of the universe," of "our true condition as men," "the words of faith and the meaning of peace and communion in redemption," and also challenges us "to manly and Christian living during our days here." The Spirit takes this divine revelation and applies it. "Prayer, preaching, the elements of worship generally, are only meaningless without the words of Scripture. If the believer is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever he must know the will of God and he can find it nowhere else than in Holy Scripture" (69).

The Lord's table carries the words "In Remembrance of Me," for the sacrament of communion, administered in most PCUS churches quarterly, "is a perpetual reminder of His death for our sakes and the promise of

23. Morecraft, telephone interview, August 17, 2018; Vernon Broyles, III, telephone interview, August 22, 2018; "Some Thoughts on Union," *Southern Presbyterian Journal* (December 12, 1954), 2–3. See also *In the Cool of the Evening: The Distilled Wisdom of Dr. Vernon S. Broyles, Jr.* (N.p.: [Big Canoe Chapel], n.d.), comprised of various messages which appeared as a column in *The Atlanta Constitution*. He clearly proclaimed the necessity of believing in Jesus, as when he said, "The love of God revealed in Jesus Christ will be the same. Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. In all your ways, He will be seeking you to give you His divine gifts of forgiveness and strength and hope" (1). Speaking of the apostle Paul: "He found himself reconciled God by the cross of Christ. He discovered that the fires of his hatreds were put out and that the walls which divided him from others were destroyed. He found that in Christ, enmity was destroyed and that God made a new man of him" (5). And again: "The Bible's chief interest is in reconciling man to God" (69). And again: "The central message of the Christian faith is 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.'" (377).

His undying love." The preacher declared: "When the elements of bread and wine, accompanied by the words of the institution, are presented to and received by the sincere believer, then can he be assured of our Lord's abiding presence in his heart." This sacrament "is a bond of our union with Him and with each other as followers of His. It is a seal of His promise to us and a renewal of our spirit to Him. It is the assurance of His presence to us who are gathered in His name and the promise of His coming again" (69–70).

At the baptismal font "we see re-enacted the lovely drama of Christ calling the little ones unto Himself. When the parents in Christian faith bring their little one for baptism, they claim for him the blessings of the new covenant in Christ" (70).

The final element that Dickson mentioned was the offering. In light of Christ's great sacrifice, we owe Him everything. "Therefore, as a humble believer, on the first day of the week we offer the first fruits of our blessings, which we have set aside for the glory of His name upon the earth, together with our lives to Him who is our Master and our Friend" (70).

This message does not directly speak of how our worship should be specifically ordained by Scripture—the doctrine which today we refer to as the regulative principle of worship. On the other hand, it does note the traditional Presbyterian understanding of the simplicity nature of worship and its character of "less outward glory."

However, please note that despite this proclamation of Presbyterian principles of worship, just a few years later, in 1949, Atlanta's Morningside Presbyterian Church completed a new church building, the architecture of which contradicted what Dickson had preached. Though the structure was Colonial-style rather than Gothic, the edifice demonstrated that there was a hankering after symbolism. In the words of a booklet on the congregation's history:

> Symbols are meant to remind us of deep truths. Knowing this, the pastor [Dr. Arthur Vann Gibson] and the Building Committee of Morningside Church asked the architect … to build into the church many of these "sensible signs". The result you can today see all about you, and these symbols of our faith are constant reminders of deep and abiding truths.

That booklet went on to describe the numerous symbols in the building's architecture, and concluded as follows: "It is the hope of those who planned this building that all who worship here may be reminded, wherever they look, of the deep truths of their faith, and helped in worship by these meaningful symbols."[24]

The Eighth Sermon

The eighth sermon, "The Right Man for Rough Places," based on selections from Acts 27, was preached by Alton Henley Glasure, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Marietta. He received an A.B. degree from North Georgia College, a B.D. degree from Columbia Theological Seminary, and an M.A. degree from the University of Georgia.

The minister spoke of the important role that one man can play—someone like George Washington. On the other hand, "Today the world is conscious of another man, the head of another nation. This man is causing the old ship of state to rock because of his totalitarian philosophy. The storms are again howling; mad destruction and death are everywhere evident. The first man saved a nation, the second is destroying nations" (74). Glasure then turned his attention to Paul and his "stormy experience." First of all, Paul warned against the danger. Similarly, the church "has ever warned against aggrandizement, selfishness, hate, sin, immorality, and the whole field of carnal thought" (75).

Secondly, Paul comforts in the storm. Similarly, the church must not only "tenderly [warn] the people of impending danger," but also "seek out those who heeded not, must lift up the fallen, strengthen the weak, help the helpless." This message of being of good cheer must go out today: "We are being storm-tossed, bruised, and broken. Nations are being destroyed; governments are being upturned; our smug society may be disturbed, and the tall spires of our cosmopolitan churches may be bombed; but the message of the church will still be delivered in the streets and in the chapels, along the byways and hedges, to the simple and sincere" (75–76).

Thirdly, when the storm was over, Paul, by God's grace, had saved himself and the crew. Paul was a big man: "Those aboard the ship were not saved by their knowledge of nautical science, nor because of the organized efforts of the crew, nor even because of the prowess of their boat. They were saved because of one man, of one purpose, one hope, one faith, one clear-cut conviction—'I believe God'" (76–77).

The bottom line was this:

24. *Morningside Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, Georgia* (N.p.: n.p., n.d. [1964]). Even though a new pipe organ was installed during Dickson's tenure, we are certain that he would have been disappointed that the congregation rejected his affirmation with respect to worship that is in spirit and in truth.

> Our world today cannot be saved alone by arms, by machines, by military science, by geographical positions, or by diplomatic emissaries. We must add to these prayer, faith, hope, and a constant keeping of the eye upon the goal. Our world cannot divorce itself from the supernatural and the divine. We must depend on God (77).

This message is a classic example of how not to preach. Instead of preaching the text in its context and with respect to its redemptive-historical backdrop, the minister used this text in order to apply moralistic lessons. As is often the case with the selections in this little volume, we come back to the question: Where is the gospel?

The Ninth Sermon

The ninth sermon, "Show Me Your Hands," based on Proverbs 19:24 ("A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again"), was preached by Sidney Austin Gates, Ph.D., pastor of the Pryor Street Presbyterian Church, Atlanta. He graduated from the University of Louisville, received B.D., and Th.M. degrees from Louisville Theological Seminary, and his doctorate from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dr. Gates began his message by stating, "The Bible says a great deal about hands. It contains hundreds of passages dealing with the activity rendered in the name of God. It is interesting to note that God's Book reserves its highest praise for a woman's hands, generous, tender, and kind." He went on to say:

> Tolstoy … gives us a picture of the ideal ruler. He represents this man as keeping open house and feeding those who labor with the finest food, while he gives to the lazy and indolent only crusts and crumbs. One is curious to discover just how the ruler is able to distinguish these people, and finds that as they enter the palace door they are required to show their hands. The hands that are rough and calloused are working hands, while the soft and unmarked hands tell a story of idleness and ease. It is a simple test, yet extremely effective.
>
> There are far too many church members today who lift toward heaven hands with no callouses on them, no marks of labor for the Lord. We cannot sing lustily, "Work for the night is coming," and then fold our hands in idle acquiescence, expecting to be transported to heaven on flowery beds of ease (81).

God, according to the preacher, "wants consecrated and active hands" and also "clean hands." That includes hands that are folded in prayer—as portrayed by Albrecht Dürer in his painting "Praying Hands." "I believe that such hands as those of the artist's friend bind the heart of the world to the throne of God. Through them the hand of God reaches ours" (82–83).

Gates appealed to the words of the Italian writer Giovanni Papini in his *Life of Christ* (1923) with respect to the hands of Jesus. At the close of the sermon, he told the story of a minister who was seeking to comfort a dying girl who had sacrificially cared for her family. When she asked, "But will He know me if I should go to Him?", the minister "noticed the calloused and bruised hands as she raised them pleadingly and he remembered that they had gotten that way in the service of her brothers and sisters, and he said, 'Yes, He will know you; just show Him your hands" (84).

What is particularly striking in this message is that it is not even close to being exegetical. The Proverbs text was used merely as a pretext.

The Tenth Sermon

The tenth sermon "Our Suffering Saviour," based on Isaiah 53:5–6, was preached by William Franklin Taylor, Jr. The pastor of the Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church in Augusta, he attended Davidson College and the University of Tennessee, and received a certificate from Columbia Theological Seminary.

Pastor Taylor noted that the virgin birth of Christ and His suffering constitute "the vital point" to those church patriarchs who penned the Apostles' Creed, while that statement makes no mention of Jesus' miracles.

The preacher cautioned that it is impossible to explain "in anything like adequate fashion an event so profound and so mysterious as the sufferings and death of Christ…. How can we, … hampered as we are with finite abilities of reason, modes of thought and expression, understand such love as God has for sinful man, and such sacrifice as Christ has manifested in laying down His life for us on Calvary's cross?" Furthermore, "we cannot justly treat the sufferings and death of Jesus as some isolated event in the life of our Lord…. Christ's sufferings and death are forever and undeniably linked with that other great event, His resurrection." Indeed, "leaving Him dead in that tomb, would be to nullify all that for which He died" (89–90).

Taylor proceeded to use various Scriptural descriptions of Christ's sufferings and death: "ransom," "propitiation," "reconciliation," and "substitution." With regard to the idea of substitution, the preacher rhetorically asked: "Could language be any clearer? He bore our

penalty of guilt. He received the punishment we deserve. Christ died that we might not have to die" (92). He concluded his message this way:

> And so Christ, the Son of the living God, our Saviour, has taken our punishment for us. "He was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him; and with his stripes *we* are healed." May the knowledge of this lead us to fall at His feet in love and worship, to exclaim … "Lord Jesus, I'll love you all my life for what you have done for me. Whatever you want me to do for you I'll do. I'm yours from now on" (93, emphases in original).

This message was, of course, a clear gospel presentation. However, there was one point which was questionable. In describing propitiation, he said that the word in I John 2:2 meant "'a covering' or, as used in the book of Exodus, 'mercy seat.' Christ's death is that by which God covers and therefore pardons the penitent and believing sinner" (91). Though Taylor immediately went on to say that Christ's death "is set forth as the ground upon which a righteous God can forgive a guilty sinner without in any way compromising His own righteousness," nevertheless, there does appear to be a conflating of propitiation and expiation.

The Eleventh Sermon

The eleventh sermon, "God's Last and Tenderest Invitation," based on Revelation 22:17 ("And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"), was preached by John Calvin Reid, D.D., Ph.D., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Columbus. He graduated from Erskine College (B.A.) and Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary (B.D. and Th.M.) and received his Ph.D. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Muskingum College awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1938. Dr. Reid authored several books, including *Reserves of the Soul, and Other Sermons* (1942); *On Toward the Goal: Sermons of Hope and Encouragement* (1949); *We Knew Jesus: A Series of Lenten Messages* (1954); *We Wrote the Gospels* (1960); *Prayer Pilgrimage through the Psalms* (1962); *The Marriage Covenant* (1967); *We Spoke for God* (1967); as well as books intended for children: *Bird Life in Wington: Sermonettes for Young Folk in Story Form* (1948); *Parables from Nature: Earthly Stories with a Heavenly Meaning* (1954); *Surprise for Dr. Retriever* (1962); *War of the Birds* (1963); and *Frisky Finds a Treasure* (1964).

In his sermon, Dr. Reid noted that though there are many invitations from God, His "tenderest invitation He has kept to the last." God's "unspeakable" love is seen in this invitation, as it is extended, as Revelation 22:15 intimates, to the "dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie" (97–98).

This is a fivefold invitation. First, "The Spirit Saith, Come." Even though theology

> may be too deep for you, … in the midst of mystery and even darkness there is this inward reality—a lingering Presence which you cannot escape, and which you should not, if you could; a voice within, which in quiet church assemblies, or in the crush of sorrow, or in the hush of a midnight hour, whispers over and over again, "Come, come, come."
>
> Call it the indwelling Christ. Call it the Holy Spirit. Call it God in the heart. It matters not. You know what it means. It is God's direct plea for your life—The Spirit saith, Come (98–99).

Secondly, "And the Bride Saith, Come." The preacher here suggested that though much of the criticism which the church was receiving may be true, nevertheless, "I am persuaded that most people who are criticising the church are doing so in a desperate effort to find a cloak for their sins and an excuse for their selfish neglect." But despite criticism, the church is the only organization that opens her door "to all who will come!" (99).

Thirdly, "And Let Him That Heareth Say, Come." This points to personal responsibility to witness.

> When the church was being organized in Jerusalem, says Dr. A. Boyd Scott, there stood up one member who said, "We have all we want now, a sure scheme of salvation for ourselves. Let us furnish this upper room tastefully, and have a pipe organ in, and an expert quartette, and a nice tame minister who shall purvey to us week by week a couple of entertaining and harmless sermons … etc., etc." But such was not Christ's program. He stood by them and said, "There is a band of painted barbarians on the bank of a river in a faraway land. There is a Negro in a mud hut beyond Carthage who has felt a drop of my blood fall upon his breast and knows not what the pain of it means." It is a rather sad fact, by the way, is it not, how easily we may be stirred *for* the Negroes in Africa, and how easily stirred *against* the Negroes in America! (100)

Fourthly, "Let Him that is Athirst Come." By speaking of this universal thirst in the soul, God is leaving man without excuse. "You do not have to have any special preparation, no special feeling, no special anything—only the desire" (101).

Fifthly, "Whosoever Will, Let Him Come." Dr. Reid stated: "'Whosoever will'—does that include everyone? Yes, but also it *excludes* everyone who will *not!*" (102).

The Twelfth Sermon

The twelfth and final sermon, "The Power to Cleanse from All Unrighteousness," based on I John 1:8–9, was preached by the volume's editor, Francis Lloyd Ferguson Wood, D.D., pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Atlanta. He graduated from Davidson College and received his B.D. from Columbia Theological Seminary. Oglethorpe University conferred an honorary doctorate on him in 1941.

Dr. Wood, by appealing to a statement by the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover about the rampant criminality in American life, demonstrated the sin problem. But the preacher, by quoting the text, quickly moved to "the great characteristic aim that distinguishes Christianity from every other system of religious thought on earth," which is "to banish sin and to cleanse from all unrighteousness. The gospel lays its finger on moral evil as the primary cause of unhappiness and misery in the world. Compared with the supreme curse of human selfishness, nothing else seriously matters, and accordingly the gospel proposes to cure this inward malady of the soul" (106).

Dr. Wood noted the need to accept personal responsibility for sin rather than minimizing it. John's epistle was dealing with Christians who had bought into the idea that God is

> so great and comprehensive that He contained within Himself darkness as well as light and looked with equal complacency on the evil and on the good. To such people John declared that God is Light without any mixture of darkness, and that men can be partakers of His life only by refusing to do the works of darkness. He assured them that the power to cleanse from all unrighteousness comes from God and from Him alone. For we must not only refuse to say that we have no sin, but we must press forward to confess our sins, to carry them with shame before God for Him to cleanse. This cleansing rests upon the very faithfulness and righteousness of God. In doing it He is not indulgently breaking in upon the strict law of His nature, He is but perfecting what He began, refusing to despise the work of His own hands, fulfilling the purpose for which His Son died on Calvary's cross (106–07).

With that as a foundation, Dr. Wood proceeded to examine various alarming conditions.

The first was "the breakdown of the home. To many Americans home is nothing more than a dormitory where they sleep at night, or a restaurant where they take their meals, or a garage to which they hurry for the family car after a busy day at school or work" (107). The minister lamented the divorce rate of one per every six marriages. "In this machine age we are unable to find time for quiet meditation and family prayers. Father is too engrossed with his business associates, mother with defense activities, sister with her friends, and brother with his athletics. Are we wise in abandoning the family altar for the family bar or a ping-pong table?"

The second issue was "the neglect and willful desecration of the Sabbath day. We have come a long way since the days of our early forefathers when it was necessary to tread deep snows with a gun on one's shoulder to protect him from the Indians; when the church consisted of four bare walls, with little or no heat, and three-hour discourses. Yes, it's a long way from those days of simple living to our maddening, non-stop, aspirin-conscious days" (108).

Dr. Wood quoted from the action of the 1942 PCUS General Assembly which adopted the recommendations of the Permanent Committee on Sabbath Observance, as follows:

> 1. That the ministers and officers of our church set a good example of reverence for and observance of the Lord's Day.
>
> 2. That all our people be urged to be regular in their attendance upon the worship services of the church.
>
> 3. That Sunday-school teachers use their influence to have their pupils attend the morning service in the church.
>
> 4. That parents be urged to attend the church services, together with their children; that they occupy the same pew in order that "the family pew" might be restored.
>
> 5. that the use of the Lord's Day merely for business or for pleasure be not only disapproved but also condemned.
>
> 6. That our people refrain from making purchases on the Lord's Day, except in cases of necessity and mercy.
>
> 7. That employers, as far as possible in this present

> emergency, do not require the employees to work on the Lord's Day.
>
> 8. That the pastors of all our churches be requested to read to their congregations the action of this Assembly in regard to Sabbath Observance.

Dr. Wood concluded this second point by declaring: "It is essential for righteousness that there be a day of spiritual renewal and moral re-enforcement; without it we lose our ability to distinguish between right and wrong. Like the Christians of John's day, we become confused and are apt to call good evil and evil good" (109).

The third "alarming condition" was that of drunkenness and crime. He decried the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. He argued that the Biblical statement about wine being a mocker, and strong drink raging, "is as modern and up-to-date as though it had been written yesterday. Modern scientific discovery has proved that alcoholic liquors chemically constitute a poison, the effect of which on the human body, among other things, produces carelessness." The minister declared: "After the collapse of France, the Vichy government announced through the Associated Press that one of the main causes of France's collapse was the heavy drinking of the soldiers while the Germans were under the strictest discipline against drink. Believe me, you and I can attend Defense Rallies, we can gird ourselves as true men and women, we can buy War Bonds and Stamps, we can pay taxes until there isn't any more money to pay, and still we can lose this war and go down in shameful defeat, if we allow our men to be destroyed by liquor and prostitutes and gamblers before they ever reach the battle line!" (110)

The preacher then connected crime with drunkenness.

> Do you know that seventy per cent of all the arrests made are due to liquor? That a major crime is committed every twenty-two seconds? That one out of every four homes is troubled by crime, and that one out of every thirty-seven citizens is a lawbreaker? That thirty-five people are murdered daily? That there is one death by criminal violence every forty-five seconds, so that our murder rate is twenty times greater than that of Great Britain? That the annual amount spent on vice is six hundred and twenty-eight million dollars? That our annual crime bill is fifteen billion dollars, or four hundred per cent more than the United States spends on education each year? That each month one million five hundred thousand copies of horror magazines are sold, and about ten times as many sex magazines, magazines that deal with sex from a standpoint of unimaginable lewdness and laxity? (110–111)

After noting the personal responsibility for sin, which also had national ramifications, Ferguson Wood urged that each one must not only confess his sins, but also confess that our sins "have not come out of nothing, but out of our own being." Indeed, "To confess sin is to come to the conclusion in your heart, and freely with your lips to make the admission, that your breach of God's law, and your not loving God with your whole heart and soul and mind and strength, and your not loving every human being as yourself, is an awful thing justly charged against you as your guilt" (111).

He concluded his message with this paragraph:

> America, wake up and live! God cannot endure unrighteousness in high places, nor can He condone national evils and sins, but God has the power to cleanse from all unrighteousness! As a part of this great nation are you as an individual availing yourself of God's wonderful power? Have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb? Will you not come to the Cross just now and say, "Lord, my sins are many, but I believe! I know that Thou art faithful and just to forgive! I confess my every sin and yearn to be cleansed. Take me, cleanse me, and use me to teach transgressors Thy ways, for Jesus' sake." Will you do it? Will you do it? (112)

Evaluating the Sermons' Contents

So, how shall we evaluate these messages? What lessons can be learned, both historical and practical? In reading through this little volume, we were struck by several things.

(1) Impact of World War II on the messages.

One would expect that the fact of a world war would impact the preaching in some way, and, in point of fact, as have seen, this was the case. On the other hand, it is fair to note that in the vast majority of these messages, World War II was not the main theme. Rather, the ordinary themes—of salvation, of doubt, of fears, of worship, of apologetics—that would normally be the subjects of sermons, are what one finds being preached from these pulpits in 1943.

What is most significant, however, is that when matters of war and international relations are discussed, the messages were not thumping triumphalistic or nationalistic or patriotic themes, but often were warning against nationalistic and ethnic pride, and encouraging a sense of solidarity with those who were regarded as

battlefield enemies. Perhaps this prophetic dimension, which proclaimed brotherhood over American interests, is what led Dr. Wood to state in the Foreword that the "message of the Presbyterian pulpits in Georgia is … forceful, timely, and courageous."[25]

(2) Not much content.

One thing is abundantly clear about these sermons, and that is their brevity. This present author was able to read through a page (containing around 400 words more or less) in about two-and-a-half minutes. Here is a list of the approximate number of pages taken up for each sermon: 7, 5, 5–1/2, 8–1/2, 7, 5–1/2, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5–1/2, 7–1/2. That would mean that the longest sermon could be preached in less than twenty-two minutes, while the shortest ones could be preached in about eleven minutes. The average number of pages was not quite six, which means that the average length of a sermon could be under fifteen minutes.

Now, it is certainly true that one can convey significant truth in a brief period, and it is most definitely the case that length does not necessarily indicate great piety or profundity. Nevertheless, in point of fact, there simply is not much content. We would also suggest that the length of these messages, as a whole, may be a good indicator that these congregations were not willing to tolerate the longer sermons of a previous generation.[26]

(3) Not much depth.

Not only were these sermons short—they were also shallow, in contrast to the rich and deep sermons of yesteryear. It also bears noting that the people quoted were, for the most part, not well-renowned churchmen—such as Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Owen, Thornwell, Girardeau, Dabney—but rather either thinkers of dubious pedigree, or figures of popular culture.

(4) Not much exegesis.

For the most part, these sermons were not very exegetical. As noted above, some of these examples are worse than others. Of the dozen, only less than a handful could be said to demonstrate a traditional approach of giving a *detailed* explanation of the text as well as applying it.

(5) Not very focused.

In contrast to messages with a unifying theme, most of these messages seemed to be all over the place. In at least two instances, the sermon was based on three different texts, with three different themes. To use a military analogy, in this series of sermons, one hears the staccato of a burp gun (which scatters bullets in a wide spray) rather than the report of a sharpshooter's rifle.

(6) Not much theology.

Although there was some theology presented in these sermons, classical theology was, with rare exception, missing. There was precious little discussion of the doctrine of God, of creation, of providence, of the fall of man into sin, of justification, of adoption, of sanctification, and so forth. There was no presentation of traditional doctrines such as the Five Points of Calvinism (TULIP), nor of any of the solas of the Reformation. There was no preaching of the doctrine of imputation, and when the doctrine of propitiation was mentioned, the preacher confused it with expiation. In sum, there was not much evidence that Reformed theology informed the vast majority of these messages in any meaningful way.

(7) Not very theocentric.

Not only was there not much theology in the classic sense, but the thrust of the messages was, mostly, man-centered not God-centered. There seemed to be no awareness of the Westminster Shorter Catechism #1, that man's chief end "is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." Yes, there was exhortation to live properly, to care for one's neighbor, to show brotherhood, to take heart, and so forth. But the focus was almost always on meeting man's needs, rather than the glory of God and His expectations and demands.

A tract by J. McDowell Richards, "The Christian Sabbath in the Twentieth Century," written probably in the 1950s, illustrates this point. While Dr. Richards acknowledged that Sabbath observance is mandated by the Fourth Commandment, nevertheless, the focus was not on why the Sabbath is important for God's glory and worship, but why God has ordained the Sabbath in order to meet man's needs. These needs include the necessity of rest, the opportunity for "the cultivation of

25. According to Beverly Ann Zink, World War II did significantly affect Southern Presbyterian preaching. Common sermonic themes included the sovereignty of God in that time of turmoil; and patriotic tones, touting the role that America would play in a post-war world. "The fears and uncertainty of a world at war tested America's faith and institutions as wartime conditions impinged upon congregations and their members. The preaching of the PCUS represented in this study [i.e., the sermons she studied] expressed a concern for the alienation existent at all levels of society, from the individual to the international, during the war. Nevertheless, these preachers sounded a note of hope: hope generated by the reaffirmation of the healing presence of God in the midst of human despair." See her "Themes in Southern Presbyterian Preaching, 1920–1983," in *The Confessional Mosaic: Presbyterians and Twentieth-Century Theology*, 116–20.

26. Ernest Trice Thompson notes that the "orthodox level" in the 1880s was for sermons 45 minutes in length; "in the 1890s, 40 minutes was the more accepted length; in the next decade the norm became 30 minutes, and so remained for another generation when in many pulpits it dropped to 25 and even 20 minutes." E. T. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, Vol. Three: 1890–1972 (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1973), 342.

wholesome family relationships," the opportunity for Christian training in the home and at church in order to prevent juvenile delinquency, and protection of society from various ill effects, including high divorce rates. Even the Sabbath providing opportunity for worship is viewed from the perspective of the benefit that worship is to man: "Man is a social being, and it is written into his nature, as into the Word of God, that he must worship often in company with others if he would attain his full spiritual nature." In the last paragraph, the seminary president wrote: "The proper observance of the Sabbath is more than a duty. It is a privilege in which lies the hope of our homes, of our nation, and of the Church for tomorrow.… Let us remember this day to keep it holy, that it may come again to be a bulwark of God's people against the advance of secularism, a blessing to our family life, and an instrument for the spread of the Gospel throughout all the world." All of those sentiments are true, and it is perfectly fine to use such argumentation in making a full-orbed case for Sabbath observance. However, the fundamental reason for Sabbath observance is that God has commanded it, for His own glory. That God-centered perspective is what was missing in this tract on the Sabbath, and it is what was missing in many of these dozen sermons.

(8) Not much gospel.

In one of these messages, the preacher intimated that the Roman Catholic Church was part of the universal church—thereby implying that the message of Roman Catholicism with regard to salvation is legitimate. But, of course, the Romanist message is not legitimate—the denial of justification by faith alone by the pope is a damnable heresy. One could argue, therefore, that Vernon Broyles' presentation shows an inconsistency with respect to the gospel.

However, the problem with many of these sermons is not that of an actual denial of the gospel, either explicitly or implicitly. The basic problem is that the gospel, in about half of these sermons, is simply not there. And furthermore, even when the gospel is present, it is not very fully or adequately presented.

This observation is not making the point that the doctrine of justification needs to be in every sermon (though it should often be there, as this doctrine is the heart of the gospel). But the grand scheme of redemption should always be present one way or another, forming the backdrop for the text and therefore the message, providing motivation for obedience, displaying God's grace, affirming that all of Scripture points to Christ and finds its fulfillment in Him. That's what was missing!

Perhaps the best confirmation of this conclusion comes by considering a message on Romans 5:1 which J. McDowell Richards prepared as part of a series of brief messages for broadcast over the radio ("Thought for the Day"), apparently in 1943.[27] Romans 5:1, of course, is the classic passage for the doctrine of justification by faith alone ("Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"). Despite that fact, Dr. Richards did not explain what is meant by having peace with God or how it is obtained. Instead, the emphasis was rather on the believer's experience of happiness and peace. The prayer he offered at the close also illustrates the subjective rather than objective nature of his message: "'O Lord, Thou didst make us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until we rest in Thee.' We thank Thee today anew for thy love which commendeth itself to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Help us to trust Him more fully and to follow Him more completely, that through Him our longing for Thee may be satisfied and we may be at peace: We ask it in His name. Amen."[28] Notice that the whole thrust was on the individual's being able to have his psychological and spiritual needs met so that he can experience peace, and not at all on God's wrath being appeased via propitiatory sacrifice so that the peace treaty between God and man can be effected. If Dr. Richards could not bring himself to preach the heart of the gospel when the text was Romans 5:1, there is no reason to believe that he would touch upon that subject at all.[29]

Comparison to Earlier PCUS Sermon Collections

One way by which to evaluate this little volume of sermons is to compare it to three other sermon collections.

The first such collection we will consider is a nineteenth-century production. Published in 1896, *Southern*

27. The message refers to the "tragedies of war"—a reference which would suggest that this message was delivered during World War II. No year is found at the top of the message, but given that it carries a date of Thursday, October 7, the year would have to be 1943.

28. "The Peace of the Believer," J. McDowell Richards papers, box 75, folder 10, C. Benton Kline, Jr. Special Collections and Archives, John Bulow Campbell Library, Columbia Theological Seminary.

29. We would also note the editorial by Dr. L Nelson Bell, "What is the Gospel?", which appeared in the *Southern Presbyterian Journal* (August 1, 1946). After noting that the gospel "is not Christian ethics" nor "morality" nor "social righteousness," he declared: "We are amazed at the number of fine sermons which emphasize Christian ethics but which totally ignore the source of power to live such a life." Dr. Bell's amazement at "the number of … sermons" which do not present the gospel, would lend credence to the observation that a number of the representative messages in this collection of sermons were indeed lacking the gospel.

Presbyterian Pulpit featured thirty-three sermons, many of them by PCUS luminaries.[30] The Preface stated that there were two motives that "prompted the issue of this volume." One was "a distinct demand for a book of practical sermons, suitable for reading in the public worship of God when conducted by ruling elders of the church." Additionally, "it has seemed very desirable to put in permanent form some examples of the work of our Southern Presbyterian pulpit, which is, we are confident, second to none in eloquence, doctrinal purity, persuasiveness, and practical power."

Quite a few of these messages deal directly with the gospel.[31] Other sermons at least allude to the gospel, or impress upon the hearer the need for personal faith and repentance.[32] Two other sermons are distinctly doctrinal: T. D. Witherspoon, "Not One Forgotten" (Luke 12:6), which speaks of Providence; and W. F. V. Bartlett, "The Sabbath-Day" (Isaiah 56:23), which argues extensively for the observance of the Sabbath. Indeed, all thirty-three of these messages are seriously informed by doctrine.

There was much content as well as meat in these sermons. The average length was more than eleven pages, each page containing, say, about 350 words. This fact means that the average sermon length from the 1896 collection was about 3,800 words, or approximately fifty per cent more than the average sermon length from the 1943 volume, which was about 2,500 words. The shortest sermon from the 1896 collection ran about 2,400 words, while the shortest sermon from the 1943 volume was two-thirds of that at about 1,600 words. The longest sermon from the 1896 collection was about 6,300 words, while the longest sermon from the 1943 volume came in at around fifty-five percent of that figure (about 3,500 words).

A second collection, *The Southern Presbyterian Pulpit*, appeared in 1928.[33] Three years later, a pastor who had been 46 years in the ministry, Dr. George L. Bitzer, delivered Austin Theological Seminary's annual alumni address and compared this volume with the one from 1896. In the words of historian E. T. Thompson, among the changes noted were

> the fact that the chief stress in preaching was no longer upon justification by faith alone; that equal stress was now placed upon sanctification, the subjective aspects of sanctification; and again the fact that church and state were no longer regarded as so widely separated that ministers could not refer to social responsibilities. The old time Calvinism, Dr. Bitzer indicated, had lost its appeal. "Is there a personal God?" "Are we real personalities, or mere cogs in the World Wheel?" These, he stated, were questions that men in the street were now asking, and it was to such questions that sermons must now be directed. Dr. Bitzer urged young ministers to make use of the new scientific thought of the day. "I think the world never needed ministers more than now," he concluded, "ministers who do their own thinking, and speak with the power of

30. *Southern Presbyterian Pulpit: A Collection of Sermons by Ministers of the Southern Presbyterian Church* (Richmond, Va.: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1896). Interestingly, every one of the 33 ministers held the D.D. degree.

31. B. M. Palmer, "The Transforming Power of the Gospel" (II Corinthians 5:17); Moses D. Hoge, "The Changing World and the Unchanging God" (Hebrews 1:10–12); J. Henry Smith, "'One Jesus'" (Acts 25:18–19); George D. Armstrong, "The Gospel Call" (Revelation 22:17); John L. Girardeau, "Christ's Pastoral Presence with His Dying People" (Psalm 23:4); R. L. Dabney, "The Happy Service" (Matthew 11:28–30); J. W. Rosebro, "Seeking the Lord" (Isaiah 55:6); Neander M. Woods, "Our Redeemer's Prayer for Christian Unity" (John 17:21); W. U. Murkland, "The Divineness of the Family Bond" (II Timothy 1:3); A. W. Pitzer, "Why Believers Should 'Not Fear'" (Revelation 1:17–18); J. H. Bryson, "The Ruler's Question" (Matthew 19:16); S. W. Davies, "The Children of the Covenant: Their Privileges and Responsibilities" (Acts 3:25–26); G. R. Brackett, "Man Inspired of God" (Job 32:8); J. R. Burgett, "'How Long Halt Ye Between Two Opinions?'" (I Kings 18:21); G. B. Strickler, "Consecration" (Romans 12:1); Robert P. Kerr, "The Striving Spirit" (Genesis 6:3); R. K. Smoot, "Applied Christianity" (Luke 10:25–29); W. W. Moore, "The Three Causes of Salvation" (James 1:18); J. F. Cannon, "The Necessity of Christ's Resurrection" (Acts 2:24); J. R. Howerton, "'To Me to Live is Christ'" (Philippians 1:21); C. R. Hemphill, "Jesus' Supreme Authority" (John 13:13); and W. T. Hall, "The Gospel as First Revealed" (Genesis 3:15).

32. J. R. Stratton, "The Pitilessness of Sin" (Matthew 27:3–5); J. W. Lupton, "'What is the Chaff to the Wheat?'" (Jeremiah 23:28); William N. Scott, "Personal Work for the Master" (Revelation 22:17); John A. Preston, "Joseph of Arimathea. The Christian Outside of the Church" (John 19:38; Mark 15:43); Peyton H. Hoge, "Natural Law and Divine Providence" (Matthew 10:29); James I. Vance, "Take Hold of God" (Isaiah 27:5); G. L. Petrie, "The Valley of Achor" (Hosea 2:15); Samuel A. King, "Religion Not a Vain Thing" (Deuteronomy 32:47); Joseph R. Wilson, "Trust in the Lord" (Psalm 118:8–9). We must acknowledge that the sermon by James I. Vance misses the point of how we achieve peace. Dr. Vance stated: "A human life, in its frailty and need, lays hold of God, and God comes down and dwells in the human life, invests it with the power and majesty of his presence, communicates the calm of heaven to the perturbed spirit, and there is 'peace.' Brethren, that is religion in its effect. 'That he may make peace with me.' God is anxious for us to come to that. The only safety for anything or anybody in the wide world is to be on God's side. There is not room enough for two gods in the universe" (316). Of course, the Biblical understanding of peace and how it is established is by means of atonement based upon Christ's propitiatory sacrifice and the imputation of His righteousness (Romans 5:1).

33. *The Southern Presbyterian Pulpit: Pulpit Addresses by Ministers of the Presbyterian Church in the United States,* ed. Charles Haddon Nabers (New York/Chicago/London/Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1928).

> personal conviction, and with the passion of a great love. Men who study the problems of the time, and bring to doubt-ridden men a Gospel message in terms of the thinking of today."[34]

A third collection, *Some Southern Presbyterian Sermons*, featured a dozen sermons of just one man, Rev. J. E. Flow, D.D.[35] Born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, in 1874, Dr. Flow graduated from Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary (Virginia). He pastored in Missouri, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and North Carolina. He served as stated clerk of Upper Missouri Presbytery, Greenbrier Presbytery, and the Synod of West Virginia. He was a superintendent of home missions and an evangelist and home missionary for Concord Presbytery. His collection of sermons is particularly relevant for purposes of comparison, since it was published in 1941, just two years before *Living Echoes* appeared. This little volume is also a study in contrast, in that he represented an older generation of Southern Presbyterian ministers.

Here is a list of these sermons which flowed from his lips:

> The Inerrancy of the Scriptures
> Presbyterian Church Government
> The Greatness of God
> The Creation of Man in An Estate of Holiness and Happiness
> The Fall of Man Into an Estate of Sin and Misery
> The Covenant of Redemption and of Grace
> The Sovereign Electing Grace of Almighty God
> Christ, the Redeemer of God's Elect
> Effectual Calling
> The Perseverance and Preservation of the Saints
> The Overruling Providence of God
> The Separation of Church and State or the Spiritual Mission of the Church

The titles of the sermons alone indicate not only the boldness of the minister, but also his commitment to and proclamation of standard Presbyterian doctrine. Moreover, not only are these messages chockfull of doctrine and meaty, but they also have substantial content. The sermons average about seven pages in length, with about 500 words per page.

In the Introduction, the author wrote:

> We Presbyterians are not afraid of doctrine. In fact we believe in "sound doctrine" as the only sure basis for "sound speech" and righteous living. We have no sympathy with those who claim to have no creed, but believe only the Bible. That is shallow thinking. It is only another way of saying that they do not know what they believe or teach. A creed is what one believes the Bible to teach. We have a creed. We know what we believe and what we teach, and furthermore we know why we believe and why we teach it. We believe also that every Christian duty arises out of some Christian doctrine. The doctrines are statements of facts. Our duty to love and serve God is based upon the fact that there is a God who is worthy to be loved and served. But the existence of God is a doctrine. And that he is worthy to be loved and served is also a doctrine.
>
> The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms comprise the doctrines we believe the Bible to teach…. [The Westminster divines] produced the greatest creed the world has ever known. These Standards are firmly based on the Word of God. The proof texts are attached to every statement….
>
> The Presbyterian Church has always stood for an educated ministry and an intelligent people. We believe in loving the Lord with all our mind as well as with all our heart, soul, and strength….
>
> There are some doctrines that are distinctive of the Presbyterian Church. There are others we hold in common with all other evangelical denominations, and there are some we emphasize more than other denominations because we believe they are more important and essential to Christian faith and practice. These we teach and defend and "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" (3–4).

What a sharp contrast to the whole approach taken in *Living Echoes*! Without apology, Dr. Flow proclaimed and contended for the teachings of historic Presbyterianism.

At least one scholar has maintained that continuity of message characterizes the Southern Presbyterian pulpit over a number of years. For example, she concluded from her study "that preaching in the PCUS … changed very little over the course of the century when considering the dominant homiletical themes" and that the sermons she reviewed displayed "a consistency of perspective and content that reflects the significant concerns of the twentieth-century church while adhering

34. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, 3.360.

35. Rev. J. E. Flow, D.D., *Some Southern Presbyterian Sermons* (N.p. [Concord, N.C.?]: n.p., n.d. [1941]).

to the 'coherent theological tradition' which defined the 'solid South,' a tradition of preaching 'centered in the themes of man's depravity, Christ's atoning death, and the assurance of salvation.'"[36] But, as we have demonstrated, though there may be some superficial similarity of themes, the actual content differed considerably. (Indeed, given the doctrinal diversity and theological changes occurring within the PCUS, how could the situation be otherwise?) *The Southern Presbyterian Pulpit* (1928) represented a break with the traditional approach, which novel perspective was perpetuated and advanced in *Living Echoes* (1943), while both *Southern Presbyterian Pulpit* (1896) and *Some Southern Presbyterian Sermons* (1941) are decidedly different from the 1928 offering and particularly *Living Echoes*.[37]

Influences on the Sermons' Contents

In addition to homiletical history, there are other historical considerations in evaluating *Living Echoes*.

The Influence of Romanticism

We mentioned above the fact that one of the sermons made favorable reference to Romantic poetry. What must be remembered is that Romanticism had broad appeal in society as a whole, and increasingly in the Southern Presbyterian Church from the late-nineteenth century onwards. There were many facets of Romanticism. They included observance of religious holy days and a church calendar; the use of liturgy; and choirs and musical instrumentation in public worship. Broadly speaking, Romanticism entailed an appeal to the senses in worship—a development that was decried by conservatives, while championed by the progressives.[38] Stained glass windows became prominent features at many prestigious churches. For example, Dr. Wood's congregation, Westminster Presbyterian in Atlanta, featured a large stained glass picture of Christ—art work which to this day is high above the pulpit in the congregation's present building, into which it moved in 1963. Atlanta's First Presbyterian Church in the early-twentieth century commissioned a number of stained glass windows depicting the advent, life and ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. In 1900, North Avenue Presbyterian Church constructed its Gothic-style edifice; among the stained-glass windows in the sanctuary are three depicting the ministry of Jesus. In 1940, Atlanta's Druid Hills Presbyterian Church, when the nation was still suffering from the Great Depression, planned a project of installing stained glass windows in its new Gothic building. These windows included depictions of Christ's life, ministry, and crucifixion, as well as other things, such as the signs of the Zodiac in conjunction with the various months.[39]

Romanticism is often affiliated with the church returning to a medievalism—the notion of worship that is ancient as well as sensualistic and symbolic. However, it is important to note that there is also a revivalistic aspect to Romanticism—the tent meetings of the early-nineteenth century paved the way for the more formal, liturgical worship.[40]

One can see the multidimensional nature of

36. Zink, "Themes in Southern Presbyterian Preaching, 1920–1983," 132. The material being quoted is from Samuel S. Hill, Jr., et al., *Religion and the Solid South* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 20.

37. One might also consult *The Wartime Sermons of Dr. Peter Marshall,* ed. Peter J. Marshall (Dallas, Tex.: Clarion Call Marketing, 2005). While a few of these sermons present the gospel, several others are devoid of the gospel. Other sermon collections during this time period are *Our Fighting Faith* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1944), written by J. Blanton Belk, pastor of St. Giles Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Virginia; and *Keep Your Faith* (New York/London/Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1943), written by Teunis E. Gouwens, D.D., pastor of Second Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Kentucky. Dr. Gouwens wrote: "there is no way of saving our souls, no way of redeeming our civilization from its evil and preserving its good, except the way of full surrender to Christ." He stated that his "purpose in these sermons is to submit certain facts, truths and arguments which commend our faith. My deep conviction is that the truth and power of Christianity will manifest themselves as the invincible bulwark of the individual soul and the hope of the world" (6–7). His approach could be described as being that of a warm-hearted evangelicalism.

38. See Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, 3.343–61.

39. *The First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta 150th Anniversary* (N.p.: First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, 1998); Mary-Elizabeth Ellard, *A Soft Radiant Light: The Stained Glass Windows of Druid Hills Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, Georgia* (N.p.: Druid Hills Presbyterian Church, 2008). According to Mrs. Ellard, "Druid Hills Presbyterian Church undertook to build a sanctuary inspired by the great French Gothic cathedrals, complete with stained glass windows" (7). Ironically, among the figures featured in the stained glass windows were John Calvin, John Knox, Francis Makemie, and James Henley Thornwell, who undoubtedly would have been aghast at this project. Three of North Avenue's stained-glass windows, constructed in 1961, depict Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Knox.

40. Julius Melton noted that Flavel Mines, a critic of Presbyterian worship, "observed that revivalism prepared churches for a romantic return to more liturgical worship." Melton stated: "One appeal revivalism originally had was its apparent spontaneity and reliance upon the Holy Spirit. But the new form of it seemed more and more to be just as much concerned with the 'outward and visible' aspect of services as liturgical worship had ever been. Rather than Presbyterians becoming steeped in spontaneous, Spirit-led worship by their contact with revivalism, by about 1840 they had found revivalism becoming more and more formalized. Some observers saw revivalism preparing Presbyterians for the more formal worship which was a part of the contemporary 'uneasy efforts' being made by much of Protestantism 'towards a churchly re-modeling.'" Melton, *Presbyterian Worship in America: Changing Patterns Since 1787* (1967; rpt. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 60.

Romanticism by noting, first of all, the influence of gospel songs on the PCUS. In 1910, the denominational Presbyterian Committee of Publication released *Assembly Songs for Use in Evangelistic Services, Sabbath School, Young People Societies, Devotional Meeting, and the Home*. On the other hand, there were selections in denominational hymnals that reflected more of the appeal to antiquity, as reflected in the Oxford Movement within the Church of England. And let us not forget that one of the hymns featured in the 1927 hymnal was "In the Cross of Christ I Glory," by the aforementioned John Bowring, a Unitarian Romanticist.[41]

The point here is that this branch of the church was already compromised with respect to worship, having capitulated its Calvinistic fortress to the hordes of Romanticism—an army with many divisions. Accordingly, one would not expect to hear thundering denunciations of pictures of Christ or staunch affirmations of the second commandment and the objective nature of worship practice. But that failure to maintain historic Presbyterian standards vis-à-vis Romanticism's manifestations gives a clue as to why the preaching would be neutered. It is difficult to fly the flag of the Westminster Standards, when one is embarrassed by numerous of their provisions.

The Progressive Era

Starting in the late-nineteenth century and continuing into the early-twentieth century, a powerful movement called Progressivism impacted America. This movement has been described as being more a mindset rather than delineating a particular agenda. The ideology is that of making things better societally and globally, whether with regard to sexual morals (as in opposition to prostitution), alcohol (as in abstinence and prohibition), labor (as in the rights of workers and outlawing of child labor), and industrial relations (as in pacifism, disarmament, and international organizations such as the League of Nations).

The movement characteristically was white and middle-class. However, what has often been overlooked by historians is the religious dimension. Progressives, by and large, were Protestants. Or, to summarize, Progressivism was largely "WASP-ish" (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant).

What has sometimes been missed, in the discussion of Progressivism, has been its connection with the Social Gospel movement. Part of the appeal of the Social Gospel in the nineteenth century and then into the twentieth century had to do with the abandonment of the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement within mainline denominations. Nevertheless, people still, instinctively, understood that they were guilty. The way of dealing with that innate sense of guilt was through external actions, particularly with regard to societal betterment. The Social Gospel and Progressivism played off of and fed each other. And although the Social Gospel was not as virulent a strain in the South as in the North, nonetheless, it did influence folks in Dixie, and therefore must also be considered as forming part of the Southern Presbyterian milieu in the 1940s.

Changing Role of Preacher and Church

As argued by John McClure,

> By 1920, there were signs that the nature of the authority of the preacher was changing—a barely perceived shift in the role and identity of the preacher…. Preachers were becoming more concerned to be interesting, relevant, simple, and clear in their preaching. Weekly sermons were abandoning the promulgation of theological and social programs and focusing on "practical living" and the "lofty ideal of living." … There was a change from reliance upon the external authority of position and office to a more internal authority based upon the quality of the pastoral relationship between the preacher and the congregation.
>
> One reason for this change was that congregations were looking for less in the way of knowledge and information from their preacher. The level of education and the quality of information available to the parishioner increased rapidly in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, due partly to improvements in Christian education and public education and partly to wider exposure to religious issues in the mass media.[42]

Though this phenomenon was more pronounced in the North than in the South, nevertheless, it was present in Dixie and among Southern Presbyterians.

The Influx of Leftist and Ecumenist Ideology

Historians customarily contrast the branches of mainline Presbyterianism, by noting that the Northern

41. Morgan F. Simmons, "Hymnody: Its Place in Twentieth-Century Presbyterianism," in *The Confessional Mosaic*, 163–64, 168–69, 174–75; *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1927).

42. John McClure, "Changes in the Authority, Method, and Message of Presbyterian (UPCUSA) Preaching in the Twentieth Century," in *The Confessional Mosaic,* 88. McClure also suggested that the "ideas of the social gospel movement also affected the status and authority of preaching in Presbyterian churches, though that impact did not occur until the social gospel movement had nearly run its course" (89).

branch went liberal much sooner than the Southern. That historiographical conclusion is certainly true—witness the fact that the major split in the North occurred in 1936 (leading to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church), while the major exodus in the South occurred in 1973 (leading to the Presbyterian Church in America). However, that fact should not obscure the reality that there was significant liberalism within the Southern Church by the early-twentieth century.

Two works help to demonstrate the infiltration of leftist ideas. One, by noted historian Dr. C. Gregg Singer, *The Unholy Alliance*, was an exposé of the National Council of Churches, and its predecessor body, the Federal Council of Churches. Dr. Singer clearly demonstrates the influence of socialist and communistic ideas on the ecumenical movement. The PCUS, though not as radical as many other denominations, was a member of these organizations.[43]

The other book was penned by Matsu Crawford, a Southern Presbyterian missionary to China who with her husband had been forced to return to the United States during World War II. Her *My Head Is Bloody But Unbowed* tells the story of her personal experiences with radical churchmen and churchwomen in the Southern Presbyterian Church not only in the 1960s, but as far back as the 1940s.[44]

The promotion of collectivist and Marxist ideas by church bureaucrats and other elites was real. And given that these notions were being circulated in the educational institutions and women's meetings and youth camps, they had to have had an effect on the church in softening it up and preparing the way for retreat from the true gospel and, ultimately, surrender of the truth. That reality is another piece of the puzzle in providing the context for these sermons.

Doctrinal Downgrade and Confessional Revisionism

But one must also take note of the doctrinal downgrade and confessional revisionism taking place in the PCUS. An elite Ad Interim Committee on Changes in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, consisting of the systematic theology professors of the PCUS seminaries and the moderator of the 1935 General Assembly, recommended to the PCUS General Assembly in 1937 various modifications of the Westminster Standards. Many of those proposed changes were in 1938 sent down to the 88 presbyteries for advice and consent. Some of the modifications were relatively benign; others struck at the heart of the Calvinistic system.

Chapter III of the Confession of Faith was particularly targeted. Paragraphs III and IV, dealing with the particular double predestination of men and angels (some to life and some to reprobation), would have been removed altogether. Other paragraphs would have been softened. In Paragraph VII, the phrase "whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin," would have been changed to read, "and in the exercise of His sovereign right, to pass by, and to leave them to the consequences of their sin."

Similarly, Chapter V, Paragraph VI, would have removed, among other wording, the phrase about how God "exposeth them [i.e., "wicked and ungodly men"] to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin." In Chapter VI, dealing with man's fall into sin, the word "wholly" would have disappeared from the phrase "wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body"; and "utterly" and "wholly" would have been removed from "we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil."

Chapter X, Paragraph IV, would have changed the wording with regard to those who assert and maintain that men can only be saved through professing the Christian religion; no longer would such a position be "very pernicious, and to be detested," but it would be "without warrant of the word of God." Chapter XXV would have removed "synagogues of Satan" with respect to false churches; and also the reference to the Pope as being "that anti-Christ, that man of sin, and son of perdition." Chapter XXIX, Paragraph II, would have changed "the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominably injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice," to "the sacrifice of the mass is most contradictory to Christ's one sacrifice." And Paragraph VIII would have erased this sentence: "Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these Holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto."[45]

Not all of these changes were enacted. The proposals regarding Chapter III, Paragraphs III and IV, barely failed to obtain the three-fourths supermajority in the

43. C. Gregg Singer, *The Unholy Alliance* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1975).

44. Matsu Crawford, *My Head Is Bloody But Unbowed* (Manassas, Va.: Reformation Educational Foundation, 1983).

45. *Minutes of the Seventy-Eighth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States With an Appendix* (Austin, Tex.: Press of Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1938), 128ff.

presbyteries (the presbytery votes being 63–24 and 64–23). Furthermore, per recommendation of the Standing Committee on Bills and Overtures, the General Assembly declined to adopt the amending of Chapter III, Paragraph VII; Chapter V; and Chapter VI.[46] Nevertheless, the fact that substantial majorities in the Assembly and among the presbyteries voted for these changes signals that there was substantial disapproval of the strong doctrine of the Westminster Assembly. At the same time, many in the church still did adhere to the old truths.

The sermons found in *Living Echoes* were not preached in a vacuum. They both reflected, and aided and abetted, this mishmash of doctrine.

General Lack of Substance

Some of us may remember the 1984 Democratic presidential primary debates, in which former Vice-President Walter Mondale skewered one of his rivals, Gary Hart, with the rhetorical question, "Where's the beef?" The Minnesotan Mondale was challenging Senator Hart with regard to his lack of content. Of course, that question had been part of a TV ad campaign by Wendy's, in which a little old lady looks disdainfully at a competitor's hamburger that was mostly bun.

In our ruminating on the twelve sermons in *Living Echoes*, that question, "Where's the beef?", came to mind. There was not much content, not much exegesis, not much theology, and certainly not much gospel. But the question then arises, why didn't the little old ladies on the back pews challenge this type of preaching? Perhaps some did, but their protests, unlike that of Jenny Geddes as she cast her milking stool in St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh in 1637, have been lost to history. Perhaps godly saints just got overrun by the ecclesiastical establishment, as by a tank.

Actually, there is indication of at least one protest, which did get crushed. As documented in the official fiftieth-anniversary history of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church,

> Westminster Presbyterian Church of Valdosta, Georgia, came into being on April 23, 1952. Forty-one members, including thirteen deacons and two ruling elders of the First Presbyterian Church (PCUS) of Valdosta, met in the Georgia Power and Light auditorium for the purpose of considering the advisability of withdrawing from that church and forming a new Presbyterian church. This meeting grew out of disciplinary action taken against the ruling elders and deacons of the church by the Presbytery of Southwest Georgia (PCUS) because the congregation's official bodies had requested the removal of the pastor for his liberalism and advocacy of merger with the Presbyterian Church, USA.[47]

That separation occurred during the tenure of Cecil Thompson's successor, H. L. Laws, who pastored in Valdosta from 1947 to 1952. Though it did not occur in the 1940s, it does demonstrate the eventual theological reaction in that south Georgia city.[48]

However, we think that, whatever protests and expressions of concern there may have been, the bigger story is that the majority of the people in many (though not all) of these congregations went right along with these messages. That, we believe, is very telling—it indicates that a hunger for the gospel and meaty messages was already absent among the very respectable suit and tie-clad men and hat and glove-bedecked women traveling in gas-rationed Chevrolets, Fords, Packards, and Cadillacs to Gothic church buildings. And that fact is a strong indication that the Southern Presbyterian Church was already doomed by the 1940s, and probably by the 1930s or even earlier. The inevitable demise of the PCUS was not merely a function of liberal professors at denominational colleges and seminaries, but was rather a manifestation of the phenomenon of much of the laity having lost spiritual discernment.

Commenting on the prior generation in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., J. Gresham Machen lamented the state of that largely Northern denomination. Writing of the 1915 General Assembly, he noted: "The Church is

46. *Minutes of the Seventy-Ninth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States With an Appendix* (Austin, Tex.: Press of Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1939), 68–69.

47. Charles D. Dennison, editor, *The Orthodox Presbyterian Church 1936–1986* (Philadelphia: Committee for the Historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986), 265. Interestingly, "In response to a request to Columbia Theological Seminary, seminarian Morton H. Smith was sent to conduct Sunday services."

48. The view of those who stayed with First Presbyterian, as is to be expected, differed considerably from the OPC perspective. In a history of the congregation penned by a man who served as pastor after the controversy, he alleged that "the blot" apparently was caused by two elements: a "rigid fundamentalist group which stressed Dispensationalism (a doctrine contrary to Presbyterian belief); and an overbearing coterie of church officers (mostly deacons) who violated their vows" of office, including "the vow of promising 'to study the peace, unity, edification, and purity of the church." He also suggests a third element, viz., "a clash of personalities between certain officers and the pastor." Frank C. King, Sr., *Pilgrims Perseverant: The Ongoing Journey of First Presbyterian Church, Valdosta, Georgia, 1864–1989* (Valdosta: First Presbyterian Church, 1989), 38. If those who left the downtown congregation had affiliated with, say, the Bible Presbyterian Church, then the charge of Dispensationalism would be credible; but given that the group affiliated with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, that charge lacks credibility.

still fundamentally evangelical—but sadly indifferent to the big questions." The next year, he wrote:

> Dreadful things seem to be going on at the General Assembly, the "liberal" candidate for moderator having been elected by a large majority. Of course a good many brethren did not know how bad he is. He posed as a "moderate conservative." But I fear the Union Seminary men, with their deceitful phrases, and their contempt for the Christian faith, will go quite unmolested…. The mass of the Church here [i.e., in the North, in contrast to the Southern Presbyterian Church] is still conservative—but conservative in an ignorant, non-polemic, sweetness-and-light kind of way which is just meat for the wolves.[49]

Machen was laying the blame primarily on the deceptive churchmen and professors. But on the other hand, he himself recognized that the laity were naive. What we are suggesting is that by being naive and spiritually immature and theologically incompetent, the people in the pew also bore responsibility. In this regard, two aphorisms that one sees in the civil realm are being mirrored. One, the people usually get the rulers—in this case, the preachers—that they deserve. Two, change in law—in this case, modification of the confessional standards—is a trailing indicator of the direction of the body. In other words, the ethos changes long before the ethics officially do. The standards of a society, including the society of a church, merely reflect its culture. And the culture of the PCUS, by and large, as reflected in the sermons presented in *Living Echoes*, had already been overrun by a new theological orientation.

Faults of the Editor

In the early days of World War II, Winston Churchill referred to the action of Russia as being "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma." That quote could be applied to the action of Ferguson Wood in editing this collection. If he was so committed to conservative Southern Presbyterian theology, why did he include sermons with such obvious problems and deficiencies?

Dr. Wood either did not discern the problems with these sermons, or, having discerned them, he did not object to them.[50] In either case, his support, for whatever reason, of these sermons is telling—it demonstrates the weakness of the "conservative" position in the Southern Presbyterian Church in the mid-twentieth century. Indeed, when the time came for ecclesiastical separation in the 1970s, Dr. Wood declined to depart the PCUS.

In our estimation, the key to unlocking the enigma of Dr. Wood's action is that the so-called conservatism within the PCUS by the 1940s was, for the most part, not a genuine commitment to the theology of the Westminster Assembly, but to vague traditional values, including social mores such as abstinence from alcohol and even Sabbath observance. Or, we could frame the matter this way: if this 1943 collection of sermons is truly representative of the Southern Presbyterian pulpit at that time, then it is obvious that there were many Southern Presbyterian ministers who had very little inclination to emphasize solid doctrine and Reformed theology.

This conclusion is bolstered by the observations of E. T. Thompson. In 1943, he delivered the Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary, dealing with changing emphases in American preaching. In considering Horace Bushnell, the progenitor of American liberalism, Professor Thompson wrote:

> In presenting this theory [of the atonement], Bushnell sedulously avoids any thought of legal satisfaction. In direct contrast with the traditional method, he endeavors "to interpret all that is prepared and suffered in the propitiation of God and justification of men by a reference to the moral pronouncements of human nature and society; assuming that nothing can be true of God, or of Christ, which is true in some sense *more humano*, and is not made intelligible by human analogies. We cannot interpret God," he insists, "except by what we find in our own personal instincts and ideas."
>
> In spite of the inadequacies, the one-sidedness, the forced interpretation of Scripture texts to be found in The Vicarious Sacrifice, Bushnell had in fact rendered great service to our understanding of the work of Christ. For one thing he made it clear that the atonement is too large, too transcendent in its relation to the infinite and the eternal, to be illustrated by any one analogy, or to be comprehended and carried about in any single formula.
>
> Then again he emphasized the fact, sometimes forgotten, that the end of the atonement, according to the

49. Quoted in Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1978), 221. The Union Seminary to which Machen was referring was the institution in New York City.

50. Perhaps he was operating under the burden of his youth—even though he was obviously an accomplished pastor (otherwise, he would not have been the minister of a prestigious church), he was only thirty-three when the volume was published.

> usual Scripture text, is reconciliation of men to God rather than reconciliation of God to man (as in II Cor. 5:19), the renovation of character here on earth rather than a forensic transaction in heaven. As Peter puts it: Christ "bare our sins in his body upon the tree, *that* we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness" (I Peter 2:24).
>
> In addition, Bushnell took the atonement out of the region of legalism, which had become dry scholasticism, and laid it straight down upon life itself. "It is singular," one acute critic remarked at the time in a letter to a friend, "that men who, like Bushnell and Robertson, reject the full import of the death of Christ, should make Christ a far more living and effective power than the majority of those who receive it. It is singular, yet it must be confessed it is true."[51]

At best, the PCUS ministry, as a whole, was committed to a bland evangelicalism, but not the sturdy truths of the Westminster Standards, while there were some ministers that were beginning to drift ever leftward on issues such as Scripture and atonement. Oh, yes, there were still many Southern Presbyterian ministers, especially those of an older generation, who were adhering to the old-fashioned message of the church—men like J. E. Flow of Concord, North Carolina. But his sermon collection was self-published, not published by John Knox Press, the official publishing arm of the PCUS. On the other hand, the up-and-coming generation of preachers was represented by this group of sermons which, taken as a whole, appealed to oh-so-respectable laity. There may have been a faint echo of traditional Reformed theology, but there was no clarion trumpeting of the truth.

Conclusion

What was "echoed" in *Living Echoes* was a confused message and a cacophony of voices, rather than a reveille which would reverberate throughout Georgia. This was no bugler's wake-up call, but rather a toleration of complacency and appeasement. Moreover, the toleration was not only on the part of the ministry and eldership, but on the part of people in the pew.

The presence of such phenomena in any denomination in any age is a tell-tale indication that the ship, having already been torpedoed, is sinking. This is not to say that lifeboats will not be launched—and in point of fact, we can be thankful that at least two of the eleven congregations featured in *Living Echoes* did ultimately separate from apostasy.[52] Nevertheless, denominationally speaking, the lack of consistently solid doctrinal and gospel preaching as evident in this little volume was a harbinger that the long theological war which dragged on for more than a generation within the Southern Presbyterian Church, was already lost by 1943.▪

51. Ernest Trice Thompson, *Changing Emphases in America Preaching: The Stone Lectures for 1943* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1943), 41–42 (emphasis in original).

52. Westminster Presbyterian Church in Atlanta was the site of the Convocation of Sessions in May 1973, which called for ecclesiastical separation, leading to the formation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA); the Westminster congregation itself did eventually join the PCA, but not until July 1985. First Presbyterian Church of Thomasville joined the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in October 2013. A majority of First Presbyterian Church of Columbus voted to withdraw from the PC(USA) in 2015, but the attempt was thwarted as it failed, barely, to obtain the mandated supermajority (64.56% rather than the necessary two-thirds); a group subsequently left First Pres to form a new congregation affiliated with ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. One must also note that at least two other of these congregations had ministry that tended in an evangelical, even conservative, direction. For example, North Avenue's pastor from 1950 to 1954, Dr. McFerran Crowe, left the Atlanta pulpit in order to become President of Belhaven College, where "he made sure every member of his faculty was not only Presbyterian but also Calvinist"; see Elizabeth Blackshear Flinn, *With Feet of Clay: A History of the North Avenue Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, Georgia, 1889–1990* (N.p. [Atlanta]: n.p. [North Avenue Presbyterian Church], n.d. [1990?]), 62. First Presbyterian of Marietta has through the years sought to maintain a witness in favor of traditional morality and marriage, and in opposition to abortion; see *God at Work: A History of the First Presbyterian Church of Marietta, Georgia, 1835–2000* (N.p.: [Marietta, Ga.]; The First Presbyterian Church of Marietta, Georgia, Church History Committee, 2000), 175–77.

Changing Direction:
Moving Away From Technique-Driven Exegesis

By Benjamin Shaw

Beginnings

The history of biblical exegesis is often divided into two parts: pre-critical and critical. While there is some truth to that division, it tends to obscure divisions in the pre-critical period as well as developments in the critical period. These divisions and developments arise from the fact that any interpretive method must be suited to the nature of the text being interpreted. In the history of the church, different conclusions about the nature of the biblical text have led to differing approaches to its interpretation. To oversimplify, the pre-critical period can be divided into two parts. The first part extends from the early church up to the period of the Reformation. The second involves the Reformation and the post-Reformation period up to the time of the Enlightenment. In the pre-Reformation period, various approaches to exegesis were employed. In the early church, there is often a distinction drawn between the Alexandrian school, which tended to take a more figurative approach to the text, and the Antiochene school, which tended to take a more literal approach. Various approaches to interpretation were tried during the medieval and pre-Reformation period, each enjoying varying degrees of success and popularity. Medieval exegesis, however, is most commonly connected to the fourfold method, or *quadriga*. That is, any text was assumed to have, or to be capable of showing four different senses. The first of these was the literal sense, or the meaning of the text taking the words at face value and in their ordinary sense. The second sense is allegorical, in which the literal sense is linked to some spiritual truth. The third sense is the moral sense, by which the Christian is taught proper Christian conduct. The fourth sense is anagogical, leading the reader to heavenly realities.[1] The use of "Jerusalem" in Galatians 4:22ff can give us an illustration of these four senses. The literal meaning of Jerusalem is the city in Palestine. Allegorically, Jerusalem is the church of Christ. Morally, Jerusalem is the human soul. Anagogically, Jerusalem is the heavenly Jerusalem.[2]

Most interpreters of the Bible recognize that some passages in Scripture do operate on more than one level. But the medieval interpreters had applied this fourfold sense to any text, which produced not only many strained interpretations, but also contributed to "Scriptural" support for some eccentric Roman Catholic doctrines. With the rise of the Reformation, there was a widespread recognition that a change in interpretive approach was needed. This change of direction was away from the fourfold sense to an emphasis on the literal meaning of the text. However, this emphasis on the literal meaning of the text was not a literalistic approach. In other words, the Reformers and their successors recognized that sometimes in the Old Testament, for example, the literal meaning of Jerusalem was not the city in Palestine but was instead a figure of the church. Another way of putting it is that sometimes the literal meaning of a passage is figurative.

The Critical Period

As the post-Reformation period moved into the period of the Enlightenment, another change in direction

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1. Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Second Edition* (Doubleday, 1995; ebook, 2012), 115–117.

2. See Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: Volume Two: Holy Scripture*, second ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), especially Chapter 1, which traces the medieval developments in the doctrine of Scripture, and Chapter 7, which deals with issues related to the interpretation of Scripture.

took place. It is at this point that biblical interpretation moved from the pre-critical to the critical phase. The change was introduced by the English political philosopher Thomas Hobbes, and more thoroughly by the skeptical Jewish philosopher Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza.[3] The primary element in this change of direction was a rejection of the fundamental assumption concerning the Bible that characterized pre-critical interpretation. Whatever differences there were between medieval and Reformation exegesis, they both operated on the fundamental assumption that the Bible is the Word of God, given to His church to make His will known. For Spinoza and Hobbes, the Bible was not a sure word from God, but instead a collection of Jewish and early Christian literature. Its meaning was to be determined by an analysis of its statements in their historical context. This approach has been identified as the historical-critical method. It can be defined as "the application of our historical knowledge to the ancient text unfettered by religious or ideological strictures that would destroy the light history can shed upon the Bible."[4]

The rise of the historical-critical method corresponded with the rise of the Enlightenment. There were two characteristics of the Enlightenment that also influenced the development of the historical-critical interpretation of the Bible. The first was the sufficiency of human reason for the discovery and the understanding of truth. The second was the importance of science. The natural sciences developed what is often called the scientific method. The scientific method is the use of techniques in an investigation such that, if another person used the same technique with the same materials, he would reach the same result. In other words, the scientific method sought for repeatable techniques that would guarantee a reliable result. Scholars in fields other than the natural sciences sought to make their disciplines scientific as well, aiming at the development of techniques in their disciplines that would produce repeatable results.

The first technique used among biblical scholars was adopted from those who studied Greek and Roman classical literature. Among the classicists, it had become a standard assumption that Homer could not have written the complex epics *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*. Instead, their view was that these epics had been compiled over an extended period from a variety of sources. Biblical scholars adopted the same approach and applied it to the Pentateuch. Their fundamental assumption was that writing was unknown among the early Hebrews, so that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch. Instead, as with *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*, the Pentateuch as we have it must have been developed over an extended period, compiled from a variety of sources. This approach, from the assumption that a variety of sources were used in the compiling of the work, was called source criticism. Underlying this approach is another assumption—that the real meaning of the text is not in the Pentateuch as we have it, but in the sources from which it was compiled. Source criticism was the scientific technique used by these scholars to determine the meaning of the biblical text. This approach characterized almost all of the biblical studies work done in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Germany.[5] From there, it spread throughout Europe and the United Kingdom, eventually making its way into the United States. It reached its zenith in the formulation made by J. Wellhausen in his *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*.[6] While source criticism was widely used, and was seen as a scientific technique, it was unable to produce repeatable results. The variety of results arrived at by a variety of scholars litter the publications on Old Testament studies throughout the nineteenth century.

Because of the lack of consistent results from the employment of source criticism, the search began for another technique that would permit reproducible results. In the late nineteenth century, another German scholar by the name of Herman Gunkel came under the influence of the Brothers Grimm. These collectors of European folk tales had the view that literature had its beginnings in shorter forms, each of which had distinctive characteristics. For example, a fairy tale ordinarily begins with "once upon a time." A newspaper article will ordinarily give a summary of the whole story in the opening paragraph, filling in the details in the following material. On the basis of distinctive characteristics,

3. Benedict de Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, 1951). Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. C. B. MacPherson (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), Part III, Ch. 23.

4. Fred L. Horton, "What Is the Historical-Critical Method?" http://users.wfu.edu/horton/r102/hc-method.html (accessed: August 4, 2018). See also "Historical-Critical Method" in Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, second ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981).

5. For more extensive surveys of these developments, see John H. Hayes, *An Introduction to Old Testament Study* (Nashville, Abingdon, 1979), 83–120; and R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969), 1–82. Hayes has a more critical view, while Harrison has a more evangelical treatment. Both of these survey the development of biblical criticism from the beginning of the Enlightenment up to the beginning of the postmodern period.

6. Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957).

different forms could be identified. It was Gunkel's conclusion that the sources that made up the Pentateuch traced back to earlier forms, such as sagas, legends, and etiologies (a story that explains the origin of something). Gunkel saw this form criticism as a new and more reliable technique than source criticism.[7] Further, the real meaning of the text was not to be found in the sources, but in the various forms that had been brought together in the sources. As with source criticism, the results of form criticism that appeared from a variety of scholars showed that form criticism also was not reliably repeatable.

A form-critical approach to the Bible characterized Biblical studies in much of the first half of the twentieth century.[8] But a general dissatisfaction with irreproducible results prompted the search for newer and more effective techniques. The next to appear was tradition criticism. This approach argued that the biblical forms originated as oral presentations, and these oral presentations developed into the forms that Gunkel and others had identified. The real meaning of the text was not in the forms, but in the oral traditions behind the forms. Other approaches that appeared in the twentieth century include redactional criticism (the examination of the techniques used by those who had turned the oral traditions into forms, the forms into sources, and the sources into the text that we have. The meaning of the text was then to be found in identifying the work of the redactor. This was not, of course, the original meaning of the text, but the meaning given to the text by the redactor. Rhetorical criticism, which examined the rhetoric of the texts to read between the lines of the text, was intended to get at what was really going on in the text. Thus, the story of Dathan and Abiram was intended to show the struggle between Levites and Aaronides over control of the religious practices of the early Hebrews.

Perhaps the last of the attempts at developing a scientific technique for the analysis of the biblical text was structuralism.[9] Structuralism was sufficiently complex and confusing that even its practitioners could not agree among themselves as to the meaning that could be derived from the biblical text. Structuralism also served to provide a transition between historical criticism and postmodernism.

Postmodernism

By the 1980s, postmodernism had appeared, touting the view that no text has an inherent meaning. Rather, all texts can be read in a variety of ways, and the goal of reading is to get behind the apparent meaning of the text, which (in the postmodern view) was largely determined by political interests, preserving the rights and privileges of the ruling classes. The postmodern search was to find a meaning of the text that was hidden by the apparent meaning. The search for a scientific technique that could yield a reproducible result had been abandoned. Instead, postmodernism in biblical studies is "characterised [*sic*] by flux, change, instability, and crisis."[10] The field of biblical studies is now littered with a variety of approaches intended to deconstruct the biblical text in order to deliver the reader from its oppressive patriarchal Eurocentric character. Among the many approaches now in use are feminist criticism, womanist criticism (black feminism), LGBTQ criticism, and post-colonialism. All of these approaches are considered to have their place, because of the inherent plasticity of the text. There is no one right way to interpret the text, because there is no single metanarrative that controls the methodological approach. The point here is that "in scholarship there is by definition no heresy. We should rather practice and accept methodological pluralism."[11] Each of these approaches has, however, implicitly adopted its own metanarrative that drives and determines the meaning read in the text. In addition, each of these approaches has adopted its own techniques in the interpretation of the text. Particular readings of the text are, for example, ruled out by a "queer theory" reading of the text, even though those readings may be found perfectly acceptable in another reading of the text.

The Situation Among Evangelical Scholars

Evangelical scholars generally have adopted some of the earlier critical approaches. While they have mostly avoided the use of source criticism, they have broadly adopted form criticism, redaction criticism, and rhetorical criticism.[12] In addition, other approaches to the

7. Hermann Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis: The Biblical Saga and History*, trans. W. H. Carruth (New York: Schocken Books, 1964). For a full display of the approach, see Klaus Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition* (New York: Scribner's, 1969).

8. Brief, but substantive discussions of each of these critical approaches can be found in the series "Guides to Biblical Scholarship" published by Fortress Press. Some of the titles are *What is Redaction Criticism*, *Tradition History and the Old Testament*, and *The Historical-Critical Method*.

9. Daniel Patte, *What is Structural Exegesis?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

10. Craig Bartholomew, "Reading the Old Testament in Postmodern Times," *Tyndale Bulletin* 49.1 (May 1998): 93.

11. Rolf Rendtorff, cited in Bartholomew, 96.

12. See, for example, the plainly technique-driven approach to exegesis found in Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis*, fourth ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010).

interpretation of the Bible have been worked into an evangelical reading of the Bible. Linguistic techniques are currently widely used and heavily influence the approaches to Bible translation as well as Bible interpretation.[13] The use of archaeology is also common. Archaeology is generally unobjectionable, as it can give us background information about life in the ancient Near East (ANE). However, scholars, including evangelical scholars, have largely insisted that the Bible must be interpreted in light of other ANE writings.[14] In the view of these scholars, the opening chapters of Genesis cannot be properly understood without reference to the ANE creation myths. Genesis 1–11 is then understood to be an Israelite creation myth, influenced by, and in some sense in reaction to, the Babylonian and Assyrian myths. Beyond Genesis, reference to Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Canaanite myths and epics are allegedly found throughout the Old Testament. It is commonly argued that without the information from these ANE sources, the reader misses much that is of importance in the Scriptures.

Technical Difficulties

There are three problems with this technique-driven approach to the interpretation of the Bible. The first is that it pretends to a scientific character that it does not have. That is, these techniques are not unbiased approaches to the reading of the Scriptures that can produce objectively repeatable results. Rather, the biases are anti-supernatural, which goes directly against the claims the Bible makes for itself. In addition to this anti-supernatural bias, the techniques employed do not yield reproducible results. Scholars, allegedly using the same technique, come to very different conclusions about the nature and meaning of the text. Second, the techniques were primarily developed by scholars who could devote a great deal of time to learning and perfecting their techniques. It is not possible for the average pastor, let alone the average Bible reader, to devote the time necessary to master one of these techniques, let alone master the multiplicity of techniques that have been developed over the last two centuries. The pastor and the layman then become subject to the masters of the techniques, forced to take the assertions of the masters at face value. When faced with two masters making different claims about the meaning of the text, the reader is forced to make a choice based on mere "gut sense." Third, technique-driven exegesis further separates those in the church from the text. The biblical text becomes a sort of gnostic collection that can be accessed only by the enlightened ones. This tends to make people in the pews liable to take seriously "Bible code" approaches to the Bible, since they do not sound too different from the esoteric techniques taught by the scholars.

Time for a Change

It is clear that, as with the time of the Reformation, it is time for a change of direction in the interpretation of the Bible. But what direction are we to go? In the most recent generation, there has been a movement among scholars, especially evangelical scholars, toward what is called "theological exegesis."[15] It sounds good. After all, shouldn't we read the Bible theologically? But on closer investigation, much of this theological exegesis reveals itself to be another technique, largely dependent on the medieval model, tacked on to the use of some of the more theologically-oriented techniques already in play. That this is really a move back to the pre-Reformation model is indicated by the number of recent publications surveying and encouraging the revival of medieval exegesis. The problem with that is two-fold. First, those proposing this approach really see it as another technique, guaranteed to produce *the* meaning of the text. The idea of a scientific approach has not changed. The other problem is that it reintroduces the difficulties caused by the medieval model in the first place.

The "New" Old Approach

My proposal is that we jettison altogether the idea that one technique, or even a cluster of techniques, properly applied, will lead us unerringly to the meaning of the text. We need to get rid of the idea that exegesis is a scientific enterprise. And instead of going back to the swamp of medieval exegesis, the move ought to be toward the other part of the pre-critical period—the exegesis of the Reformation and post-Reformation period.[16] The Westminster Confession of Faith sums up

13. Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1989). Douglas Mangum and John Westbury, eds. *Linguistics and Biblical Exegesis* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

14. See, for example, John H. Walton and D. Brent Sandy, *The Lost World of Scripture* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013); John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009); Tremper Longman, III and John H. Walton, *The Lost World of the Flood: Mythology, Theology, and the Deluge Debate* (IVP Academic, 2018).

15. Daniel Trier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008). A significant number of other books on the same topic have appeared in the intervening decade.

16. For a thorough presentation of this idea, see Iain Provan, *The Reformation and the Right Reading of Scripture* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2017).

well the Reformational approach to exegesis: "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly" (I.9). This summary is preceded in the Confession by two important caveats. The first is: "All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all" (I.7) The second is: "in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal unto them [the Hebrew and Greek originals]" (I.8). These may be summed up in this fashion: First, the Scripture interprets itself. Second, due to the imperfect knowledge and character of even the most sanctified persons, there will never be universal agreement on the meaning of some places in the Scriptures. Third, the responsibility of resolving these controversies rests with the consensus of the church based on the study of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and not with any one individual interpreter.

The Scripture interprets itself. We must begin with the recognition that the Bible is the Word of God. God designed it to speak to people of every time and of every place. As such, it was intended to be self-contained. If it was to fulfill its intended purpose, it could not require any outside material for its proper understanding. If any additional information outside of the Scriptures was necessary to the proper understanding of the Scriptures, then it would be likely, indeed, almost certain, that most people in most times and in most places would not be able to interpret the Bible properly, for they would not have access to this material external to the Scriptures. The best example here is the insistence by some that an understanding of ANE literature is necessary to a proper understanding of the Bible. If that were indeed the case, then the church, for the first eighteen-and-a-half centuries of its existence, was almost certain to misinterpret the Bible. Those ANE materials did not become available until the middle of the nineteenth century. We must insist that the Bible, and the Bible alone, serves as its only interpreter. Another example that has arisen more recently is the insistence that we must know and understand the literature of Second Temple Judaism to understand the New Testament. But again, were that the case, the church would have been subject to a serious misunderstanding of the Bible, since much of the Second Temple material has only recently come to light.[17]

There will never be universal agreement on the meaning of some, perhaps many, biblical passages. We must be willing to give up on the idea of perfect comprehension of the Scriptures. We, even as justified saints, are not up to it. And we must be satisfied with that. There is no technique, there is no approach to the study of the Bible that can overcome the incomplete knowledge and the incomplete competence of the interpreter of the Bible. However, this does not absolve the interpreter of the responsibility to strive for a fair and thorough understanding of the text.

The meaning of the Bible, that is, the summation of what the Bible teaches, does not depend on the individual interpreter, though the individual interpreter does play a role. Instead, the teaching of Scripture on any point of doctrine is the responsibility of the church, based on what the Scriptures say in the original languages.

If the exegesis of the Bible is not to be carried out using various techniques, how then is it to be done? The exegesis of the Bible is to be done by the careful examination of the scriptural statements in their various contexts. There is, at the bottom, the context of the word in the sentence. Then there is the context of the sentence in the paragraph. Then there is the context of the paragraph in the larger literary unit. Then there is the literary unit in the larger context of the book. Finally, there is the book in the context of the entire collection of the books of the Bible. That is, exegesis is no more, and no less, than a careful reading of the biblical text. Fundamentally this approach to biblical exegesis requires a thorough and profound knowledge of the content of the entire Bible.

In the past, techniques have been used as shortcuts to determine the meaning of the text. When I was in elementary and junior high school, we would occasionally have multiple choice tests. The teacher would have a template that they could lay over each student's test paper. The template would show for each question whether the student had marked the correct answer. It was a quick and easy way for the teacher to grade the tests. The various techniques developed in the critical period have been used as templates to read out the correct meaning of the text. Unfortunately, the Bible is not a multiple-choice test, and it does not give up its answers so easily. While the fundamental message of the Bible is clear, reaching the understanding of that message requires, for both the learned and the unlearned, the "due use of the ordinary means" (WCF I.7). Part of the reason for the continuing popularity of technique-driven exegesis is that most people read poorly. They do not pay careful attention to what they read, so need

17. This is precisely the assertion of N. T. Wright and other proponents of the New Perspectives on Paul.

techniques to help guide them to the content of the text. But the multiplying of techniques ends up distracting from the text, rather than illuminating it.

The minister who would explain and apply the Scriptures to his congregation must make the Bible the primary subject of his study. Commentaries are necessary. Theologies are helpful. But the exegesis of the Bible ultimately requires nothing less than an intimate acquaintance with all its details. There is no shortcut that can accomplish that. There is no technique that will enable the interpreter to make up for biblical ignorance. It is to this full-fledged intimate knowledge of the Bible that we must commit ourselves if we would faithfully expound the Word of God.

Two Examples

Two brief examples might illustrate both what is indicated by a careful reading of the text and the importance of understanding that the Bible provides its own context for interpretation. 1 Samuel 17 presents the story of David and Goliath. It is a well-known story, and there are basically three interpretations of the passage, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The first is that the story shows David's rise to power and the beginning of Saul's opposition to him. The second interpretation accepts the first but goes on to say that the story is really an illustration for all of us, that if we trust God, we may, with his help, slay the giants in our lives. The third interpretation agrees with the first, rejects the second, and goes on to say that the pitting of David against Goliath is really an illustration of the battle between the seed of the woman (here represented by David, God's anointed king) and Goliath (in his bronze scale armor) representing the seed of the serpent.

The first interpretation is a surface reading that could be achieved by reading the subheadings in most English translations. The second is a simplistic application of the first. The third is less simplistic, but is founded on the assumption that Jesus, or his type, must be found on every page. One wonders whether that's really the purpose of the story. None of these interpretations pay attention to all the details of the story. The chapter begins with the introduction of Goliath and his challenge to Israel. Then the story introduces David. The reader doesn't know at this point what David's role will be. Then the story introduces the Israelite army, including Saul, and its fear of Goliath. David then raises the question of why this uncircumcised Philistine should be allowed to get away with defying the armies of the living God. David at this point becomes Goliath's opponent. Saul dresses David in his own armor in order to prepare him for the contest. David, realizing that he can't operate in that armor, goes back to his shepherd's weapons, the staff and the sling. At that point, though Goliath doesn't know it, the end of the contest is certain. Rather than fighting Goliath on Goliath's terms, David is fighting the battle on his own terms. The use of the sling means that he doesn't need to get within reach of Goliath to enter into battle with him and defeat him. To sum up, we have David presented here as the man after God's heart, concerned more for the honor of God than for his own safety, and willing to put aside the obvious weapons for the weapons in which God has already trained him. These characteristics are seen throughout the rest of David's career in 1 and 2 Samuel. In other words, the conflict between David and Goliath gives the reader a peek into what David will become over the course of his life. Certainly, David is a type of Christ, but that is not the first thing on the text's own agenda.

A second example, focusing on the issue of context, has to do with the Song of Songs. Traditionally, this book was interpreted as representing the relationship between Christ and the church, or between Christ and the Christian soul. The book was understood to be an intentionally figurative work. In the nineteenth century, this traditional view was abandoned by the historical-critical interpreters. The book was first taken to not be operating at a figurative level, but on a literal level. The context for interpretation was no longer the Scriptures, but such things as Syrian wedding songs, pagan celebrations of fertility festivals, or Egyptian love poetry. As a result, the book has been in the present century presented and preached as some sort of Christian marriage manual. But the context that Scripture as a whole provides takes the reader in the traditional direction. Given the importance of marriage in the biblical view of life, the Scriptures are remarkably quiet about the physical aspect of marriage. But the Scriptures say quite a bit about the relationship between God and his people, very often using marriage as a metaphor for that relationship. It is in that context that the Song is to be understood.

Scripture interpreting Scripture, paying careful attention to the words of the Bible: That is the "new" old paradigm for biblical interpretation.▪

Shot through with Personality:
Establishing Man's Freedom within the Sovereign Plan of God

By Daniel Ragusa

Introduction

1. The Covenantal Framework of the Westminster Confession of Faith

Written at the entrance of the temple of Reformed theology are the words: "God does not exist because of man, but man because of God."[1] This Reformed principle of a relentless commitment to the preeminence of God's glory—what Geerhardus Vos called Scripture's "deepest root idea"—found its most natural expression in covenant theology.[2] Cornelius Van Til went so far as to say, "Covenant theology *is* Reformed theology."[3] For "only covenant theology gives all the glory to God, and without giving all the glory to God there is no true religion."[4] This covenantal schema is embodied in what B. B. Warfield called "the ripest fruit of Reformed creed-making," the Westminster Confession of Faith (hereafter WCF).[5]

This should come as no surprise for the Westminster divines were wholly committed to the glory of God as the chief end of man and self-consciously began with Scripture as their *principium cognoscendi*[6]—the two ingredients necessary for covenant theology. So, as Vos observed, "The Westminster Confession is the first Reformed confession in which the doctrine of the covenant is not merely brought in from the side, but placed in the foreground and has been able to permeate at almost every point."[7] Likewise Warfield is well-known for writing, "The architectonic principle of the Westminster Confession is supplied by the schematization of the Federal theology, which had obtained by this time in Britain, as on the Continent, a dominant position as the most commodious mode of presenting the *corpus* of Reformed doctrine."[8] The covenant, then, is not a disparate chapter in the confession, but the structural framework around which the entire confession is built, manifesting a commitment to the glory of God above all else.[9]

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1. Geerhardus Vos, "The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology," in *The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos: Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1980), 242.

2. Vos considers three implications of this Reformed principle that substantiate this claim—the third of which will coincide with the concern of Cornelius Van Til, which we will take up later: "When this principle is applied to man and his relationship to God, it immediately divides into three parts: 1. All of man's works has to rest on an antecedent work of God; 2. In all of his works man has to show forth God's image and be a means for the revelation of God's virtues; 3. The latter should not occur unconsciously or passively, but the revelation of God's virtues must proceed by way of understanding and will and by way of the conscious life, and actively come to external expression" ("The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology," 242). Van Til will appeal to this passage from Vos to establish the Reformed view on the relationship between the Absolute personality of God and the finite covenant personality of man (see "The Will in its Theological Relations," 46). Cf. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:23.

3. Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, second edition, ed. William Edgar (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 271. From now on *IST*.

4. Cornelius Van Til, *A Survey of Christian Epistemology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, n.a.), 98. From now on *SCE*. Elsewhere he writes, "All true religion is covenant religion and s based upon this name of God [*Jehovah*] as the one who is unchangeable in his attitude of saving grace to his people" (*IST*, 321).

5. B. B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work* (1932; repr., Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1991), 58.

6. Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), chapter 1.

7. Geerhardus Vos, "The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology," 239.

8. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, 56.

9. Anthony Hoekema writes, "The doctrine of the covenant of grace is … the vertebrate structure which holds all the doctrines of Reformed theology together" (*Herman Bavinck's Doctrine of the*

2. WCF 3.1, The Covenant, and Van Til's Representational Principle

The above context will be vital for the focus of this paper in understanding the way in which the confession relates God's absolute sovereignty to human freedom without falling into the rationalism of either fatalism or deism in chapter 3 ("Of God's Eternal Decree"). The divines' treatment of ultimate and second causes is tied to the personal God of the covenant. The nature of the decree is not argued for on the basis of abstraction or philosophical speculation, but grounded in a biblical understanding of God as the self-sufficient and self-contained triune God (2.1–3). The confession reads,

> 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 (3.1).

The primary question of concern is this: *How does the covenantal structure of the Westminster Confession of Faith inform its theological formulation of God's sovereignty and human freedom?* While this question could be considered from numerous vantage points, this paper will focus on the way in which Cornelius Van Til provides an answer by way of his representational principle in continuity with the theology of the confession.[10] His representational principle pushes us beyond a superficial and impersonal understanding of the covenant idea, for it pushes us to its most basic foundation: the self-sufficient triune God of Scripture. Van Til writes,

> The *covenant idea* is nothing but the *expression* of the *representational principle* consistently applied to all reality. The *foundation* of the representational principle among men is the fact that the *Trinity* exists in the form of a mutually exhaustive representation of the three Persons that constitute it.[11]

Notice that the covenant, according to Van Til, has an exhaustive impact on "all reality," charging the whole of it with personality. Man does not operate or make choices in a vacuum or in an atmosphere of chance—such would render his will inoperative and his choices meaningless—but in an exhaustively personalistic environment, that is, in the comprehensive plan of God. "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). At all times and in all places man is *coram Deo semper*. The Trinity, in whom there is no residue of impersonality since the persons are mutually exhaustive of each other (perichoresis), provides the necessary ontological foundation for this personalistic environment, which is expressed in the covenant idea. At the heart of the covenant, then, is personal union and communion with the triune God. "I will be your God and you will be my people" is the refrain of the biblical narrative and the goal that consummates all of human history. History, therefore, is not bare or impersonal history, but covenantal history, the outworking of the sovereign purposes of the triune God unto their eschatological fulfillment.

Van Til's representational principle is a brilliant systematic move that integrates the deep contours of theology: trinity, covenant, and eschatology. *Eschatology* is the historical consummation of the *covenant idea*, which expresses the *representational principle* that is grounded in the perichoretic relations of the ontological *Trinity*. The representational principle in God, then, is the mutually exhaustive representation of the persons in each other with no residue of impersonality. This paper will

Covenant, 360). He also notes a similar point in the thought of Herman Bavinck who understood the doctrine of the covenant to be central to theology because it is central in Scripture. He writes, "Bavinck even goes so far as to say that, apart from the doctrine of the covenant, the Reformed creeds and the Reformed theology cannot be understood on a single point" (ibid., 69–70; see also 110, 325). To support this claim Hoekema cites Bavinck's *Roeping en Wedergeboorte* (Kampen: Zaleman, 1903), 92ff. The same point is made by Geerhardus Vos, who writes, "The relation of the redeemed to God, their Redeemer is a covenant-relation.… The entire revelation of God is dominated by this idea" (*Dogmatiek* [Grand Rapids: 1910], Vol. 1, Part II, p. 84; cited by Hoekema, 306).

10. To my knowledge the only extensive treatment of Van Til's representational principle is found in Lane Tipton, "The Triune Personal God: Trinitarian Theology in the Thought of Cornelius Van Til" (dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia,2004). Tipton, while doing the heavy lifting in laying the foundation for constructive development of Van Til's representational principle, does not directly treat the way in which it relates to divine sovereignty and human freedom. See also Lane G. Tipton, "The Function of Perichoresis and the Divine Incomprehensibility," *WTJ* 64 (2002): 289–306. John Frame makes brief mention of the principle, but leaves unexcavated its programmatic impact on Van Til's theology (see *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1995], 58–61). Pierce Taylor Hibbs considers the representational principle and the way in which it renders *language* meaningful ("Closing the Gaps: Perichoresis and the Nature of Language," *WTJ* 78 [2016]: 299–322). Our concern in this paper is how it renders *human choices* meaningful.

11. Van Til, *SCE*, 96. The relationship between the covenant and God's triune being is found earlier in the writings of Geerhardus Vos, who had a major influence on Van Til's thought. Vos writes, "Just as the blessedness of God exists in the free relationship of the three Persons of the adorable Being, so man shall also find his blessedness in the covenantal relationship with his God.… [I]t is only in the triune Being that that perfect freedom dominates which the covenant idea appears to demand" ("The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology," 245–46).

expound upon these basic points of Van Til's theology as well as make explicit their organic relationship to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

3. The Relevancy of this Paper

Before proceeding, however, we should note the relevancy of this exploration in the confession of faith and Van Til's theology. There has been a welcomed resurgence to Reformed theology in recent years, which is a good sign of the church returning to Scripture and realizing its "root idea" of the glory of God. Unfortunately, Reformed theology is often reduced to the five points of Calvinism as found in the Canons of Dort[12] and so abstracted from the larger Reformed system, which is structurally covenantal. As Van Til said, "Covenant theology *is* Reformed theology."[13] Richard Muller exposes this problem well,

> Calvinism or, better, Reformed teaching, as defined by the great Reformed confessions does include the so-called five points. Just as it is improper, however, to identify Calvin as the sole progenitor of Reformed theology, so also is it incorrect to identify the five points or the document from which they have been drawn, the *Canons of Dort*, as a full confession of the Reformed faith, whole and entire unto itself. In other words, it would be a major error—both historically and doctrinally—if the five points of Calvinism were understood either as the sole or even as the absolutely primary basis for identifying someone as holding the Calvinistic or Reformed faith. In fact, the *Canons of Dort* contain five points *only* because the Arminian articles, the *Remonstrance* of 1610, to which they responded, had five points. The number five, far from being sacrosanct, is the result of a particular historical circumstance and was determined *negatively* by the number of articles in the Arminian objection to confessional Calvinism.[14]

At least two problems arise from this. First, many have embraced the five points *abstracted from their covenantal context*. This has led to a misunderstanding of Reformed theology by its opponents and a distortion of the five points by its proponents, the former waging *accusations* of fatalism or philosophical determinism, and the latter *purporting* some species of fatalism or philosophical determinism, despite explicit objections to such conclusions. Van Til and the confession avoid these issues by means of situating the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom within its personalistic covenantal context.

Second, many have embraced the five points *purely in reaction to Arminianism*, but have not escaped the fundamental rationalism of Arminianism. So while they object to Arminian conclusions they continue to operate with the same methodology and merely end up on the opposite end of the same rationalistic spectrum. Fatalism is as much rationalistic as libertarianism. It is as much a problem to rationalize away God's sovereignty as it is to rationalize away human freedom.[15] In contrast, Van Til and the Westminster Confession operate on a different methodological spectrum entirely and are able to maintain the tension between the two equally valid biblical truths of divine sovereignty and human freedom.[16] Van Til will explicitly push the tension back into the Trinity in whom unity and diversity are equally ultimate, so that neither compromises the other.

4. Thesis

According to Van Til's representational principle, for man's will to operate and for an act of his will to be significant and meaningful it *must* take place within an exhaustively personal environment, that is, it *must* take place within the sovereign and eternal plan of the self-sufficient triune God. The absolute freedom of God does not *take away* or *limit* man's freedom, but rather *establishes* it in an analogical fashion.

1. Doctrinal Backdrop: The Self-Sufficient and Self-Contained Triune God of Scripture

Along with the covenantal structure of the confession—which is the natural product of the divine's commitment to the glory of God (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q1) and God's Word as their *principium cognoscendi* (WCF 1)—we also need to take into account

12. These five points are often summarized by the acronym TULIP: Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace and Perseverance of the saints.

13. Van Til, *IST*, 271.

14. Richard A. Muller, "How Many Points?," *CTJ* 28 (1993): 426.

15. "As alone the Calvinist is concerned to oppose indeterminism at the lowest level of existence, so also he alone is concerned to oppose determinism" (Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, fourth edition, ed. K. Scott Oliphint [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008], 273). From now on *DF4*.

16. We should note here at the outset of our study that this tension exists only for finite man and not for the infinite God whose thoughts are higher than our thoughts as the heavens are higher than the earth (Isa. 55:9). While the Reformed approach, particularly as it is expressed by Van Til, allows us to *maintain* this tension, it does not necessarily *resolve* it. We are still required to humble ourselves by the power of the Spirit before the revelation of God so as not to answer back to him (Rom. 9:20), but to rest in his goodness and faithfulness unto the doxological praise of his inscrutable ways and unsearchable judgments (Rom. 11:33–36).

the doctrinal backdrop erected in the second chapter ("Of God, and of the Holy Trinity") leading up to God's eternal decree in the third chapter. When chapter three begins with "God" as the agent of the decree it does not have in mind a vague theistic notion of God, but particularly the self-revealed triune God of Scripture. For, to echo Van Til, no other God than the God of Scripture exists: "there is but *one only*, living, and true God" (2.1).[17] To ascribe the decrees to any other God is to ascribe them to an un-reality, a non-existent figment of a fallen, finite mind. This, as will be shown, distorts the nature of the decree and inevitably devolves it into a kind of fatalism or philosophical necessity that takes away the freedom and contingency of secondary causes.

In this section we will first briefly consider the confession's doctrine of God, which stands behind its formulation of God's eternal decree, and then turn to Van Til's formulation, which makes explicit that it is none other than the self-sufficient triune God of Scripture who is the agent of the decree—this will become foundational for his representational principle. As a point of contrast, we will conclude this section with a critique of R. C. Sproul's formulation in his popular book *Chosen by God*.

1.1 The Westminster Confession of Faith on the Doctrine of God

On the basis of God's self-revelation in Scripture, the divines first speak of God *in se* as "infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, *most free*, most absolute" (2.1). Here God is considered as he is in and of himself in an absolute sense. It then considers God *pro nobis*: "working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory…" (2.1). Here God is considered relatively as he relates to his creation.

The second paragraph moves into describing "God's 'aseity,' or absolute independence from all things."[18]

> God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself *all-sufficient,* not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and *hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent, or uncertain*. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them (2.2).

We will continually return to this notion of the absolute independence of God in our discussion of his sovereignty in relationship to human freedom and responsibility. At the heart of our critiques of Arminianism, Lutheranism, Deism, fatalism, philosophical determinism, etc., is a most basic failure to maintain this biblical truth. As we will come to see, these formulations conceive of man's freedom in such a way that makes God *dependent*, at least to some degree, upon the creature and to that extent depersonalize the surroundings of man, so that he operates in a void or vacuum, and introduce elements of impersonality into the triune God himself.[19] The absolute independence and freedom of God as established in the confession (2.2), therefore, is vital for maintaining the absolute personality of God, which, in turn, is vital for maintaining the exhaustively personal atmosphere in which *alone* man can operate and his choices be significant and meaningful.

It is not enough only to take into account Confession 2.1 and 2.2 as necessary background for understanding the decree, for 2.3, which provides a concise statement on the Trinity, is just as vital. It reads,

> In the *unity* of the Godhead there be *three* persons, of *one* substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son (WCF 2.3).

17. Van Til, *DF4*, 34.

18. Chad Van Dixhoorn, *Confessing the Faith: A Reader's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2016), 33.

19. See Van Til, *Christianity and Idealism* (Philadelphia, PA: P&R Publishing, 1955), 96–97, 121, 123, 126–27, 136, 138–39. "If God is absolute personality he is completely self-conscious. God is light and in him is no darkness at all. There are no hidden depths of troubled possibility within or beyond him. He knoweth the end from the beginning. it [sic.] is this absolute selfconsciousness of God that forms the basis of certainty for our knowledge. Possibility for us is deeper than the deepest sea. If it were so also for God the whole of our coherent experience would be adrift on a shoreless, bottomless void. Our thought would be operating in a vacuum. If there is to be any rationality or coherence anywhere there must be absolute rationality somewhere. Our rationality rests upon God's rationality" (pp. 126–27).

We find this oversight, for example, in the work of J. V. Fesko, in which he dedicates three pages to the doctrinal backdrop in his chapter on God and the decree.[20] He concludes without any mention of the doctrine of the Trinity: "Understanding God's attributes, considered both absolutely and relatively, is key to the proper understanding of how the divines explain the nature of the decree."[21] This is problematic, for the triunity of God is not a mere appendage to our theological system, but its very heart.[22] Furthermore, it is fundamental for maintaining the absolute personality of God, which is essential for Van Til's representational principle and for avoiding species of fatalism and philosophical determinism. The confession can seamlessly bring together the unity and diversity of God in perfect harmony.

1.2 Van Til's Trinitarian Theology

Van Til self-consciously initiates his entire theological and apologetic project with the self-sufficient, self-contained triune God of Scripture.

> Christianity offers the triune God, the absolute personality … as the God in whom we believe. This conception of God is the foundation of everything else that we hold dear. Unless we can believe in this sort of God, it does us no good to be told that we may believe in some other sort of God, or in anything else. For us everything depends for its meaning upon this sort of God. Accordingly we are not interested to have anyone prove to us the existence of any other sort of God but this God. Any other sort of God is no God at all, and to prove that some other sort of God exists is, in effect, to prove that no God exists.[23]

With this in view, Lane Tipton writes, "Reformed trinitarian theism appropriately encapsulates the theology of Cornelius Van Til."[24]

Elsewhere Van Til echoes the language of the confession regarding God's absolute independence:

> God's being is self-sufficient, his knowledge is analytical, and his will is self-referential. In his being, knowledge, and will God is *self-contained*. There is nothing correlative to him. He does not depend on his being, knowledge, or will upon the being, knowledge, or will of his own creatures. God is *absolute*. He is *autonomous*.[25]

In this description, Van Til has in view none other than the triune personal God of Scripture. In terms of the confession: the God of 2.2 who is *a se* is none other than the triune God of 2.3.

> God exists in himself as a triune self-consciously active being. *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are each a personality and together constitute the exhaustively personal God*. There is an eternal, internal self-conscious interaction between the three persons of the Godhead. They are co-substantial. Each is as much God as are the other two. The Son and the Spirit do not derive their being from the Father. *The diversity and the unity in the Godhead are therefore equally ultimate; they are exhaustively correlative to one another and not correlative to anything else*.[26]

From this we can make at least three observations. First, notice that "the fact that the Trinity exists in the form of a mutually exhaustive representation of the three Persons that constitute it," will become for Van Til "the foundation of the representational principle among men."[27] This will be explored in a subsequent section.

Second, it is to *this triune God* who Van Til ascribes the eternal decree and to none other. Note the way he prefaces his citation of the confession (3.3), "I further hold that *the self-sufficient triune God* 'from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeable ordain whatsoever comes to pass.'"[28] The decree of the self-sufficient triune God *alone* can establish the liberty or contingency of second causes, for as we will see, he alone can provide the personalistic environment in which man can make significant and meaningful choices. When we say that man's surroundings are shot through with personality we are iterating Van Til's representational principle.

Third, the starting point for Van Til's entire theological enterprise is *special revelation*. He does not begin with a bare theistic notion of God founded on some kind of natural revelation or theology, but explicitly

20. We should note that Fesko's work is intentionally selective, nevertheless he explicitly considers the theological background for the decrees, yet makes no mention of the Trinity.

21. J. V. Fesko, *The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context & Theological Insights* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 101. We should note that Fesko does maintain both primary and secondary causes.

22. Van Til cites Bavinck as writing, "The trinity is the heart of Christianity" in *DF4*, 33.

23. Van Til, *DF4*, 34.

24. Tipton, *The Trune Personal God*, 1.

25. Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, second ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003), 28–29. From now on *CA*.

26. Van Til, *CA*, 29. He will later conclude, "The Christian teaching of the ontological Trinity, therefore, gives it a clearly distinguishable metaphysic, epistemology, and ethic. In all these three Christian theism is wholly different from any other philosophy of life" (p. 30).

27. Van Til, *SCE*, 96.

28. Van Til, *DF4*, 242, 243.

with the self-contained triune God who has made himself known by special revelation that has now been inscripturated.[29] The finite mind is in desperate need of special revelation, for on its own it cannot conceive of anything higher than a finite God, and for a finite God to foreordain whatsoever comes to pass is inescapably fatalistic. The significance of this can be seen by way of contrast with the popular formulation of R. C. Sproul.

1.3 Critique of R. C. Sproul

Sproul recounts an instance when he began a class by reading the opening lines from confession of faith chapter three. After reading it, he asked the class, "Is there anyone in this room who does not believe the words that I just read?" A multitude of hands went up. He then asks, "Are there any convinced atheists in the room?" Nobody raised their hands. He then quipped, "Everyone who raised his hand to the first question should also have raised his hand to the second question."[30] He goes on to provide his reasoning for this, "I tried to explain to the class that the idea that God foreordains whatever comes to pass is not an idea unique to Calvinism. It isn't even unique to Christianity. *It is simply a tenet of theism*—a necessary tenet of theism."[31] According to Sproul, the decree by which God foreordains whatever comes to pass is merely a necessary result of God's sovereignty.

We do not have the space to provide a full-fledged critique of Sproul's position, though in a sense this entire paper functions as a critique in that it argues that the only way to maintain the tension between God's sovereignty and human responsibility without devolving into fatalism or some kind of philosophical determinism is by way of the representational principle, which is inherently trinitarian and cannot be established by a bare non-trinitarian, theistic notion of God.

The issue is that the sovereignty of a general theistic god, as Sproul argues for, is *qualitatively* different from the sovereignty of the triune God of Scripture—there is no shared concept of sovereignty between the two. The former temporizes the eternal as it confines it within the bounds of finite understanding, while the latter alone interprets God's sovereignty by means of purely eternal categories on the basis of special revelation.[32] The former fails to maintain the basic Creator/creature distinction, for the sovereignty and freedom of God does not go beyond finite instances of sovereignty and freedom—they are qualitatively the same. The latter, however, maintains the Creator/creature distinction in full force—the sovereignty of God is to be interpreted in eternal categories and so is qualitatively distinct from finite instances—they are qualitatively different, according to the Creator/creature distinction, but analogically related.[33] The former is fundamentally antitheistic (which is ironic as Sproul's goal is to maintain that it is basic to theism), while the latter is consistently theistic. In summary, we might categorize Sproul's conception of God's sovereignty as "finite sovereignty" or "creaturely sovereignty," while Van Til and the confession's conception could be spoken of as "infinite sovereignty" or "absolute sovereignty," which becomes the archetype of "finite sovereignty" or "creaturely sovereignty." Van Til in an article for *Calvin College Chimes* Editorial writes,

> Our view of man as the spiritual production of God points to God as the archetype of all human freedom. Human freedom must be like God's freedom, since man resembles God, and it must be different from God's freedom since man is a finite creature. In God, then, lies the archetype of human freedom.… We are fashioned after God and our freedom after God's freedom. But never ought we to lose sight of the fact that our freedom is distinguished from God's freedom by reason of our finitude.[34]

Contrary to Van Til's archetype/ectype freedom schema, Sproul conceives of the freedom of God and the freedom of man as *qualitatively* equal since he ascribes freedom to God on the basis of natural reasoning. In other words,

29. Cf. Geerhardus Vos, *RD*, 1:177: "In the creation of the universe by the triune God lies the guarantee that nature also, as far as it extends, provides a trustworthy revelation of the being of God. It is not as if the natural revelation must lead to Unitarian results and then suddenly, in a totally unprepared fashion, the idea of the Trinity appears before us on the basis of God's supernatural revelation. The more and better we get to know nature, the more we will be brought face to face with the *triune* God" (emphasis mine).

30. R. C. Sproul, *Chosen by God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 171.

31. Sproul, *Chosen by God*, 172.

32. While the conscious content of Sproul's teaching is theistic, the hidden impetus is surprisingly pantheistic in that God is changed into man and his eternal attributes are defined by the temporal. For the helpful distinction between "conscious content" and "hidden impetus" see Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:76. Vos has in view Lutheran Christology, but his critique of its underlying pantheism on pages 79–81 is applicable to our critique of Sproul. The mixture of the eternal and the temporal will also be explored later when we consider Van Til's critique of Luther's semi-determinism and Melanchton's synergism.

33. See Van Til, *SCE*, 109.

34. Van Til, "Freedom" in Collection of Articles from 1920–1939, 4. https://presupp101.wordpress.com/2011/08/13/collection-of-articles-from-1920-1939-by-cornelius-van-til/ [accessed July 26, 2018].

God and man subsist on the same spectrum of freedom with God positioned above man. The distinction is not qualitative, but *quantitative*. Many errors arise from this schema. First, God's absolute freedom and sovereignty does not *establish* man's freedom as the WCF teaches, but rather *limits* it in a kind of zero-sum game.[35] Sproul writes, "Autonomy implies absolute freedom. We are free, but there are *limits* to our freedom. The ultimate *limit* is the sovereignty of God."[36] Accordingly, "if God has no right of coercion, then he has no right of governing his creation."[37] Because God is above man on the spectrum of freedom, he can restrict or limit man's freedom, but man can never restrict God's freedom. So, Sproul concludes, "God is free. I am free. God is [quantitatively] *more* free than I am. If my freedom runs up against God's freedom, I lose. His freedom restricts mine; my freedom does not restrict his."[38]

This positions Sproul between a rock and a hard place, for his abstract notion of analogy inevitably results in God and man being correlative to one another.[39] First, if man's freedom cannot limit God's freedom then he has cascaded into *fatalism* or *determinism* and the relationship between God and man is purely *mechanical* and *impersonal*. He is unable to do full justice to human personality as well as the personalistic covenantal context in which man operates and the decree of God is understood—in fact, Sproul makes no mention of the covenant in his book.[40] Behind this stands a compromised doctrine of the Trinity. For, as we will demonstrate later, it is impossible for God, who is absolute personality, to create except according to the representational principle.[41] The absolutely personal God, in whom there is no residue of impersonality, cannot create an impersonal environment and continue to be the absolutely personal God.[42]

Second, if man is granted any freedom, then to whatever extent he is free, to that extent God has conceded his own freedom, made himself dependent upon the creation, introduced into himself elements of impersonalism, and so, ultimately, has ceased to be God.

35. "This world has meaning *not in spite of,* but *because of*, the self-completeness of the ontological Trinity" (Van Til, *IST*, 359). Herman Bavinck also avoids the rationalism that would set God's freedom and man's freedom in opposition to one another, rather than understanding the former to establish the latter: "If God and his human creatures can only be conceived as *competitors*, and if the one can only retain his freedom and independence at the expense of the other, then God has to be increasingly restricted both in knowledge and in will. Pelagianism, accordingly, banishes God from his world. It leads both to Deism and atheism and thrones human arbitrariness and folly. Therefore, the solution of the problem must be sought in another direction. It must be sought in the fact that God—because he is God and the universe is his creation—by the infinitely majestic activity of his knowing and willing, *does not destroy* but instead *creates* and *maintains* the freedom and independence of his creatures" (*Reformed Dogmatics,* 2:376–77, emphasis mine; see also p. 379). Likewise Geerhardus Vos understands God's eternal decree as the foundation of man's freedom: "...God can realize His decrees with reference to His creatures *without needing to limit their freedom in a deterministic manner*. Their free acts are not uncertain and the certainty to which these acts are connected is not brought about by God in a materialistic, pantheistic, or rationalistic manner. As the omnipresent and omnipotent One, the personal One, He can so govern man that man can do nothing without His will and permission and still do everything of himself in full freedom. When God sanctifies someone, He is at work in the depths of his being where the issues of life are, and then the sanctified will acts of itself and unconstrained outwardly no less freely than if it never had been under the working of God. *The work of God does not destroy the freedom of the creature but is precisely its foundation*" (*Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:90–91, emphasis mine).

36. Sproul, *Chosen by God*, 181, emphasis mine.

37. Sproul, *Chosen by God*, 182.

38. Sproul, *Chosen by God*, 182, emphasis mine.

39. "When one thus begins with the abstract notion of the analogy of being, God and man are bound to come out of this vague sort of being as correlatives to one another" (Van Til, *IST*, 333). Van Til says this with regard to Roman Catholic theology, but it applies to the natural reasoning of Sproul. Both "cannot find a real creation doctrine …. One must choose between saying that God is a self-contained being and that human beings are created analogous of him while he is the original and not the analogue of them, and saying that there is a vague general being that divides itself by the process of limitation into various modes. In the former case, we have the truly Christian notion of being, and in the second case, we have what is really the pagan notion of being. The Aristotelian notion of the analogy of being cannot be harmonized with the Creator-creature idea of Scripture" (p. 333). We must begin concretely with God's self-revelation in Scripture regarding his original sovereignty and original freedom and from there analogically develop our conception of man's derivative freedom and derivative sovereignty. While we have exposed the fundamental methodological problem with Sproul's view, we can say positively that, like Jonathan Edwards, whom Sproul is dependent upon in his formulation, he does, in fact, demonstrate the impossibility of affirming the liberty of indifference of the faculty of the will—a major tenet of the Arminianism and Liberalism that Edwards was combating. Van Til provides a critique of Edwards' position in his essay "The Will and its Theological Relations," 30–32, 36–38. He does not view Edwards as operating on purely anti-theistic grounds, but as trying to mix both theism and Berkeleian Idealism, the *principium speciale* and the *principium generale*.

40. The same can be said about Edwards who seems not to have escaped his Berkeleian Idealism. See Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 37. He writes, "Berkeleian idealism must always tend to abstraction from the finite in order to do justice to the infinite. Mysticism on this basis becomes a denial of the finite processes; a theory of the will on this basis can never do complete justice to man" (p. 37).

41. "Since the whole being of God, if we may in all reverence say so, is built upon the representational plan, it was impossible for God to create except upon the representational plan" (Van Til, *SCE*, 79).

42. Sproul only speaks of God as personal once in the final chapter of his book: "Predestination is rooted in the character of a personal and righteous God" (*Chosen by God*, 261).

Here we can recognize the significance of Van Til beginning with special revelation as his ultimate standard, rather than natural reason.[43] There is, according to Van Til, an absolute antithesis between the two *principia*.[44] Because of the noetic effects of sin, natural reason or general revelation cannot arrive at a biblical understanding of God's nature, attributes, and decrees and man's relation to them. Van Til writes,

> Fundamentally anyone that has placed himself or who has been placed upon the basis of the *principium speciale* as before defined, will try to do justice to all the elements in revelation. He makes God's revelation the standard and adjusts his concept of liberty accordingly. On the other hand anyone standing on the basis of the *principium generale* will in the ultimate sense make himself the standard, will not without reservation submit himself to revelation and thus either come to determinism, whether it be pantheistic, materialistic or rationalistic, or to libertarianism according as his views of psychology, epistemology and metaphysics may vary.[45]

Furthermore, the mixture of the two *principia* leads into the errors of rationalism and impersonalism. According to Van Til, when one is not *wholly* committed to special revelation and does not *wholly* submit to the position of Scripture on the nature of God and of man, then,

> surreptitiously a new head arises from the serpent of rationalism, and there results confusion worse confounded. If this is not the case it is a happy inconsistency. The views of God and man and of their relations to one another, i.e. the views of the will, vary as they consistently or inconsistently keep out this rationalistic motif.[46]

43. Van Til distinguishes between a Christian way of negation and a non-Christian way of negation. The former begins with the personal and concrete God of Scripture as its ultimate starting point, while the latter begins with the creature and arrives at an empty and abstract notion of God. This point can have massive pastoral implications. Van Til writes, "*That abstract way of negation is a convenient tool for the sinner by which to remove the positive attributes of God from making direct demands upon him*" (*IST*, 324). In other words, the sinner cannot entirely escape their sense of God and so tries to hide away in *imagined places of impersonality*. While the believer loves being *coram Deo semper*, the sinner hates that he is everywhere confronted with the self-conscious revelation of the absolute personal God, so that his environment is shot through with *personality*. An *imagined* environment of impersonality is shot through with *chance*, so that man lives, moves and has his being in a void or vacuum. This upholds fallen man's false sense of autonomy, for it means his surroundings impose zero obligation upon him (contrary to living within the personal plan of God). Instead of remaining a finite covenant personality in his fallen estate as a covenant breaker, he *impersonalizes* (a) God, (b) his environment and (c) himself. Yet despite his attempt to salvage his autonomous personhood in his revolt against the One in whom he has his being (by conceiving of him abstractly), he ironically makes *himself* an abstraction and so ceases to be a *person*. In contrast, our *union* with Christ by which we receive all the benefits of redemption is unto our *communion* with the self-contained triune God of Scripture, who is Absolute Personality—fellowship with him alone can satisfy the hearts of men. This means our preaching should confront people with this personal, covenantal God as their only comfort in life and in death, and in our evangelism we should expose the areas of impersonality where sinners are trying to hide, and point them to the grace of God that freely invites them through the shed blood of the God-man, Jesus Christ, into the marvelous light of his presence, which is charged with personality. Van Til will go on to critique Barth who operates according to an abstract notion by assuming "no difference between the Christian and the non-Christian when it comes to knowledge of the things of this world" (p. 325). The same could be argued against Sproul here as he conceives of a definition of God's freedom and sovereignty that does not begin with special revelation, but is arrived at by the natural reasoning of all people, whether Christian or non-Christian. "If man claims to know anything independently of God, he has equated the level of his own thought with the level of God's thought" (p. 325). Herein is our critique of Sproul's univocal reasoning of God's freedom and man's freedom, rather than conceiving of them in an analogical fashion according to the basic Creator/creature distinction. Sproul moves from a creaturely conception of freedom and by way of eminence arrives at God's freedom. But this introduces only a finite God, a God whose freedom is like man's freedom; rather than man's ectypal freedom being analogical to God's archetypal freedom. While we must speak of God anthropomorphically, for we are creatures and that is how God has revealed himself in Scripture, yet "we must be alert to the danger that we should forget that God is the original and that we are the derivatives" (p. 326). "Everything with respect to God is on the plane of the *absolute*, while everything with respect to man is *derivative*. On the other hand, we have in man a copy, something of that which God has revealed with respect to himself. Man's being is analogical of God's being" (p. 327). Thus we speak of God's absolute covenant personality as the archetype of man's finite covenant personality. We begin with God's concrete special revelation and reason about God analogically (not univocally or equivocally). Our conception of God, then, is "an analogical reproduction of the notion that God has of himself. Our notions or concepts are finite replicas of God's notions" (p. 328). An abstract approach to God's freedom and sovereignty ends in impersonalism.

44. Van Til writes, "The *principium speciale* is a denial of the ultimate validity of the *principium generale*. By the former we are placed on Biblical grounds. This implies the recognition that we accept a logic that is higher than ours as the final bar of appeal. Hence we seek not to subject any part of Scripture to the *principium generale*, nor subject any part of Scripture revelation to any other part, for that amounts to the same thing as again subjecting it to our own judgment" ("The Will in its Theological Relations," 77).

45. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 28. He concludes regarding Edwards, "For the time being it suffices that we have pointed out Edwards' failure to harmonize entirely all the givens of revelation. And again this was due to the fact that he tried to combine to an extent the *principium generale* with the *speciale*, or at least that he did not fully see their complete antithesis. From time to time the old leaven of Berkeleian Idealism asserted itself; then Edwards lost to an extent the purely Biblical theistic conception of God and man" (p. 38).

46. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 28.

By conceiving of the sovereignty of God by means of natural reasoning,[47] Sproul posits God's freedom and man's freedom as univocal concepts and is unable to arrive at a qualitatively different, though analogically related freedom between God and man and so fails to maintain the basic doctrine of creation that establishes the Creator-creature distinction and forbids "the intermixture of the categories of time and eternity."[48] Sproul's intention is for man to realize his end of living to the glory of God and he attempts to secure this in his formulation by not compromising the sovereignty of God, while also doing justice to man's freedom. However, owing to his flawed methodology, he tries to arrive at man's chief end by way of *subtraction* from finite covenant personality, rather than through the *realization* or *establishment* of it.

2. Covenant Theology: Absolute Personality and Finite Covenant Personality

We have already recognized the covenant as the architectonic principle of the WCF and noted the deficiency of Sproul's view to maintain a robust covenant theology in which the finite personality of man is fully realized and established. It has been the prerogative of a consistent Reformed theology committed to an unmixed *principia speciale* to establish the relationship between the triune God and man, "maintaining even then the absolute dependence of man upon God, or in other words maintaining the Absoluteness of God and yet allowing of a finite covenant personality with ample room, and exactly enough room for the highest and only possible form of freedom conceivable for a creature."[49] This has been accomplished by way of a full-fledged covenant theology.

This has arose from a desire to be faithful to three great principles found in Scripture, namely,

> first that all work of man must find its basis in a preceding work of God. Secondly, that in all his works man ought to reveal the image of God and be a means to revelation of the virtues to God and thirdly, that this purpose must be attained not passively, but actively through the mind and will, through the conscious life of the finite creature.[50]

The covenant idea avoids the rationalistic schema entirely, falling neither into the error of fatalism (as Sproul trends toward) nor the error of Pelagianism or Arminianism in which the will of man is thought to operate independent of the plan of God. Reformed theology is opposed to both of these positions for a non-covenantal relation "at one point or another is bound to wreak itself in a pantheistic ulcer, or a deistic frost."[51] The covenant alone furnishes the possibility of real human freedom. "The current of divine influx into temporal life descends through the copper line of the covenant and is mediated through the covenant personality of Adam and dispatched without obstruction to his posterity."[52]

By covenant theology, according to Van Til and the Reformed tradition, "is not meant that theory about the relation of Adam to his posterity that is opposed to Realism, but rather it is that *larger view that looks upon the entire relation between God and man in creation and redemption to be of a federal nature*."[53] So, as we cited earlier, "The covenant idea is nothing but the expression of the representational principle consistently *applied to all reality*."[54] Covenant theology has provided the Reformed with a "firm and conscious metaphysical basis."[55]

Van Til makes explicit that undergirding the covenant idea as its theological or doctrinal basis, which helps to avoid the errors of rationalism when formulating the relationship between God and man, the Infinite and the finite, is the doctrine of the Trinity.[56] In other words, the personal covenant relation has its foundation in the exhaustively personal relations of the Trinity. Both of these elements—the covenant and God as none other than the self-sufficient triune God of Scripture—are not foreign to the Westminster Confession, but integral to it, and will be skillfully weaved together by Van Til for a thoroughly Reformed (and so biblical) conception of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. This, in turn, incites us to a consideration of his *representational principle*, which we come to next.

47. In his article, "The Will in its Theological Relations," Van Til evaluates the entirety of secular philosophy from the Greeks, Plato and Aristotle to Enlightenment thinkers, Kant and Hegel, and concludes "that we shall have to choose definitely between the alternative of building on natural reason and, if we be logical, turn to despair, or admit that we must get down from our pedestals as judges and let God pronounce judgment upon us" (p. 23).

48. Van Til, *SCE*, 66.

49. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 46. That it is the *only* form has an apologetic import, for "the implication of the finite consciousness is theism" (p. 77).

50. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 46. These same three principles were mentioned in an earlier article by Vos (see fn. 2).

51. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 54.

52. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 54.

53. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 54. This is not the same as confusing covenant and ontology as Ralph Smith does in *Paradox and Truth* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2002).

54. Van Til, *SCE*, 96.

55. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 47.

56. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 47.

3. Van Til's Representational Principle

3.1 The Representational Principle

We have demonstrated that Van Til does not ascribe the eternal decree to the non-revelatory god of theism. To ascribe the eternal decree to such a god is to ascribe it to a figment of rationalism and inevitably fall into a kind of fatalism or determinism. Such a god does not exist. The Subject of Westminster Confession 3.1 is the triune God of Scripture who has been described in 2.1–3. Therefore, "God," that is, *the self-sufficient triune God of Scripture* and none other, "from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass" (WCF 3.1).[57]

Van Til's representational principle can be understood in two ways. Tipton provides a concise overview,

> First, when understood *in se*, the representational principle denotes the absolutely personal fellowship within the ontological Trinity. The personal communion within the Godhead is so complete that it excludes every vestige of impersonality. In addition to this, the representational principle, understood *pro nobis*, denotes the *covenantal relationship* among the persons in the Godhead, or between the Creator and the creature. In Van Til's thought, the absolutely personal and self-sufficient triune God provides the ontological ground for the *possibility* of the covenant relationship.[58]

3.2 The Representational Principle in se

When we come to understand the representational principle *in se*, we must begin by noting that Van Til's doctrine of the Trinity avoids any kind of rationalism that would prioritize either the unity above the diversity (modalism) or the diversity above the unity (tritheism). Instead, he maintains both as equally ultimate and conceives of them as being eternally harmonized in the absolute personality of the ontological Trinity. Tipton writes, "Van Til's approach will not grant logical primacy either to God's simple and undivided *ousia* nor the divine *hypostases*; rather, he sees both as limiting conceptions which are neither logically nor metaphysically prior to one another, since unity and diversity in the Godhead are equally ultimate."[59] Tipton will go on to observe that Van Til includes the doctrine of *perichoresis* along with God's *ousia* and *hypostases* as equally ultimate limiting conceptions.[60] This forms the basis for Van Til arguing that "every aspect of God's triune life is *exhaustively* personal."[61] Here then is the representational principle *in se*: "In the Trinity there is completely personal relationship without residue."[62] In this respect, God is absolute or ultimate personality.

Before proceeding we should also note here that Van Til conceives of God's eternal decree concerning the creation as being of the nature of an eternal covenant, which might lead us to speak of Absolute Covenant Personality belonging to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He writes,

> All the decrees, having reference to creation or recreation, i.e. to all finite existence, are accordingly of the nature of an agreement between the persons of the Divine Essence; i.e. the relation between the Divine persons is a *covenant relation*. In this *eternal covenant*, the covenant of the decrees, God deals with man. In one sense these decrees are opera ad intra, because they still effect nothing historical, yet in another sense they are opera ad extra, because they have reference to that which will historically occur. But in each case they are a covenant activity within the Godhead by which the relations of man to God are established. All the relation of God to temporal existence is accordingly a covenant relation. It is the One God that creates, yet *it is through covenant relation that He creates*; it is the One God that redeems but *it is through covenant relation that he redeems*.[63]

Both creation and redemption are wholly encompassed by the covenant relation—nothing exists outside of its bounds (cf. Col. 1:15–20). Here we are confronted

57. It goes beyond the scope of this paper, but it is interesting to note that Herman Bavinck understood that deterministic views of reality reflect a deeper misunderstanding of the doctrine of God, particularly his trinitarian nature. See his *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:360–61; James Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism: Towards a New Reading of Herman Bavinck's Organic Motif* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012), 102–3. "The concept of God as simultaneously sovereign and non-coercive is rooted, for Bavinck, in the Trinity" (p. 103).

58. Tipton, *The Triune Personal God*, 114–15.

59. Tipton, 89.

60. Van Til defines perichoresis as follows: "As to the relation of the persons of the Godhead one to another, the church fathers further spoke of a περιχορησις or ενυπαρξις or in Latin, *circumcessio* or *Inexistentia*, i.e. the persons of the godhead exist mutually in one another (Jn 17:21). There is a sort of inward circulation of the Godhead, an eternal movement within the being of God. The persons are distinct from the Divine Essence not *modaliter*—Sabellianism, nor *essentialiter*—Tritheism, nor *formaliter* or *ratione*, but *realiter*, which can have meaning for us only by negation of the others because admittedly we here peer into mystery" ("The Will in its Theological Relations," 47).

61. Tipton, *The Triune Personal God*, 100.

62. Van Til, *SCE*, 78.

63. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 48.

head-on with Van Til's representational principle, which the covenant idea gives expression to. At no point, whether in creation or redemption, does man exist in an impersonal, non-covenantal relation laden with chance; rather, his environment is shot through with personality at all times and in every way. It is through the exhaustively personal covenant relation that the absolutely personal triune God creates. And it is through the exhaustively personal covenant relation that the absolutely personal triune God redeems.

Here we begin to see how the absolute covenant personality of God stands in relation to finite covenant personality in an archetypal or analogical fashion. This should come as no surprise for man is created in the image of God, which gives expression to the complete relation of man to God. "Man cannot be thought of, or expressed in terms of a phenomenon of nature; he is related to God and finds his explanation in him."[64] In man as the image of God, then, is a complete finite personality, which possesses a freedom analogical of God's freedom, only derived and dependent.[65] To conceive of man as autonomous, that is, independent of the consciousness or plan of God, is to sever him from the source of his existence and ascribe to him a kind of freedom that does not suit his own being. Van Til writes,

> Now the highest freedom has always been ascribed to God, and yet He also possessed the highest necessity, for He can do nothing contrary to his nature. So of the activity within the Godhead we must say that it was at once necessary and free. In God there is perfect freedom because in him there is the perfect interaction of divine personalities. Hence we seek a similar freedom of finite personality in man. There is no external constraint upon man nor anything inherent in the nature of man whether of body or soul that prevents spontaneous expression of personality.[66]

The first implication of this exhaustively personal covenant idea, according to Van Til, is that "since it is the divine essence that makes the covenant within itself with reference to creation, all temporal events are *forever certain*."[67] This includes the certainty of sin, for nothing exists (nor can exist) in an impersonal atmosphere independent of the plan of God. Second, and consistent with the first, "the reality and vitality of the personal and therefore covenant relation within the Trinity, however unharmonizable it is for our logic, with the Oneness of the divine essence also forms *the basis for a real freedom of the finite person*."[68] God does not enter into covenant relations with man and so treat him as a stone or a block; that is, he does not treat him contrary to the nature he created him with.[69] While all temporal events are certain, so that for God nothing is contingent, there is still a real finite freedom belonging to his image bearers. The covenant relation does not *subtract* from man's personality, but rather *establishes* it, providing man with "a genuine free finite covenant personality."[70] Man was always to recognize his freedom in the realization of the purposes of God, that is, within the plan of God.[71] He concludes,

> The covenant relation is therefore the *only* relation in which the finite stands to the infinite, because the eternal persons of the divine Trinity stand to one another in covenant relation.… Now this covenant relation between God and the finite world enables us, therefore, to maintain in the last analysis, the absolute dependence of creation upon God, so that no substance, or power or "phenomenal [*sic*] chance, act or quality has its certainty outside of the plan of God, and yet also it

64. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 52.

65. The notion of man's freedom as derived and dependent, that is, *creaturely*, is taken from Scripture. The Reformed have maintained man's freedom *in this biblical sense* and not in the sense of autonomy and independence from God. Van Til writes, "The followers of Dort should seek to bring these Arminian defenders of 'free will' to realize that their basic commitment to Christ should lead them to take their notion of freedom from Scripture rather than from a presupposed ultimate of experience" (*The Sovereignty of Grace: An Appraisal of G. C. Berkouwer's View of Dordt* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1969], 24).

66. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 52.

67. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 48.

68. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 48

69. See Anthony Hoekema, *Herman Bavinck's Doctrine of the Covenant*, 68–69, 111–12, 166–67, 238–39, 330. "The covenant of grace does not put man to death, and does not treat him as a stick or a block, but it takes man into itself as a totality, with all his powers and faculties, with soul and body, for time and eternity. It envelops him completely, does not annihilate his power but takes away his impotence, does not destroy his will but sets him free from sin, does not stupefy his consciousness but delivers him from darkness. It recreates the entire man and causes him, renewed by grace, with soul, spirit, and body, freely and voluntarily to love God and to dedicate himself to him. The covenant of grace therefore proclaims that God honors and glorifies himself not at the expense of but for the advantage of man. God's glory celebrates its triumphs particularly in the re-creation of the entire man, in his illumined understanding and in his restored freedom" (167).

70. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 48.

71. So Van Til, "[I]n the rational creature there is a self-conscious finite reflex to the covenant relation within the Trinity and in relation to the Trinity, so that the relation of all creation to God is now centered in that finite consciousness and man is to rule over the universe, making it subservient to the revelation of God's covenant beauty" ("The Will in its Theological Relations," 53).

> gives to creation that reality outside of God that must be maintained over against Pantheism. The world is no emanation of God, nor is it in deistic fashion independent of Him.[72]

3.3 The Representational Principle pro nobis

We next consider the representation principle *pro nobis*. Could the absolutely personal God create an impersonal atmosphere? Can those created in the image of the ultimate personality operate in a environment of chance? Van Til writes,

> In the Trinity there is completely personal relationship without residue. *And for that reason* it may be said that man's actions are all personal too. Man's surroundings are shot through with personality *because* all things are related to the infinitely personal God. But when we have said that the surroundings of man are really completely personalized, we have also established the fact of the representational principle.[73]

Man and the entire creation at all times and in all places are dependent upon the infinitely personal God—not a single atom lives, moves or has its being outside of God.

> Van Til finds the basis for man's personal identity and actions in the antecedent and eternal personality and actions of the triune God.… The construct that accounts for the connection between the absolute triune personality of God and the 'completely personalized' character of the man's relation to God arise in terms of the representational principle. Viewed from an architectonic perspective, the representational principle simultaneously asserts the absolutely personal unity of the Godhead and accounts for the covenantal context of the created order [i.e., the completely personal God/man relationship].[74]

It is this covenantal context conceived of on representational lines and grounded in the triune God as absolute personality that avoids any mechanical relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. The personality or consciousness of man is ontologically grounded in the absolute personality of God. The absolute personality of God is expressed in the covenant idea by which we understand that he has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. This comprehensive foreordination provides the personalistic atmosphere in which the personality of man can operate; in fact, this is the *only* atmosphere in which the will of man can make significant and meaningful choices. In other words, the personality of man is not taken away or lost, but established *within* the exhaustive plan of God. If something is positioned outside the plan of God or outside of a personal covenantal context it is conceived in a void or a vacuum, that is, within an impersonal atmosphere of chance. This, in turn, would render man inoperative and his choices meaningless.[75]

"If the Persons of the Trinity are representationally exhaustive of one another, human thought is cast on representational lines too. There would in that case be no other than a completely personalistic atmosphere in which human personality could function."[76] The covenant gives expression to the personally charged atmosphere in which man lives *coram Deo semper*. Man is always surrounded by the personality of God. To put it negatively, man never operates in an impersonal environment surrounded by chance. Instead, he operates in a personal environment surrounded by the plan of God. "A finite personality could function in none other than a completely personalistic atmosphere, and such an atmosphere can be supplied to him only if his existence depends entirely upon the exhaustive personality of God."[77]

It is in this manner that Van Til understands Calvin to conceive of the personality of man.[78] "Man is not a

72. ("The Will in its Theological Relations," 53.
73. Van Til, SCE, 78, emphasis mine.
74. Tipton, *The Triune Personal God*, 119, 120.
75. "How can we account for the idea of significant choices? … Only if we have a God who through Christ controls whatsoever comes to pass do we have an alternative to placing man in a vacuum" (Cornelius Van Til, *The Case for Calvinism*, [Philadelphia, Pa.: P&R Publishing, 1963], 110).
76. Van Til, *SCE*, 97.
77. Van Til, *SCE*, 97.
78. We will explore the influence of Calvin's doctrine of the Son and Spirit being *autotheos* and the world as the theater of God's glory on Van Til's representational principle later under his critique of Lutheranism. There is also the influence of the Hodges and the Old Princeton tradition, which is duly observed by Tipton, especially when it comes to the doctrine of perichoresis. Tipton notes, "He follows Hodge's theology of perichoresis and amplifies it" (*SCE*, 100). See also Tipton, "The Function of Perichoresis and the Divine Incomprehensibility," *WTJ* 64 (2002). I would also include Old Amsterdam as a major influence, especially the theology of Herman Bavinck and Abrahahm Kuyper. The organic motif at the center of Bavinck's theology as explained recently by James Eglinton bears remarkable resemblance to Van Til's representational principle. Eglinton summarizes Bavinck's organic motif as: "a theology of Trinity *ad intra* requires a cosmology of organicism *ad extra*" (Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 68). In the same way Van Til wants to maintain that on the basis of the absolute personality of the Triune God man's surroundings are shot through with personality, so Bavinck utilizes his organic motif to combat any mechanical view of man and the creation (see e.g., Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*, 71–72).

metaphysical independent being. Creation is taken seriously. *Man does not need for his responsibility a freedom that would enable him to do something beyond the plan of God.*"[79] A freedom that operates outside of the plan of God inevitably operates in an impersonalistic environment surrounded by chance—in such an environment it would be impossible for man to operate and would render all of his actions meaningless and of no value.[80] Calvinism is the only alternative to complete impersonalism in which man cannot operate. "Covenant theology furnishes the only completely personalistic interpretation of reality."[81] This will be explored in more detail below when we consider Van Til's critique of Arminianism.

> The reality and vitality of the personal and therefore covenant relation within the Trinity, however unharmonizable it is for our logic, with the Oneness of the divine essence also forms the basis for a real freedom of the finite person. God can thus also enter into historical covenant relation with man, and have this relation be real and vital, giving to man a genuine free finite covenant personality. The covenant relation is therefore the only relation in which the finite stands to the infinite, because the eternal persons of the divine Trinity stand to one another in covenant relation.[82]

The personal always assumes a covenant relation—the covenant relation is personal and wherever there is personality it is within the atmosphere of the covenant. This is the case in an ultimate, archetypal sense within the Trinity and ectypally represented in the creation. This, according to Van Til, forms the basis for a real freedom of the finite person.

That everything happens, including human choices, within the plan of God is objected to as deterministic or fatalistic in order to salvage human freedom and responsibility. However, the "only alternative is to make human choice operate in a vacuum, in chance. One either makes God and his plan the source and bound of possibility for man or makes chance, that is, pure possibility, the source and bound both of God and of man."[83] Just as brute facts and acts do not exist, so there is no brute possibility.

3.4 Impossible for God to Create Except Upon the Representational Plan

Van Til writes, "Since the whole being of God, if we may in all reverence say so, is built upon the representational plan, it was impossible for God to create except upon the representational plan."[84] Why is this the case? Tipton notes that Van Til has in mind a theological parallel to the absolute consequent necessity of the atonement. "Given the nature of God in his absolute justice and given his free decree to save the elect, it was not possible that God redeem except by the atoning sacrifice of the God-man. Similarly, given the exhaustive personal character of the Godhead, and given the free decree to create, it was not possible that God create apart from representational or covenantal categories."[85] In short, for the *absolutely personal* triune God to create anything *impersonal* would be to deny himself and to contradict his own absolutely personal nature. We might also add that "given the fact that there is no vestige of impersonality within the Godhead, and given the premise that covenant relationship is relationship with no vestige of impersonality, Van Til reasons that there is no ontological and trinitarian ground for an impersonal relationship between the Creator and the creature."[86] The exhaustively personal relationship within the triune God is expressed in the exhaustively personal relationship between God and man. "Thus, given the triune nature of God as revealed in Scripture as understood in Reformed theology, Van Til affirms the decretal impossibility of a non-covenantal order of creation and redemption."[87]

4. Providence: Ultimate and Second Causes

4.1 Van Til and the Westminster Confession of Faith on Providence

In chapter 5 ("Of Providence") of the confession, the divines defend against the charge of fatalism or determinism by teaching that second causes are not destroyed, but established by an ultimate cause.

> God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and

79. Van Til, *SCE*, 97, 98.
80. Van Til, *DF4*, 265.
81. Van Til, *DF4*, 265.
82. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 48.
83. Van Til, *DF4*, 208; cf. *IST*, 337.
84. Van Til, *SCE*, 79.
85. Tipton, *The Triune Personal God*, 123. Van Til recognizes this principle in Calvin's theology. He writes, "Fact is, that for Calvin, God's will is never arbitrary because it is expressive of God's nature, while God's nature is never to be identified with impersonal law because God's nature is never taken in separation from God's will. It is thus that *complete personalism and therefore complete stability are combined*" (*SCE*, 100).
86. Van Til, *SCE*, 100.
87. Van Til, *SCE*, 123, 124.

> 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 (5.1).
>
> 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 ordereth them to* fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently (5.2, emphasis added).

Van Til notes, "Unbelievers, and Christians of the Romanist and evangelical persuasion, are ready to charge that in making God's counsel the ultimate ground of whatever comes to pass, Reformed Christians really make God the author of sin and do injustice to the will of man, as well as to the genuine significance of contingency."[88] This same objection was raised by Pighius against Calvin, and Van Til understands the confession here to speak "the language of Calvin."[89] The confession positions the will of man, second causes and their contingency "within the ultimately determinative plan of God."[90] It is non-Christian and so antitheistic to think of man's freedom or second causes as independent of God's decree, his creation and his providence.

4.2 Ultimate Cause Establishes Second Causes

It is on the basis of Van Til's representational principle that we can affirm with the confession both an Ultimate (or Remote or First) cause and Second causes. The Ultimate cause does not render the Second cause insignificant or meaningless, but rather establishes it within the exhaustively personal covenantal context in which God and man relate.[91] "First and second causes do not stand antagonistically opposed to but supplement one another. Second causes come to their right only when related to first causes; if we give them more independence they themselves become first causes."[92]

Van Til defends Calvin's view that "second causes have genuine significance not in spite of, but just because of, the fact that they accord with the one ultimate *cause* or plan of God."[93] It is objected that unless a cause be ultimate, it cannot have any significance.[94] But, according to Van Til, "Calvin argues that man's choice is free and responsible just because it is within and therefore subject to the ultimate will of God."[95] Any objection to this on the basis of it being fatalistic or deterministic requires that a genuine possibility may and must be outside the plan of God, which, as will be explored below under Van Til's critique of Arminianism, is antitheistic. A consistently theistic view must maintain "that the second causes are subordinate to God as *prima causa*, but that in this very subordination they remain true *causæ*."[96]

4.3 God is not the Author of Sin

Van Til notes that while he uses the word "ultimate" instead of "remote," as Calvin uses, there is no essential difference between their usage.[97] It is objected that to maintain the truth that God has foreordained *whatsoever* comes to pass in effect makes God the author of sin. Calvin, however, directly denies this, asserting that the entrance of sin into the world "so proceeded from [man's] own fault that God cannot, in any way, be considered the author of it."[98]

In order to safeguard against ascribing to God authorship of sin, Calvin distinguishes between remote causes and proximate causes. While the fall of man was within the plan of God, man, not God, is the proximate cause of sin. As the proximate cause man was culpable and responsible for his action. In fact, "there could be no responsible proximate cause unless there were also an all-comprehensive remote cause."[99] Later Van Til writes that only on the basis of Calvin's distinction between remote and proximate causes "is it really possible to establish the exclusive responsibility of man for sin. For then, and then only, is the freedom of man really established and are secondary causes given a true foundation."[100]

In his formulation, Calvin combats the objection that there can only be one cause (or that for an act to have significance it must be *unipersonal*, that is, it cannot take place according to the plan of God *and at the same time*

88. Van Til, *DF4*, 267.
89. Van Til, *DF4*, 267.
90. Van Til, *DF4*, 267.
91. "[I]n the last analysis second causes have no power to originate but that still they are real, and find their reality not in their subsumption under but in their covenant relation to primary causes" (Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 49).
92. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 48.
93. Van Til, *DF4*, 208.
94. "There are those that make the primary causes the only real origin of things and are in the danger zone of fatalism; but there are also those that emphasize the originality of second causes and they almost always succumb to the siren song of Deism" (Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 49).
95. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 49.
96. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 49.
97. Van Til, *DF4*, 243.
98. Cited in Van Til, *DF4*, 243.
99. Van Til, *DF4*, 243
100. Van Til, *DF4*, 245–46.

be done by an act of man[101]). The will of man cannot be conceived of as the final or ultimate cause of its own acts without depersonalizing his context and so rendering his choices meaningless and insignificant. For "as ultimate, these second causes then rest on nothing better than chance. Thus all of human experience is meaningless.… It takes an *ultimate cause*, God, if there are to be genuine second causes."[102] Furthermore, it would deny the grace of God freely given to sinners. "Making the distinction between proximate and remote causes enables Calvin to do full justice to the longsuffering of God without giving up the decree of God as basic to whatsoever comes to pass."[103]

"The providence of God, therefore, extends over all things great and small, at every turn, in every sphere. God is related to finite creation, but related in such a way that the finite is not abrogated through this relation, but realized through it."[104]

5. Van Til's Critiques of Lutheranism and Arminianism

5.1 Luther's Semi-Determinism

Van Til recognizes a systemic impersonalism in Lutheran theology that arose from its inability to "rid itself of the remnants of Scholasticism."[105] Rather than severing the pagan system at its root, it only cut off the legalism that was its fruit. This scholastic influence is evident in the Lutheran conception of the image of God as consisting only in the moral attributes of knowledge, righteousness and holiness. They did not follow the Reformed in also affirming the image in the wider sense, that is, man's intellect and will. This is founded on a scholastic commitment to an "originally existing sense world," which implies some independence from God.

> Accordingly, not the whole of man's relationship as a self-conscious being was with the personality of God. In other words, man's relationship to the world about him was not completely mediated through the personality of God. There was a remnant of impersonalism about it all.[106]

In contrast to this Lutheran conception, Van Til and Calvin maintain that man's whole environment is shot through with personality and that he is always and everywhere confronted with the plan of God. Calvin rightly understood the world to be God's *theatrum gloriæ*. Man is therefore always confronted by the revelation or self-consciousness of God about him and within his constitution—there are no brute, uninterpreted facts existing apart from God.[107] That is to say, man can never strip himself of his covenant personality and enter into a void or some kind of impersonal atmosphere charged with chance. This is nothing less than the covenant idea that reaches all reality. In fact, Van Til understood Calvin as being "deeply convinced that true religion could thrive upon the basis of a covenant theology alone," which simply expresses the representational principle founded in the absolutely personal triune God of Scripture.[108]

In contrast, the impersonalism of Lutheranism comes to the fore in Martin Luther's debate with Erasmus in his book *The Bondage of the Will*. Luther conceives of God as at some points dealing with his fallen image bearers "below the level of personal dealings."[109] Man in his fallen estate was treated no different by God than as a stone or a block. Van Til draws this conclusion,

> Luther not only argues for man's ethical inability as such, but virtually implies that man's relationship to God after the entrance of sin into his heart has made it necessary for God to deal with man mechanically. Luther's early teaching on predestination verges on the borderline of philosophical determinism.[110]

The remaining impersonalism of Scholasticism in Luther's theology naturally leads to this mechanical view of God's relationship to man. In contrast, the Westminster Confession teaches the following regarding man in his fallen estate:

> Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath 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 (WCF 9.3).

Here the confession, echoing Augustine, affirms that after the fall man was *posse peccare* and *non posse non*

101. Van Til, *SCE*, 100.
102. Van Til, *DF4*, 265.
103. Van Til, *DF4*, 247.
104. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 51.
105. Van Til, *SCE*, 67.
106. Van Til, *SCE*, 67.
107. Van Til, *SCE*, 95, 117. In order for this point to be maintained, all remnants of subordinationism needs to be banished from the Trinity. This is best achieved by Calvin's doctrine of the Son and Spirit being *autotheos*. See also p. 102.
108. Van Til, *SCE*, 98.
109. Van Til, *SCE*, 95.
110. Van Til, *SCE*, 95.

peccare. However, notice that man does not cease to have a will, so that he must be treated as a stone or a block. Rather, he "wholly lost all ability of will *to any spiritual good*." Here is where the Lutheran conception of the image of God as consisting only in the moral attributes of knowledge, righteousness and holiness leads to impersonal dealings between God and man. Man is conceived of as independent of God and his plan; his freedom is understood as doing anything he pleases *without any reference to God*.[111] "Man's knowledge is once more made to depend in some measure upon something other than the personality and self-consciousness of God."[112] The Reformed concur that man lost the image of God in this narrow, moral sense, but continues in the image of God in the broader sense of having a will and understanding. The will itself was not lost, but only the *ability* of will to any spiritual good.

Over against Luther, Van Til maintains that "a completely Christian theistic epistemology can allow for no impersonalism anywhere along the line of the transactions between God and man."[113] At no point does God treat his image bearers as mere stones or blocks.

5.2 Melanchthon's Synergism

Van Til also notices that the "semi-determinism of Luther developed into the synergism of Melanchthon."[114] The intention of this development was to move away from God treating man as stones and to recognize man's intellect and will in God's dealings with him. This was to provide a greater emphasis on a personal relationship between God and man. However, Van Til notes,

> When taken in its ultimate effect, synergism does not work in the direction of a greater personalization of the relation between God and man. Synergism takes for granted that there can be no truly personal relation between God and man unless the absoluteness of God be denied in proportion that the freedom of man is maintained.[115]

We made this same point earlier in our critique of Sproul. If God's freedom and man's freedom are understood univocally, that is, of being the same species or of the same quality, then God's sovereignty does not *establish* man's freedom but only *limits* it. And to whatever extent man has freedom (or is abstracted from the plan of God) it is to that extent God has conceded his own freedom, become dependent upon the creation and welcomed into himself elements of impersonality. There is a depersonalization both of God and man wherever either concedes their freedom to the other. God and man become bound to temporal and impersonal categories. Van Til continues,

> Synergism assumed that an act of man cannot be truly personal unless such an act be *unipersonal*. By that we mean that according to synergism, a personal act of man cannot at the same time, but in a difference sense, be a personal act of God. Synergism assumes that *either* man *or* God acts personally at a certain time, and at a certain place, but that they cannot act personally simultaneously at the same point of contact. In other words, synergism holds that personal activity on the part of man must always be at the expense of the personal character of that which surrounds him.[116]

Again, the requirement of a *unipersonal* act fails to take into account the Creator/creature distinction and reasons univocally about God's freedom and man's freedom. This reasoning is inconsistent with Van Til and the Westminster Confession of Faith. The confession maintains that God as the ultimate or primary cause does not *take away* the liberty or contingency of secondary causes, but rather *establishes* them. There is precedent given to God as the ultimate cause, for it is not the secondary causes that establish the ultimate cause. But neither is maintained at the expense of the other.

In addition, to demand that a personal act be *unipersonal* does not comport with the biblical principle of personal representation, that is, the representational principle (see Rom. 5:12).[117] Van Til explains,

> One either maintains that human personal thought and action is representative, covenantal thought and action, because man is enveloped at every point by the claims of

111. Van Til, *SCE*, 75.
112. Van Til, *SCE*, 69.
113. Van Til, *SCE*, 68.
114. Van Til, *SCE*, 68. He will also speak of Luther's view as "semi-mechanism" (p. 77).
115. Van Til, *SCE*, 68.
116. Van Til, *SCE*, 68.
117. "Van Til defines our representation in the context of covenant. Sinful philosophy, he tells us, refuses to believe that our thought and action is valid if God is involved. All of our thought and action must be completely independent if it is to be authentic. So, for example, Rom 5 and Adam's representative headship must be left by the wayside if we want to affirm authentic and meaningful human behavior. Van Til calls this 'unipersonal' thought and action. It suggests that all of what we do must be done autonomously, in isolation from the triune God" (Hibbs, "Closing the Gaps," 310). We might say, as there can be no brute facts, so there can be no brute acts. Vos draws a similar analogy between Adam's representation of humanity in the covenant

> God; or, one, in effect, maintains that human personal thought and action is autonomous. On this view, any personal act must be the act of the person acting alone. It must be unipersonal. An act can be truly personal only if the surroundings of the person be impersonal.[118]

This, however, is reduced to absurdity for it would require that there be only one person, lest the presence of another person render the surroundings personal. But if there is only one person there could be no personal relationship at all. We avoid this pitfall by affirming on the basis of special revelation that "because he is a creature, man must in his thinking, in his feeling, and his willing, be representative of God."[119] So, as Hibbs puts it, "we represent the triune God when we think the Father's thoughts after him as revealed in Scripture, when we echo the words of Christ and conform to his image as we speak the truth in love (Rom 8:29; Eph 4:15), and when we act by and through the power of the Spirit who indwells us (Rom 8:9–11). That, in essence, is how our analogical representation of the triune God works."[120]

Van Til recognizes in Synergism the Greek idea of the universe being independent of God. "If nowhere else," he writes, "the synergist at least extracts his own activity from the personal activity of God at some point in time. And just to that extent he has depersonalized God."[121] Man's freedom or originality is maintained at the expense of God. Lutheranism, at the bottom of it, mixes the eternal and the temporal by conceiving of man as independent of God, at least at some points where God has conceded his own freedom and sovereignty, and so "has not learned to interpret all reality in exclusively eternal categories."[122] Also, "Lutheranism has not been quite theistic enough in the sense of making God the completely original and exclusively original personality which serves as a foundation for the meaning of every bit of human predicate."[123] In contrast, Van and the Westminster Confession take into account the absolute distinction between the eternal and the temporal.

Thus, it is evident that Melanchthon's project to provide a greater emphasis on the personal relationship between God and man did not accomplish its purpose. "There was an element of impersonalism in Luther's position, and that element of impersonalism merely changed its form, in the synergism of Melanchthon."[124]

5.3 Arminianism

Arminianism goes farther than Lutheranism in attributing to man's will an independence from the plan of God and so conceives of it as operating in an even stronger impersonal environment.[125] Van Til notes that the most important element in the whole of Arminian theology is "that man's will and rationality include his ability to change the actual course of events as planned by God. Arminian theology attributes to man such powers as to enable him to do things that were not in the plan of God."[126] We might denote the most basic commitment of Arminian theology as autonomous human freedom, that is, the utter independence of human personality. A Pelagian notion of the will is thus assumed at the beginning of this theological project.[127]

In this schema of ascribing to man autonomous freedom, if man is to operate *within* the plan of God, then his choices are rendered devoid of any real significance and meaning. To put it positively, man must possess some creaturely metaphysical independence to go beyond the plan of God, if his choices are to be meaningful and his moral deeds real. For "an act to be considered ethical must occur in a vacuum. Or … an act to be

of works and the economy of the divine persons: "[This representation in Adam] has an archetypical example in the economy of the divine persons, in which the one person appears representatively for the others" (*Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2: *Anthropology*, trans. and ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. [Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012–2014], 33; see also p. 42; Vos, "The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology," 245).

118. Van Til, *SCE*, 78.

119. Van Til, *SCE*, 78–79.

120. Hibbs, "Closing the Gap," 310.

121. Van Til, *SCE*, 68–69.

122. Van Til, *SCE*, 69. While it goes beyond the scope of this paper, this tendency is abundantly clear in the Lutheran doctrine of the two natures of Christ in which the eternal can be temporized and the temporal can be eternized. Van Til goes on, "The infinite enters into the finite and thus gives it reality. When the infinite has really come into the heart of the believer, he is happy and rejoices, but when the infinite withdraws, the salvation has also disappeared and joy is no more. Thus we find that instead of eradicating the leaven of paganism, Lutheranism once more returns with longing eyes to the fleshpots of Egypt. If there was need of anything, there was need of an emphasis upon the absolute distinction between the eternal and the temporal if the difficulties of Platonic reasoning were to be avoided. And exactly here we are disappointed in Lutheranism" (*SCE*, 70–71).

123. Van Til, *SCE*, 80.

124. Van Til, *SCE*, 80.

125. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 70.

126. Van Til, *SCE*, 83. In other words, it is presupposed that God is not the total source of possibility, but rather that possibility exists outside of God. See Van Til, *The Sovereignty of Grace: An Appraisal of G. C. Berkouwer's View of Dordt* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1969), 7, 13–14.

127. Van Til writes, "Back of Arminianism lies Pelagianism, for if man can decide about salvation after he has fallen in sin, he must have creaturely independence enough to start an absolutely new series" ("The Will in its Theological Relations," 71).

moral or immoral, must take place in a completely impersonal atmosphere."[128]

But what is the theological impact of allowing for an action to occur outside of or beyond the plan of God? The primal sin in the Garden, for example, can be conceived of as either within or outside the plan God. If it was *within*, "then the Arminian idea of choice is clearly untenable, inasmuch as choice must then mean something that is consistent with the plan of God."[129] If it was *outside*, "then by definition we have facts that are beyond the control of God, and we are on antitheistic grounds."[130] But a universe over which God does not have complete control is an impersonal universe. And in an impersonal universe man is rendered inoperative and his choices meaningless. Arminianism, then, in an attempt to save meaningful choices has placed man in an environment in which meaningful choices are an impossibility.

Another example is that of faith and unbelief. Van Til writes,

> If our faith is within the plan of God, it cannot be the result of the type of freedom that Arminianism desires because it cannot in that case be said that it would have been equally possible for us to disbelieve as to believe. In that case our choices and moral actions in general have genuine significance *because they are within the plan of God*. On the other hand, if our faith is not within the plan of God, things are by definition happening that are beyond the plan of God, and we are *ipso facto* on antitheistic ground. Moreover, in the latter cause we would have the unique situation that faith, which is a thing much desired by God, should be occurring beyond his will and plan. Or again, we may say that our unbelief is either included in the plan of God or it is not. If it is not, we have facts happening beyond God's once more. If it is, then unbelief is genuine unbelief because of the fact that it is related to the plan of God.[131]

In liberating man from the plan of God, and attributing to him an originality and independence from the plan of God in a completely impersonal atmosphere, Arminianism has taken away the very personality of man and introduced elements of impersonality into God himself while robbing him of his glory in salvation.

Van Til's critique exposes the foundation of Arminianism as being built upon the contradictory elements of both theism and antitheism. The Arminian commitment to man's autonomous freedom, that is, the demand that meaningful choices be made in a vacuum or void, has led to a distortion of a truly biblical doctrine of God and anthropology, rendering them both fundamentally antitheistic. In addition, to require that a truly ethical act be entirely self-originated, that is, apart from God, also requires the denial of the basic doctrine of creation.[132] "Before Arminianism can make its doctrine tenable, it will have to make the whole of the non-theistic system, which holds to the existence of the universe apart from God, tenable too."[133] It can lastly be noted that along with Lutheranism, Arminianism mixes the eternal and the temporal by reasoning univocally about God's freedom and man's freedom.

Over against this, Van Til reasons, "Every act of every human being must be related to the plan or it would have no significance at all."[134] For an act to be considered ethical or moral, it must take place within a completely *personal* atmosphere, that is, within a comprehensive covenantal context that gives expression to the representational principle founded in the absolutely personal triune God in whom there is no residue of impersonality. Only in this sense is the freedom and contingency of secondary causes established. "It is utterly impossible to think rationally of an act operating ethically in a void" for such "holds bare possibility to precede actuality."[135] Instead, Van Til maintains the biblical position, which "holds God to be the source of all possibility."[136] Lastly, instead of denying the doctrine of creation, Van Til can maintain it in full force, for "God can create creatures whose deeds are in correspondence with the will of God."[137] In capitulating to the autonomous man, Arminianism "must live by the grace of its enemy."[138]

Conclusion

The central focus of this paper has been to consider the nature of our personal relation to God. We have

Continued on Page 277.

128. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 87. "Arminian theology contends that man is in some measure influenced and surrounded by pure contingency. The Arminian calls this freedom. He claims to defend the idea of human responsibility over against Calvinist determinism. But in doing so he fails to see that, to the extent that one accepts contingency, to that extent human responsibility would have to function in a vacuum" (Van Til, *The Case for Calvinism*, 110).
129. Van Til, *SCE*, 83.
130. Van Til, *SCE*, 83.
131. Van Til, *SCE*, 84–85.
132. Van Til, *SCE*, 88.
133. Van Til, *SCE*, 88.
134. Van Til, *SCE*, 85.
135. Van Til, *SCE*, 88.
136. Van Til, *SCE*, 88.
137. Van Til, *SCE*, 88.
138. Van Til, *The Case for Calvinism*, 110.

Images of Christ and the Vitals of the Reformed System

By Harrison Perkins

The image of Christ's natural body in the fancy darkens the view of Christ, as the image of God, by faith. These two images cannot stand together, no more than Dagon and the ark. Dagon must fall, if the ark comes into the heart.†

Introduction

The Westminster Larger Catechism question number 109 asks, "What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?" and the answer includes, "the making any representation of God, of all or any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever.…"[1] In recent times, the catechism's prohibition of making images has proved difficult even for many members of Reformed and Presbyterian churches, much more the prohibition of forming of images in our mind. This dispute, however, even about the use of mental images, is not new.[2] The issue was addressed in the often-cited theological handbook of the Reformed faith, the Leiden *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*, and the language of the answer to Larger Catechism 109 mirrored the prohibition of mental images from this work.[3] The implications of this debate about mental images were

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†Ralph Erskine, *Faith No Fancy: or, A Treatise of Mental Images* (1745; Philadelphia: William McCulloch, 1805), 65.

1. All citations from the Westminster Standards come from *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646; Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1994, reprinted 2009). Henceforth, Westminster Confession (WCF), Westminster Larger Catechims (WLC), Westminster Shorter Catechism (WSC).

2. Ralph Erskine (1685–1752), a Scottish minister devoted a whole treatise to refuting mental images; Erskine, *Faith No Fancy*. The debate that occasioned this work was apparently Jonathan Edwards's argument about "the psychological neutrality of 'imaginary ideas of Christ.'" John K. La Shell, "Imagination and Idol: A Puritan Tension," *Westminster Theological Journal* 49 (1987): 305.

3. *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae: Synopsis of a Purer Theology: Latin Text and English Translation, Volume 1: Disputations 1–23* (Leiden: Brill, 2014). The Leiden Synopsis "gained great authority within the Reformed academies of the Netherlands and was used for many years as an introduction to theology. Its popularity is further witnessed by the fact it saw five printings between 1625 and 1658. As such, the text of the Synopsis disputations can be used as a good example for defining the orthodox position" (Albert Gootjes, *Claude Pajon (1626–1685) and the Academy of Saumur: The First Controversy over Grace* [Leiden: Brill, 2014], 38). Although not on the subject of WLC 109, Samuel Rutherford (1600–1661) cited the *Synopsis* at the assembly (Chad Van Dixhoorn (ed.), *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly 1643–1652*, 5 vols. [Oxford University Press, 2012], 3:505). George Gillespie (1613–1648), another Scottish Commissioner, cited the *Synopsis* regularly (e.g. George Gillespie, *A dispute against the English-popish ceremonies* [Leiden, 1637], 3.2, 3.6, 3.84, 3.162, 3.170; each of the four parts is paginated separately). Edward Reynolds (1599–1676) and Lazarus Seaman (1607–1675), who owned one of the largest personal libraries of the times, both owned a copy, and Sion College, one hub of activity for many Westminster divines that likely functioned as a library away from home during the Assembly for those divines who did not live in London, held this work (*Bibliotheca Hawkinsiana, sive Catalogus variorum Librorum ex Bibliotheca ... Necnon Reverendiss. in Christo Patri Eduardo Reynolde* [1685], 6; *Catalogus Variorum & Insignium Librorum Instructissimæ Bibliothecæ … Lazari Seaman* [London: Ed Brewster & Guil. Cooper, 1676], 88; and John Spencer, *Catalogus universalis libroum omnium in bibliotheca Collegii Sionii apud Londinenses* [Londini: Ex officina typographica Rob. Leybourni, 1650], 139). The Westminster Abbey Library, which was local and housed many of the works cited by divines who published during their time at the Assembly, was quite cramped. Sion College library was likely much more accessible, as was the large library at the private residence of Seaman. Both libraries were short distances from the rooms of the Scottish Commissioners at Somerset House. The small research library assembled for their use is not known to contain a copy of the *Synopsis*; at least a copy is not in the list of works 'borrowed' from Laud's library. Possibly a copy may have been obtained from elsewhere, but Laud's is the only known list of works in this research library. ("Westminster Abbey Library: And Other Theological Resources of the Assembly of Divines (1643–1652)," in *The Westminster Assembly's Grand Debate* [Naphtali Press, 2014], 379–413).

also not new. Roman Catholic apologists raised objections about the prohibition of images, as did later Protestants in a controversy about images of Christ in the mind that erupted at the time of the Great Awakening.[4] Clearly the view that mental idolatry was prohibited by the second commandment was not new or unique to the Westminster Larger Catechism. The purpose of this essay is to analyze and support the confessional Reformed interpretation of the second commandment, specifically regarding images of the second person of the Trinity, as it relates to the integrity of the entire system. The thesis is that the full system of doctrine expressed in the Westminster Standards excludes the need or possibility of making and using images. Reformed theology necessitates that our doctrines be integrated through the practice of systematic theology, but this should also include a consideration of our ethics.[5] In other words, our ethical positions should also be interrelated throughout our system of doctrine and, conversely, it should be examined how the system of doctrine undergirds a particular ethical position. John Murray argued in this way in support of Sabbatarianism.[6] This article argues that major doctrinal poles require the prohibition of making images of Jesus Christ.

Reformed Protestantism has always been distinct because of its radically Word-centered approach to ministry.[7] In fact, the Puritans rejected images "because they obscure the spirituality, sovereignty, and glory of God. They also minimize the value of his word."[8] Calvin argued, "For our Lord saieth expressly that he shewed not himself to his people any otherwise than by his onely voice, and therefore that it is a corruption to make images."[9] The dominating feature of the later English Reformation was the endeavor to reform and improve Word-centered pulpit ministry.[10] This Reformed emphasis on the Word came with a particular approach to the making and use of images of God generally, but of Christ in particular, and this was one viewpoint that distinguished Reformed from Lutheran Protestantism.[11] Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1570) wrote in the Second Helvetic Confession (1566), "We reject, therefore, not only the idols of Gentiles, but also the images made by Christians. Although indeed Christ assumed a human nature, nevertheless, he did not, therefore, assume it so that he could offer a model for statues and pictures. He denied that he came to abolish the law and the prophets (Matt. 5:17), and the law and the prophets forbid images (Deut. 6:23; Isa. 40:18). He denied that his bodily presence would be beneficial for the church, and promised to be near us perpetually by his Spirit (Jn. 16:7; 2 Cor. 5:5). Who, therefore, would believe that a shadow and likeness of his body would confer any other benefit to the godly?"[12] The Heidelberg Catechism (1563) instructed in questions 96–98,

> 96. What does God require in the second commandment? That we in nowise make any image of God, nor worship him in any other way than he has commanded in his Word.
>
> 97. Must we, then, not make any image at all? God may not and can not be imaged in any way; as for creatures,

4. Anthony Burges, *A Treatise of Original Sin* (London, 1658), 355. Samuel Rutherford possibly identified the Catholic apologists to which Burges referred: Rutherford, *The Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication* (London: John Field, 1646), 156. Erskine's work, *Faith No Fancy*, reveals the contours of this debate during the Great Awakening.

5. See David VanDrunen, "A *System* of Theology? The Centrality of Covenant for Westminster Systematics," in *The Pattern of Sound Doctrine: Systematics at the Westminster Seminaries: Essays in Honor of Robert B. Strimple*, ed. David VanDrunen (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004), 195–220.

6. John Murray, "Letter to the Editor, from John Murray, Badbea, Scotland," *The Presbyterian Guardian* (June 1969), 85–86. Thanks to Chris Coldwell for this reference. I am grateful to Chris for the many ways he improved this work, and he deserves particular credit for his suggestions of sources and the expansion of the sections about forming mental images.

7. Robert Kolb and Carl R. Trueman, *From Wittenberg to Geneva: Lutheran and Reformed Theology in Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 221–234; Carl R. Trueman, "Scripture and Exegesis in Early Modern Reformed Theology," in Ulrich L. Lehner, Richard A. Muller, and A.G. Roeber (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600–1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 179–180; Bryan D. Spinks, "Liturgy and Worship," in Anthony Milton (ed.), *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume 1: Reformation and Identity, c. 1520–1662* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 157–166.

8. La Shell, "Imagination and Idol," 310.

9. John Calvin, *The Sermons of M. Iohn Calvin upon the Fifth Booke of Moses Called Deuteronomie*, trans. by Arthur Golding (London: Henry Middleton for Thomas Woodcocke, 1583), 137.

10. Chad Van Dixhoorn, *God's Ambassadors: The Westminster Assembly and the Reformation of the English Pulpit, 1643–1653* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017).

11. Kolb and Trueman, *From Wittenberg to Geneva*, 207–234.

12. Second Helvetic Confession 4.2 in Phillip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, 3 vol. (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1877), 242 (my translation: *2. Rejicimus itaque non modo gentium idola, sed et Christianorum simulacra. Tametsi enim Christus humanam assumserit naturam, non ideo tamen assumsit, ut typum praeferret statuariis atque pictoribus. Negavit se venisse ad solvendum legem et prophetas (Matt. v. 17); at lege et prophetis prohibitae sunt imagines (Deut. vi. 23 Isa. xl. 18). Negavit, corporalem suam ecclesiae profuturam praesentiam; Spiritu suo se nobis perpetuo adfuturum promisit (Job. xvi. 7; 2 Cor. v. 5). 3. Quis ergo crederet, umbram vel simulacrum corporis aliquam conferre piis utilitatem?*)

> though they may indeed be imaged, yet God forbids the making or keeping any likeness of them, either to worship them, or by them to serve himself.
>
> 98. But may not pictures be tolerated in churches as books for the laity? No; for we should not be wiser than God, who will not have his people taught by dumb idols, but by the lively preaching of his Word.[13]

Clearly the Heidelberg taught even making any image of God was idolatry that sought to replace the sufficiency of the Word. Even Reformed theologians whom we would anachronistically call Anglicans held this view. James Ussher (1581–1656) wrote in the Irish Articles (1615), "All manner of expressing God the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Ghost, in an outward forme, is utterly unlawfull. As also all other images devised or made by man to the use of religion."[14] This confessional evidence shows the historic Reformed tradition has been explicit in its official rejection of the making and using of images of any person of the Godhead. Reformed Protestants even emphasized the proper ordering of the Ten Commandments to ensure the prohibition of images in the second commandment was clearly and distinctly emphasized over against the Roman Catholic viewpoint.[15]

Some who are part of Presbyterian denominations have recently begun to undermine this confessional view, and debates have even taken place at the General Assembly level.[16] Some, in other words, have adopted a more Lutheran view on the use of images, despite the clear teaching of the standards of Reformed and Presbyterian churches.[17] This is a hard phenomenon to explain, but it likely owes to the impact of accommodating to broader American evangelicalism on the issues of worship; and it indicates that some Presbyterians are taking the confessions less seriously than we have historically as our agreed understanding of what the authoritative Scripture teaches.[18] This drift is unfortunate, because Presbyterians should be deeply attached to our traditional understanding of worship, primarily because Scripture shaped that understanding.[19] *The Directory for The Publick Worship of God* (1645) is evidence that confessionally Reformed thinkers have long given thought to how the Scripture should shape our practices in worship.[20] This consideration does not entail overly strict rigidity in the specifics of what we do in worship, but it does mean Reformed people honor our heritage that is expressed in what we confess together that the Bible teaches about how we should worship God. The trend of increasingly dismissing our confessional theology and practices should be concerning, because it indicates a shift away from our historical identity, and because there are few stopgaps on that trend.

The practice of system subscription in confessional Presbyterian denominations makes systematic theology a necessary lens for approaching the second commandment. Under system subscription, ministerial candidates are permitted to take exceptions to the Westminster Standards as long as those exceptions do not "strike at the vitals" of our religion, although what the vitals are has never been clearly defined. [21] There are an increasing number of candidates taking exception to the traditional view of the second commandment. I argue that the Reformed interpretation of the second commandment, which prohibits images of Christ, should be normative for our lives because the entire force of the Reformed system supports this position. In other

13. Schaff, *Creeds*, 343.

14. *Articles of Religion Agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops, and the rest of the Cleargie of Ireland* (Dublin: John Franckton, 1615), sig. C4r (Article 53).

15. Jonathan Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue: Religious Identity and the Ten Commandments in England, c. 1485–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 28–56.

16. The 2017 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, recommendation 52 addressed the issues of materials being distributed in a stated worship service that displayed a representation of Christ. *Minutes of the Forty-Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America* (Lawrenceville, GA: Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, 2017), 431–438. The recommendation of the minority report against images was adopted by the General Assembly and the Northwest Georgia Presbytery, the presbytery where the service occurred, voted in agreement with the General Assembly that this instance of image use was an exception of substance to the Westminster Standards. See the minutes of the Northwest Georgia Presbytery meeting from September 16, 2017.

17. Kolb and Trueman, *From Wittenberg to Geneva*, 207.

18. R. Scott Clark, *Recovering the Reformed Confession: Our Theology, Piety, and Practice* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Co., 2008).

19. D.G. Hart and John R. Muether, *With Reverence and Awe: Returning to the Basics of Reformed Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2002); D.G. Hart, *Recovering Mother Kirk: The Case for Liturgy in the Reformed Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003).

20. See *The Directory for The Publick Worship of God* in *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646; Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1994, reprinted 2009), 369–394.

21. Charles Hodge, *The Reunion of Old and New-School Presbyterian Churches* (New York: Charles Scribner & Co, 1867), 24–27. Although Hodge did provide a sketch of those things that should be considered vital here, these tenets have never been accepted as such by the official judgment of the Church. It is worth noting that Hodge essentially listed the major subjects of the WCF and that he included points about worship. If the traditional Presbyterian view is that the major points from the standards constitute the "vitals" then it seems contemporary Presbyterians should not draw a smaller circle within the standards of doctrines that are vitals within our confession.

words, I examine whether the second commandment even *could* permit images of Christ, much less should, if one presumes the Reformed system. More specifically, by taking exception to the Westminster Standards on the second commandment, one does strike at the vitals of the system, because this exception has ramifications for many other areas of the system; and to permit images of Christ's humanity is a clear exception to the intent of the Westminster Assembly, as is easily demonstrated from historical sources.[22] Presbyteries, therefore, should not permit this exception. My argument proceeds by situating the implications of making images of Christ in relation to various systematic loci: through covenant and ecclesiology, through theology proper, anthropology, and Christology, and through eschatology. Focusing on the second commandment through the lens of the Reformed system requires that I presume certain positions about the systematic loci used in this study in order to build from those positions toward a view of the second commandment. The positions I presume are those outlined in the Westminster Standards and the already-not yet tension of amillennial eschatology.

Covenant and Community

This section examines the second commandment in light of covenant theology and ecclesiology. Covenant theology gives us a framework to understand the normative value of the second commandment, namely, the abiding nature of the moral law, which has been administered in different capacities through various historical covenants.[23] Covenant theology is the basis of Reformed ecclesiology.[24] The confessional position is that the Decalogue summarizes the moral law, which is normative for all men including those who have received Christ's saving benefits.[25] It is not a covenant of works for believers, as if it presents the conditions for obtaining eternal life, but is the rule to guide the Christian life. Reformed theology as expressed in the covenant theology of the Westminster Standards holds that the moral law, which has been binding since Creation, does require our obedience; and, therefore, we must account for *what* the second commandment requires of us.[26] Although it is highly unlikely that someone entering the ministry in a Reformed denomination would (or could) take exception to the second commandment as such, it should be noted that doing so would be true antinomianism. To take exception to what the commandment requires, however, is no different than taking exception to the commandment itself, and is also antinomianism.[27] When ministerial candidates take exception to Larger Catechism 109, presbyteries need to investigate what they think the second commandment actually does require of us. It is insufficient to know they think the commandment does not forbid images of the incarnate Son because the regulative principle of worship,[28] which says only that which Scripture commands is permitted in worship, governs Reformed practice. Taking exception to the catechism's answer because the second commandment does not forbid making images of the incarnate Christ is contrary to this regulative principle.[29]

Ecclesiology functions in this essay as a subcategory of covenant theology, that is, the church is the covenant community. As such, Scripture, which is also the covenant canon, is its constitution. Michael Horton argued, "Every covenant has a canon (meaning 'rule'), and every community is defined by its constitution. As the word suggests, such a document actually *constitutes* a nation or company."[30] The "light of nature" equipped humanity to understand many things, but more was needed in addition to that knowledge found in creation if we are to know God and His will for us.[31] Additionally, if we are unable to know God fully without special revelation, we also cannot know how to approach Him without it. The Westminster Shorter Catechism answer 2 states, "The Word of God, which is contained in the

22. Chris Coldwell, "*In Brief*: The Intent of Westminster Larger Catechism 109 Regarding Pictures of Christ's Humanity," *The Confessional Presbyterian Journal* 5 (2009) 227–228; 323.

23. WCF 19.1: "*God gave to Adam a law*, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all is posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it: and endued him with power and ability to keep it." WCF 19.2: "*This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai*, in ten commandments, and written in two tables: the four first commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six our duty to man" (emphasis added).

24. Michael S. Horton, *People and Place: A Covenant Ecclesiology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008).

25. WCF 19.6. For interesting data related to the connection of the moral law as natural law regarding the second commandment, see Anton Houtepen, "The Dialectics if the Icon: A Reference to God," in Willem van Asselt, Paul van Geest, Daniela Müller, Theo Salemink (eds.), *Iconoclasm and Iconoclash: Struggle for Religious Identity* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 60–61.

26. WCF 19.1, 5

27. WLC 99 (point 6); WCF 1.6, "good and necessary consequence."

28. The Regulative Principle of Worship is often abbreviated RPW.

29. Kolb and Trueman, *From Wittenberg to Geneva*, 229–231.

30. Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 151 (Italics original; in all quotations italics are original unless otherwise stated). See also Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority, 2nd ed.* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997), 21–93.

31. WCF 1.1. See also Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 151.

scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him." The fact that the Scriptures are the *only* rule highlights their necessity and sufficiency in informing worship, that is, how we glorify God.[32] The Scripture, therefore, must guide how we worship because it alone informs us of the proper way to approach God. Thus, the regulative principle of worship is not a doctrine that exists in the abstract as a way to ensure a certain type of worship, but is in fact built upon the Reformed doctrines of Scripture, epistemology, and theology proper. This principle is itself then not additional to the Reformed system but is tied to its fundamental elements.

The church, therefore, is a community normed by the Scripture in its doctrine and practice, which means she must submit to the ways in which God has instructed her to worship. The way that God has instructed the church to worship is by the regular gathering under the means of grace.[33] The means of grace are, especially in this light, the way that God has ordained to bless us with his presence.[34] The means of grace, however, highlight a striking sense of the non-visible nature of God's presence with us in worship. Preaching is an oral-aural event. Although we see the water, bread, and wine, we see those things, and not any person of the Trinity. Yet it is in word, water, bread, and wine that the Spirit or the Son comes to be present among us. The issue in question is not if orthodox Christology allows that Christ *can* be depicted, but whether we even *should* depict Him, even if we can reconcile a depiction with Christology. Although Christological responses are important, this argument from the regulative principle of worship preempts those standard debates.[35]

Practices governed by the regulative principle contrast with the desire to institute images of the Son, whether in worship or outside it. This principle determines how we worship, but the broader principle is that it also informs entirely the way we approach God, whether in formal worship or not. There is in fact no way to approach God other than from a posture of worship. To try and approach God outside worship through means that He did not appoint also violates the regulative principle. We are able to have photographs of family and events to remind us of those memories, but these do not contain any innate reason for us to worship them. Remembering Christ ought to lead us to worship Him because remembering Him includes remembering what He has done for us in salvation as well (1 Cor. 11:25–26). Images of Christ even outside the formal worship setting have, or at least ought to have, an impulse to worship imbedded in the nature of what they call to mind. It is also significant that this regulating principle permits only what Scripture commands in worship and Scripture does not command images of Christ, nor can it be deduced from good and necessary consequence.[36] Because remembering Christ leads us to worship Him, the regulative principle of worship equally applies to images outside of formal worship.[37] Horton wrote, "Today people want to see, touch, and control God…. Not content with hearing God's Word, they want to see God's glory."[38] He argued that to demand a vision of God in the way that we want it now is to fall into the idolatry that so plagued Israel, which is exactly what is at stake in the second commandment.[39] These points come together in our concept of the church as a covenant community governed by Scripture. To make an image of any person of the Trinity, Incarnate or not, is to try to approach God outside of the ways the Scripture commands. Images, therefore, violate the confessional position on the regulative principle, but also the confessional ecclesiology, which holds the church is necessarily governed by this principle of worship because of our doctrine, our Scripture, epistemology, and theology proper. All these doctrines are, therefore, at stake in exceptions to the Standards on the second commandment.

Not every theologian has noticed the interconnected relationship between a covenantal view of Scripture, ecclesiology, and practice. John Frame argued that the second commandment prohibits making images of God only if the purpose is to worship them.[40] Images of God, therefore, may be used for teaching. He affirmed, however, that teaching is a major aspect of worship.[41]

32. Cf. WCF 21.1.

33. WCF 21.5.

34. I am not denying that God's presence is granted through the indwelling Holy Spirit in every believer, but here I am focusing on how God grants his presence to the *community*.

35. See David VanDrunen, "Iconoclasm, Incarnation, and Eschatology: Toward a Catholic Understanding of the Reformed Doctrine of the 'Second' Commandment," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6n02 (2004): 136–142.

36. See David VanDrunen, "Pictures of Jesus and the Sovereignty of Divine Revelation: Recent Literature and a Defense of the Confessional Reformed View," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 5 (2009): 218, 223, 225.

37. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* translated by George Musgrave Giger, edited by James T. Dennison, Jr., 3 volumes (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992–1997), 2.54–57, 62–63.

38. Michael Horton, *A Better Way: Rediscovering the Drama of Christ-Centered Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 36.

39. Horton, *A Better Way*, 37. I return to this theme, more specifically regarding God's presence, below in the section on eschatology.

40. John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Co., 2008), 453.

41. Frame, *Christian Life*, 482.

It is not clear how this logic maintains that images are forbidden even for the purpose of worship. Additionally, he objected to forbidding images, not necessarily of God, being used in worship by arguing he is not aware of any Bible passage "that restricts teaching in the church to oral and written communication."[42] It is not precisely clear in this statement if "in the church" means the broader life of the church or the worship service proper, but the latter seems more likely because in the same paragraph he contrasted the use of images and drama with preaching. If it is the case that Frame thought anything is permitted in the service that is not explicitly forbidden by a specific passage of Scripture, then he has undermined the regulative principle of worship. He defended the principle earlier in his discussion, but only in a qualified sense.[43] It appeared he actually adopted the normative principle of worship instead, which permits anything that is not explicitly forbidden in Scripture. If Scripture does not command images and drama to be used in worship, then the Reformed regulative principle does not permit them. Frame's exceptions to the Reformed position seem based on inconsistent reasoning. His arguments, however, fall close to the Lutheran position, and should be rejected.[44] Calvin would actually slate Frame's position in with Roman Catholic errors:

> And therefore let us see that wee apply the textes against the Papistes as wee ought to doe, that we may bee armed to prove our case just. But yet must wee bee fully resolved of this, that if any man goe about to expresse Gods Majestie by any shape: he doeth him wrong, and it is high treason to him, because he is uncomprehensible in his glorie.[45]

He concluded that,

> Therefore the setting up of images in Churches is a defiling of them aforehand, and can serve to no purpose but to drawe folke from the pure and true knowledge of GOD. Againe, to what end doe the Papistes set up images in Churches?[46]

Since Calvin preached this long before bulletins and coloring pages were distributed as aids to participation in worship, we can reasonably assume he would apply this same stance on imagery to our paper handouts.[47] With Calvin and in line with the Westminster Standards, we should believe that images, rather than being helpful to proper worship, hinder and distort worship.

Deus, Doulos, And Dominus

The purpose of this section is to examine how making images of the second person of the Trinity intersects with theology proper (Deus), anthropology that regards man as God's servant (doulos), and Christology (Dominus). First, although the focus of this essay is on making images of the second person of the Trinity, looking more broadly at the issue of images of the Godhead in general helps us narrow in on the topic. Making images of the Father is itself an impossible task to attempt. God is infinite and invisible, and it is inherently impossible to depict in a limited space what is infinite and invisible.[48] No one has seen the Father except the Son (Jn. 6:46), which leaves man with no point of reference to depict the Father accurately, if it even were possible to represent Him at all. Any effort to make visible what is invisible is to deny the very nature of the thing. Paul explicitly forbade Christians from trying to construct an image of God: "We are obligated not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the skill and imagination of man" (Acts 17:29; my translation). The point in the previous section was to show that the regulative principle of worship is part of the Reformed system that excludes the possibility of any legitimate making of images, but this verse is also relevant to show that Paul does outright forbid even *thinking* of God in images that we formulate.[49] This passage obviously undergirds the claim in Larger Catechism 109 that the second commandment prohibits "making any representation of God," even "inwardly in our mind." Making images of God is an offense because it inherently involves speculation on our part and inevitably the maker of the image has to envisage God, as he wants God to be (Rom. 1:21–25).

This argument about depictions of the Father is relevant to the issue of making images of Christ because we also do not have any point of reference to begin accurately depicting the Incarnate Son. We have no representations of the Son from those who saw Him, which

42. Frame, *Christian Life*, 483.
43. Frame, *Christian Life*, 464–470.
44. Harry Boonstra, "Of Images and Image Breakers," *Calvin Theological Journal* 32 (1997): 423.
45. Calvin, *Deuteronomie*, 138.
46. Calvin, *Deuteronomie*, 138.
47. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, translated by Ford Lewis Battles, edited by John T. McNeil (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 1.11.5–7.
48. WCF 2.1. See VanDrunen, "Iconoclasm, Incarnation, and Eschatology," 140. Contra Frame, *Christian Life*, 456–460.
49. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.11.1.

is telling in itself. This lack of a trustworthy prototype means any attempt to make an image of the Son is also speculative and leads to envisioning the Son in a way the artist would have Jesus be rather than how Jesus actually was. The question becomes can we truly and accurately depict Jesus, and if not, why try? Images do not meet any of our needs that are not met in another fashion, and we should not feel they are necessary if God has not commanded them for our good.[50] It actually seems that artists typically think God should look similar to how they look. The classic case is Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, in which God the Father looks strikingly like an elderly European. The same is generally true with images of the Son, in which He might be seen as blonde and blue-eyed, black, or Hispanic. What is at stake in this is the Creator-creature distinction.[51] When God is made into the image of the artist, he has rendered the Creator in the image of the created (Rom. 1:18–32). The archetypal-ectypal presupposition of Reformed ontology is thus affected by manufacturing images of a Trinitarian person.[52] It is striking that John Calvin's famous quote, "man's nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols," was written as a refutation of images, wherein he also argued that it is wicked to try and depict God as "he has inwardly conceived."[53] Calvin rightly attributed idolatry to our desire to create an image of the Triune God (Rom. 1:21–25).[54]

Again, not every theologian has grasped the ramifications of God's attributes for second commandment issues. Frame denied that invisibility restricts us from depicting God because God visually reveals Himself in history. His primary example of this visual revelation is the appearance in the Incarnate Son, whose body, although in heaven, would be visible if eyes fell upon it.[55] Although God does visually reveal Himself, it does not register with Frame that these visual revelations of God are at His own prerogative and in forms He chooses. The second commandment still forbids men to construct images. It is one thing for God to decide to reveal Himself in visual form, but it is certainly another for people to try to create a visual representation of God. It is not for us to demand God's revelation, or determine what form it takes. Additionally, the hypothetical possibility of viewing the divine persons is a null point. There is no doubt that we could make an accurate representation of Jesus if we saw Him. The fact is we have not seen Him, and that is because He has chosen to remain bodily in heaven. Even at that, we are still commanded not to make an image of Him. Having the ability to do something does not mean we have the permission. We do not have permission to commit adultery simply because we have the ability to go on a date while our spouse stays at home. We would not say the ability to commit adultery in this situation entails that there is no longer reason not to commit adultery. This reasoning is disastrous when applied to the seventh commandment, and it is disastrous when applied to the second.

The very act of making images of God forms an intersection between theology proper and anthropology. In some sense, it could be considered a noble desire to want to image God in creation by filling it with His image. God Himself, however, has claimed the right to fill creation with His image and has determined to do so in humankind. Meredith Kline argued that creation forms the paradigm for theophany in the creation of humanity in God's image. My point is that man should not attempt to usurp God's right to determine theophanies.[56] God has already determined the way He will fill creation with His image, and man should not think he has right to adjust that method by creating his own images of God. These considerations are relevant to making images of the Son because, in principle, the act of making an image is the same as trying to subvert God's role in filling the earth with His image. God is also at work in His people, conforming them to the image of the Son (Rom. 8:29); and, therefore, God has chosen to fill the world with the image of Christ through the means of sanctification and not by human efforts. Theology, anthropology, and Christology intersect here regarding the second commandment.

Christology has always played a role in the debate about whether we may depict the Son. It is not necessary to rehash standard arguments here, but a summary of their relevance will be helpful. Iconophiles inevitably violate orthodox Christology—although not always in the same ways, as there have been various defenses of their practices.[57] First, to claim that images depict the divine person of the Son by depicting the human Christ is monophysitic, meaning they have undermined traditional Christology by mixing the two natures of

50. Houtepen, "The Dialectics if the Icon," 51.

51. WCF 7.1.

52. Franciscus Junius, *A Treatise on True Theology: With the Life of Franciscus Junius*, translated by David C. Noe (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), 107–120.

53. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.11.8.

54. Willem J. van Asselt, "The Prohibition of Images and Protestant Identity," in van Asselt, et al (ed.), *Iconoclasm and Iconoclash*, 306–307; VanDrunen, "Pictures of Jesus," 217.

55. Frame, *Christian Life*, 456–460.

56. Meredith G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1980, repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), 13.

57. VanDrunen, "Iconoclasm, Incarnation, and Eschatology," 137; Milliner, "Iconoclastic Immunity," 508.

Christ.[58] The two natures of Christ have been conceptually blended if an artist claims to display both natures by illustrating Jesus' humanity. Second, to claim that images depict only Jesus' humanity is Nestorian, because they have separated the two natures of Christ by depicting one nature without depicting the two-natured person of Christ.[59] As James Ussher wrote, "An Image can onely represent the man-hood of Christ, and not his God-head, which is the chiefest part in him. Both which Natures being in him unseparable, it were dangerous by painting the one apart from the other, to give occaision of *Arianisme*, *Apollinarisme*, and other Herisies."[60] Milliner has argued that icons present only the flesh and not the divinity of Christ, which is a Nestorian argument.[61] This view also seems to pose the hypothetical anhypostatic flesh, referring to the human nature of Jesus existing separately from the hypostatic union, which has been traditionally rejected.[62] Those who walked on earth with Jesus encountered the full person of the Son in His assumed human nature. The same cannot be said of our gazing at images, because we cannot and should not imagine the divine being (Acts 17:29). It is unhelpful to suggest the hypothetical implications of whether someone could have photographed Jesus, because God did not choose to assume a human nature in a time when He could be photographed; so therefore we should submit to the wisdom of His timing (Rom. 5:6; Gal. 4:4). Ussher actually addressed the issue of a hypothetical situation that would facilitate making of an image:

> That although the painting of Christ were both lawfull to doe, and profitable for remembrance, yet because it hath been so much abused, and no where in Scripture commanded, it is not now to be used: As *Ezechias* worthily brake the Brazen Serpen[t], being abused, although *Moses* had set it up at the Commandement of the Lord, and might have served for a singular Monument of Gods mercies, after the proper use thereof, had not the superstitious opinion thereof been.[63]

Calvin further argued,

> Beholde, they paint and portray Jesus Christ, who (as wee knowe) is not onely man, but also God manifested in the flesh: and what a representation is that? Hee is Gods eternall Sonne, in whom dwelleth the fulnesse of the Godhead, yea even substantially. Seeing it is said, substantially, should wee have portraitures and images whereby the onely flesh may bee represented? Is it not a wyping away of that which is chiefest in our Lorde Jesus Christ, that is to wit, of his divine Majestie? Yes: and therefore whensoever a Crucifix stands mopping & mowing in the Church, it is all one as if the Divell had defaced the Sonne of God.[64]

Any image of the Son therefore, fails to illustrate the fullness of His glorious majesty because it cannot capture His divine nature. It would represent only His humanity and would exclude His divinity, in Nestorian fashion, and should be avoided.

Lastly, to claim images depict the anhypostatic human person of the Son is an adoptionist form of Docetism, which holds that Jesus was a human person who was entered by the divine person of the Son.[65] No one in the Reformed camp has made an argument for depicting a hypothetical human person who had not yet been indwelled by the Christ. The point is important, however, because advocates for images often accuse iconoclasts of another form of Docetism, which teaches that the Son of God merely appears to take on a human nature but that human nature is actually a "heavenly flesh" that is not like ours. David VanDrunen has already offered a sufficient response to the broader

58. For an example of this, see Milliner's description of Theodore of Studios in Milliner, "Iconoclastic Immunity," 513.

59. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.11.4

60. James Ussher, *A Body of Divinitie, or, the Summe and Substance of Christian Religion, Catechistically propounded, and explained, by way of Question and Answer: Methodically and familiarly handled* (London, 1645), 231. Some have disputed Ussher's authorship of this work, but for a defense that it represents his theology, see Harrison Perkins, "Manuscript and Material Evidence for James Ussher's Authorship of *A Body of Divinitie* (1645)," *Evangelical Quarterly* 89.2 (2018): 133–161.

61. Milliner, "Iconoclastic Immunity," 504.

62. Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 2.316.

63. Ussher, *Body of Divinitie*, 231–232. Some Reformed Confessions, as well as Calvin and other individual theologians, built a principle from Hezekiah's destruction of the bronze serpent. This demonstrates a broad Reformed appropriation of this exegetical stream of 2 Kings 18:4 in the Reformed tradition, and sets Ussher solidly on the same page with the Reformed on worship despite his support of episcopacy. See the Nassau Confession in *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation,* ed. James T. Dennison, 4 vols. (Reformation Heritage books, 2008–2014), 3.12, 14–15; "*In Translatione:* John Calvin's Letters to the Ministers of Montbéliard (1543–1544): The Genevan Reformer's Advice and Views of the Liturgical Calendar," introduction by Chris Coldwell, translation by David C. Noe, *The Confessional Presbyterian* 13 (2017): 212–213, esp. 212n85. "*In Translatione:* Calvin's Response to a Certain Tricky Middler," trans. R. Victor Bottomly, *The Confessional Presbyterian* 8 (2012): 264; Gillespie, *Ceremonies*, 3.19 (citing Calvin).

64. Calvin, *Deuteronomie*, 138; cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.11.2.

65. Heiko Augustinus Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1983), 259–261.

accusation of Docetism; but this particular issue of Docetism is worth examining in more depth here, because recent accusations against those who hold the confessional position actually raise the issue of mental images and the implications these have for the Christian life.[66] Frame argued it is Docetic to prohibit mental images of Christ while allowing visualizations of other Gospel narrative events. His argument in favor of mental images apparently assumes that we are allowed to make an illustration of any person who has real flesh.[67] He also claimed it is impossible not to form mental images, but offered no evidence for this.[68] His argument does not take account that not all people in the Gospel narratives are divine persons, nor that there are different rules for how we think about a person of the Triune God than how we think about other human persons. If forced to choose between portraying all aspects of the Gospel narrative including Christ, or no aspects of the Gospel narrative, we should be willing to give up all representations so that we maintain obedience to God. Frame illegitimately assumed the other Gospel depictions are felicitous. Furthermore, just because some people incline towards thinking pictorially as they read narratives does not mean this practice should be indulged when reading stories about the person of Christ. Some people claim they do not think in pictures, and others who find their tendency to think of mental pictures of Christ convicting have taught themselves not to do so. I say this as someone who is inclined to imagine the events pictorially as I read. As an effort at sanctification, I have tried to discipline myself not to envision the person of Christ. Frame's claim, therefore, is not axiomatic and requires at least some attempt at proof.

Mental images were, in fact, a primary target for Westminster divines:

> Fourthly, sacred significant Ceremonies devised by man, are to be reckoned among those Images forbidden in the second commandement. *Polanus* saith, that "every illicit form" is forbidden in the second Commandement. The Professours of *Leyden* call it "Whatever image, whether mentally conceived, or made with hands."[69]

Gillespie made it clear here that images of any kind, including mental images, were forbidden by the explicit demands of the second commandment. Additionally, it was the position of Roman Catholics that mental images of Christ were a necessary aspect of thinking about God, which should give us pause before we accept that view as axiomatic in the way Frame has.[70] VanDrunen underscored what is key in the question: "I suppose that I could sit around and contemplate whether I am constitutionally capable of blocking mental images of Jesus when reading the Gospels, but isn't the important question not *whether* I form mental images but *what I do with them* if I form them?"[71] Indeed we are meant to set aside every other temptation when it enters our minds. Why would it be different with images? This indicates the need to think a little more fully about the implications of mental images for what it means to practice idolatry.

Frame's position is actually not new. Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) argued that the mind naturally imagines pictures even of God, Christ, and other heavenly things when the person's affections are raised.[72] He taught that mental images are the natural outcome of conceiving of an object.[73] Some did claim to have visions of Christ during the Great Awakening. Frame's argument that it is impossible not to form mental images when we read Gospel narratives is substantially the same as Edwards' claim that heightened affections unavoidably bring about mental images of divine persons. Yet, Ralph Erskine, who admittedly struggled with such images, nevertheless held, "Even if they are unavoidable, imaginary ideas of Christ's human body are sinful and idolatrous."[74] Frame (and Edwards) should heed Puritan warnings against mental imagery that ran on two principles derived from biblical reflection:

66. VanDrunen, "Pictures of Jesus," 226.

67. Frame, *Christian Life*, 459–460.

68. Frame, *Christian Life*, 459–460; see response in VanDrunen, "Pictures of Jesus," 226–227.

69. Gillespie, *Ceremonies*, 3.84 (my translation of the internal quotations: *omnis figura illicita*; *Imaginem quamlibet, sive mente conceptam, sive manu effictam*); cf. *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*, 455.

70. Rutherford, *Divine Right of Church-Government*, 156.

71. VanDrunen, "Pictures of Jesus," 226.

72. La Shell, "Imagination and Idol," 317. Yet, Edwards should hardly be considered representative of the Reformed mainstream theologically, much less philosophically. Richard A. Muller, "Jonathan Edwards and the Absence of Free Choice: A Parting of Ways in the Reformed Tradition," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 1no1 (2011): 3–22; Thomas A. Schafer, "Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith," *Church History* 20no4 (December 1951): 55–67; George Hunsinger, "Dispositional Soteriology: Jonathan Edwards on Justification by Faith Alone," *Westminster Theological Journal* 66 (2004): 107–120; John W. Cooper, *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 74–77.

73. La Shell, "Imagination and Idol," 308.

74. John K. La Shell, *Imaginary Ideas of Christ: A Scottish-American Debate* (PhD dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary Philadelphia, 1986), 108.

> First, the imagination is the root of all idolatry because of its power freely to fashion images which are not in accord with reality. Second, it is generally assumed that the kinds of images which are forbidden to be made by the hands are also prohibited in the mind.[75]

After all, the heart is deceitful above all things, and this undoubtedly affects our imaginations (Jer. 17:9). Paul in fact declared that the foolishness of idolatry results when people "exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man," and that "even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1:20–23; NASB). The darkened and deceitful heart about which Jeremiah and Paul alert us seems to result from futile speculations that people indulge despite the fact that they knew God and his "*invisible* attributes."

The ramifications of imagining Christ, therefore, are not simply about reading strategies, but actually should lead us to ask if we take the threat of idolatry seriously.[76] To bring the discussion back more precisely to Christology and Docetism, Christ certainly had true human flesh, and it would hypothetically be possible to depict His human nature. That hypothetical ability does not mean we have divine permission to do so, and we should be aware that approaching God in ways He has not authorized constitutes idolatry. This warning holds whether we fashion idols with our hands or with our minds. As Erskine wrote, "to conceive of Christ as man, is carnal worship and idolatry, when this imaginary idea of Him as man is brought in, as helpful and necessary to faith or worship. Which two I mention together, because faith is a special leading part of divine worship."[77] We should realize that we see Christ by faith in the gospel, rather than in a painting, sculpture, drawing, or imaginary image (Gal. 3:1).[78] The traditional Reformed arguments, therefore, stand in response to monophysitism, Nestorianism, and Docetism that ecumenical Christology prohibits depicting Jesus Christ because images of God are forbidden.

Eschatology And Presence

The purpose of this section is to frame the making of images within the context of eschatology. VanDrunen also made an eschatological argument in favor of the Reformed position, in which he focused on the beatific vision.[79] Although there is some overlap between our arguments, I focus on the tension created by eschatology and how our current condition should in fact highlight Christ's noticeable earthly absence within the broader hope of the promise of his presence. I assume amillennial eschatology, but these arguments rest more basically on the already-not yet tension that is, or can be, shared by other eschatologies as well. Willemien Otten argued that the tension between word and image is at the heart of Christianity.[80] Shulamith Laderman used the theophany cloud of Exodus 19 as well as the injunctions to create the tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant (visual pieces) to make basically the same point.[81] Although they were exactly right that there is a tension at work in Christian theology regarding this issue, I believe they have misunderstood what the tension is. Rather than a tension between word and image, I argue that tension is between presence and absence.

Reformed theology holds that when God created Adam, He entered into a covenant of works with Adam, promising life on the condition of perfect obedience.[82] This life entails the full enjoyment of God's presence (Jn. 17:2–3).[83] This offer of life means that the full enjoyment of God's presence is something that belongs to the new creation; it is eschatological. It also means, particularly in light of the Fall, that man cannot enjoy the fullness of God's presence.[84] This obstacle to God's presence is the presence-absence tension that more aptly characterizes Christian theology than a tension between word and image. The presence-absence tension arises from the fact that man was made for the full enjoyment of God's presence, but that this intended reality has been ruptured. Although believers wait for that presence, currently it is God's absence that can be predominantly felt.

This absence, created by ethical alienation, leads some to describe the central issue in "iconoclash" as

75. La Shell, "Imagination and Idol," 315.
76. Burgess, *Treatise of Original Sin*, 348–371.
77. Erskine, *Faith No Fancy*, 65.
78. Erskine, *Faith No Fancy*, 65.
79. VanDrunen, "Iconoclasm, Incarnation, and Eschatology," 142–145.
80. Willemien Otten, "The Tension Between Word and Image in Christianity," in van Asselt, et al (eds.), *Iconoclasm and* Iconoclash, 34.
81. Shulamith Laderman, "Biblical Controversy: A Clash Between Two Divinely Inspired Messages?" in van Asselt, et al (eds.), *Iconoclasm and Iconoclash*, 143–147. This very issue is addressed briefly in Turretin, *Institutes*, 2.65.
82. WCF 7.2. There was some debate in the seventeenth century concerning the exact nature of this life promised to Adam, see Mark A. Herzer, "Adam's Reward: Heaven or Earth," in *Drawn Into Controversie: Reformed Theological Diversity and Debates Within Seventeenth-century British Puritanism*, ed. Michael A.G. Haykin and Mark Jones (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 162–182. I understand this life to be the same life that we will receive in the consummate state because of Christ's obedience. See Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), 74.
83. WCF 33.2. See also Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, 76–79.
84. WSC 19.

the identification of the "other."[85] This "self-identification" issue described in *Iconoclasm and Iconoclash* might sound like Ludwig Feuerbach's theory that man is looking to project himself as the divine.[86] The real issue that undergirds the discussion, however, is the matter of difficulty in relating to "the other," that is God, in the midst of an overwhelming sense of His absence and the realization that we are unable to overcome that absence. We, therefore, feel much like God is "the other," someone separate from us with whom we need an encounter.

In light of these issues, it seems in some ways reasonable to try and overcome this absence, this alienation, by constructing images that imply the nearness of God by the presence of His "image." Indeed, the visibility of God's form, the beatific vision, is an eschatological concept.[87] We live in an age where eschatological blessings already belong to those in Christ.[88] As we see in the example of Abraham, it is typical for man to wish for some sort of guarantee of things that they have by promise, but not by possession, or better, by faith and not by sight (Gen. 15:8; 2 Cor. 5:7). Although God gave Abraham a covenant rite to assure him he would possess the promise (Gen. 15:7-19), it would have been wrong for Abraham to construct his own method of assuring himself of God's promise. It could be argued that was the exact issue at the root of Abraham's sin in Genesis 16. There is a tension created by the fact we are promised the full presence of God, but that we do not yet possess it (Rev. 21:1–4). This tension, however, does not give us the right to construct our own ways of assuring ourselves of that presence. Some might argue that images of Christ are necessary for the church today because each is a promise of Christ's presence. Although I fully affirm that it is necessary for the church to have a promise of Christ's presence, it is not appropriate for us to create our own means of having that promise in tangible form. Christ has granted to the church promises of His presence that cause disruption in His absence, but the means of communicating those promises to us are not in images we make of Him, nor are we permitted to add additional means of communicating these promises to us, but are restrained to the tangible means commanded in Scripture.

It could be argued that the sense of absence should be something we rejoice in as we await the Second Coming, which will bring the full presence of God and the new creation. Although we should long to be present with Christ, in this life we can receive great comfort by reflecting on the function of Christ's absence from us in the body (Phil. 1:18–26). The crucial point of Christ's absence is that He stands in heaven ever to intercede for us (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; Acts 7:55–56).[89] As we reflect on Christ's bodily absence from us, it should lead us to contemplate the surety of our eternal state, because in His absence, He stands in our flesh as a pledge to take us there as well (1 John 2:1).[90] His absence, in one sense, therefore, should be something we should treasure.

Framed in this light, it works against the surety of our salvation to try, for the purpose of mediated visibility in images, to pull Christ down from heaven (Rom. 10:6). This point is reinforced by looking at Otten's and Laderman's arguments for a word-image tension in Scripture again. They cited the theophany atop Sinai and the Ark of the Covenant as examples of images crucial to Israel's understanding of God.[91] Although there is certainly a visual component to these examples, the striking thing about both is specifically what is not depicted. In between the wings of the cherubim atop the Ark, where God's presence is said to sit on the mercy seat, is empty space. The crowning point of this visual piece is not a depiction of God, but a reminder of His absence.[92] Similarly, the cloud atop Sinai is not God Himself, but a cloudy seal of God's presence, another reminder God Himself cannot be seen.[93] The cloud is not God. It conceals Him. Even more, Moses' encounter with God atop Sinai in Exodus 33 is the pinnacle of seeing God, and the climactic moment was Moses' being shielded from seeing all but God's back. It is noteworthy that God steered Moses away from the visual and led him to worship in light of the *proclamation* of His name and attributes (Ex. 33:19; 34:6-7). These instances are all reminders that the word-image tension is better expressed in terms of presence-absence, and many of the visual features Laderman and Otten cited are actually reminders emphasizing God's relative absence compared to the full presence for which we hope (Rev. 21:1–4). It was Christ Himself who said that it would be better for His people on earth if He ascended into heaven than if He remained with us bodily (Jn. 16:7). Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562) commented on this verse,

85. Van Asselt et al (ed.), *Iconoclasm and Iconoclash*, 8–10.

86. John E. Wilson, *Introduction to Modern Theology: Trajectories in the German Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 74–75.

87. Carl R. Trueman, *Grace Alone: Salvation as a Gift of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 96–102.

88. WLC 83.

89. WCF 8.4, 8; 17.2; WLC 44, 54–55, 79.

90. Heidelberg Catechism 49.

91. Otten, "The Tension Between Word and Image in Christianity," 34; Laderman, "Biblical Controversy: A Clash Between Two Divinely Inspired Messages?" 143–147.

92. Van Asselt et al, *Iconoclasm and Iconoclash*, 18.

93. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.11.3.

> Christ comforted the Apostles when he was on earth, because it was the time that he needed to depart, saying that unless he departed, the Spirit, who is the Comforter, would not be sent to them (John 16:7). This means the bodily presence of Christ obstructed them so that they were not suitable to receive the Spirit. But if this is truly said concerning the actual bodily presence of the Lord, how much more must it be affirmed that images and statues of him are obstructions?[94]

Vermigli noted that the bodily presence of Christ prevented the coming of the Spirit. Clearly, it is better to have Christ indwell all believers by the Spirit than for Him to be in one place on earth bodily. Yet, as Vermigli indicated, the depiction of His human nature is an attempt to tear Christ from heaven and replace the Spirit in our hearts with a painting on our walls.

The biblical material that causes us to reflect upon, and grapple with, the implications of Christ's absence has not been received by all to mean we should take his absence itself as a promise of our future delivery. Daniel A. Siedell, having stated that he writes from a basically Reformed perspective, has made the argument that we should use "icons not merely as aesthetic teaching tools, but as dogmatic markers of Christology and witnesses to the kingdom to come."[95] He continued this argument: "The icon (*eikon*, 'image'), then, is a material means of grace, a pointer through which devotion, contemplation, and communion with God are enacted. It is the sacramental presence of a transcendent world."[96] He appears to think that iconoclasm was an oddity in the Christian tradition that needed to be squeezed out because it had "roots in Neoplatonic thought, particularly as it is manifest in Origen."[97] He based this historical assessment on the fact that the second Council of Nicaea ruled against the iconoclast movement in 787, and ancient theologians like John of Damascus promoted the use of images.[98] He argued that the denial of images rejects the goodness of the material creation, and explained that

> [a] key aspect of the theory and practice of icon veneration is that the material world is not, as Greek philosophy assumed, a burden that must be abandoned or transcended in order to achieve communion with God or participate in his divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). The material means by which divine transcendence is or can be experienced.[99]

It seems that the only way Siedell can conceive of affirming the goodness of God by means of the material world is by creating images. This restricted viewpoint is why he believed that "Nicene Christianity does not merely tolerate images in the church. It *requires* them."[100] He further argued that manmade images are actually the way that the people of God can interact with God through material means: "The economy of the icon operates in a worldview that is profoundly sacramental, in which the transcendent is mediated through the immanent and is recognized, experienced, and contemplated through material means."[101] Siedell, in other words, has located the Christian relationship to their Creator in a piece of art.[102]

There are three major problems with Siedell's argument, however, and the first is historical. There was not a unified acceptance of images in the early church. Some fourth century theologians "denied the possibility of artistically delineating Christ's image."[103] He also missed that the so-called seventh ecumenical council in Nicaea was not as forthright and undisputed as the previous councils. There was an earlier council in Hieria, convened by Constantine V in 754, that was then considered ecumenical, and it condemned the use of images.[104] The iconoclast cause had even begun years before under Emperor Leo III. The reason for the dispute about images actually concerned Christology.[105] This council concluded that making images of Christ results in Christological heresy, and argued along the same lines I did above.[106] The iconophile success was apparently a brief lacuna in the early church under the Empress Irene, as the iconoclast position was reaffirmed

94. Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Loci Communes* (London: Thomas Vautrollerius, 1583), 220 (my translation: *Christus cum esset in terris, quod iam abiturus esset, consolabatur Apostolos, quod nisi discederet, Spiritus paracletus non esset illis mittendus: quod ad carnem illos impediret, ne idonei essent ad spiritum accipiendum. Quod si vere dicitur de carne Domini, quanto magis de imaginibus & statuis eius affirmandum erit?*).

95. Daniel A. Siedell, *God in the Gallery: A Christian Embrace of Modern Art* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 17.

96. Siedell, *God in the Gallery*, 30.

97. Siedell, *God in the Gallery*, 31.

98. Siedell, *God in the Gallery*, 30–31.

99. Siedell, *God in the Gallery*, 32.

100. Siedell, *God in the Gallery*, 31 (italics original).

101. Siedell, *God in the Gallery*, 34.

102. Siedell, *God in the Gallery*, 32–34.

103. "Iconoclasm," in Alexander P. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 975.

104. John Meyendorf, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1979), 44; Jamal J. Elias, *Aisha's Cushion: Religious Art, Perception, and Practice in Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univeristy Press, 2012), 59–60.

105. Elias, *Aisha's Cushion*, 60; "Iconoclasm," *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 975.

106. "Hieria, Local Council of," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 929; Meyendorf, *Byzantine Theology*, 44.

at the ascension of Emperor Leo V in 814.[107] Iconoclasts were successful until the death of Emperor Theophilus in 842. Only in 843 did the inconophile position take firm hold with the decision of Theophilus' widow.[108] Additionally, the iconoclast impulse was not Neoplatonic, as Siedell claimed, but had its heritage of the Christian faith, and religions with Abrahamic roots in general.[109] Jamal Elias described the traditional roots of the iconoclast movement:

> Despite the attention given to the period from 724 to 843 as a phase of Christian history, in fact, Byzantine iconoclasm was grounded in antecedents not only in pre-Christian religious understandings but in Christianity itself, a historical observation that situates Christianity more solidly in an attitude toward religious images that is shared across faith communities, including Islam. The period of Christian history prior to the eighth century was characterized more by a widespread distrust of images than by any systematic veneration of them; at the very least, many early Christians displayed an indifference to religious images.[110]

Even given this point, the development of the religious use of images, and particularly the cross, was connected to the link between those images and imperial rule rather than to any sacramental promises as Siedell argued.[111] The definition from the Council of Hieria went so far as to say,

> After we had carefully examined their decrees ["principally those of the six holy Ecumenical Synods"] under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we found that the unlawful art of painting living creatures blasphemed the fundamental doctrine of our salvation—namely, the Incarnation of Christ, and contradicted the six holy synods. These condemned Nestorius because he divided the one Son and Word of God into two sons, and on the other side, Arius, Dioscorus, Eutyches, and Severus, because they maintained a mingling of the two natures of the one Christ.[112]

This evidence demonstrates that iconoclasm was focused on the theological issues of Christology and salvation, and was not a brief movement.[113] Rather, it had ecumenical, conciliar support that a later council tried to overturn.[114] Yet, the nature of an ecumenical council is that it is the settled agreement of the entire church. The Christian tradition, therefore, was certainly not as settled about the use of images as Siedell imagined, and there was much opposition to their use, especially along Christological lines.

The second major problem with Siedell's argument is that it conflicts with the theology of the Reformed tradition. In contrast to Siedell, who thought that the Incarnation and ascension necessitate images, the Reformed argued that it utterly does away with them. Jerome Zanchi (1516-1590) wrote,

> But with the advent of Christ, as the Fathers wrote, there was the ejection of the devil out of the doors, and even the idols have fallen. How then were images again introduced into the Church of Christ? Whoever would see those images, establishes extraordinary lies.[115]

Zanchi clearly thought the incarnation did away with the notion of images, and that using them is an act of lying to the Church of Christ. Whereas Siedell thinks a manmade image is a promise from God, Zanchi recognized that they were in fact lies substituted for the ways God instituted to receive his promises. Ussher took Zanchi's view even further, "God by such Images is, as it were, mocked, *Rom. 1.23*."[116] Siedell, depending mostly on Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox theologians, thought images were necessary to the Christian faith, and that they are the sacramental encounter between God and the believer.[117] Ussher on the other hand argued from Scripture, "That we must not give the least token of Reverence; either in Body, or in Soule, unto any religious Images, *Psal. 97.7. Hab. 2.18. Isa. 44.15. Exod.*

107. Elias, *Aisha's Cushion*, 61; "Iconoclasm," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 976.
108. "Iconoclast Controversy," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (accessed on March 3, 2018 at https://www.britannica.com/event/Iconoclastic-Controversy).
109. "Iconoclasm," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 976.
110. Elias, *Aisha's Cushion*, 62; "Iconoclasm," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 976.
111. Elias, *Aisha's Cushion*, 62–63; "Iconoclasm," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 976–977.
112. "Epitome of the Definition of the Iconoclastic Conciliabulum, Held in Constantinople, A.D. 754 Iconoclastic" in Paul Halsall (ed.), *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, produced by Fordham University Center for Medieval Studies (accessed March 3, 2018 at https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/source/icono-cncl754.asp).
113. "Iconoclasm," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 976.
114. Contra Siedell, *God in the Gallery*, 31.
115. Hieron Zanchii, *Tractationum Theologicarum Volumen De Statu Peccati et Legali* (Neustadt: Wilhelm Harnisch, 1603), 495 (my translation: *Sed cùm ad Christi adventum, ut scribant Patres, ejectio foras Diabolo, corruerint etiam idola: quomodo denuò introductae imagines fuerunt in Ecclesium Christi? Qui illas tuentur, mira figunt mendacia.*)
116. Ussher, *Body of Divinitie*, 231.
117. Siedell, *God in the Gallery*, 32–34.

32.4."[118] When Siedell promoted genuine use of images *in worship* because "[t]he key principle of icon veneration is that the honor shown to the image is transferred to the prototype, and whoever honors an image honors the person represented by it," he should have remembered Calvin's reflection on Judges 8: "Moreover, God vehemently detests that which mortals contrive from themselves for his worship."[119] Even though Siedell purported to argue from a Reformed position, the Reformed tradition with its express dependence on actual biblical texts obviously does not square with his arguments, which have a striking lack of appeal to Scripture.

The last and most significant problem with Siedell's position is that it conflicts with the biblical data. His argument that "[t]he icon (*eikon*, "image"), then, is a material means of grace" and a "sacramental presence of a transcendent world" outright contradicts the claims of the Apostle Paul, who taught that "Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified before your eyes" (Gal. 3:1; my translation). Interestingly, this did not mean that the Galatians had seen a painting of the crucified Christ, but that the preaching of the gospel had sufficiently displayed the crucifixion for them.[120] Preaching is sufficient for our needs and no literal visualization is required to experience the gospel. In other words, Christ comes to His people in the preaching of the Word. Paul made this point clear when he said that Christ came and preached to the Ephesians, despite the fact that there is no record that Christ ever went to Ephesus (Eph. 2:17). Clearly, Christ came and preached through those ordained servants of the church who proclaimed the gospel in their presence. Clearly, the preaching of the Word of Christ is the primary means by which God delivers His promises to His people. Tellingly, Siedell's argument that our attempt to instantiate the presence of God through art corresponds with Abraham's attempt to realize the promise of God by having a child with Hagar instead of Sarah (Gen. 16). Abraham's self-appointed means to achieve the promises of God ended in disaster, and we should take that as a warning (Gal. 4:21–31).

Perhaps not surprisingly, I argue that the Lord's Supper is precisely the material reminder of the presence-absence tension fit for the church. The Supper is not only a promise of Christ's eschatological presence, it is also fully consistent with the regulative principle of worship and actually has the promises of Christ to support it (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22; 1 Cor. 11:17-34).[121] It is the God-ordained means of visibly setting forth the benefits of Christ.[122] The very reason for the Supper is understood in light of Christ not being bodily present with us (1 Cor. 11:25–26; Mk. 14:25; Lk. 22:19). Although the Supper is thus a reminder of Christ's absence, it is also a way to bridge the gap created by the ascension, because in the Supper Christ makes Himself present with us again in the elements (1 Cor. 10:16–17).[123] Although a prominent feature of the Lord's Supper as a fulfillment of the Passover meal is the striking absence of a lamb, we know that absence means that our Lamb stands once-and-for-all in heaven to save us. The sacrament that Christ ordained is the means by which He has promised to make Himself present with us in accommodation until He comes to be present with us in fullness at His Second Coming. The iconoclastic Council of Hieria actually decided that "the only true image of Christ, representing him in his totality, was the Eucharist."[124] Calvin further argued,

> And by the waye let us marke, that the true meane to seeke God after such sorte as he uttereth himselfe, is, that after we once knowe him, wee doe also consider that hee stoopeth to our rudenes, and yet cease not to seeke him by mounting up higher, and by conceiving the thinges spiritually which the Sacramentes doe shewe us. It is true that by them God commeth downe to us.[125]

118. Ussher, *Body of Divinitie*, 232.

119. Siedell, *God in the Gallery*, 30; Ioannis Calvini, *Institutio Christianae Relionis*, 4.10.25 in *Corpus Reformatorum 30: Ioannus Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia,* vol. 2, ed. Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz, and Eduardus Reuss (Braunschweig: C.A. Schwetschke and Sons, 1864), col. 886 (my translation: *Quantopere autem abominetur Deus, quae mortales ex se ipsis excogitant ad eum colendum, alter non inferior Menoha Gedeon insigni document est, cuius ephod non modo ei et familiae, sed toti populo cessit in ruinam (Iud. 8,27). Denique adventitia quaelibet inventio, qua Deum homines colere appetunt, nihil aliud est quam verae sanctimoniae pollutio.*)

120. Ernest de Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Galatians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1921), 143–147; Herman Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), 111–112; F.F. Bruce, *Galatians*, New International Commentary on the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 148; Thomas Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 181–182; Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 181–182.

121. WCF 29.1; WLC 168–169.

122. WCF 29.7

123. WCF 29.7; WLC 170

124. "Iconoclasm," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 975; "Hieria, Local Council of," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 929. ("Eucharist" was written in all capital letters in the original to indicate there was an entry for this topic within the work cited. I have written it with lower case letters to avoid confusion about emphasis.)

125. Calvin, *Deuteronomie*, 138.

Reformed Churches confess this position, as is clear in the Belgic Confession (1561), article 35:

> Therefore, Christ always resides at the right hand of his Father in heaven, but that does not prevent him from communicating himself to us through faith. Again, this meal is a spiritual table, in which Christ offers to us participation with himself and with all his benefits.[126]

The Westminster Confession of Faith furthered this view in §7 of chapter 29,

> Worthy receivers outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also, inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death: the body and blood of Christ being then, not corporally or carnally, in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet, as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.

It is clear in the Reformed view that Christ makes promises about His presence with us through the sacrament that He instituted. When He promised "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age," it was in the context of making disciples by baptizing (sacraments) and teaching (preaching), not in the context of creating images of Him (Matt. 28:19–20). No image of Christ is a promise of His presence, because those images do not come from God. They are manmade fabrications that have no support from the Word of God. If we construct our own so-called means of grace, those means are not guaranteed to be effectual for the elect.[127] We, therefore, should not substitute human attempts to assure ourselves of Christ's presence, such as images, for the means Christ has promised to use to make Himself present with us.

Conclusion

Much more could be said to draw connections between each of the doctrinal loci and how they relate to the second commandment. The arguments here have not even scratched the surface of exegetical and theological material that could supplement what has been presented. The highly significant historical argument that the iconophile position was not the outright position of the early church can actually be further documented, and the implications explored.[128] Additionally, I have not used any arguments that "start from scratch" to argue against images of the Son, nor have I tried to respond directly to the criticisms that are raised against the traditional Reformed position on the second commandment. This essay has also not addressed the use of general images in worship, that is, images not of a person of the Godhead.[129] The purpose of this essay, rather, has been to establish that there are connections between the Reformed position on the second commandment and other essential doctrines of the Reformed system. It should be clear that the making of images of Christ has no room in the Reformed system, or in the practice of Reformed churches. The rejection of images is something that has always marked Reformed churches, and it should remain so. Those who desire to make and use images of Christ for any purpose, assuming they maintain other Protestant convictions, take a Lutheran view and share the Lutheran position on worship and piety.[130] Perhaps for those who affirm the use of images, the Lutheran communion would be a more suitable fit. As I have argued in this thesis, the Reformed interpretation of the second commandment, which prohibits images of Christ, should be normative for our lives because the entire force of the Reformed system supports this position. The immediate import of this thesis is that exceptions to the confessional position do strike at the vitals of our faith and should not be permitted by presbyteries.▪

126. Festus Hommius (ed.), *Specimen controversiarum Belgicarum. Seu Confessio ecclesiarum reformatarum in Belgio* (Leiden: ex officina Elzeviriana, 1618), 131 (my translation: *Christus itaque semper ad dextram Patris in coelis residet, nec ideo minus se nobis per fidem communicat. Porro haec Coena mensa est spiritualis, in qua Christus seipsum nobis cum omnibus bonis suis participandum offert, efficitque ut nos in illa, tam illo ipso, quam merito passionis mortisque ipsius fruamur.*). Although the Belgic Confession was originally composed in French, the Synod of Dort adopted the Latin text in 1619.

127. WLC 161.

128. See Leo Donald Davis, SJ, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325–787): Their History and Theology* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983), 290–322, especially 302–304. Paul J. Alexander, "Church Councils and Patristic Authority: The Iconoclastic Councils of Hiereia (754) and St. Sophia (815)," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 63 (1958): 493–505, contra Frame, *Doctrine of the Christian Life*, 482. The historical issues involved are certainly more complicated than Frame suggested. Documentation is in Daniel J. Sahas, *Icons and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm: An Annotated Translation of the Sixth Session of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (Nicaea, 787)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

129. This issue is raised by Frame, *Doctrine of the Christian Life*, 451–454, 481–484.

130. Kolb and Trueman, *From Wittenberg to Geneva*, 211–217, 229–231.

Reviews & Responses

Review: Cornelis P. Venema, *Christ and Covenant Theology: Essays on Election, Republication, and the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017). 978-1-62-995251-2. Reviewed by Gabriel N.E. Fluhrer, Ph.D., Associate Minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Columbia, South Carolina.[1]

Introduction

A doctrine as important as God's covenantal dealings with mankind, and controversies as complex as any other in recent memory, require a certain kind of scholar to treat both well. Combining exegetical proficiency with an impressive command of the Reformed tradition, Cornelis Venema distinguishes himself as that scholar in his latest work, *Christ and Covenant Theology: Essays on Election, Republication, and the Covenants*. Before proceeding, it should be noted that, while Professor Venema's aim is to exposit, articulate, and defend a Reformed, Confessional doctrine of the covenant, this book is not a mere exercise in polemics. Rather, it is by turns polemical and pastoral, where the voice of the writer is also the voice of a shepherd who cares deeply for God's flock. Because of this feature alone, it is to be commended.

All who come to this volume will find something from which they can learn. Those interested in the issues of recent disagreement regarding covenant theology will find a carefully researched treatment of all sides. Those new to these discussions will find terms clearly explained and backgrounds set with precision. Straw men are absent. Overstatement is avoided with care. Those with whom Professor Venema disagrees are given a fair hearing, even if he decides against them. In sum, not just the *substance* (which is very good, as will be detailed below), but the *style* of this book makes it a model for those who must engage in the unfortunate work of controversy.

In what follows, I will summarize what I take to be the main points of the three sections into which the book is divided, while making some comments along the way. The page numbers from the book are in parenthesis after the citation. The bulk of the review will focus on the first section of the book, since it deals at length with the issue at the forefront of the discussion surrounding covenant theology at the present time.

Part One: "The Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace"

The first part of this book, "The Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace," consists of three chapters, respectively addressing "The Covenant of Works in the Westminster Confession of Faith," "The Covenant of Works and the Mosaic Economy (1): The Case for 'Republication,'" and "The Covenant of Works and the Mosaic Economy (2): Assessing the Case for 'Republication.'" For readers of this journal, I am going to assume a cordial assent to the Westminster Confession of Faith and, more particularly, the Biblical warrant for affirming a pre-fall covenant of works and a post-fall administration of God's one plan (the covenant of grace). With that in mind, Venema's first chapter guides the reader through recent objections to the doctrine of the covenant of works in the Confession. He begins with the criticisms leveled by Karl Barth. Venema highlights two features of Barth's critique; namely, his rejection of the historicity of the prelapsarian account and his aversion to a transition from wrath to grace in the life of a sinner. "Not only does Barth regard the Biblical account of creation and fall to be nonhistorical *saga*, but he also resists any suggestion of a *transition in history from wrath to grace subsequent to the fall into sin*" (7; emphasis original). Venema also observes (correctly, in my judgment), "Many of the objections to the WCF's understanding of the covenant of works stem from the influence of…Barth's theology" (8).

Next, Venema considers the work of Holmes Rolston III, University Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Colorado State University (and former student of T.F. Torrance). Rolston's chief complaint is that the Confession's doctrine unduly elevates the merit and ability of man over the grace of God (10–11). Hence, according to Rolston, the Confession deviates markedly from Calvin at this crucial point. Venema answers similar criticisms soundly elsewhere in the book, so we will set Rolston's critique aside for the moment. From Rolston, Venema then turns to the work of James B. Torrance. While Torrance's theology is heavily indebted to Barth, his criticisms of the traditional understanding of the covenant of works differ from Barth in interesting ways, not the least of which is Torrance's abhorrence of limited atonement, which he

Responses critical of articles and reviews may be submitted for consideration for publication by sending drafts to the editorial address. Please contact the editor at editor@cpjournal.com, beforehand to obtain submission requirements and preferences. When possible, the subject of a negative or possibly controversial review may 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. I am grateful to Dr. Carlton Wynne and Rev. Brian Habig for their helpful suggestions and comments on an earlier draft of this review. All errors are my own!

sees (correctly) as a natural consequence of the Westminster assembly's bicovenantalism (12–13). Venema then considers the work of S.G. De Graaf and G.C. Berkouwer. Summarizing their collective objections, Venema notes, "[T]hey do not wish to acknowledge that man's covenant fellowship with God is ever founded upon something other than the love and goodness of God in granting it as his gift" (17).

Finally, Venema turns the reader's attention to John Murray's disapproval of the covenant of works. Since he is known as one of the stalwarts of twentieth century Reformed orthodoxy, his rejection of the covenant of works poses unique challenges for those who find affinity with Murray's theology elsewhere. Venema summarizes Murray's discomfort with the covenant of works this way: "In Murray's estimation, the language, 'covenant of works,' fails to do justice to the elements of grace entering into the administration" (21). Accordingly, Murray shares the same uneasiness with the language and concept of the covenant of works as the other critics Venema analyzes.

It is interesting to observe that one of the cardinal disappointments that all of these objectors voice with respect to the doctrine of the covenant of works is how the Confession classifies the relationship between works and grace in the divine economy. How one understands this relationship is significant because the kinds of objections raised by these various authors do not limit themselves merely to the protological, prelapsarian Edenic context. Because of the inseparable link between protology, soteriology, and eschatology, a misunderstanding of the pre-fall covenantal situation will have sweeping ramifications for one's conception of all subsequent theologizing.

Briefly, Venema closes chapter one with a defense of the Westminster Confession's doctrine of the covenant of works. I suspect that most readers of this periodical will be more interested in the subjects which occupy chapters two and three, so I will simply highlight Venema's treatment of the knotty question of the place (if any) of merit in the prelapsarian covenant. He writes, "It should be evident from the foregoing that there is one obvious sense in which the language of 'merit' has no place in a biblical theology of the covenant: *at no point in God's dealings with man as covenant creature may we say that God, in the strict sense of justice, owes the creature anything*" (32; emphasis original). Nevertheless, as Venema goes on to explain, the fact that God bound himself by covenant to reward Adam's perfect obedience (had it been rendered) does not contradict the thoroughly biblical concept that everything the creature enjoys at God's hand is unmerited and freely bestowed. Thus, the objections to a traditional understanding of the covenant of works which Venema surveys represent something of a false dichotomy wherein one is forced to choose between either a species of legalism or a particular view of unmerited favor in the prelapsarian economy. Venema does an admirable job of showing the reader how the Confession studiously avoids this dichotomy. As a result, he demonstrates that the doctrine of the covenant of works, as outlined in the Confession, is biblical.

Chapter two, "The Covenant of Works and the Mosaic Economy (1): The Case for Republication," guides the reader through the most recent debate surrounding covenant theology the so-called "Republication Controversy." The question is stated simply: is the Mosaic administration of the covenant of grace a republication of the covenant of works; and, if so, in what sense? Venema observes that this question arises for the Reformed interpreter because of his insistence of the unity of the covenant of grace through Scripture. Such unity proscribes the place of law within the covenant of grace. In other words, the very fact that one admits to a unity between the covenants raises the issue at hand; namely, the fact that the Mosaic covenant *appears* to endorse law keeping as the way for a sinner to earn God's favor. Accordingly, the question of republication, which may seem minor at first blush, is of central importance. Hence the controversy.

In this chapter, Venema works his way carefully through probably the best modern defense of the republication thesis, *The Law is Not of Faith,* edited by Bryan D. Estelle, J.V. Fesko, and David Van Drunen.[2] Before turning to the historical arguments of the volume, Venema summarizes the editors' introduction this way: "The purpose of the editor's *[sic]* introduction, therefore, is to impress upon the reader that the doctrine of republication under the Mosaic administration belongs to the historic view of Reformed orthodoxy and that it constitutes an important, if not essential, feature of a sound biblical-theological interpretation of the covenant" (43).

Venema proceeds to walk the reader through the different sections of the book, which is divided into three categories: historical, biblical, and theological (69). The historical claims of *TLNF* are summarized succinctly: "The idea that the Mosaic covenant in some sense republished the covenant of works was a commonplace, even the predominant view" in the Reformed tradition (69). Specifically, *TLNF* tries to convince the reader that when Paul cites passages like Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30:1–14, "he interprets the Mosaic covenant as including the 'works principle' that was an essential component of the prelapsarian covenant of works" (70). Moreover, the authors want to argue that "the 'works principle' that is an inherent feature of the Mosaic covenant functions typologically to teach Israel that its inheritance of and tenure as a corporate people in the Land of Promise was based upon her obedience to all the demands of the law" (70). Theologically, at

2. *The Law Is Not of Faith: Essays on Works and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant,* ed. Bryan D. Estelle, J.V. Fesko, and David Van Drunen (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009); hereafter TLNF.

least one aim of some of the authors of *TLNF* is to argue that "since believers in the new covenant are no longer under the law of Moses as a covenant of works, at least with respect to their conduct as members of Christ's spiritual kingdom, their conduct within the church is not governed by the law of Moses" (70–71). Chapter three, "The Covenant of Works and the Mosaic Economy (2): Assessing the Case for Republication," offers the reader Venema's analysis of the case for republication as presented in *TLNF*. Venema's opening criticism in this chapter is one that dawned upon me as I read through the many arguments for and against republication. "Though it is a rather general criticism, it could be argued that the most problematic feature of the republication thesis is the vagueness of its principal claim. The repeated use of the phrase 'in some sense' to modify the republication begs the obvious question, 'in what sense'?" (77) Venema then assesses the case for republication using the taxonomy of *TLNF*; namely, historical, biblical, and theological arguments.

He begins with Calvin. Like many of the early Reformation thinkers, Calvin's theology is underdeveloped with respect to the role of works in the Mosaic economy because it was not asked with the same urgency during his time. Nevertheless, in reply to John Fesko's reading of Calvin, Venema demonstrates that the Genevan Reformer's understanding of the relationship between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace was closer to the non-republication viewpoint, understanding the Mosaic covenant as a whole as "an administration of the covenant of grace" (85).

Venema then considers Turretin's views on the subject, noting that "Turretin addresses explicitly the debates among Reformed theologians regarding whether the Mosaic administration was an administration of the covenant of grace, whether it was also an administration in some manner of the covenant of works, or whether it was a distinct covenant altogether, neither a covenant of works nor a covenant of grace" (89). Based on his reading of Turretin, Venema concludes, "Though the Mosaic administration may include a *formal* republication of the law's obligations, together with the consequences that follow in the instance of obedience or disobedience to its requirements, it does not thereby reinstitute at some level the prefall covenant of works" (94; emphasis original).

Venema's comment that Turretin considered that the Mosaic administration of the covenant of grace included a "formal" republication of the law's obligations is important. A formal republication means, roughly, that the "law reiterates the demands of the covenant of works and shows why the promise of life and blessing cannot be obtained through the law" (94). However, the law is not an *actual* republication of the covenant of works because, in Turretin's view, "To view the law as though it were given covenantally as a means for obtaining the blessing of life and justification would be to 'abstract' the law from the promises of grace that are an integral part of the Mosaic economy" (94). It would seem that if we ignore the distinction between a *formal* republication versus an *actual* republication of the covenant of works, we are bound to the ambiguity Venema noted at the opening of this chapter, for what constitutes an *actual* republication of the covenant of works has not quite been spelled out to anyone's satisfaction.

Venema outlines the views of Herman Witsius briefly, before focusing his attention on the Confession's teaching on this matter. He writes, "The best source for determining the historic Reformed consensus on the doctrine of the covenant is undoubtedly the WCF" (100). Commenting on Confession of Faith 19.6, Venema observes, "[T]he Confession expressly denies that the law was given through Moses 'as a covenant of works'" (104), even though the same law was given to Adam in the covenant of works (WCF 19.1–2). While there was certainly disagreement about the relationship between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace among early Reformed theologians, the consensus view enshrined in the Confession evidences a decidedly non-republication character, according to Venema. Accordingly, one of the principal claims of *TLNF*, namely that republication represents possibly an essential feature of sound biblical theology, is found wanting.

Next, Venema addresses the exegetical case for republication offered in the second section of *TLNF*. Venema's evaluation of these arguments begins with Paul's use of Leviticus 18:5. "In the writings of Calvin, Turretin, and Wistius, Paul's appeal to Leviticus 18:5 in Romans 10 and Galatians 3 is interpreted quite differently than in the chapters by Estelle and Gordon" (110). These older Reformed theologians understood "Paul's use of Leviticus 18:5 in terms of what may be called a 'narrow' or 'abstract' view of the law of Moses" (110). That is, "When Paul adduces Leviticus 18:5 against his opponents, he is not offering a complete account of the law within the framework of the Mosaic covenant" (113). Space forbids a detailed examination of Venema's arguments here, but this writer was persuaded by Venema's case for the traditional Reformed conception of the place of Leviticus 18:5 in Paul's writings.

A highlight of Venema's book is his engagement with T. David Gordon's chapter in *TLNF* on Galatians 3:6–14, which he considers "the most provocative exposition of the republication thesis" in the volume. In this chapter, Gordon argues that "the contrast between the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants in Galatians 3:6–14 … are 'characteristically' different. Whereas the Abrahamic covenant was unconditional and gracious, the Mosaic covenant was conditional and legal" (116). Gordon views the Abrahamic covenant as one of promised life and blessing through Christ, while the Mosaic covenant "enunciated a 'works principle' that could only condemn and curse the people of God" (116). Thus, on Gordon's reading, "Paul's appeal to this contrast was not skewed by a legalistic misuse of

the law of Moses by his opponents. Rather, Paul was appealing to the radical contrast between two principles of inheritance that characterize the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants," all in service defense of the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone (116). While Gordon nobly champions the historic doctrine of justification, the question remains whether his reading of the Mosaic covenant coincides with the apostle's argument. Venema argues that Gordon's exegesis does not stand up to careful scrutiny and enlists the help of Herman Ridderbos to make his case.

Venema summarizes Ridderbos's case against Gordon's reading of Paul along two lines. First, "the point of the text [Lev. 18:5], as is true of the giving of the law of Moses in general, is to summon Israel to grateful obedience" (123). Second, "when Paul appeals to Leviticus 18:5 against those who seek to establish their own righteousness before God based upon obedience to the law, he properly reminds opponents 'that he who strives after the righteousness that is by the law is then bound to the word of Moses, that is, to do what the law demands'" (123). Therefore, according to Ridderbos, "[w]hen Paul appeals to Leviticus 18:5, he is not offering a complete account of the nature of the Mosaic administration. Rather, Paul is showing his opponents the futility of any attempt to make the law an instrument of justification before God" (124). Hence, for Gordon's argument to work, his distinction between the character of the Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants must be *absolute*, whereas, according to Venema's summary of Ridderbos (which, Venema notes, represents a fairly mainstream view in the Reformed tradition), the distinction proves to be *qualified*.

Next up is a discussion of the function of typology in the Mosaic administration. Venema observes that the distinctive views of Meredith Kline relative to typology represent a genesis for the arguments in *TLNF*. Gordon's radical disparity between the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants seems to echo Kline's insistence that two very different inheritance principles are at work in the Mosaic economy. But Venema detects a flaw in this view of typology. Citing O. Palmer Robertson's disagreements with Kline, Venema concludes, "Robertson's point is the same one I wish to make. Consistent with the pattern of biblical typology, the promises and demands of the Mosaic economy are 'typical' of the promises and demands of the new covenant economy" (129). Consequently, the rigid distinction between inheritance principles is relative and not absolute.

I confess that these discussions are outside my area of expertise, but, based on my reading of Kline and the recently published report by the study committee on republication presented to the eighty-third General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (2016), I believe that Kline's view of merit is more complicated than Robertson's reading might allow. For Kline, as the OPC report indicates, only federal heads can perform meritorious works. Since Adam failed in this performance, only Christ's works are meritorious in the strict sense of the term. All good works after the fall performed by sinful creatures, including those works God demanded of Israel under Moses, must be Spirit-wrought through faith. Though they are not "meritorious" in the strict sense of the term, they were necessary for Israel's continued tenure in Canaan. This view of works under the Mosaic covenant seems to harmonize well with what the Westminster Standards seek to protect concerning merit and good works. Furthermore, this view of merit and good works is also consonant with a high view of the third use of the law. It is noteworthy that the OPC committee's report makes this very point regarding Kline's view of republication: "Further, Israel's likeness to Adam is largely seen in their exile and failure, rather in their positive accomplishments. Israel's sin is not a breaking of a covenant of works directly republished from Eden, but their failure to respond to the typical indicative of the covenant of grace, spurning the Lord through their apostasy. *It is not so much pre-fall Adam that is recapitulated in Israel, but post-fall Adam*" (emphasis mine).[3] Admittedly, while Kline's theology is nuanced, his language is sometimes unhelpful, if not overstated—particularly with regard to merit. Venema's discussion here highlights the equally nuanced treatment this thorny question received in the tradition. Moreover, combining what Venema has uncovered in Gordon's work with the findings of the study committee's findings renders Gordon's reading of the data more and more implausible.

Much more needs to be said and the reader is referred to the study committee's report for a full discussion, but enough has been mentioned to draw a provisional conclusion. The views expressed in large parts of *TLNF*, and in Gordon's essay in particular, appear not so much to be outside the pale of orthodoxy, as being unhelpfully vague at significant points, with the result of muddying rather than clarifying the debate of the place of the Mosaic covenant. In addition, *TLNF*'s reading of Kline seems one-sided.

Returning to Venema's general assessment, he concludes his review of *TLNF* by identifying some theological ambiguities. (130) His first concern is the way that the republication thesis blurs the classic distinction in Reformed covenant theology that the covenant of grace is one in substance and diverse in its administration. "The theological problem posed by the republication thesis can be stated rather simply. If what belongs to the substance of the covenant of works does not belong to the substance of the covenant of grace *in any of its administrations*, it is semantically and theologically problematic to denominate

3. Report, Committee to Study Republication, *Minutes of the Eighty-Third General Assembly Meeting at the Sandy Cove Conference Center, North East, Maryland, June 8–14, 2016* (Published by The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, [2016]), 432.

the Mosaic administration as *in any sense* a covenant of works" (131; emphasis original). A second difficulty Venema highlights is the claim in *TLNF* that this view of the Mosaic covenant represents a consensus, historic viewpoint among Reformed theologians. Venema disputes this claim vigorously, as we have seen. Third, Venema notes that "the traditional and consensus view of Reformed theologians is that the covenant of works was a voluntary condescension on God's part that could never be 'merited' in the proper and strict sense of the term" (136). As will be seen below, this observation will prove critical when discussing current deviations from traditional expressions of covenant theology. Finally, and importantly, Venema notes that "it is strange that little is said in *TLNF* about the positive role of the law of God, whether in the Mosaic covenant or new covenant economies, as a norm for the sincere, albeit imperfect, obedience of God's covenant people" (137). There seems to be a pronounced aversion to the third use of the law in some circles today, so Venema's caution is judicious.

The bulk of our review so far has been occupied in scrutinizing this portion of Venema's book simply because, as I mentioned at the outset, the vexing question of republication seems to be troubling the Reformed community at the moment. However, the remaining two sections of his book treat issues that continue to interest the Reformed tradition. We will work through both in a much briefer scope than our treatment of the first section. As a personal aside, I would like to register my sincere appreciation for much of the work produced by the authors of *TLNF*, while retaining my disagreements with the formulations presented in *TLNF*.

Part Two: "Covenant and Election"

The second section of the book is entitled, "Covenant and Election." Here Venema examines in depth the theology of election and covenant in the thought of Herman Bavinck. After analyzing Bavinck's views, Venema deals with the difficult question regarding the status of children of believers who die in infancy, particularly as this question is taken up in Article 1.17 of the Canons of Dordt. Finally, this section concludes with a chapter on covenant theology and infant baptism.

Venema's analysis of Bavinck will be of interest not only to those who want to study his theology in more detail, but also for those who want to gain "an understanding of the history of the period in which he played an influential role" (149). The chapter provides a welcome entry point for those who want to gain their footing in the landscape of Reformed teaching regarding covenant and election. The following chapter on Bavinck, which explores the relationship between election and covenant in Bavinck's theology, is likewise useful. Here, Venema discusses the question as to whether one should view "covenant from the standpoint of election," or view "covenant strictly in terms of its historical administration" (195). Roughly speaking, the question can be stated this way: "Is covenant broader than election?" How one answers this question will prove decisive, especially when we consider the Federal Vision movement shortly. Venema admirably summarizes Bavinck's careful thought on this question, noting the "close yet distinct" (198) relationship of covenant and election in Bavinck's (and the tradition's) theology. The "distinct" aspect of the previous statement is all-important to covenant theology. Finally, Venema notes Bavinck's affirmation that it is both right and proper to a) call to covenant members to self-examination and b) call covenant members to conversion (202). Venema's discussion here sets the reader up nicely for his treatment of the Federal Vision and New Perspective in later chapters.

As I stated in the introduction, this book is polemical and pastoral by turns. Nowhere is the pastoral element more pronounced than in Venema's discussion of children of believers who die in infancy. Since this year marks the four hundredth anniversary of Dordt, the historical discussion of the chapters is of special interest. But it is the pastoral facet which is so valuable. Venema concludes this section of his book with a fine chapter which defends paedobaptism. He rehearses the standard data here, but his arguments are compelling.

Part Three: "Covenant Theology in Recent Discussion"

The final section of this book, "Covenant Theology in Recent Discussion," surveys recent deviations from traditional Reformed covenant theology. Chapter nine outlines the major doctrinal emphases of the Federal Vision movement. For those just entering into this debate, Venema's sketch is lucid and fair, recognizing that this movement is not a monolithic creature. Chapter ten critiques the Federal Vision's understanding of covenant and election. As pointed out above, Venema's treatment of Bavinck prepares the reader for his critique in this chapter. Chapter eleven presents the reader with Venema's arguments against the Federal Vision's understanding of covenant and justification. As with the rest of this volume, Venema's criticisms are measured, careful, and accurate. My only complaint would be that I would have liked to have seen Venema explore the relationship between union with Christ and justification and sanctification, as these three relate to the departures from Reformed orthodoxy represented by the Federal Vision.

In this reviewer's opinion, one of the fundamental and basic errors of the Federal Vision is that it exchanges a Biblical and Reformed pneumatology for a non-Reformed ecclesiology. Venema's overall discussion of the movement is valuable and advances a strong case against its understanding of covenant and election, without falling into overstatement.

In the book's final chapter, Venema scrutinizes the views of N.T. Wright, particularly as they relate to covenant and justification in Romans 5:12–21. Since Wright is, to put it mildly,

a polarizing figure in Reformed and evangelical circles, responses to his work seem to have become something of a cottage industry. Venema's contribution to this ongoing appraisal of Wright is beneficial because of his specific focus on Wright's exegesis. He notes the false dichotomy Wright erects between the *ordo salutis* and the *historia salutis*, along with drawing attention to Wright's ambiguity regarding the historicity of Adam, the latter of which is a significant, if not fatal, weakness in Wright's exegesis of Romans 5:12–21.

One aspect of Wright's thought which I have not seen critiqued at length is his epistemology relative to the use of background materials in exegesis. I would have liked to have seen Venema drill down on this feature of Wright's theology. His privileging of certain Second Temple documents exemplifies the problem of the appropriate use of background materials in New Testament circles, while the current trend of finding Ancient Near Eastern parallels in the text of the Old Testament embodies the trend in OT studies. The root of both, however, is the same; namely, a denial *in practice* of *sola Scriptura*. Ironically, as Venema notes, Wright claims his reading is *more* faithful to *sola Scriptura* than the Reformed tradition (386); indeed, Wright insists that exegesis, not tradition, drives his reading of Paul. Hence, in Wright's view, he is the heir to the Reformation and not his opponents. However, as long as he accords interpretive and hermeneutical authority to the Second Temple documents, then, it seems to me, he has (unwittingly, perhaps) denied both the principle and the practice of *sola Scriptura*.

In the writings of the Federal Vision and Wright, we see a failure to appropriate a Reformed pneumatology. As the Federal Vision downplays the role of the Spirit with respect to soteriology, Wright downplays, if unintentionally discards, the activity of the Spirit with respect to epistemology. In my judgement, a full-orbed, careful, and Biblical pneumatology is one of the pressing needs today. All that to say, I found Venema's criticisms of Wright to be timely and useful. As I mentioned above, Wright's body of work, and that of his critics, is growing like kudzu in the South. Venema's contribution ranks among one of the better offerings in that sprawling enterprise.

Conclusion

The controversies detailed in this book show no signs of abating any time soon. Therefore, Venema's work will be needed in the coming years. The doctrines of election and covenant present themselves on virtually every page of the Bible and a thorough study of both is invaluable. Venema's contribution will assist the reader greatly in that endeavor. Viewed from the perspective of doctrine, *Christ and Covenant Theology* is the work of a mature scholar. Viewed from the perspective of pastoral theology, it is the work of a churchman who sees that these disputes never stay in the ivory tower, but always make their way to the pastures where Christ's flock grazes. Combining both of these elements in this book leaves the reader in the author's debt.

Review: Jeffrey S. McDonald, *John Gerstner and the Renewal of Presbyterian Evangelicalism in Modern America* (Princeton Theological Monograph Series, Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017). 978-1-49-829633-5. x + 263 pp. Also available in paperback and Kindle versions. Reviewed by Benjamin Shaw, Academic Dean and Professor of Hebrew & Old Testament, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, both liberal theology and a historical-critical approach to the study of the Bible had made significant inroads into American Protestantism. By 1910 a conservative reaction had begun to build against those developments and in that same year, the Presbyterian Church in the USA (PCUSA) adopted resolutions emphasizing five articles that have become known as the fundamentals. These articles are: the inerrancy of the Scriptures, Christ's virgin birth, his vicarious atonement, his bodily resurrection, and the reality of his miracles. The denomination reaffirmed these items in 1916 and 1923. Also in 1910, the series of pamphlets known as *The Fundamentals* began to be published. These pamphlets contained essays by conservative scholars, including B. B. Warfield, from a variety of Protestant denominations defending various traditional Christian doctrines or dealing with certain critical attacks on the Bible. Early fundamentalism was an ecumenical endeavor. Only in the 1920s and 1930s did fundamentalism begin to develop the doctrine of separation that became characteristic of the movement, and which remains a defining characteristic of fundamentalism today. In 1947 Carl F. H. Henry published *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. This publication is generally credited with marking the beginning of the rise of modern evangelicalism. In some sense, as early fundamentalism was an ecumenical move against liberalism, so early evangelicalism was an ecumenical move against fundamentalism.

It is probably providential that John Gerstner was born during the period of the beginnings of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, but Gerstner's life reflects something of the same range of controversy. John Gerstner, born in 1914, was raised without any specific religious instruction. I remember him quipping in class that he was raised Lutheran, if by that you meant that it was a Lutheran church his father didn't go to. It was not until he was nearing college age that he was converted. He attended Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania and was radically influenced by John Orr, one of the religion professors at the college. McDonald

divides his presentation of Gerstner's life into seven periods, devoting a chapter to each period. The first period takes Gerstner from his birth to the end of the 1940s. The focus of the chapter is on the influence of Orr on Gerstner's theology and on his move to graduate studies at Harvard.

In the second period, covering the decade of the 1950s, McDonald focuses on Gerstner's involvement in the debates about the merger of the United Presbyterian Church of North America (UPCNA) and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA). He also deals with Gerstner's publications during the period. For the decade of the 1960s, the issues that Gerstner dealt with were the merger of Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary (UPCNA) with Western Theological Seminary (PCUSA) and the adoption by the UPCUSA of the Confession of 1967. In the 1970s, Gerstner was involved in the Kenyon case (Wynn Kenyon was refused ordination in the UPCUSA for unwillingness to ordain women to church office) and in the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. In the 1980s, he became involved in the Kaseman case (Mansfield Kaseman would not affirm that Jesus is God, the virgin birth or that Christ rose bodily from the grave). He also co-wrote, with R. C. Sproul and Arthur Lindsley, the book *Classical Apologetics*. In the 1990s he left the UPCUSA for the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), and published the three-volume work *The Rational Biblical theology of Jonathan Edwards*. McDonald gives a fair presentation and analysis of each of these items. As an intellectual biography, it is a competent presentation of the man and his thought.

However, I wish to put Gerstner in a larger context and look at his biography from a different angle. What lessons are there for confessional Presbyterians a generation after the death of John Gerstner? First, Gerstner was primarily a churchman. I do not mean this in the sense that he was a regular attender at meetings of presbytery, or synod, or general assembly. The Synods and General Assemblies of the UPCUSA were delegated, and it is unlikely that Gerstner would ever have been popular enough to have been elected as a representative to those meetings. Furthermore, I do not mean that he was a man who took his place in the committees of the courts of the church. He may have, but McDonald does not give us this information. Instead, I mean that Gerstner understood himself to have a responsibility to labor for the good of the church as a whole. We see this in several ways. He labored hard for positions that, in his understanding, were necessary for the long-term health of the church. He worked against the merger that would unify the UPCNA and the PCUSA, seeing that the evangelicalism of the UPCNA would eventually be lost in the liberal commitments of the PCUSA. The larger denomination had already gotten rid of its most vociferous conservatives in the days of Machen. He also worked against the unification of the two seminaries. While admitting that the faculty at Western was more scholarly, he was aware of the more liberal theological commitments among its faculty and was concerned that the evangelical commitments among the Pittsburgh-Xenia faculty would also be lost. He labored almost alone among UPCUSA academics against the adoption of the Confession of 1967, knowing that its vague language and vague affirmations would serve only to give excuse for a further loosening of the denomination's already weak confessional commitments. The same motivation drove his defense of Wynn Kenyon on the issue of women's ordination. That Kenyon would lose was a foregone conclusion, since the denomination had been ordaining women as pastors for almost two decades. But the decision in the Kenyon case was the penultimate step in making it impossible for men opposed to the ordination of women ever to be ordained in the UPCUSA. The final step was the adoption of changes to the denomination's Book of Order that gave the status of church law to the decision in the Kenyon case. Gerstner was motivated by similar concerns in the Kaseman case, knowing that the victory of Mansfield Kaseman would make it almost impossible to hold any minister in the UPCUSA accountable for heterodox doctrinal commitments. Though Gerstner argued that a statement from the following General Assembly affirming the full deity of Christ was a step in the right direction, it was merely an *in thesi* declaration (not judicially binding) and would have no real power over future decisions by presbyteries as to whom they could admit to ordination. This last also shows Gerstner's commitment to the denomination, whatever its weaknesses. It was not until near the end of his life that he finally gave up on the idea that the PC(USA) was still a real church of Christ. He saw the church as his mother, and would not leave here, even if she was deathly ill. Perhaps especially because she was deathly ill.

His commitment as a churchman is also shown in his almost indefatigable commitment to teaching throughout the church. He did not limit his lecturing to the seminary classroom or to the academic convocation, as many seminary professors do. Instead he spoke wherever he was invited using the same incisive wit to reach laymen as he did with his students in the classroom. In addition to his teaching at Pittsburgh, he also taught occasionally at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, and at Westminster Theological Seminary. His involvement with the Ligonier Valley Study Center has certainly proved to be a benefit for the church. The audio and video recordings of his teaching are still available for later generations of students, primarily laymen, who are interested in Jonathan Edwards, in the teaching of Old Princeton, and in those committed to orthodox Reformed theology.

In addition, his commitment to being a churchman was demonstrated in his broader evangelical commitments. He

contributed several essays to books edited by Carl F. H. Henry in the 1950s and 1960s. He served on the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. In his public lecturing, he did not limit himself to Presbyterian groups, but reached out to the larger evangelical world.

Second, Gerstner was a teacher. McDonald does not do much with that, and perhaps it is impossible for a biographer to handle the issue in any helpful fashion. He does quote a few students about Gerstner's teaching, but not in any way sufficient to give the reader a real sense of what it was like to be in a class with Gerstner. As a lecturer, his presentation was never merely academic. It was advocacy for what was being taught. He wanted the students to have the same commitment to the material that he had. In that way, it came very close to being preaching. But his most stimulating teaching was in his seminar classes. He conducted these in Socratic fashion. The students were expected to have read, and to some extent mastered, the material before class. By means of careful questioning, Gerstner would then tease out of the students the implications of what the material covered. These classes made the students think hard and articulate carefully their understanding. It is no wonder that some of the students didn't care for these classes. As A. E. Housman said, "Three minutes thought would suffice to find this out; but thought is irksome and three minutes is a long time." Those classes were hard mental work, but for those interested, worth every minute.

Third, Gerstner was not much of an academic. He was eventually dismissed from the editorial committee of the Yale University Jonathan Edwards project because he could not maintain the objective distance toward his subject that is expected in today's academy (see pp. 127-128). The bulk of what Gerstner published was aimed at the public, not the academy. As such, it probably has had a much wider reach and a more significant impact than it otherwise would have had. Some of what he wrote has been kept in print by Soli Deo Gloria publications and by Ligonier. His three most significant works—*Classical Apologetics*, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, and *The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*—all have their problems. All could have used more thorough editing, and no doubt some things could have been better and more accurately said. But they remain accessible. Gerstner on Edwards is most probably a more helpful and reliable guide than the material produced by John Piper.

In sum, it can fairly be said that Gerstner labored for the good of the church, in his denominational involvements, in his teaching, and in his publications. This is an example from which we can all benefit. McDonald's biography is a good place start our journey in Gerstner.

Review: Paul C. H. Lim, *Mystery Unveiled: The Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). 978-0-19-533946-8. Hardback. 488 + xvi pp. $87.00. Reviewed by Harrison Perkins (PCA). Mr. Perkins is assistant minister at London City Presbyterian Church (Free Church of Scotland).

The Holy Trinity has always been a crucial doctrine in Christian theology and there has never been a lack of discussion about how to explain it. There have always been the vigorous defenders of ecumenical Trinitarianism and there have always been detractors that needed to be addressed. Paul C.H. Lim's work *Mystery Unveiled: The Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England* explores both sides of the Trinitarian debates that occurred in England during the seventeenth century. That time was a fascinating period for the development of Reformed theology as defenders of rigorous Protestantism sought to implement further reform in the national churches, but also in regards to how many radical sects emerged even just within the boundaries of London. Many of these sects moved away from classical Trinitarianism. Some explicitly rejected the doctrine and tried to rewrite the doctrine of God completely by claiming to be using the Protestant criteria of *sola scriptura*. Other groups moved away from traditional Christianity implicitly by muting or simply neglecting the crucial doctrines that had so long defined the faith.

Lim masterfully guides readers through the minefield of all the groups involved in debating the Trinity in early modern England and provides a helpful guide to those who want to understand the nuanced debates about the Christian commitment to the doctrine of God. The first chapter argues against previous historiographical claims that Socinianism foreshadows intellectual developments like the Enlightenment. Instead Lim contends that the anti-Trinitarianism of John Biddle and Paul Best grew out of commitment to *sola scriptura* in the most radical form. They thought that the Reformation had never finished and tried to extend that into revising the ecumenical doctrine of the Trinity. Lim makes excellent use of difficult and perhaps thus far misunderstood sources to open up the actual positions of the anti-Trinitarian authors. Chapter two looked at the Familists and the Ranters. Both undermined the Trinity by confusing the Creator-creature distinction. Their mystically leaning piety mitigated Nicene orthodoxy. This examination of untrinitarian fringe groups shows how it is inadequate to overly distinguish radical religious groups. They have to be considered together as part of a general sense of societal meltdown amidst political upheaeval. Chapter three examines the reactions to John Biddle. This examination includes Catholic and various Protestant responses. Lim sheds new light on Trinitarian hermeneutics and reveals how complex the attacks on Socinian exegesis actually were.

The notion of mystery was highly important to Trinitarian arguments, whereas anti-Trinitarians had a rationalist bent against defaulting to God's incomprehensibility. Chapter four looks at two leading Trinitarians: Francis Cheynell and John Owen. Lim situated Cheynell, a Westminster divine who wrote an important book on the Trinity, within the political climate of the English civil war and the Interregnum. He gives particular attention to the situation in Oxford. He also looked at Owen's writings on the Trinity with an eye to understanding his exegetical strategies and his purpose to foster deeper communion with God. Chapter five shows that both the use of the Bible and the church fathers were at stake in responses to anti-Trinitarian arguments. Early modern theologians were aware that they needed to fit within the biblical and patristic historical texts. Lim examines Richard Baxter, Thomas Hobbes, and Andrew Marvell as examples of historians that accounted various aspects of conciliar history. Their anti-conciliar and anti-episcopal approach may not have "singlehandedly ushered in the Deist and Enlightenment critique of the Trinity and its conciliar history" but it certainly did not curtail it either (269). The last chapter looks at how interpretive trajectories for the Gospel of John played out in the polemical context about the Trinity. Specific texts in this Gospel obviously became key points of debate.

This work is valuable on multiple fronts. Lim has brought attention to understudied manuscript sources that need further examination. He also breaks new ground on understanding how anti-Trinitarianism developed and the directions it took. Although historiography has largely considered anti-Trinitarianism separately from antinomianism, Lim showed that early modern polemicists clearly linked these issues. The focus of this book is on the 1640s and 1650s, which will make it of particular interest to those who want to understand the historical setting of the Westminster Assembly. Although there is not a massive amount of attention on the Assembly itself, its members do feature as key figures and the work as a whole sheds great light on the cultural and theological context that quite literally surrounded the meeting of divines. The book is not for the faint of heart, even as Peter Lake noted in the forward. It is large, dense, and complex. It will prove profitable though for those who labor through it carefully and digest its content.

Especially in today's context where the doctrine of the Trinity is somehow even up for debate within so-called evangelical circles, this volume is highly relevant. Although history is never determinately prescriptive, it helps us understand far better the issues that are at stake as we go about exegesis. Lim shows that a commitment to doing exegesis of Scripture does not necessarily mean someone is an orthodox Christian. As confessional Presbyterians think through arguments by theologians who trumpet *sola scriptura*, this book reminds us that rationalists who want to sit over God have always loved an overly radical use of scriptural exegesis. *Sola Scriptura* can become a backdoor for rejecting what the universal church has always agreed that the Bible itself teaches. Exegesis can be abused and turned into a way to rewrite confessional or even creedal doctrine in favor of our own preferences. Lim's book is a reminder for readers of this journal that true, confessional Protestants read the supremely authoritative Bible responsibly alongside the history of the church. Where the church has holistically agreed about what the Bible teaches, we ought to be humble about our exegetical strategies and listen to the wisdom of our forebears. This work is also a reminder about the importance of the doctrine of God. Reformed Protestants have never compromised on theology proper in favor of emphasizing a bare soteriology. Reformed theologians have recognized that the gospel is inherently tied to who God is. We can be grateful that Paul Lim has guided us deeper into the Protestant and generally Christian commitment to uphold a proper and biblical doctrine of the Trinity.

Review: Garnet Howard Milne, *Has the Bible Been Kept Pure? The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Providential Preservation of Scripture* (Author published, 2017). 978-1-52-203915-0. Paperback. 322 pages. Kindle version available. Reviewed by Benjamin Shaw, Academic Dean and Professor of Hebrew & Old Testament, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

What does the Westminster Confession of Faith teach about the preservation of Scripture through the ages? It is stated briefly in 1.8, which says, "The Old Testament in Hebrew… and the New Testament in Greek…being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic." Milne's concern in this book is with the meaning of the word "pure."

His introduction to the book presents the issue as one of religious epistemology. What is the source of true religious knowledge? Is it in the tradition and teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, or is it in the Scriptures? This was, at the time of the Reformation, the issue. The Roman Catholic view was that the Scriptures had become corrupt over the centuries, while God had preserved the church as both pure and authentic. The response of the reformers was that God had preserved the Scriptures as pure and authentic, while it was the church that had become corrupt. Milne's concern is that modern evangelicals have abandoned the position of the reformers: "Today it is generally accepted by most conservative Evangelical, Reformed and Presbyterian churches that while the original Scriptures or autographs were fully inspired by God and without error, the apographa or copies of those original

texts, both individually and collectively, even when collated, still contain errors" (24). He traces this abandonment of the original Protestant position to the influence of B. B. Warfield and other nineteenth-century scholars.

The book is organized as follows: the introduction sets out the position of Warfield, citing statements from a number of his writings. In the first chapter, the book moves to a presentation of Calvin's view on the text of Scripture, which is that we have "the complete authoritative Word of God" (67). The second chapter surveys the discussion of the issue in the period from Calvin to the turn of the seventeenth century. The views considered are those of Thomas Cartwright (1535-1607), William Whitaker (1548-1595), and John Jewel (1522-1571). The third chapter is the heart of the book. In this chapter, Milne seeks to show what the Confession means when it says that the Scripture has been "kept pure." In his discussion, Milne contrasts the views of John Lightfoot, Richard Vines, Anthony Tuckney, and James Ussher with what he considers to be nineteenth-century misrepresentations of their views. The fourth chapter deals with the Westminster divines' understanding of the role of providence in the preservation of the text. The fifth chapter deals with the views of John Goodwin, a contemporary of the Westminster divines. Goodwin's position was eccentric, and the responses of the divines to Goodwin's views gives Milne further opportunity to confirm his understanding of the views of the divines. Chapter six presents the perspective of James Ussher in some detail. The seventh chapter is an affirmation of reformed religious epistemology. It is followed by a very brief conclusion. I found chapters five onward to be largely redundant, covering much the same material that had already been presented. The remainder of this review will focus on the third chapter, which is the key chapter of the entire book.

Before evaluating Milne's work, a few comments are necessary. First, everyone agrees that there are variations among manuscripts. No two manuscripts, either of the Hebrew Old Testament or of the Greek New Testament, agree in every detail. Some of these variations are more problematic than others. For example, in 1 John 1:4 some manuscripts have the Greek pronoun *hemon*, while others have the Greek pronoun *humon*. The difference in English is between *our* and *your*. That strikes me as a pretty small difference, and most translations will translate it one way in the text and the other way in the margin. Other differences are more significant. Some manuscripts include the so-called "longer ending" of Mark (16:9-20), while others end at Mark 16:8. That is a significant difference, and the question is then raised as to which manuscripts should be followed.

Second, even at the time of the Westminster Assembly, scholars were aware of these sorts of manuscript variations. The Greek New Testament edited by Erasmus in the early sixteenth century had gone through several editions, with additional manuscript evidence added by the time of the Westminster Assembly.

Given that there are variations among manuscripts and that the Westminster divines were aware of these variations, what then does the WCF mean when it affirms that the biblical text has been "kept pure in all ages"? Milne seeks to answer that question.

In a certain sense, the views of Calvin and others prior to the Westminster Assembly are only significant to the extent that they informed the thinking of the Westminster divines. But it is important to Milne's treatment that he show the influence that these earlier scholars had on the thinking of the Westminster divines. But, the key issue is what the WCF means by the word "pure"? Milne's third chapter deals with this question. He states, "In the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*, the words pure, purity, purest or purely occur in total ten times" (104). Investigating the use of those terms in the Westminster standards, Milne concludes that there are three types of purity referred to. First, there is a relative purity, characteristic of the church, since no church is ever entirely pure. Second, there is the absolute purity of God himself. Third, there is the preserved purity of the text of Scripture. Those are accurate and helpful distinctions. But the further question is, "What is meant by 'preserved purity'"? Milne notes that the only Scripture proof offered by the divines for that statement is Matt 5:18 and concludes, "The purity implied, therefore, is a purity of the text in words, matter and doctrine" (107). This purity is preserved by the special providence of God, but this special providence "does not imply that the autographic originals were to be reproduced perfectly in every copy" (107). But Milne goes on to say, "If God intended to restrict the way of salvation to truths found in the Scriptures, then surely he would ensure that those Scriptures could be trusted, and the only way they could be trusted would be if they were perfectly preserved in their original texts" (109). This statement appears to me to be problematic. Would not perfect preservation imply the absence of variants? Just a bit later, he essentially repeats himself: "If God has provided a standard of purity for theological purposes, it would seem inconceivable that such a standard would be untrustworthy, and therefore anything less than perfect or pure in both form and substance" (109). Here, Milne appears to equate purity with perfection. Again, this raises a difficulty. According to Milne, the existence of variants seems to point to imperfection, or only a relative perfection in the existing texts. But a relative perfection is no perfection at all.

Milne concludes this key chapter with the following statement: "When the Westminster divines wrote that God had kept the Scriptures pure in all ages (WCF 1:8), they specifically stated that these were the original texts that had been

immediately inspired by God. This means that the very same text God had dictated to the penmen of Scripture had been kept intact and as a consequence, it was deemed "authentical", containing their own intrinsic authority, and this text was therefore to be appealed to by the Church "in all controversies of religion'" (149). This again appears to be a problematic statement. It is at best unclear, and certainly confusing.

I think that what Milne ultimately intends to communicate is the following: first, the Westminster divines believed in the preservation of the biblical text by a special providence of God. Second, this special providence did not extend to the perfection of each manuscript copy. Instead, by a careful collation of the copies available, the pure Scripture was attainable. Third, this Scripture, preserved among many copies, was available to the church in any age, and would continue to be so available, due to the special providence of God.

If that is indeed what Milne intends, I have to agree with him. However, I found the book less than helpful. There were too many instances, like those cited above, where Milne was unclear, or his language was insufficiently precise. I agree with his assessment of the modern situation, in that it often appears that New Testament text critics have little confidence that the Word they have is the final Word of God. I do not, however, think that Warfield and a few others are those primarily responsible for the present situation. Instead, that responsibility goes to Westcott and Hort, and the many who adopted the Westcott-Hort approach to textual criticism in the late nineteenth century. In some sense, textual criticism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has been a long footnote to the work of Westcott and Hort.

As an interesting aside, I found in the course of researching for this review that the New Testament text held as standard by both the Roman Catholic Church (the Vulgate) and the Eastern Orthodox Church are both much closer to the Textus Receptus than to the modern eclectic text. Both the Vulgate and the Eastern Orthodox Greek text contain the long ending of Mark, the *pericope adulterae* (John 7:53-8:11) and 1 John 5:7, the so-called Johannine Comma.

Ultimately, I think this book is useful for the work Milne has done in digging through the Reformation and post-Reformation material. It is also useful for laying out the issues. I wish, however, that the book had been more carefully written and more thoroughly edited.

1. To eliminate any confusion, we mention here that Knell uses a spelling of John Scottus Erigena that is not as common as most readers are used to seeing. The more common spelling in historical and philosophical writings is Scotus with the one "t."

2. A *Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, first series,* ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1886–1890). *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, second series,* ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1890–1900).

Review: Matthew Knell, *Sin, Grace and Free Will: A Historical Survey of Christian Thought, Volume 1: The Apostolic Fathers to Augustine* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2017). ISBN 978-0-227-17654-2. Pb, 260 pp. £20.00. Reviewed by Mark A. Herzer PhD, pastor of Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church in Warminster, PA.

As the title indicates, the book offers a historical survey of sin, grace and free will among the Church Fathers up to and through St. Augustine. The author gave about one-quarter of the book to Augustine's own writings. Knell begins with the Early Church Fathers (Justin Martyr, Clement, *et al*), Apologists like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen, the Greek Fathers (e.g., Cappadocian Fathers, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, *et al*), and then turns his attention to Augustine. An epilogue covers the Council of Orange (AD 529) and John Scottus Erigena.[1] The book deals with the various ways in which these church fathers reflected on the specific theological topics mentioned in the beginning.

Before interacting with some of the actual content of the book, the reader will have to understand what Knell intended to accomplish. This is the first of three volumes in which the author presents a "reader on sin, grace and free will" (3). Knell loads the book with very large extracts from leading theologians from the second century to the ninth century. He took most (not all) of these quotations from Schaff's ubiquitous 38 volume *Ante-Nicene Fathers* and *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.[2] He does this specifically to encourage students to read the original sources for themselves. Since everyone can access these volumes on the internet, he felt this was the best way to make his sources available to interested students.

Because this book is comprised of large extracts from various church fathers, Knell's own analysis is minimal. In addition, near the end of the book, he states, "It is not the purpose of this work to draw conclusions for the reader, but to encourage readers to engage with the range of sources that have been influential in the history of the church in the areas of sin, grace and free will" (239). He declares that he deliberately did not "synthesize" the readings. Knell introduces the reader to the topics of sin, grace, and free will with a few lines or a short paragraph and then fills the pages with a slew of large and at times enormous extracts. After each section, one recognizes the topic being covered (since he organized it quite well) but is left with no guidance as to what the reader should have been looking for in the ponderous quotation. One cannot help but wonder if these quotations were not strung together simply because they included the word "grace," "free will," etc. Without some analysis from the author (often given with little or no context for these extracts), the quotations will seem arbitrary and stilted to the reader.

Herein lies the most frustrating part of the book and it

made the whole exercise of reading the first volume tedious and arduous. Too often, an extensive quotation covers the entire page (e.g., 125, 215). On most of these occasions, the author strings together several block quotations punctuated with a sentence or two from himself. Where he does offer some analysis (albeit very little), it is helpful and at times penetrating. The very point these extracts were to show could have been easily gleaned from books on the history of doctrines, or good church history volumes engaged in theological development. For example, one can find a very good analysis of these topics from J. N. D. Kelly's popular *Early Christian Doctrines* (see Ch. 13, "Fallen Man and God's Grace").[3]

With these words of critique offered, allow me to synthesize some of the main points of the book not always explicitly pointed out by the author. From the early fathers up to St. Augustine, it becomes crystal clear that the doctrine of free will was foundational to the Greek Fathers. Almost all of them established this doctrine from man being created in the image of God. Since God is absolutely free and man was created in his image, it follows that an essential element of man's being is his free will. Irenaeus (AD 130–202) declared, "…man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness man was created" (35). To get an idea how fundamental the doctrine of free will was to these men, read the words of John of Damascus (AD 675–749) from his *Exposition of the Christian Faith*: "For we have been created with free wills by our Creator and are masters over our own actions" (161). Furthermore, these Greek Fathers argued that no one could be virtuous or vicious without this doctrine of free will. Personally, this is probably the most alarming thing to relearn from Knell's book. I almost forgot how rabid they were over this doctrine and you see it very clearly in all these Greek Fathers. Knell simply indicated these Greek Fathers maintained this view up to the eighth century (John of Damascus).

When dealing with the doctrine of sin, the Greek Fathers of course did not deny its pervasive influence and presence but they did not develop it in such a way as to impinge on man's free will. Fundamental to their view is that man was always responsible for their sin and God can never be faulted for it. The role of Adam's sin did not dominate their thinking (unlike Augustine).

In the section on "grace," Knell repeatedly sneaks in synthesized sentences in which he offers the reader very helpful observations, namely, that the Greek Fathers did not have a highly developed doctrine of grace. Regarding the early church fathers, he says, "It is difficult to pick up themes of grace in these works" (25). He says that Irenaeus "does not devote extensive sections of his work to the concept of grace" (43). Regarding Tertullian, Knell says that he "follows the general pattern of the earliest church writings in not having a developed doctrine of grace" (63). Perhaps not all that astonishing, the author declares that Origen "does not develop any theology of grace" (90). The rest of the Greek Fathers, he avers, did not develop "a strong doctrine" of grace (129). The author also shows how the doctrine of grace was not as established and dominant in Augustine's earlier writings (though his later writings clearly developed a doctrine of grace that greatly affected the Western Church).

Of course, Augustine's mature view differed considerably from the Greek Fathers and readers of this journal well understand that difference. Augustine's breathtaking reflections on sin, grace, and free will show why he has had such an impact on Christianity.

At this point, I want to point out a few specific matters in Knell's book. I found Chapter Six, "The Greek Fathers on Grace," to be very unhelpful. The quotations are arranged according to the way the word "grace" is used. The reader can easily read the word "grace" used by various Greek Fathers but having so many extracts arranged topically (Grace and Nature, Means of Grace, Grace and Salvation, Baptism and Grace, Grace and Sanctification, Grace and Charismata, Amount of Grace) does not help him. Dumping these quotations onto these pages has the appearance of being both lazy and superficial. It is one thing to read the author's analysis and see if the quotations actually prove his point or observation, but it is quite another thing to read them without any interaction or guidance.

Let me offer an example of the superficial arrangement just mentioned. In the section under "Grace and Salvation," he suggests that Cyril of Jerusalem believed in "some kind of space between becoming a Christian and receiving grace" (142). Yet the quotations that are lifted from Cyril's *Catechetical Lectures* must be understood in their context. The catechumens were being instructed in how they were to prepare for their baptism. The "grace" Cyril was speaking of was the grace that came to the believer at baptism. Their unique view of baptismal grace (beyond the purview of this review) explains this "space." Knell suggested that this was quite unique ("a very interesting line") when in fact it was very common among the Fathers. Again, this suggests a slavish compilation of quotations with a simplistic and misleading arrangement.

In Knell's seventh chapter, he offers another simplistic analysis of human will. Comparing man's will to that of angels, he only posits that the angels held an intermediary position between God and man when it came to the will (it is not clear why such a distinction is important). But Knell overlooks something much more significant between men and angels. Quoting John of Damascus, he does not notice that angels are not encumbered by man's physical body in regard to their free

3. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines,* fifth revised edition (London; New York : Continuum, 2006).

will: "having neither antipathy on the part of the body to overcome nor any assailant" (160). That is, angels do not struggle with human bodies and are not tempted from without. The reader had been led to believe that the free will of God, angels, and men is merely constitutional to their state and very little differences existed between angels and men regarding to their free will. John of Damascus, like many Greek thinkers, did not have the most positive view of the body. This should have been noted and highlighted as it sheds light upon some of the thinking among Greek Fathers.

The delightful Epilogue remains by far his best chapter. Though limiting himself to the Council of Orange and John Scottus Erigena, Matthew Knell synthesized their thinking quite well. Sadly, he refers to Gottschalk only in passing and as the backdrop for Erigena. I fear the second volume will not include Gottschalk at all. Though Semi-Pelagianism was condemned by the Council, it prevailed after the council in men like Erigena (and subsequently in most of Eastern and Western theology). It would have been helpful if the author recognized the continuing tension between Augustinianism and Semi-Pelagianism in theological history but his descriptive overview tends to overlook it. It remains to be seen if it will be noticed in the second volume.

This book turned out to be very different from what I expected. The intriguing title piqued my interest because these themes of *sin, grace, and free will* have always been a central concern for all Reformed thinkers. Yet, the book frustrated me more often than not. Only a few times did it ever offer interesting insights. Overall, this book has limited value and it will only benefit a very specific kind of student.

Would I recommend this book? Only for those who are interested in a "reader." But the themes of *sin, grace, and free will* require greater attention than merely a survey of quotations. A thorough analysis and synthesized judgments would have made this book invaluable because these theological themes always have contemporary relevance. Very few people will avail themselves of this book because it is only a reader. One will have to go somewhere else to get a good competent theological analysis. Nevertheless, reading this book could be helpful for those who have not really studied the early fathers. This book will certainly expose them to a plethora of original sources and in this manner, Knell's book can be considered a success.

Review: Alan D. Strange, *The Doctrine of the Spirituality of the Church in the Ecclesiology of Charles Hodge* (Phillipsburg, NJ. Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 2017). Paperback, xxx, 387 pages. 978-162995285, $59.00, Kindle/ePub, $35.99. Reviewed by Jeffrey A. Stivason, Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church, Gibsonia, Pennsylvania.

Alan D. Strange is professor of church history and theological librarian of Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Dyer, IN and in this book, full of solid history and rich documentation, Professor Strange acquits himself of those tasks quite well. The aim of this work is to describe and exfoliate Charles Hodge's understanding of the spirituality of the church, which, according to Strange, can be summarized in the following way. First, the church, like the state and family, is a divine institution. Each of these institutions has the same general aim but each achieves this end by different means. Second, the duties and means of these institutions cannot be "learned *a priori* from their design, but must be determined from the word of God" (p. 47). This means that the qualifications for church officers and the inclusion and exclusion of the membership are based upon God's word. Third, the state being a distinct institution is not to assume the prerogatives of the church. In other words, the duties of preserving and promoting the church belong to the church and not to the state. And finally, the church is independent of the state and the state promotes the interests of the church best by letting her alone. According to Strange, "This is Hodge's doctrine of the spirituality of the church in theory, particularly as that theory came to expression in America" (p. 48).

However, Strange is not interested in an abstract development of the doctrine of the church's spirituality nor can he be because Hodge primarily worked this doctrine out in the *sitz im leben* of America's battle over the issue of slavery. Thus, for Strange, this means that "Hodge's view of the spirituality of the church had the dual effect of ensuring that the church would remain faithful to its calling, not confusing itself or its operations with those of the state, while, at the same time, not rendering the church mute in its carrying out the task of the Great Commission, including the duty of comprehensive discipleship" (p. vii).

Strange's book does not function like a sharpened arrow seeking its target. Rather, it's more like a tank rolling through the country before setting up within range of its target. The reader should not misunderstand the illustration. The journey across the countryside is a delightful one. And you are looking for a delightful book on all things Hodge then look no further. However, the spirituality of the church is often tucked away in the background of the book or at least for much of the beginning. For example, though a handy summary of Hodge's life,

the biographical chapter must stretch a bit in order to include the doctrine of the church's spirituality.

However, let us jump aboard the tank as it makes its way along. In chapter one, Strange is concerned to develop Hodge's view of the church's history with regard to spirituality. By necessity the church's spirituality includes the concrete and the battle which brought this aspect of the church to the fore came in the nineteenth century. Up to that time the spirituality of the church was not mentioned. However, Strange is keen to demonstrate that this aspect was present even in Biblical times. For instance, he argues that the spirituality of the church was not absent during the theocracy but at the heart of the old covenant was true spirituality highlighted in worship and devotion to Yahweh.

And Strange also points up Hodge's criticism of the Constantinian model wherein the church as a spiritual institution was brought together and ruled by an agent of civil society. For Hodge, this was a fundamental violation of the church's spirituality. Strange continues to trace the church's relationship to the state throughout the middle ages, the reformation and even to different nations culminating in the church state relationship in the American context. It was this American context and its exceptions or scruples to certain articles found in chapters twenty and twenty three of the Westminster Confession of Faith that pointed up both America's independence and the place where the church of Christ as a spiritual society could be entirely distinct from the civil government. This was the context in which Hodge lived and wrote.

If chapter one functioned as the path of this tank then chapter two might function as a hiatus along the way. As Strange says, "Any fair survey of his temporal life and times must take into account matters both temporal and spiritual, as he was committed to both, and the doctrine of the spirituality of the church resides in some measure at the nexus of one's doctrine of church and state" (p. 50). The difficulty is that besides a note on the spirituality of the church regarding the upcoming discussion of slavery in the American context this chapter does not really push the argument forward. However, having said as much let me also say that the chapter is a delightful summary. Anyone interested in the Old Princtonians not only loves their doctrine but cherishes their example. These were lives well lived.

If chapter two was a siesta then the third and fourth chapters function as coordinates for a concluding target. In other words, in these chapters Strange is plugging in some crucial theological material that will be necessary for us to understand before blowing the target to bits. Chapter three deals with the theological convictions "that gave root to and underlay his (Hodge's) doctrine of the spirituality of the church" (p. 90). These sections are divided along the lines of the theological loci of traditional theological rubric. Here Hodge deals with reason and revelation, the doctrine of God, man, and Christology. However, there is an interesting discussion of Hodge's view of revelation, reason and the influence of Scottish Common Sense Realism in this chapter. Strange lands squarely on the side of the new paradigm pressed by Helseth and Hoffecker before him which states that the Princetonians were more Calvinist theologians than Common Sense philosophers as Ahlstrom contends.

However, after speaking about Hodge and his view of the innate knowledge of God Strange raises an interesting discussion at the end of that section. There Hodge speaks of axioms and Strange comments that this is not an argument based on Scottish Common Sense Realism but "presuppositional argument from the impossibility of the contrary" (p. 111). This would take Strange's work further afield but since he raises the point it might have been interesting had he dealt with Henry L. Mansel's, *The Limits of Religious Thought*.[1] Hodge mentions Mansel nearly sixty times in his Systematic Theology and for good reason. Mansel argued in the 1858 Bampton Lectures that humans, being finite, could attain no knowledge of God apart from Scripture. Mansel's epistemology drove one to the Bible. Though Mansel was no modern Presuppositionalist, he might have been a close parallel for the time!

The third chapter raises another interesting issue regarding the reign of Christ that has some bearing on the spirituality of the church. For Hodge there are two separate aspects of Christ's reign. There is first his providential rule. Strange summarizes, "In fine, 'under the present dispensation, therefore, Christ is the God of providence. It is in and through and by Him that the universe is governed. This dominion or kingdom is to last until its object is accomplished, i.e., until all his enemies, all forms of evil, and even death itself is subdued. Then this kingdom, this mediatorial government of the universe, is to be given up (I Cor. xv.24)'" (p. 122). However, there is also a spiritual kingdom which "includes the relation in which he stands to his true people individually and collectively (the invisible church); and the relation he sustains to the visible Church, or the body of his professing people" (p. 123). The reign of his providence is "for the benefit of the church" (p. 122).

The fourth chapter raises another interesting point with regard to Hodge's theology. It appears that for Hodge the church is not an essentially visible society but an invisible one. Certainly the reader wonders how such a rigid view of the church as invisible can be consistently maintained. Hodge argues, "[the] Church, as such, is not a visible society. All visible union, all external organization may cease, and yet, so long as there are saints who have communion, the Church

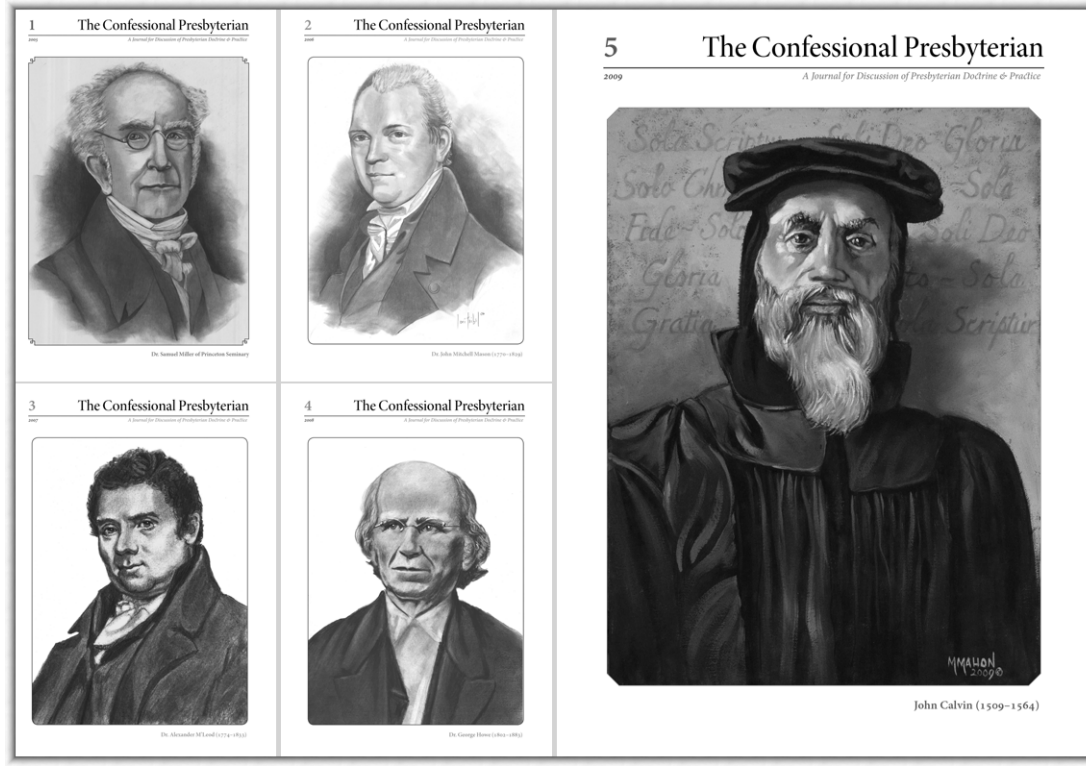
1. Henry Longueville Mansel, *The Limits of Religious Thought Examined in Eight Lectures,* fifth edition (London: John Murray, 1867)

exists, if the Church is the communion of the saints" (p. 164). One might ask Hodge if a person could willingly abstain from the organization of the church and yet be without sin. Strange seems to indicate that Hodge would answer in the affirmative when he summarizes the spirituality of the church by saying, "The Holy Spirit constitutes the true church—that invisible body of believers gathered across the ages and found in a variety of particular visible churches" (p. 173). Such phrasing seems to indicate that the invisible church is the true church whereas the visible church is not. What is more, one cannot help but wonder if Hodge is striving for two goals: first, the exclusion of the Roman ecclesiology and second the inclusion of non-reformed or evangelical churches.

Chapters five through eight trace the doctrine of the spirituality of the church through a series of General Assemblies but also through a series of Hodge's opponents, not the least of which is James Henley Thornwell. The story itself is worth reading these chapters. However, it is here in the debate over slavery that the doctrine of the church's spirituality comes to the forefront. And throughout one asks whether they agree or disagree with Hodge. Strange obviously admires Hodge but he is a good guide through the issues and does not leave us with hagiography but a well researched discussion regarding the visible church's struggle on how to speak to the issue of slavery.

The final two chapters bring us in touch with the south and the reunion of the northern church as well as Strange's concluding chapter. Here Strange sums up and ties up the loose ends and concludes as he started, giving us a faithful account of Hodge's life and ministry, especially as it touched upon the spirituality of the church.

This is a fine book, particularly if you love the Old Princeton theologians. It has a variety of excellent topics including a chapter on Hodge's life, battles within the church courts, and the slavery issue in America at its most volatile. However, as I have already said, this is not a sharpened arrow soaring through the air hungrily seeking the target. This is a tank rolling through the fields, and though it takes a tank longer to reach its destination it is a pleasant trip because you have a better opportunity to look at the sites as you pass them by.▪



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Psallo

Psalm 128:1–6

In the Psalm before you there are several technical points of translation, a few of meaning, and some of pastoral and spiritual use which we desire to bring to your attention. In the first instance, we notice the title of the Psalm itself, "A Song of Degrees."[1] As we have intimated before we believe this designation refers to the devotional and spiritual use of these Psalms (among other times and reasons as well) as the men of Israel and their families made their way to the thrice-annual feasts in Jerusalem, First-fruits, Booths, and Passover. This view is supported by Ernst W. Hengstenberg in his work on the Psalms.[2]

In the text before you, we first mention that there are a few places where the translation, meter, or rhyme has been smoothed by the addition of an occasional English word not found in the Hebrew text. These few instances are designated by the use of *italics*. Further, we have used the older English designations concerning the singular and plural second person for the sake of clarity. As I tell our congregation, if it begins with a "th" it designates one person (thou, thee, thine, thy) and if it begins with a "y" it designates two or more persons (ye, you, your). Interestingly, in the Psalm before us, there are no instances of the second person plural—all usages of the second person are singular, making this a very poignant piece of prose. Another point here is that the divine name used throughout is the Covenant Name, designated Lord,[3] and in the interpretive comments below the significance of this usage will be discussed.

The subject of the Psalm is the blessed estate of that man who fears the Lord. As we have a common-meter-double setting, the contextual markers appear more clearly because the first verse in each complete stanza begins with this godly quality, followed by the attendant blessings upon such a man who thus fears the Lord. The first three verses make up the first "stanza" and verses four through six, the second.

As with all discussions of blessing in keeping with godliness, or fearing the Lord, whether Scriptures of the Old or New Testament (Psalm 34:12–16; 1 Peter 3:10–12, and many others), several points of clarification are necessary. It would be a fundamental misunderstanding of this and other passages of Scripture to assert that God blesses us in return for faithfulness, or as it is styled in this Psalm, for fearing Him. These are the Lord's encouragements to our duty, as the Lord would reveal to us His will of command, and how He strengthens His instruction to us by His fatherly good pleasure. William Swan Plumer writes: "The promise of temporal prosperity shall be so far fulfilled as may not conflict with the higher interests of the soul. Yet the Lord does not engage to supply the insatiable cupidity of the human heart; but to give his blessing on lawful industry."[4] It is clear from the history of redemption, in Scripture and without, that the most godly among us have often been the most maligned, persecuted, marginalized, patronized, etc., culminating in the Lord Jesus Himself. Truly we ought not to take such passages as the one before us, in which blessings are shown as attending obedience, to teach that the Lord operates upon an absolute principle of *quid pro quo*. Note also the character of the blessings promised—they are not what many would consider grand or great, yet when we pause to consider them, they are the sweetest kind of favor that a people in any age might enjoy, that of a happy and well-ordered home (as Plumer notes {p. 1117}: "…where do we find a description of domestic happiness superior to this in beauty and brevity?").

Working our way through the Psalm then, in the first stanza the Psalmist sees the blessing of those who fear the Lord and walk in His ways. We note first the parallel statement—fearing, and walking, the former inward, an attitude of the mind or heart, the other manifesting that heart in outward conformity to the Lord's commands, and service to Him. Beginning with the blessing, the Lord gives the encouragement of partaking or eating the fruit of one's own hands. Several things are taught here, but we must notice first the blessing of labor, and that in all lawful callings. Money for nothing, despite the popular opinion, is seldom good for "the higher interests of the soul." The Lord blesses with meaningful labor, the industry of which the blessed man translates into the maintenance of this earthly life. The אַשְׁרֵי (blessing) of those who fear the Lord rises out of this labor unto Him. Further, this blessed man eats the fruit of his labor—that is, he is not enslaved—the things of this life, the fruits of his labor which are the providential gifts of God, are nourishing to *the man himself*. This has, in proper exposition, both a spiritual and material understanding.

Continued on Page 278.

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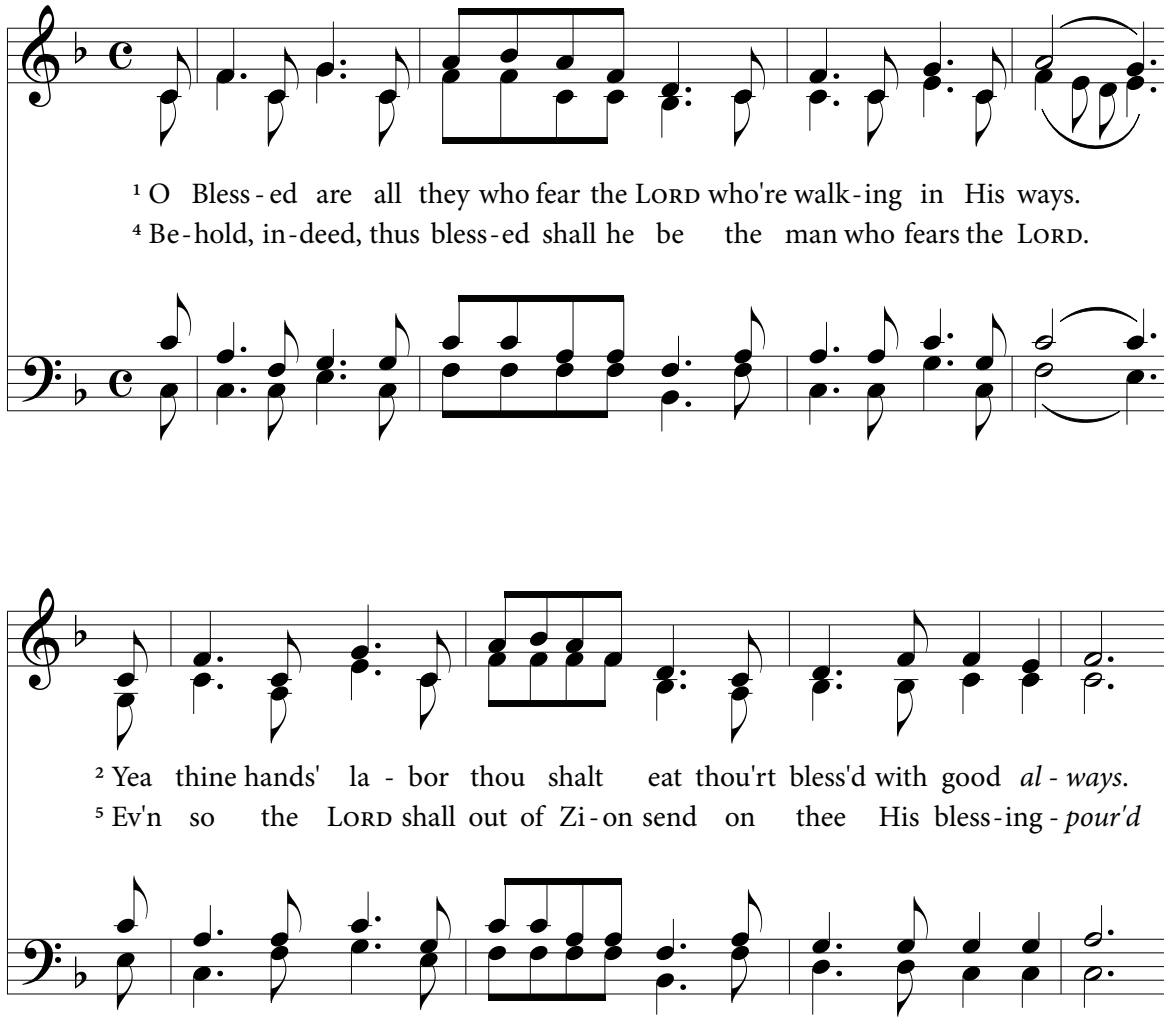
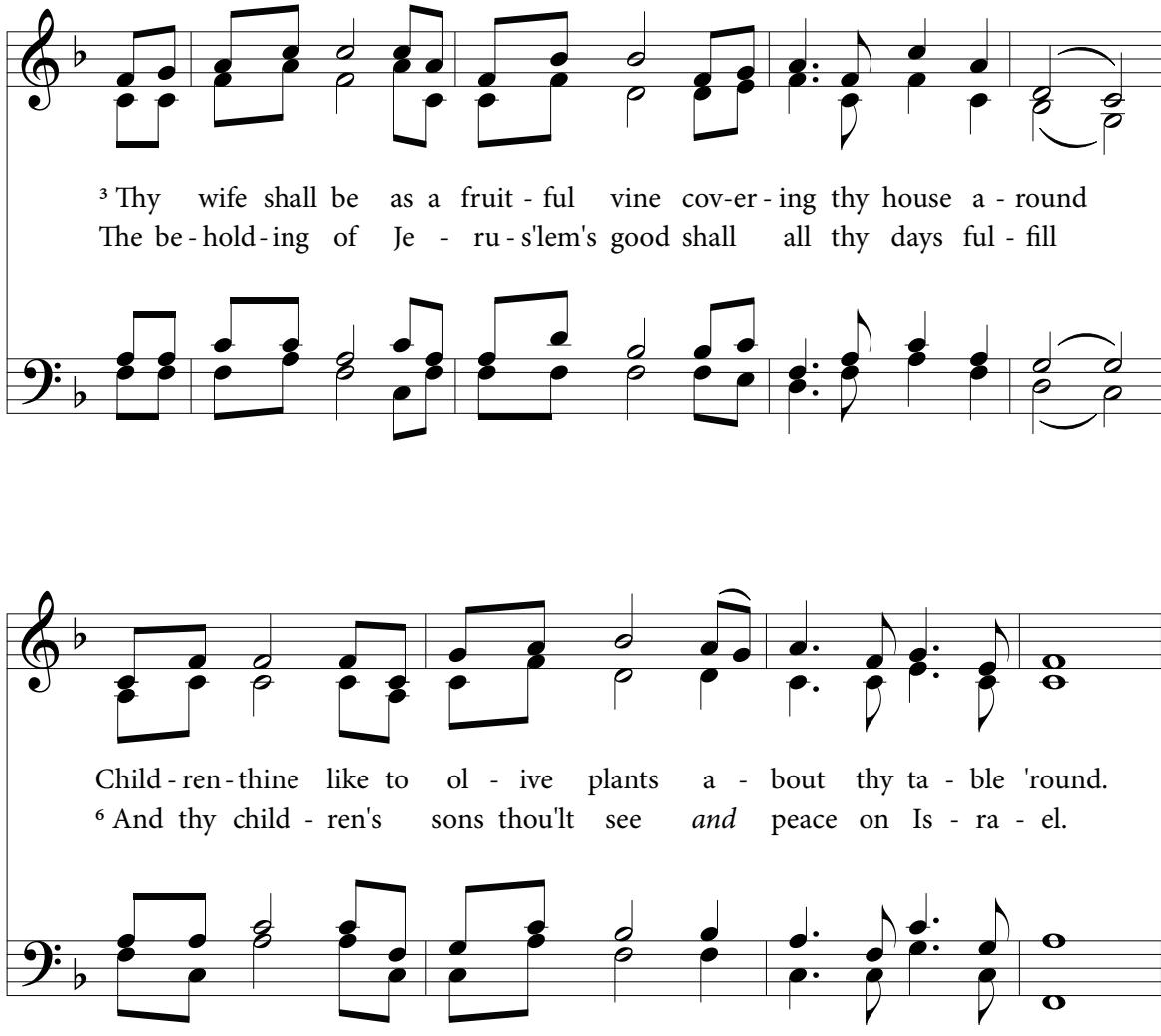
1. Heb. שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת
2. See E. W. Hengstenberg, John Thomson, and Patrick Fairbairn, Commentary on the Psalms, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1869), 3.407–408.
3. Heb. יְהוָה
4. William S. Plumer, *Studies in the Book of Psalms: Being a Critical and Expository Commentary, with Doctrinal and Practical Remarks on the Entire Psalter* (Philadelphia; Edinburgh: J. B. Lippincott Company; A & C Black, 1872), 1118.

Psalm 128:1–6

A Song of degrees.

Gefen Poriyah Todd L. Ruddell



3 Thy wife shall be as a fruit - ful vine cov-er - ing thy house a - round
The be - hold - ing of Je - ru - s'lem's good shall all thy days ful - fill
Child - ren - thine like to ol - ive plants a - bout thy ta - ble 'round.
6 And thy child - ren's sons thou'lt see *and* peace on Is - ra - el.

In Translatione

Johannes Hornbeeck (1617–1666), Disputational Piety at Leiden, and a Translation of *De desiderio animæ erga Christum*

Introduction and Background

In the context of the early modern university the holding of disputations was an important educational component, and education at Leiden was no exception.[1] The scene was typical: presiding would be the faculty professor; defending, the student, or respondent; opposing, one or more of his student fellows. The set of theses, about which the disputation was held, would be drafted beforehand, usually by the presiding professor, sometimes by the respondent, and sometimes by a combination of both, and would be an abridged summary of that which was expected to be delivered and defended orally by the respondent.

Hundreds of these sets of disputational theses have been preserved.[2] There were several types: *disputationes pro gradu*, held for the obtaining of a degree; *disputationes exercitii gratia*, held for practice and theological training (and therefore much more common); the *collegia privata* were held in faculty rooms; others were public, whether those held in a regular cycle (a *collegium*), or those of a more quodlibetal nature, following the medievals. Many of the former were developed later by the professor into *systema* of various sorts, of which the *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae* (held at Leiden 1620–1624) is perhaps the most famous.

Johannes Hornbeeck (1617–1666), at Leiden 1654–1666, also held disputations as professor of theology. Many of these were titled *theologica practica*, handling material not of an exclusively theoretical nature but uniting *theologia et praxis pietatis*, *leer en leven*. The holding of *theologica practica* disputations reflects Hornbeeck's contention that theological education was not meant simply to fill the mind with knowledge but to form the soul in piety. It reflected his belief, which he would present in the beginning of his two-volumed *Theologia Practica* (1663), that "the practical must really be taught" in the academy.

To give a larger picture of this inclusion of the *practica* in theological education, I want briefly to introduce Hornbeeck, survey his view of the role the *practica* should play in academic instruction in theology, and provide example of this through a brief introduction and then translation of one of his academic *theologica practica* disputations, *De desiderio animae erga Christum*.

Hornbeeck: Life and Works

Johannes Hoornbeeck[3] was born 4 November 1617 in Haarlem during the Dutch Twaalfjarig Bestand (1609–1621). The oldest son of Tobias (1588–1637), a merchantman, and Janneke Hoornbeeck (b. 1596), he began his classical education early and at sixteen entered Leiden University (15 April 1633), where he trained under the faculty of the time: Claudius Salmasius (1588–1653) in classics; Daniel Heisius (1580–1655) in literature; Constantin l'Empereur (1591–1648) in Eastern languages; Franco Burgersdijk (1590–1635) in philosophy; and Antonius Thysius (1565–1640) and Antonius Walaeus (1573–1639) in theology.[4] When plague struck in 1635, Hornbeeck transferred to Utrecht for a brief year's stint of study with Gisbertus Voetius (1589–1676); he would return to Leiden after the plague.

The Translator: Ryan M. Hurd is an editor, teacher, and translator and a member of an Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

1. For an analysis of disputations at Leiden particularly, see G. D. J. Schotel, *De Academie te Leyden in de 16e, 17e en 18e eeuw* (Haarlem: Kruseman & Tjeenk Willink, 1875), 327–27; Herman Huber Kuyper, *De opleiding tot den dienst des Woords bij de gereformeerden* ('s-Gravenhage, 1891), 528–30; Margreet Ahsmann, *Collegia en colleges: juridisch onderwijs aan de Leidse Universiteit 1575–1630 in het bijzonder het disputeren* (Groningen, 1990), 274–341; Keith Stanglin, *Arminius on the Assurance of Salvation: The Context, Roots, and Shape of the Leiden Debate 1603–1609* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 37–58; Keith Stanglin, *The Missing Public Disputations of Jacobus Arminius: Introduction, Text, and Notes* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 7–100; William Otterspeer, *Het bolwerk van de vrijheid, Leidse Universiteit, 1575–1672* (Amsterdam, 2000), 236–38.

2. On average there would be between 100 and 150 copies made by the printer of each disputation. Ahsmann, *Collegia en colleges*, 280.

3. Bibliography information is sourced from: *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), s.v. "Hornbeek, Johannes." Berend Borghuis, *Hornbeek en Voetius: De actuele betekenis van de* ars moriendi *bij Hoornbeek en Voetius voor de pastorale praktijk*. Unpublished manuscript. Utrecht, 2008, 22–24; J. W. Hofmeyr, *Johannes Hoornbeeck as polemikus* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1975);T. Brienen, *Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617–1666): Eminent geleerde en pastoraal theoloog* (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 2008); T. Brienen, *De eerse Nederlandse homiletiek van Johannes Hoornbeeck* (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 2009); T. Brienen, *De Nadere Reformatie en het gereformeerd piëtism* (s-Gravenhage: Boekencentrum, 1989); *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (New York: Macmillan Reference, 1998), s.v. "Hoornbeeck (*or* Hoornbeek), Johannes." NB Hornbeeck's earliest biographer D. Stuartus, *Levensbeschrijving van den vermaarden Johannes Hoornbeek* (1744), in W. van Eenhoorn, *Euthenasia ofte welsterven. Deel I* (Amsterdam: Douci en Vieroot), 139–62.

4. For these as also Leiden faculty in general cf. A. Eekhof, *De Theologische Faculteit te Leiden in de 17e Eeuw* (Utrecht: G. J. A. Ruys, 1921).

Declared candidate for ministry in 1638, Hornbeeck was ordained 1 March 1639, serving the refugee "Dutch congregation under the cross" at Mühlheim-on-the-Rhine, Germany. He would pastor there until 1643. He obtained his doctorate of divinity 21 December 1643, and, in 1644, after receiving a few calls, accepted the chair of theology at Utrecht as the successor to Meinardus Schotanus (1593–1644), who had passed away in April. Hornbeeck would deliver his inaugural address 6 July: *Oratio inauguralis ad susceptionem Professionis de Studio SS Theologiae*. On 25 October of the following year he became a minister at Utrecht. There he would remain until 1654, when he transfered to Leiden, where he gave his inaugural address 9 July 1654.

He would marry Anna Bernart in May 1650, and have six children, not all of whom survived: Joannes (b. 1651); Anna (b. 1653); Isaack (b. 1655); Hendrick (b. 1657); Johannes (b. 1659); and Johannes (b. 1664). Hornbeeck would die before fifty at Leiden 1 September 1666 and be buried at Peters Church, Leiden.

Hornbeeck's academic abilities were notable, and he would influence later important theologians such as Herman Witsius (1636–1708)[5] and Simon Oomius (1630–1706).[6] Hornbeeck had mastered thirteen languages, and his wide reading seemed to be matched only by his prolific writing.[7] His corpus generally divides between his time at Utrecht and Leiden: at the former, he is involved generally in the further reformation project, showing a historical emphasis in *systema* and homiletical treatises; at the latter, he is much more polemically driven, responding to conflicts with Johannes Cocceius (1603–1669) and Abraham Heidanus (1597–1678), as well as the threats of Cartesianism, Arminianism, and Socinianism.

A noted polemicist,[8] Hornbeeck wrote works such as *Summa Controversiarum Religionis* (1653) and *De observando a Christianis praecepto Decalogi quarto* (1659), the latter prompted by his debates with fellow faculty members Cocceius and Heidanus. But he was not known only for polemics. His work *Institutiones theologicae ex optimis auctoribus concinnatae* (1653)—as noted by the title, a collection of theological views from notable theologians of the time—was a significant if unoriginal work contributing to the burgeoning Reformation project. He would also impact other areas, such as missions with *Summa controversiarum religionis* (1653); *De convincendis et convertendis Judaeis et Gentilibus* (1655); and *De conversione Iudorum ac gentilium* (1669). And he is attributed the first Reformed homiletical textbook: *Disputationes theologicae de Ratione Concionandi* (1645).[9]

More to our point at hand, Hornbeeck also maintained a clear pastoral, practical emphasis. As a figure of the *Nadere Reformatie*, this is to say nothing remarkable. Perhaps the most notable works here are his completion of Voetius's *Geestelijke Verlatingen* (1646, 1659)[10] and Hornbeeck's own *Euthanasia, ofte wel sterven* (1651),[11] as well as his two-volume *Theologia*

5. See A. Goudriaan, "*Theologia practica*: The Diverse Meanings of a Subject of Early Modern Academic Writing," in J. Ballor, D. Sytsma, and J. Zuidema, eds., *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism: Studies in Honor of Richard A. Muller on the Maturation of a Theological Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 452–53.

6. See Gregory D. Schuringa, "Embracing *Leer* and *Leven*: The Theology of Simon Oomius in the Context of *Nadere Reformatie* Orthodoxy," PhD diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2003.

7. A list of his major publications is as follows: *Disputationes XIV Anti-Judaicae* (Utrecht, 1644); *Oratio Inauguralis de Studio SS Theologiae* (Utrecht, 1644); *Disputationes Theologicae de Ratione Concionandi* (Utrecht, 1645); *De Paradoxis et Heterodoxis Weigelianis Commentarius, ubi et de Swencfeldo, aliisque similis indolis* (Utrecht, 1646); *Gisbertus Voetii Disputaty van geestelicke verlatingen, uit de Latynse tale in onse Nederlantse overgezet, voorgezet door Johannes Hornbeeck* (Utrecht, 1646); *Korte en naardere verdediginge van de waarde Kerk, gestelt tegen den Schryver van de Paepsche Kerk onde de naam van Christophorus van Ouwerkerck* (Utrecht, 1649); *Overtuigde vermetenheid van Christophorus van Ouwerkerck in zijn verlore proces* (Utrecht, 1650); *Examen Bullae Papalis Innocentii X qua Pacem Germaniae abrogare nititur. Accedunt Bullae Urbani VIII de suppressione Jesuitissarum de cultu imaginum et de Festis* (Utrecht, 1650); *Socinianismus confutatus* (Utrecht, 1650); *Euthanasia, ofte wel sterven; waer in veel voorbeelden der stervenden en hun laatsten doodtspreuken verhaald worden* (Utrecht, 1651); *Summa Controversiarum Religionis cum Infidelibus, Haereticis, Schismaticis* (Utrecht, 1653); *De observando a Christianis praecepto Decalogi quarto die Dominico* (Leiden, 1659); *Heyliginghe van Godts name en dagh, ende van de onderhoudinghe van des Heeren daghs-heyliginghe* (Leiden, 1655); *Nader bewysinghe van des Heeren-daghs-heyliginghe* (Leiden, 1659); *Sondag Rust-dagh des Heeren ende daarin getoont conciliaty van verscheide disputen dienaangaande* (Leiden, 1659); *Epistolae ad Johannem Duraeum Scoto-Britannum, qua respondetur Examini Johannis Beverley de Independentissimo, addita est Independentium in Anglia confessio* (Leiden, 1660); *Id cum Jacobi Usserii Disputationes de reducendo Episcopatu ad formam regiminis Synodici* (Utrecht, 1661); *Van de Oorsprongh der Arminiaensche nieuwigheden* (Schoonhoven, 1662); *Dissertatio de Veterum Concionibus* (Utrecht, 1663); *Berigt van de Sabbath* (Utrecht, 1663); *Theologia Practica, Accessit eiusdem Irenicum, de studio Pacis atque Concordiae, et Oratio de Prudentia, II Partes* (Utrecht, 1663–1666); *Disputationem Theologicarum Anti-Sociniarum compendium* (Utrecht, 1666). This list was compiled from Hofmeyr, *Johannes Hoornbeeck as polemikus*, 223–26.

8. See Hofmeyr, *Johannes Hoornbeeck as polemikus*.

9. The work is a collection of six disputations held quite early at Utrecht from 4 October 1645 to 13 July 1646. Roughly, disputation 1 covers the definition of a sermon as a holy act; disputation 2, the format or style (e.g., logical or rhetorical) of a sermon and its introduction; 3, the theme of a sermon; 4, the explicatio of the text; 5, the applicatio of the sermon; 6, the delivery of the sermon. See here Brienen translation (into Dutch), *De eerse Nederlandse homiletiek van Johannes Hoornbeeck*. Cf. also Hornbeeck's smaller treatise *Dissertatio de Veterum Concionibus* (1663) held at Leiden.

10. *Gisbertus Voetii Disputaty van geestelicke verlatingen, uit de Latynse tale in onse Nederlantse overgezet, voortgezet door Johannes Hoornbeeck* (Utrecht, 1646). Translated in English as *Spiritual Desertion*, trans. J. Vriend and H. Boonstra (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003).

11. Compare with Voetius's Τα ἀσκητικά *sive exercitia pietatis* (Utrecht, 1664).

Practica (1663), a large collection of disputations on various subjects *theologica practica*.

Hornbeeck's Project of Theological Instruction: "The practical must really be taught in the school"[12]

At the start of his *Theologia Practica*, Hornbeeck would declare, "Tota theologia est practica."[13] His answer to the nature of theology, *an speculativa sive practica*, a question widely debated and answered variously, leaves no room for equivocation: "Thus we will handle theology in the present work [*Theologia Practica*] so that it may appear that theology does not only concern divine things that ought to *be known*, but *observed*. Theology is not only *teaching*, but also *using*. In fact, the whole of theology is *practical*, not *theoretical*."[14]

For Hornbeeck, *frigidas et meras speculationes* were not true theology: "Separated from praxis, it is not theology."[15] This yielded an implication for the project of theological instruction. Drawing from the Synod of Dordt, Hornbeeck argues that the divines taught the "necessity" of bringing the practical into theology along with the theoretical, "in Academiis, Collegiis, & Candidatorum Examinibus." He reflected this in his own teaching at both Utrecht and Leiden.

The context for this, that practical theology should have a place in the early modern university, is complex.[16] The idea of a *theologica practica* itself was Catholic in its origin and early development. The Catholic Johannes Molanus (1533–1585) seems to be the first to employ it in 1585 in his *Theologiae practicae compendium*.[17] Early in the Reformed world, Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588–1638) also treated it as a distinct field in his *Methodus S.S. Theologiae* (1611) as well as in other works. Cornelius van Velzen's (1696–1752)[18] late, albeit massive, three-tome *Institutiones theologiae practicae*, published 1748 and 1757,[19] marks the pinnacle of works on the subject.[20]

But within the context of the Netherlands and the Nadere Reformatie, prior to Hornbeeck there had been considerable discussion on the topic of *theologica practica*. The Synod of Dordt, responding to the request submitted to the provincial synod of Zeeland (9–17 October 1618) by Classis Walcheren,[21] had indicated in its Pro-Acta sessions that theological students be trained in the practical subjects. Post-Dordt saw the attempt of the South Holland Synod to drive this further into a distinct chair of practical theology at Leiden. Though the attempt ultimately failed, as Sinnema points out, "the attempt to establish the position had the effect of pressuring the Leiden professors to highlight more deliberately the practical implications of their own teaching."[22]

Voetius himself had devoloped the teaching of practical theology at Utrecht[23] during Hornbeeck's tenure there.

12. "Practicam omnino in Schola docendam esse." Hornbeeck, *Theologia Practica*, 1:17.

13. Hornbeeck, *Theologia Practica*, 1:1.

14. "Quare ita tractabimus Theologiam in praesenti, ut non tantum esse rerum divinarum *sciendarum*, sed & *observandarum*, appereat; non tantum Theologia *docens*, sed quoque *utens*. Tota quippe est *practica*, non *theoretica*." Hornbeeck, *Theologia Practica*, 1:5.

15. Hornbeeck, *Theologia Practica*, 1:6.

16. See for this, Donald Sinnema, "The Attempt to Establish a Chair in Practical Theology at Leiden University (1618–1626)," in *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism*, 415–441.

17. Joannes Molanus, *Theologiae practicae compendium, per conclusiones in quinque tractatus digestum* (Cologne: Mylius, 1585).

18. See for a description Achelis, *Lehrbuch der praktischen Theologie*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1911), 1:1–14; Christiaan Sepp, *Het godgeleerd onderwijs in Nederland gedurende de 16de en 17de eeuw* (Leiden: De Breuk en Smits, 1874), 2:387–423.

19. Cornelius van Velzen, *Institutiones theologiae practicae*, vols. 1–2 (Groningen: Bolt & Velzen, 1748); vol. 3 (Groningen: Bolt, 1757). Cf. his abridgement of the first two volumes *Theologiae practicae medulla, expressa ex majori opera in usum academicae juventutis* (Groningen: Bolt, 1750). See for a description of the *Institutiones* Christiaan Sepp, *Johannes Stinstra en zijn tijd Eene bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der kerk en school in de 18e eeuw* (Amsterdam: Sepp, 1865), 1:96–98; W. Geesink, *Gereformeerde ethiek*, ed. V. Hepp (Kampen: Kok, 1931), 2:469–97.

20. See for a history of *theologica practica* Aza Goudriaan, "Theologia practica: The Diverse Meanings of a Subject of Early Modern Academic Writing," in *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism*, 443–55. See also e.g., Simon Oomius, *Institutiones theologiae practicae, ofte onderwysingen in de practycke der godtgeleertheydt: eerste tractaet des tweeden boeck's van het eerste deel, vervattende de verhandelinge der theologia didactica* (Bolsward: Wed. Samuel Haringhouk, 1676); Jacobi Alting, *Opera omnia theologica, analytica, exegetica, practica, problematica & philologica,* 5 vols. (Amsterdam: Gerardus Borstius, 1687); Herman Witsius, *Theologiae practicae: quo veri ac interioris christianismi genuinum exercitium* (Groningen: Jacobus Sipkes, 1729). Voetius is attributed as introducing the *theologia practica* as an academic discipline; cf: C. A. de Niet, *Gisbertus Voetius, De Praktijk der Godzaligheid* (Utrecht: De Banier, 1996); 1:xxvii; Van Asselt and Rouwendal, *Inleiding in de Gereformeerde Scholastiek*, 87; A de Reuver, *Verborgen omgang, Sporen van Spiritualiteit in Middeleeuwen en Nadere Reformatie* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2002), 12–13.

21. J. Bouterse, ed., *Classicale Acta 1573–1620 IV: Provinciale Synode Zeeland, Classis Walcheren 1602–1620* (Den Haag: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 1995), 304.

22. Sinnema, "Attempt to Establish a Chair," 440.

23. See his advocation for it in his *Exercitia et Bibliotheca Studiosi Theologiae* (Utrecht, 1651; first ed., 1644), 490–503. See also his six disputations on practical theology in *Selectarum disputationum theologiarum* (Utrecht, 1648–1667), 3:1–59. Note that these were delivered during Hornbeeck's tenure at Utrecht. As van't Spijker points out, for Voetius, "Heel de theologie is practisch. Maar de practische theologie legt elke vorm van speculatie terzijde. Zij richt zich op de vragen van het leven zelf. Zij is naar haar diepste aard pastorale theologie." W. van't Spijker, "Voetius Practicus," in *De Onbekende Voetius*, ed. J. van Oort, et al. (Kampen: Kok, 1989), 244–45. For further on Voetius and the development of the academic form of the *theologica practica* see A. de Niet, *Gisbertus Voetius, De Praktijk der Godzaligheid* (Utrecht: De Banier, 1996); 1:xxvii; W. Van Asselt and Rouwendal, *Inleiding in de Gereformeerde Scholastiek* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1998), 87;

Voetius's *Exercitia et bibliotheca studiosi theologiae* (1644)[24] supplied a large bibliography on recommended works dealing with the subject[25] and divided practical theology into four parts: ethics or casuistry, ascetics, ecclesiastical polity, and homiletics, on the latter of which he seems to place a priority,[26] as Goudriaan points out.

Hornbeeck himself differed from Voetius,[27] and handled *theologia practica* as more distinctly "a theology that is related to Christian life,"[28] without treating ecclesiastical polity and homiletics, like Voetius. But nevertheless, though Hornbeeck would differ somewhat on the precise distribution of practical theology, he would follow in the steps of his former teacher-turned-colleage Voetius and place a heavy emphasis on the practical in his teaching. As Hornbeeck outlined in his *Theologia Practica*, for him, it is a requirement that "not only do men know what they ought to believe, and how they ought to dispute, but, what is required before all these things, and without which all these things are nothing, is that they know how to live well." Or, to put it another way (and here he quotes an Arab Proverb): "a scholar without works, is as a cloud without rain"—of what profit will he be for the world below?[29]

These were not alone the thoughts of a man at the maturation of his career, publishing his *Theologia Practica* three years before his death. Even at the start of his teaching at Utrecht in 1644, which began the same year as the publishing of Voetius's *Exercitia et bibliotheca studiosi theologiae*, Hornbeeck casts the same view of academic theological education for which he would advocate in his *Theologia Practica*: the practical is par for the course in theology, quite literally. As his *Oratio inauguralis* of 1644 makes clear, advising of the three things required for study—that one be pious, eager for learning, and diligent—Hornbeeck notes that "piety comes in the first place." He quotes Gregory: "It is necessary first to be clean, and then to cleanse another; first to be wise, and then to teach wisdom; first to be made enlightened, and after illumine others; to be near to God, and then to lead others; to be sanctified, and then to sanctify."[30] The inclusion of the *practica* within theology is thus stated, and the implication is again made clear: "Therefore, students, and those such by name who aspire to sacred things, hear what is the first work necessary for you: before all things, order yourselves to piety."[31]

Hornbeeck's program of academic study thus included the *practica*: "Neither ought this care for piety, and its conjunction with studies, in the time of ministry be rejected by students."[32] Further, as Hornbeeck notes quoting Origin, if "qualis eius doctrina, tales & mores; ac ut mores, ita etiam doctrina," then in Hornbeeck's mind the *practica* is essential in theological education. And a glance at some of the disputations Hornbeeck held both at Utrecht and Leiden confirms that he applied his view of theological education consistently: *De afflictionibus* (Feb. 1651); *De humiliatione* (May 1651); *De sincereitate & hypocrisi* (June 1654); *De constantia* (July 1654); *De progressu spirituali* (Dec. 1654); *De resurrectione Christi* (June 1656); *De pietate* (Dec. 1656); *De sensu divinae gratiae* (May 1658); *De peccato* (Oct. 1660); *De peccati poenis* (Jan. 1661); *De abnegatione sui* (March 1661); *De introversione animi ad se* (March 1661); *De bono solitudinis* (April 1661); *De desperatione salutari de seipso* (April 1661); *De promissionibus divinis* (May 1661); *De Christo* (May 1661); *De fide* (Oct. 1661); *De accessione animae ad Christum* (Dec. 1661); *De certitudine salutis* (March 1664); *De pugna spirituali* (May 1664)—along with many more.

It bears noting that the vast majority of these disputations are entitled *disputatio theologica practica*. Hornbeeck's understanding of the nature of theology as *practica* birthed a resolve to teach it in the institution, and the holding of disputations on distinctly practical subjects reflects that clearly.

De desiderio animae erga Christum, pars prima

One example of the distinctly practical subjects Hornbeeck considered essential for theological education is the present one, titled *De desiderio animae erga Christum*. This particular disputation did not make its way into the *Theologia Practica*, though a large number of similar disputations did. The reason for its omission is unclear.

A de Reuver, *Verborgen omgang, Sporen van Spiritualiteit in Middeleeuwen en Nadere Reformatie* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2002), 12–13.

24. Cf. Andreas J. Beck, *Gisbertus Voetius (1589–1676). Sein Theologieverständnis und seine Gotteslehre* (Göttingen: V&R, 2007), 106–8.

25. *Exercitia et Bibliotheca Studiosi Theologiae*, 490.

26. *Exercitia et Bibliotheca Studiosi Theologiae*, 190–221.

27. Goudriaan, "Theologia practica," 449.

28. Goudriaan, "Theologia practica," 450.

29. "Ubi & necessitatem indicant tradendae, cum Dogmatica, in Theologia, Practicae, & huius rationem non inter infima habendam esse, in Academiis, Collegiis, & Candidatorum Examinibus: uti in Ecclesia non tantum sciant homines quid credere debent, & quomodo disputare, sed, quod ante omnia requiritur, & sine quo illa nihili sunt, etiam bene vivere: nam ut optime disputes, nisi & recte vivas, nihil quidem illud prodest, nisi ut gravius justiusque condemneris; salvabit autem procul dubio pia in Christo vita, utcumque forte de fide nescium multum disputare: nam inane nomen est, scientia sine conscientia, vel ut habet proverbium Arabum, *doctus sine opere, est uti nubes sine pluvia*…. Quamobrem quum censeremus, Practicam omnino in Schola docendam esse." Hornbeeck, *Theologia Practica*, 16–17

30. "Mundari oportet primum, deinde mundare: sapere, ac deinde sapientiam docere: lucem fieri, ac postea illuminare: propinquiari Deo, tum alios adducere: sanctificari, tum sanctifacre."

31. "Ergo, studiose, & illi quidem nominatim, qui ad sacra adspirant, quid sibi primum facto opus, audiunt. Ante omnia vero ad pietatem se componant."

32. "Neque haec pietatis cura, & cum studiis conjunctio, in tempus ministerii a Studiosis rejicienda."

De desiderio[33] was held 4 July 1661 at Leiden with one Reginerus Schevenhusius as respondent. Not much can be found about Schevenhusius, though as a student (unsurprisingly) he engaged in other disputations as well—e.g., his response to Cocceius's disputatio *An fides in Christum sit necessaria ad remissionem peccatorum?*.[34] Hornbeeck's disputation to which Schevenhusius responds is *pars prima* of two; the second was printed to be held in July with the customary space to add the specific day, but the day was not filled in, though the respondent is listed as Theodorus vander Lee.

I am well aware of the debate as to the hand the residing professor had in the formulation of disputationes, whether it was he alone, the respondent, or a combination thereof. While this is not the place to solve the question *in toto*, it does appear that in the case of these Hornbeeckian disputationes Hornbeeck was heavily if not exclusively involved in their drafting. Examination of the Latin across the range of disputations suggests a single authorship, as the style is consistent. This is particularly obvious in the case of the disputation sets, such as the two here on the desire of the soul, as well as others. This is not to mention the "canonization" of many of these *theologica practica* disputationes in Hornbeeck's *Theologia Practica*, following in the line of many others who collected the disputations and formulated them into *systema* of various sorts. All this is to say that it appears one can take this disputation as Hornbeeck canon.

Analysis of the disputatio itself reveals a fairly basic outline, following a scholastic pattern of *definitio*, *distributio*, and then desire *with respect to* Christ first and then us. Theses 1–5 sets out the *definitio* as a *thirst* for the divine, thesis 6 notes its *distributio* into three parts: *lack* of a drink; *feeling* of the lack; and an *appetite* for a drink. Theses 7–19 develop this with respect to Christ. Theses 7–15 develop the first parts of the *distributio* with respect to Christ; theses 16–18, the last, divided into three parts: an appetite for the *preeminence*, *usefulness*, and *necessity* of Christ. Thesis 19 is a summary, and thesis 20 picks up with desire with respect to us. Hornbeeck will cover a total of eight characteristics spanning into the next disputation, but in the present one he only covers two. The first characteristic of desire with respect to us is divided into three parts: thesis 20 deals with the first, the *need* for our desire; thesis 21, the second, that desire indicates prior *grace* in us; and thesis 22, the third, that those who desire *receive* Christ. Thesis 23 offers an "objection," or hindrance, to this desire (poor appetite due to sin), which is remedied by thesis 24, an *emptying* of sin, thesis 25, a thirsting *for Christ*, and thesis 26, contemplating the *promises*. Thesis 27 summarizes, and thesis 28 introduces the second characteristic of desire with respect to us: that the desire is *constant*.

While I will let the disputation stand on its own merit, the one thing I want to point out with a word is one of the corollaries: *ens primum est undequaque perfectissimum*, the first being is in every way the most perfect (corollary 6). While listed as last, it is in my mind the most fundamental for the formulation of this particular disputation. The primum ens as most perfect and ergo most desirable is quite a standard move in scholastic (medieval and ancient) theology, and as such Hornbeeck employs it here to base his assumption that the soul thirsts for the immense and infinite God. As he will say, the soul can be satisfied "nowhere, except in the abyss of divine infinity, where it cannot think nor desire anything beyond."

A Word on Translation

The task of translation is a rewarding albeit risky one: rewarding, in that there is little joy greater than deep engagement with good texts (particularly those in Latin); risky, in that there is always criticism to be had for a finished product. I suppose I should claim the all-too-cliché attempt at balance of formal and functional equivalence, though this is to say very little. Regardless, I have attempted to keep the translation "tight" where it appeared to me to be required, and "looser" in the more poetic sections. Hornbeeck is at times almost lyrical, and I have attempted to retain this attribute, though admittedly it is these sections that prove the most complex (e.g., thesis 14 is one sentence in Latin, and also, in my opinion, the most musical, or better doxological). All in all, I have erred in being too wooden rather than too free.

I have retained the italics when Hornbeeck clearly employs them for structuring purposes, which he often does to demonstrate the progression through a series of points. A few minor corrections (e.g., incorrect Scripture references) are made as noted in the footnotes. Key words are translated consistently throughout the piece (e.g., "desire" for *desiderium*). An explanation or two occur *in situ*. Finally, I would note once more that this is only *pars prima*; there is a second disputation, which I will perhaps translate at some point in the future.

33. The title page is as follows: DISPUTATIO THEOLOGICA PRACTICA, De Desiderio animae erga Christum. PARS PRIMA. QUAM, Favente Deo Opt. Max. Sub Praesidio Clarissimi, Doctissimique Viri, D. Johannis Hoornbeek, S. S. Theol. Doct. Eiusdemque Facultatis in Illustri. Acad. Lugd. Bat. Professoris celeberrimi, atque Ecclesiae ibidem Pastoris vigilantissimi: Publice ventilandam proponit REGINERUS SCHEVENHUSIUS. Ad diem 6 Iulii, loco horisque solitis. LUGDUNI BATAVORUM, Apud JOHANNEM ELSEVIRIUM, Academ Typograph. CICICCLXI.

34. *Consideratio Responsionis Judaicae ad Viginti Tres Quaestiones, et Quaestionum Repositarum,* 14 (chapter 4), in J. Cocceius, *Opera Omnia Theologica, Exegetica, Didactica, Polemica, Philosophica: LXX circiter Tractatibus, post praefationem enumeratis, absoluta. Quibus Veteris ac Novi Instrumenti Codices Commentariis haud vulgaribus illustrantur.… Tomus Septimus* (Wustius, 1689).

Disputatio Theologica Practica, De Desiderio animae erga Christum Pars Prima

Thesis I

Ex Christo rite agnito non potest non in animis nasci sanctum & vehemens eius habendi fruendique *desiderium*. Atque uti ignoti cupido nulla, ita nec Christi, nisi praedicati prius agnitique. Quare ipse dixit mulieri Samaritanae, *si scires donum Dei, & quis sit qui tibi dicit, da mihi bibere, tu vero rogasses eum, & dedisset tibi aquam viventem*. Ioann. iv. 10. Ignorantiae attribuit, quod minus & ipse, & salutaris eius concupiscitur ab hominibus gratia. Quare ad cognitionem Christi, proximi succedit eius cupido & desiderium.

Thesis II

Appellatur in Scripturis *sitis*, ad denotandam affectus istius spiritualis in Christum vim & sinceritatem. Sitis animi, à Spiritu accensi, uti corporis quoque sua est alia. Matth. v. 6. *beati qui esuriunt & sitiunt iustitiam*. Paradoxum hoc Christi est, uit alia in eodem sermone: satiatos ac plenus pro beatis mundus habet, infoelices verò censet esurientes & sitientes: at Christus contrà vae dicit εμπλησμενοι *repletis*, Luc. vi. 25. & beatos praedicat alios. uti & in Cantico suo Maria dixit, *esurientes replevit bonis, & divites dimisit vacuos*, Luc. i. 53.

Thesis III

Iterum Christus altâ voce, magna Festi die clamat, Ioann. vii. 37. 38. *si quis sitit, veniat ad me, & bibat. Qui credit in me*. Blanda & benigna admodum invitatio: quam comitatur promissionis abundantissimae cornucopia, *quemadmodum Scriptura dicit, rivi aquae viventis fluent ex eius ventre*. Illic quatuor designat, *sitire*, ipsum nempe, uti liquet ex verbis sequentibus, & totâ rei historia: *venire* ad ipsum: & veniendo *credere*: *bibere* denique ex ipso quantum satis est. Non quod negem, *venire* commode exponi per *credere*, sed quemadmodum illud sitire etiam non contingit absque fide, ita actus illi distingui tamen aliqua ratione inter se possunt, uti primus dicat animae desiderium; ex desiderio sequatur accessus ad Christum; hinc

A Theological Practical Disputation on the Desire of the Soul for Christ, Part 1

Thesis 1

A holy and vehement *desire* for possessing and enjoying Christ cannot but arise in souls from him having been known rightly. Indeed, as there is no longing for something that has not been known, neither is there longing for Christ, unless he has first been proclaimed and acknowledged. For this reason, Christ himself has said to the Samaritan woman, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it was who said to you, 'Give me to drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water" (John 4:10). He attributes it to ignorance as the reason why both he himself and the grace of his salvation is longed for so little by mankind. For this reason, longing and desire for Christ follow immediately after knowledge of him.

Thesis 2

Scripture calls it "thirst" to denote the power and sincerity of that spiritual affection unto Christ. It is the thirst of the soul, aroused by the Spirit, just like it is also for the body. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matt. 5:6). This is Christ's paradox, as others say in the same discourse that those who have been satisfied and filled are blessed—as the world has it. And they count those unblessed who are hungering and thirsting. But alas, Christ, on the contrary, says you are filled, εμπλησμενοι (Luke 6:25), and he proclaims the others blessed. Mary, likewise, in her song has said, "He has filled up those who were hungering with good things, and he has sent away the rich empty" (Luke 1:53).

Thesis 3

Again, Christ, in a loud voice, shouts in the great day of rejoicing, "If any thirsts, let him come to me, and drink, who believes in me" (John 7:37–38). That which the bounty of a most abundant promise attends is an invitation entirely alluring and abounding: "Rivers of living water," as the Scripture says, "flow from his bosom." There, he outlines four things. "To thirst"—namely, for Christ himself, as it appears from the following words and the whole history of the concept. "To come" to him, and, when you have come, "to believe." Further, "to drink" from him until there is satisfaction. Let me not deny that "to come" is fittingly expressed by "to believe"; but, just as thirsting does not occur without faith, yet these acts nevertheless can be distinguished between themselves by some notion—as first he says the desire of the soul, and from desire follows approach to Christ, and hence from the

accedentis in eum fides; ex fide denique fruitio, & gratiae Christi acceptio, quae per ibitionem significatur. Quemadmodum illa in similitudine, quâ Christus utitur, & in negotio hoc spirituali latissimo ordinis causa commode interstinguuntur.

approach follows faith in him, and from faith finally delight and the acceptance of the grace of Christ (which is signified through drinking)—thus Christ uses these things similarly, and in the broadest spiritual affair they are commonly distinguished because of their order.

Thesis IV

Et in Apocalypsi, cap. xxii. 17. *& qui sitit veniat, & qui vult accipiat aquam vitae gratis*. Est actus *voluntatis*, sed illustratae & elevatae à spiritu, ad volenda ista & percipienda. *Si quis vult post me venire*. Luc. ix. 23. Iesa. lv. 1. *Heus quisquis sitit, venite ad aquas, & cui nulla pecunia, venice, emite, & comedite, venite, emite absque pecunia, & absque pretio vinum & lac*. Quae alibi comparantur cum aquâ, hic cum vino & lacte. Sed ubique gratis docentur haberi, & conferri cupientibus seu sitientibus, modò venerint. Quae una conditio à talibus requiritur, vel in subiecto gratiae illâ affusione beando, uti causa sine quâ non.

Thesis 4

So it is in Revelation 22:17: "Let the one who thirsts come, and let the one who wants take the water of life freely." It is an act of the will, but the will illuminated and elevated by the Spirit, for the purpose of willing and perceiving that. "If any want, let him come after me" (Luke 9:23). "Behold, if any thirsts, come to the waters, and the one who has no money, come, buy, and eat, come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost" (Isa. 55:1). Those things which elsewhere are compared with water are here compared with wine and milk. But wherever, they are taught to be possessed freely, and to be conferred to those longing or thirsting, merely because they have come. This one condition is required from such or exists in the subject having been blessed with that in-pouring of grace as a cause *sine qua non*.

Thesis V

Iesa. xliv. 3. *effundam aquas super sitientem, & fluenta super aridam, effundam spiritum meum super semen tuum, & benedictionem meam super prognatos tuos.* Atque nota sunt Davidis verba, Psalm. xlii. 2. 3. *sicut cervus glocitat ad alveos aquarum, sic anima mea glocitat ad te Deus: sitit anima mea Deum &c.*

Thesis 5

"I will pour out water upon him who is thirsting, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour out my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your offspring" (Isa. 44:3). And thus the words of David have been understood: "As a deer pants for channels of waters, thus my soul pants for you, Lord. My soul thirsts for God," etc. (Ps. 42:2–3).

Thesis VI

Iam verò uti in siti corporali, ita spirituali tria concurrunt, quae eam constituunt: *carentia* humidi aut potus; & istius carentiae *sensus*, namque sola carentia non facit sitim, nisi sentiatur: quod & in vivis, & mortuis manifestum, ubi saepe magna cibi, vel potus carentia, nec tamen vel fames vel sitis: denique ex sensu illo oritur *appetitus* in potum, quo sensus ille sive sitis restinguatur. Exod. xvii. 1 de Israelitis in Raphidim divertentibus, *non erat ibi aqua, quam populus biberet*. Inde contendebat populus cum Mose, ex sensu istius indigentiae nimirum, dicebantque verse. 2. *date nobis aquam ut bibamus*. & Iudic. iv. 19. Sisera Iaheli, *da mihi quaeso bibendum parum aquae, nam sitio*.

Thesis 6

But now, as in bodily thirst, so in spiritual thirst there are three things which coincide together which constitute it. A "lack" of moisture or drink, and the "feeling" of that lack. For the lack alone does not create thirst, except it should be felt. This is clear both in the living and in the dead, where often there is a great lack of food or drink, but nevertheless neither hunger nor thirst. Third, from that feeling an "appetite" for a drink, in which that feeling or thirst is quenched. In Exodus 17:1, concerning the Israelites, camping in Rephidim, there "was no water there, which the people could drink." Thence, the people were quarreling with Moses, evidently from the feeling of that need, and they said in verse 2: "Give us water so that we may drink." And Sisera said to Jael, "Give me, I ask, a little water, so I may drink" (Judg. 4:19).

Thesis VII

Ita ſpiritualis hic eſt inopia, & inopiae sensus, & ex sensu sacer appetitus in ea, quibus indigentiae iſti occurri poteſt ac plenissime satisfieri. Et quandoquidem per peccatum orbati sumus Dei gratia, ac gloria, Rom. iii. 23. hinc *Salvatorem* sitit anima: & Dei in eo *gratiam*. Luc. xviii. 13. *ô Deus propitius eſto mihi peccatori*. & denique ex gratiâ *salutem*, sive gloriam. Rom. vii. 24. *miser ego homo*. hoc praemittit Apoſtolus, quo sensum miseriae suae declaret: *quis me liberabit ex corpore mortis huius?* haec sitis eius, hoc desiderium, ex sensu illo, quem teſtatur. *Gratias ago Deo per Iesum Chriſtum Dominum noſtrum.* Quo significat obiectum desiderii sui, in quo tandem terminetur, vid. in *Deo*, per Chriſtum, iterum potiundo. Atque hic supremus desiderii eſt terminus, hoc faſtigium, in *Deum* dirigi & hic exsolvi. *Sitit anima mea Deum*, Psalm. xlii. 3. & lxiii. 2. *sitiens eſt anima mea tui, arescit ad te caro mea*. & lxxiii. 25. *quis mihi in coelis? & praeter te nullo delector in terrâ.*

Thesis 7

Thus, this is the ſpiritual want, and the feeling of want, and from the feeling the holy appetite in which need it can be moſt fully met and satisfied. And, since we have been bereaved of the grace and glory of God through sin (Rom. 3:23), hence the soul thirſts for the *Savior*, and for the *grace* of God in him—"O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Luke 18:13)—and finally, for *salvation*, or glory, out of grace: "I am a wretched man" (Rom. 7:24). The apoſtle presupposes this, when he declares the feeling of his misery: "Whoever will free me from the body of this death?" This is his thirſt, this is his desire, from that feeling, which he teſtifies. "I give thanks to God through Jesus Chriſt our Lord"—where he signifies the object of his desire, in which it terminates, namely, in *God*, once again having been attained, through Chriſt. And thus the supreme terminus, the summit, of this desire is this: to be directed unto *God* and here set free. "My soul thirſts for God" (Ps. 42:3), and, "My soul is thirſting for you; my flesh withers for you" (63:1), and, "Who is there for me in heaven? And except you I desire nothing in the earth" (73:25).

Thesis VIII

Neque etiam anima, cui quasi infixus eſt infinitatis aliquis radius in desiderio erga infinitum, ut se satiari non patiatur ubicunque finem reperit saltem cogitatione, ullibi siſtitur quam in abysso infinitatis divinae, ubi ultera nec cogitare poteſt quidquam, nec concupiscere.

Thesis 8

Also, the soul, in which, as it were, some ray of infinity has been planted in desire for the infinite, so that the soul cannot endure itself to be satisfied wherever it detects by judgment some sort of end—the soul ſtands nowhere, except in the abyss of divine infinity, where it cannot think nor desire anything beyond.

Thesis IX

Non tamen immediate Deum adire licet, nobis nunc peccatoribus, sed accedere ad eum per Mediatorum oportet, non quem ipsi nobis fingamus & fabricemus, sed quem ipse dederit, & sibi gratum esse declaravit: qui solus eſt Filius eius Chriſtus Iesus: quare de eo in exordio muneris eius dixit, quod sibi in eo complacitum sit, *meus*, quodque is esset audiendus. Matth. iii. 17. Iesa. xlii. 1. *ecce servus uſtento eum: electus meus placens anima mea.*

Thesis 9

Nevertheless, we who are now sinners muſt not approach God immediately, but it is necessary to come to him through the Mediator, not one whom we frame and fashion by ourselves, but one whom he has offered and declared that grace is his—who alone is his Son, Chriſt Jesus. For this reason, at the beginning of his office, because he in himself is pleased in him, he has said about him, "my"—and also that he should be heard: "Behold, the servant whom I uphold, my chosen one, pleasing to my soul" (Matt. 3:17; Isa. 42:1).

Thesis X

Ac propterea, desiderium iſtud in *Chriſtum* primò quidem fertur, ultimate autem in *Deum*: eſtque nil aliud, quam affectus animi ſpiritualis & sanctus, erga Chriſtum, pro salute per ipsum in Deo adipiscendâ. Eſt επιθυμιαν εχειν, ut Apoſtolus dixit. Phil. i. 23. Sic Prophetae & iuſti επεθυμησαν ιδειν

Thesis 10

And therefore, that desire is lifted unto *Chriſt* firſt, but ultimately unto *God*. And it is nothing other than the ſpiritual and holy affection of the soul for Chriſt, on account of the salvation in God which is to be acquired through him. It is επιθυμιαν εχειν [to have desire], as the apoſtle has said (Phil. 1:23). Thus, the prophets and righteous ones επεθυμησαν ιδειν

Christum, & eius diem. Matth. xiii. 17. Ioann. viii. 56. Christus, επιθυμιᾳ επεθυμησα. Luc. xxii. 15. De Iacobo Laban, Genes. Xxxi. 30. נכסף נכספתה. *desiderio desiderabas domum patris tui.*

[desired to see] Christ and his day (Matt. 13:17; John 8:56). Christ επιθυμιᾳ επεθυμησα [earnestly desired] (Luke 22:15). Laban said concerning Jacob, נכסף נכספתה, "You were earnestly desiring your father's house" (Gen. 31:30).

Thesis XI

Est desiderium *salutis*, seu pro salute obtinendâ. Quale ab infirmo homine elicuit Christus pro corporali primùm sanatione, Ioann. v. 6. *Vis fieri sanus*? sic se habet, velle salvari. Ac proinde tamquam synonyma leguntur *sitire*, & *velle*, Apoc. xxii. 17. *& qui sitit veniat, & qui vult accipiat aquam vitae gratis.*

Thesis 11

It is the desire for salvation, or for salvation which is to be obtained. It is of that sort which Christ elicited from the sick man for first bodily healing—"Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6). Thus he considers it with respect to wanting to be saved. And accordingly "to thirst" and "to want" are taken as synonyms: "He who thirsts, let him come; and he who wants, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

Thesis XII

Caeterum quia salutem, quam tantopere cupit homo, nullibi credit haberi praeterquam in *Christo*, hinc ad eum, pro illâ adipiscendâ, adeo etimulatur. Ioann. vi. 68. *Domine, ad quem abiremus? tu habes verba vitae aeternae.* Atque ipse de se Christus, Act. xxvi. 18. *ut accipiant remissionem peccatorum, & sortem inter sanctificatos, fide in me.*

Thesis 12

In other respects, because one believes that salvation, which man so very much desires, is possessed nowhere except in Christ, hence he is stirred up toward him, for that which is to be acquired. "Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). And thus Christ himself says about himself: "in order that they may receive remission of sins, and a share among the sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:18).

Thesis XIII

Christus verò ad *Deum* eos, nec minus ad se ut Deum, pro salutis omni sufficientiâ, monstrat ac perducit. Ioann. xiv. 6. *ego sum via, & veritas, & vita. Nemo venit ad Patrem nisi per me*. Primò ad Christum venire oportet, inde ulterius ad Patrem: per se nos ducit ad Patrem: ad Patrem suum & nostrum, Deum suum ac nostrum. Ioann. xx. 17. Iam cap. xvii. 6. Testatur, & se eos recepisse à Patre salvandos, *tui erant, & tu eos mihi dedisti:* & iterum se reddere illos Patri, vers. 9. *quos dedisti mihi, nam tui sunt.* 10. *& omnia mea tua sunt, & tua mea.* vers. 21. *ut & ipsi in nobis unum sint*. 1 Cor. iii. ult. *Vos autem Christi, Christus autem Dei*. Col. iii. 3. *& vita vestra occultatur cum Christo in Deo*. 1 Pet. i. 21. *qui per ipsum credunt in Deum qui suscitavit eum è mortuis, & dedit ei gloriam, ut fides vestra & spes sit in Deum.* Neque nisi in solo Deo, & infinitâ eius omnisufficientiâ desiderium ac sitim spiritus explere homo potest.

Thesis 13

But Christ shows and leads them to *God*, not less to himself as God, for the sufficiency of salvation for all. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me" (John 14:6). First, it is necessary to come to Christ, and thence further to the Father. He leads us through himself to the Father, to his Father and ours, his God and ours (John 20:17). Now, in John 17:6 he attests also that he himself has received from the Father those about to be saved, "They were yours, and you have given them to me"; and again, that he returned them to the Father, "those which you have given to me, for they are yours" (v. 9), "and all mine are yours, and yours mine" (v. 10), "in order that those also may be one in us" (v. 21). "But you are Christ's; moreover, Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:23). "And your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). "Who through him believe in God, who has raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope may be in God" (1 Peter 1:21). Man can fill up the desire and thirst of his soul in nothing, except in God alone and his infinite all-sufficiency.

Thesis XIV

Omnibus quidem vel naturâ inest appetitus aliquis immensitatis seu in immensum, quo nusquam datur acquiescere, ubi

Thesis 14

Indeed, the passion is present in all by nature for some immensity or unto something immense, where it is given to settle

finem & mensuram concipere homo potest vel viere, semper ad ulteriora hians & maiora, quae saltem formare animo possit: ut hoc quasi divinitatis radio & rivulo ad Deum perduceretur, non alias exsaturandus, quum nullum in rebus creatis obiectum sit adaequatum, quod terminare vel sistere appetitum illum queat, in solâ divinae immmensitatis abysso adimplendum: sed nunquam ille fortior, quam ubi illuminatio Spiritus accessit & excitatio, tum ad videndam penitius rerum omnium vanitatem, tum credendam & sentiendam Dei perfectionem abundantissimam, super quam cogitari, & quam ipsam neutiquam penetrare cogitando homo potest.

nowhere where man can conceive or see the end and measure. It is a passion always gaping toward the further, greater beyond, which even could form in the soul, so that it might be led by a ray or rivulet of divinity to God, as it were. It is a passion which is not something to be satisfied elsewhere, because no object in created things is adequate, which could be able to terminate or stop that appetite. It is a passion which is fulfilled in the abyss of divine immensity alone. But it is such a passion that is never stronger, than when the illumination and rousing of the Spirit occurs, both for the purpose of seeing the greater internal nothingness of all things, as well as for the purpose of believing and feeling the most abundant perfection of God, above that which can be thought and that which by thinking man can never penetrate.

Thesis XV

Psalm. lxxiii. 25. 26. *Quis mihi in coelis? & praeter te nullo delector in terra. Deficiente carna mea, & animo meo, rupes animi mei & portio mea Deus in seculum.* Nemo, & nusquam alius, praeter unum Deum. Augustinus, Confess. lib. i. cap. i. *quia fecisti nos ad te, inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te.* & Soliloq. Cap. xiii. *Hoc confiteor, hoc scio Domine Deus, quia ubicunque sum sine te, male est mihi praeter te; non solum extra me, sed etiam in me, quia omnis copia, quae non est Deus meus, mihi est egestas.* Et cap. xxx. *Quando autem* anima *se habet, plenum est desiderium eius, & iam nihil aliud quod desideretur exterius restat. Dum autem aliquid exterius desiderat, manifestum est, quod te non habet interim, quo habito nihil est quod ultra desideret.*

Thesis 15

"Who is there for me in heaven? And except you I desire nothing in the earth. Although my flesh and my soul are failing, God is the rock of my soul and my portion forever" (Ps. 73:25–26). No one, and nowhere else, besides the one God. Augustine in his *Confessions* says, "Because you have made us for you, our heart is restless, until it may rest in you" (book 1, ch. 1). And, in his *Soliloquies*: "This I confess, this I know, O Lord God, that wherever I am without you, it is bad for me beyond you. Not only that which is beyond me, but also in me, because the abundance of all which is not my God is poverty to me" (ch. 18). And, "But when my soul finds itself, it is full of desire for him, and now nothing other outside what is desired remains. But while it desires something outside, it is clear that it does not have you inside, in which habit there is nothing which it might desire beyond" (ch. 30).

Thesis XVI

Quemadmodum tria diximus in siti sive corporali, sive spirituali concurrere, *indigentiam*, eius *sensum*, & *appetitum* in hoc, quod explendae siti fit accommodatum; ita appetitum desiderii erga Christum accendi videmus, eius perceptâ agnitâque primum *praestantiâ*. Cant. v. 8. *quid est dilecto tuo prae alio dilecto, ô pulcherrima foeminarum?* 9. *Dilectus meus candore & rubore vexillarius est è myriade—denique totus est desideratissimus, hic dilectus meus, & hic amicus meus, ô Ierosolymitana.* Quare חמדת dicitur Haggaeo, *desiderium*, cap. ii. 8.

Thesis 16

Just as we have said that three things converge in thirst, whether corporeal or spiritual—namely, a *need*, a *feeling* of it, and an *appetite* in that, which is suitable for thirst to be satiated—so we see that the appetite of desire for Christ has aroused, when his *preeminence* has first been perceived and known. "What is your delight before another delight, O most beautiful of women? My delight in candor and blush has been distinguished from myriads—and further, this is my whole and greatest desire, this is my delight, this is my friend, O Jerusalem" (Song 5:8, 9, [16]). By which חמדת is spoken of by Haggai as "desire" (2:7).

Thesis XVII

Deinde animadversa eiusdem Christi ad omnia *utilitate*: ut si quis sit captivus, eum liberat; si tristis, laetificat; eum,

Thesis 17

Next, it ought to be observed by the *usefulness* of the same Christ to all, that if any should be a captive, he frees them; if

si aegrotus, sanat, ad omnia perfecte potens & copiose instrucuts, Ieusa. lxi. 1. 2. sapientia à Deo factus, iustitia & sanctificatio, & redemtio. 1 Cor. i. 30.

any should be sorrowful, he makes them glad; if any should be diseased, he washes them, being perfectly able and fully equipped for all things (Isa. 61:1–2). He has been made by God wisdom, righteousness and sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30).

Thesis XVIII

Denique & *necessitate*: ut nisi eo fruamur, aeternum nobis pereundum sit. *Ego autem fame pereo.* Luc. xvi. 17. Quemadmodum autem quando fame quis laborat, offeras ei aurum, argentum, gemmas, & totam mundi supellectilem, iuvabunt nihil, neque ea cupiet admodum; sin panem, hunc accipiet, reliquis racile praeteritis & contemtis, quia is sibi ad vitam sustentandam tum solus est necessarius; ita visa Christi absolutâ ad salutem & gratiam apud Deum recuperandam necessitate, hunc siti suâ homo tunc expetit unice, tamquam panem, qui ex coelo descendit, & dat vitam mundo. Ioann. vi. 33. Namque illa est ratio, quare Christus se cum iis comparat, non modo quae utilia homini in vita sunt, sed & summe necessaria. Atque ad Samaritanam Christus, Ioann iv. 13. 14. *Qui cunque bibit ex aquâ hac, iterum sitiet. Qui verò biberit ex aqua, quam ego daturus sum, non sitiet in aeternum, sed aqua quam ego ei dabo, fiet in eo fons aequae salientis in vitam aeternam.*

Thesis 18

Finally, observe the *necessity* of Christ: that unless we should be delighted by him, it must be eternal perishing for us. "But I am perishing with hunger" (Luke 15:17). Moreover, just as when someone should work while hungry, and you would give him gold, silver, gems, and all the goods of the world, he will judge it to be nothing, nor desire them much, but if you would offer him bread, he will receive this, and will easily pass by and hold in contempt the rest, because it has been necessary alone for him to sustain his life—just so, when Christ has been seen, a sight absolutely necessary for regaining salvation and grace with God, having a thirst for this, man thence covets solely, such a bread who has descended from heaven and has given life to the world (John 6:33). For that is the idea with which Christ compares himself with other things—not only those things which are useful for man in life, but even supremely necessary. And so Christ said to the Samaritan woman, "Whoever drinks from this water, will thirst again. But he who will drink from the water which I am about to give, will not thirst forever, but the water which I will give to him, will become in him a fountain of water springing up unto eternal life" (John 4:13–14).

Thesis XIX

Vide exemplum bonae Cananeae, Matth. xv. 22. quae quamvis neglecta à Christo, utcunque clamaret fortiter, *miserere mei Domine*, 23. *non respondit ei verbum*: tum repulsa per Apostolus dicentes, *dimitte eam*, sic etiam Christus negavit se missum, nisi ad oves perditas domus Israël: & ipsa ad eum propius accedente, instante, invocante iterum iterumque, *Domine auxiliare mihi*; resondit ipsi & primum duriuscule, non posse panem liberorum catellis obiicit: at haec se catellam agnoscens, interim cupiens pasci vel micis è mensâ cadentibus, quasi diceret, ne sim filia, at pro cane habear, nec pane fruar, at micâ saltem panis, ne ad mensam, sed sub eâ, non è manu Domini, sed ex residuo & reliquiis liberorum, sic modo pascar; quibus ostendit fortem animi sitim atque inexplebile desiderium erga Christum, & portiunculam gratiae eius ac favoris: tandem Christus dicere

Thesis 19

Note the example of the good Canaanite woman (Matt. 15:22). Although she, when she has been neglected by Christ, cries however strenuously, "Be merciful to me, Lord" (v. 23), he "did not respond a word to her." Then, when she was rejected by the apostles, who were telling "her to leave," so also Christ denied that he himself had been sent for any except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And, after she herself drew near to him, insisting, calling again and again, "Lord, help me," he even responds to her first harshly, that he is not able to throw away the bread of the children to the dogs. But when she acknowledges herself as a dog and meanwhile desires to be fed only from the crumbs falling from the table, it is as if she should say, "I am not a woman, but consider myself a dog; neither do I delight in bread, but even in a crumb of bread; Neither to the table, but under it, and not from the hand of the Lord, but from the children's remnants and leftovers—in this way I will be fed." By this, she shows the strong thirst of the soul and the insatiable desire for Christ, even a small portion of his grace and favor. Finally, Christ considered that

ei necesse habuit: *ô mulier, magna tua fides; fiat tibi ut cupis*. Adde, quod Marcus habet ad hoc exemplum, cap. vii. 24. quod in domum Christus abierit, nolens *ulli innotescere, at non potuit latere. Audiens enim mulier de eo, venit &c.* Id est, utcunque Christus cupiat se subducere aut occultare, sincero tamen & vehementi erga ipsum desiderio subducere se non potest. Fides instar vehiculi est, quod animam adducit ad Christum, sed desiderium quasi rota illius, quo fides, & cum fide anima protruditur, atque ad Christum accurrit. Hinc ordo, quem in istis observavimus, siquis *sitit, veniat, credat, & bibat*, Ioann. vii. 37. 38.

it was necessary for him to speak: "O woman, your faith is great. Take for yourself as you desire." And do add what Mark says on this example (7:24): that Christ entered into a house, not wanting "it to become known to any, but he could not be hidden. For a woman, hearing about him, comes," etc. That is, however Christ should desire to withdraw himself or hide, nevertheless he cannot withdraw himself from sincere and vehement desire for him. Faith resembles a vehicle, which leads the soul to Christ; but desire is as it were its wheels, by which faith the soul is both thrust forth with faith and also drives to Christ. Hence, in this order which we have observed in these things, if anyone "thirsts," then let him "come," "believe," and "drink" (John 7:37–38).

Thesis XX

Atque uti illa consideranda ex parte *Christi*, sic ex parte nostri *desiderii*. i. quod *sine* eo accedere ad Christum, eiusque participes reddi impossibile est. Quare primo loco ponitur, *si quis sitit*. Matth. xxiii. 37. *& non voluistis.*

Thesis 20

And thus, as these things have been considered with respect to *Christ*, so they must be considered with respect to our *desire*. (1)[1] [The first characteristic] is that *without* desire it is impossible to come to Christ and to be given his sharings. For this reason, first, it is proposed, "If any thirsts" (Matt. 23:37), and not "you have wanted."

Thesis XXI

Deinde ipsum illud desiderium est argumentum *gratiae* iam acceptae. Nam erigi & elevari ad obiecta & res spirituales naturâ suâ voluntas non potest, nisi à Spiritu acta & tracta in sublime. Ut huc applicare liceat επιποθει το πνευμα ο κατωκησεν εν ημιν. Uti pila ex se non habet, quod currit, vel in altum fertur, sed à manu quae vim & impetum istum ei impressit; sic nec animus ad Deum ire vel sitire Christum potest, nisi hoc ipsum ei indiderit Christi gratia, à quo est, quod ad eum anhelamus. Ubi effunditur tamquam unguentem nomen eius, hinc puellae diligunt ipsum, Cant. i. 4. Quare sequitur, *trahe me & post te curremus*. Cap. v. 4. ex manu eius stillat myrrha, cuius vim ubi sentit animus, surgit & ipsum quaerit.

Thesis 21

Second, such desire itself is an argument that *grace* has already been received. For the will by its own nature cannot be excited and elevated to spiritual objects and matters, unless it has been acted upon and drawn out by the Spirit in something sublime—so that one must apply this besides: επιποθει το πνευμα ο κατωκησεν εν ημιν [James 4:5] [he desires the Spirit whom he made to dwell in us]. As a mortar[2] does not possess from itself something which moves it, but rather is supported by something higher, by the hand which has pressed that power and motion to it—thus, neither is the soul able to go to God or thirst for Christ, except [the Spirit] himself will have introduced to him by the grace of Christ that by which it is that we pant after him. This is why his name "perfume" is set out, and hence the young women esteem him, where it follows: "Draw me, and we will run after you" (Song 1:4). From his hand he dribbles myrrh, whose power when my soul feels it arises and seeks him (5:5).

1. Hornbeeck provides a total of eight characteristics of our desire with respect to us. "2" occurs down in thesis 28; and "3–8" occur in part 2 in a separate disputatio. While here "1" is listed in text, as well as "2" below, in the second disputatio all are marginal notes. NB that this first characteristic has three parts.

2. As in, mortar (*pila*) and pestle.

Thesis XXII

Tertio qui verè ex animo Christum desiderant, *accipiunt* eum quoque & nanciscuntur. Matth. v. 6. *beati qui sitiunt & esurient iustitiam: quia ipsi saturabuntur.* Apoc. xxi. 6. *ego sitienti dabo ex fonte aquae vitae gratis.* Basilius, μονον θελησον, και ο θεος προσαπαντα. Bernardi hymnus, qui dicitur, ad Iesum, notus:

O Iesu mi dulcissime,
Spes suspirantis animae,
Te quaerunt pia lacryma,
Te clamor mentis intima Ec.
Desidero te millis,
Mi Iesu quando venies,
Me de te quando saties.
Iam quod quaesivi video,
Quod concupivi teneo,
Amore Iesu langueo,
Ex corde totus gaudeo.

Thesis XXIII

Caeterum uti naturalem stomachi ορεξιν impediunt vel humor noxius, vel flatus eum replens, ita spiritualem in Christum appetitum praefocat tum moralis corruptio & *vitii* alicuius in animâ dominantis, aut mundi amor, Ioann. v. 44. *quomodo vospotestis credere, gloriam à vobis mutuo captantes?* vel temeraria *praesumtio*, & confidentia sui, extra Christum. Quae erat Laodicensium insania, Apoc. iii. 17. dicentium, *dives sum & ditatus, neque ullius egeo*: quum tamen essent miserabiles admodum, & pauperes, & coeci, & nudi.

Thesis XXIV

Quae curari aliter non possunt, quam si primo instituatur istorum ex animo *evacuatio*; uti in corporalibus, noxiorum purgatio, quo ab iis liberatus homo sic veram concipere rerum necessariarum ορεξιν queàt. Unde Petrus Simonem voluit abiicere primum *fel amarissimum & vinculum iniquitatis*, in quo eum conspiciebat haerere, antequam ulterius pergere se posse & salvari opinaretur. Act. viii. 23.

Thesis 22

Third, those who desire Christ truly and from the soul, *receive* him also and possess him. "Blessed are those who thirst and hunger for righteousness, because they will be satisfied" (Matt. 5:6). "I will give to those who are thirsting from the fount of the water of life freely" (Rev. 21:6). Basil says, μονον θελησον, και ο θεος προσαπαντα [he only desires, and God goes to meet him]. The song of Bernard, which is said to Jesus, is well-known:

Jesus, O to me most sweet,
My hope of sighing heart
Thee, the pious crying seek
Thee, I shout in inmost part—
All desire, a thousandfold.
O Jesus, when Thou com'st to me
And do thrill me with Thyself,
All I sought, now do I see.
What longed for now I hold
I am weak by love of Jesus,
And rejoice with all my soul.

Thesis 23

In another respect, just as the noxious humor or flatus[3] replenishing it hinder the natural ορεξιν [appetite] of the stomach, so moral corruption and that of *other vices* ruling in the soul choke the spiritual appetite for Christ, as does love for the world—"How can you believe, when you are receiving glory from one another?" (John 5:44)—or reckless *presumption* and the confidence of it, outside of Christ. This was the insanity of the Laodiceans, who were saying, "I am wealthy and enriched, neither do I need anything" (Rev. 3:17)—when they were, nevertheless, completely miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

Thesis 24

[These vices] cannot otherwise be healed, except, first, there should occur an *emptying* of those things from the soul (just like in bodily matters), the purgation of noxious [substances], by which man, when he has been freed from these things, is able to conceive the true ορεξιν [appetite] for these necessary matters. Hence, Peter wanted Simon to throw away first "the most bitter poison and bonds of iniquity," which Peter thought cleaved to him, before he judged later Simon was able to arouse himself and be saved (Acts 8:23).

3. Historically, humors, thought to be bodily fluids, were believed, when balanced, to cause health, and when imbalanced, illness. Flatus was considered as gas which caused disease and/or discomfort in digestion and influenced the balance of humors. Hornbeek is saying here, to put it in modern terms, when one is ill because of indigestion, caused by bad food, he has no appetite.

Thesis XXV

Deinde cogitet homo sitientem *Christum*, & tam enixe affectum erga se, & cupientem suam salutem, siquidem ex eorum numero esse se putet, pro quibus Christus mortuus, & qui per eum salvari quaerant. αρχιερεα δυναμενον συνπαθησαι, Hebr. iv. 15. & qui vivit etiamnum ut pro suis oret, cap. vii. 25. erga suos, quos diligit εις τελος, Ioann. xiii. 1. non minus affectus nunc, ac olim, & cupiens iis bene, atque omnia. Haec qui cogitat, & ad se pertinere putat, sibique applicat, quomodo non feratur vicissim in Christum & omni erga eum, tantopere se volentem, affectu ac desiderio?

Thesis 25

Second, let a man consider the thirsting of *Christ*, both Christ's strenuous affection for him and his longing for his salvation, if indeed the man believes himself to be of those number for whom Christ has died and who through him seek to be saved. He is αρχιερεα δυναμενον συνπαθησαι [a high priest able to sympathize] (Heb. 4:15), and who lives even now that he may plead for them (12:25), for those whom he loves εις τελος [unto the end] (John 13:1), he being not less affected now, or before, and longing for them to be well, even in all things. The one who considers this and thinks it pertains to himself, who also applies it to himself, how is he not carried unto Christ and by all things toward him—to Christ who so greatly wants him with affection and desire?

Thesis XXVI

Tertio & *promissiones*, imprimis erga tales, sive Christi cupidos & sitientes factas contempletur, expendatque attento animo, ut sic ex fricatis illis quasi aromatis tum vim earum magis capiat, tum magis & magis erga Christum, qui illis continetur, accendatur & inflammetur. Quemadmodum discipuli testabantur inarsisse ipsis animum, quando Christus secum loquebatur, & διερμηνευσεν αυτοις *in omnibus Scripturis ea quae de ipso*. Habe thesaurum aliquem ingentem, vel arcam repletam variis eximiisque monilibus & supellectile omnifariâ, quamdiu illa occlusa & complicata, non ita animum feriunt & cupidine accendunt sui, ac quando exponuntur & explicantur & singula introspiciuntur propius: sic quo magis promissiones evolvis, ac sigillatim ponderas in iis omnia, praesertim Christi illa, eo maius iniiciunt animis sui desiderium ac cupiditatem. 1 Pet. ii. 2. *rationale sincerum lac* επιποθησατε. *Si modo gustatis quod benignus est Dominus.*

Thesis 26

Third, let him also contemplate the *promises*, especially with respect to Christ's longings and thirstings that Christ has produced. And let him weigh them with an attentive soul, so that thus, as it were, from the anointing of that spice, he may desire more both the power of those promises as well as be aroused and inflamed more and more for Christ, who is connected to such promises—just as the disciples testified that they burned in their souls when Christ spoke with them, and διερμηνευσεν αυτοις [he expounded to them] "in all the Scriptures those things concerning himself" [Luke 24:27]. Take an enormous treasure or chest filled with diverse and choice jewels and settings of every sort, and as long as they are hidden and wrapped up, thus they do not strike the soul and kindle its desire, but only when they are exposed and unwrapped and each piece examined closely. So it is even greater when you read the promises and ponder one by one all those things in them, especially those things of Christ, for whom they inspire greater desire and longing of soul. "Επιποθησατε [desire] the rational, sincere milk, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good" (1 Peter 2:2[–3]).

Thesis XXVII

Non vero quodcunque Christi desiderium iustum est & Christo placens. Est aliquod temerarium & evanidum; aliquod, non propter Christum, sed propter alia, à Christo multum aliena. Id demum probum est, quod integro corde fertur in Christum integrum, & propter ipsum. Id est, primo ut ab imo *animi* desiderium hoc proficiscatur, non nascatur demum in superficie seu cordis, seu oris. *ex toto corde*, Act. viii. 37. *ex toto animo quaerentes eum.* Psal. cxix. 2. *Ad memoriam tui desiderium animae. Animo meo desidero te.* Iesa. xxvi. 8. 9. Non ergo

Thesis 27

But not any desire whatsoever for Christ is just and pleasing to him. Some is rash and vanishing; some is desire because of Christ, but because of other things quite foreign to him. That desire is upright only which is carried in the inner heart unto the whole Christ, and exists because of him. That is first so that this desire may start from the lowest point of the *soul*, and not be birthed only on the surface either of the heart or the mouth: "from the whole heart" (Acts 8:37); "seeking him from the whole soul" (Ps. 119:2); "the desire of the soul is for memory of you. I desire you in my soul" (Isa. 26:8–9). Therefore, this

frigidum ancepsque est desiderium, sed serium non velleitatem aliquam dicens lubricam, sed firmam animi sententiam ac voluntatem, non tantum *moriar morte iustorum, & sit finis meus sicut illius*, sed hoc si seriò dicat, cupit etiam ut vita sit consimilis, & tota vivendi, nec moriendi duntaxat, ratio.

desire is not cold nor double-minded, but serious, not some mere fleeting wish, but a firm feeling and will of the soul, not only "to die the death of the righteous ones, and my end be thus," but if he says this seriously, he desires also that his life be a similar way—the whole of his living, not his dying only.

Thesis XXVIII

Quare ii. & *constans* desiderium, omni tempore & occasione idem, quia Christus semper idem, *& heri, & hodie, & in saecula*. Hebr. xiii. 8. Non uti aliquorum mos, iam, & tum, sed continuo desiderio fertur anima in Christum: unde describuntur pii, quod sint *expectantes*. Luc. ii. 25. *expectans* προσδεχομενος *consolationem Israëla.* Phil. i. 23. σθνεχομαι γαρ, την επιθυμιαν εχων *esse cum Christo.*

Thesis 28

This is why (2) it is also a *constant* desire, the same in every time and occasion, because Christ is always the same, "both yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). Not as the manner of some—a desire "now and then"—but the soul is carried in continuous desire unto Christ. Hence the pious are described as those who are "expecting": "expecting," προσδεχομενος, "the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25); συνεχομαι γαρ, την επιθυμιαν εχων [for I am torn, having the desire] "to be with Christ" (Phil. 1:23).

Corollaria

Thesis I. Vitae mortalium terminus stat certo praefixus, quem nec antevertere nec transgredi possunt.

Thesis II. Exercitium etiam capitalis supplicii in fontes Magistratui Christiano competit.

Thesis III. Nec arma tractare, aut bellum gerere ulli fidelium sub. N. T. fas prohibet.

Thesis IV. Perfectae regenerationis haec vita homo non est capax.

Thesis V. Et in fieri & in operari nihil non dependet à Deo.

Thesis VI. Ens primum est undequaque perfectissimum.

FINIS.▪

Corollaries

1. The *terminus* of mortal life stands certainly prefixed, which they can neither overturn nor cross.

2. The exercise of capital punishment for criminals belongs to the Christian.

3. The law under the New Testament does not prohibit any faithful from bearing arms or waging war.

4. Man is not capable of perfect regeneration in this life.

5. There is nothing either that happens or moves that does not depend upon God.

6. The first being is in everything the most perfect.

Antiquary

A Transcription from Manuscript of a Sermon on Psalm 2:10–12 by George Gillespie

Introduction

When the ailing George Gillespie preached before the Scottish Parliament on 2 March, 1648, the Covenanters were facing some of their most difficult and testing days. Not so long before it had seemed very different. Although the Westminster Assembly continued to meet in London until 1649, in August 1647 Gillespie and Robert Baillie had appeared before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to present the confessional documents produced by the Westminster Assembly, for approval by the Scots. The Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, with the Directory for the Public Worship of God and the Form of Presbyterial Church Government would together provide the constitutional foundations and framework for the Church of Scotland with the approval of the General Assembly and of the Scottish Parliament. Dark clouds, however, were gathering.

Charles I, having been handed over by the Scots, was a prisoner of the English Parliament. Having fled from Hampton Court on 11 November, 1647, the King ended up in Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight. His aim during this period was to foment division among his enemies and to garner enough support for a renewed campaign to restore him to his throne. The Scots were strongly wedded to monarchy, despite Charles' past actions, and in his view offered the most likely source of support if an agreement could be reached with at least some of the political leaders in Scotland.

It was out of this complex background that the notorious Engagement emerged. Many Scots, still loyal to the King and wary of Cromwell and the Parliamentarians, were willing to do what they could for Charles, short of an actual breach of the Solemn League and Covenant. This bond, signed in 1643, committed the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland to political alliance and religious reformation and had been the warrant for the Scots sending troops to support the English Parliament in the First Civil War. It would be within the bounds of that covenant that Scottish help would be offered.

Three of the leading Scots royalist nobles, Loudon, Lauderdale and Lanark, were able to visit Charles at Carisbrooke Castle: the 'Engagement' was the result of their negotiations with the wily and unscrupulous monarch. Acting on behalf of the Marquis of Hamilton and his royalist faction in Scotland, the three commissioners reached an agreement with Charles which would lead to practical military support from Scotland for the King's restoration. For his part Charles agreed to have the Solemn League and Covenant confirmed by the English Parliament, although it would not be imposed on anyone, including the King. Presbyterian church government would be implemented in England for a period of three years, after which the matter would be settled by an assembly of divines, members of parliament and royal representatives. The King would also suppress sectaries, heretics and schismatics.

Taken as a whole, the Engagement was a far cry from the original vision of the Covenanters for 'covenanted uniformity'. Although Charles had at first been told that he would have no Scottish assistance without making concessions on religion, in the end it was the 'Engagers' who made concessions without the sanction of Parliament or General Assembly. On 26 December, 1647, the Engagement was signed and the commissioners returned to Edinburgh to seek the approval of Parliament.

The Estates—the Scottish Parliament—met on 2 March and it was on this occasion that Gillespie preached his sermon on Psalm 2:10–12. The reaction of strict Covenanters to the Engagement was, as we would expect, one of vigorous opposition. The agreement was a betrayal of what they had fought for. As James King Hewison vividly puts it, 'The preachers generally, and George Gillespie in particular, stormed in every pulpit and hurled imprecations at the King and the Hamiltonians'.[1] This is the immediate context for Gillespie's sermon on Psalm 2.

We might note that the recorder of this sermon was Sir George Maxwell of Auldhouse and Pollock, a staunch Covenanter from the late 1640s until his death in 1677. He was actively involved in the Courts of the church and in the business

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1. James King Hewison, *The Covenanters. A History of the Church in Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution* (Glasgow: John Smith and Son, 1908; Revised and Corrected, 1913), 1.445.

of Parliament, and was Rector of Glasgow University from 1654 to 1660. Not only did he oppose the Engagement, but he was to be found among the 'Protestors' in the controversy with the Resolutioners in the early 1650s, and he was the victim of heavy fines after the Restoration.

This, sadly incomplete, sermon from 1648 is of particular significance because only two other sermons by Gillespie have survived.[2] Both were fast day sermons preached during Gillespie's time at the Westminster Assembly. The first, on Ezekiel 43:11, was preached before the House of Commons on 27 March, 1644, and the second, on Malachi 3:2, was preached before the House of Lords on 27 August, 1645. Although searching in their exposure of the sins of both church and nation which aroused the wrath of God, both also look to glorious days ahead for both England and Scotland. In expounding Ezekiel's vision of the New Temple Gillespie states, 'There are very good grounds for hope to make us think that this new temple is not far off. And (for your part) that Christ is to make a new face of a church in this kingdom, a fair and beautiful temple for his glory to dwell in. And he is even now about the work'.[3] Similarly, in introducing his sermon on Malachi 3:2 he says 'Scotland shall yet be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God (Isa 62:3,4); and shall be called Hephzi-bah and Beulah'.[4]

Of particular significance for understanding Gillespie's sermons, especially this fragment on a 'royal' psalm, Psalm 2, is Gillespie's doctrine of the Kingship of Christ. Much could be said on this crucial doctrine,[5] but a few comments may be made to highlight the central elements of Gillespie's approach.

Gillespie set out his view of the Kingship of Christ in a number of his published works. In 1645-46 he engaged in an exchange of polemical pamphlets with the Erastian theologian Thomas Coleman which produced three works from Gillespie's pen: *A Brotherly Examination*, *Nihil Respondes*, and *Male Audis.* He also deals with the subject in his great work of 1646 *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*.[6] His formulation of the doctrine of Christ's Kingship is neatly summed up in the title of chapter five of Book 2 of the latter work:

> Of a twofold kingdom of Jesus Christ: a general Kingdom, as he is the eternal Son of God, the head of all principalities and powers, reigning over all creatures; and a particular Kingdom, as he is Mediator reigning over the church only.

In no way is Gillespie seeking to deny that Christ is supreme over all things, nations included, but his concern is to make what he considers to be a scriptural distinction between the ways in which He reigns over nations and over the church. Civil rulers are not under Christ as Mediator but under Christ as the eternal Son (along with the Father and the Holy Spirit). They have nevertheless a duty to promote the welfare of the church, Christ's mediatorial kingdom. These distinctions are clearly evident in Gillespie's exposition of Psalm 2:10-12.

Despite Gillespie's warnings and exhortations to the Parliament, the Engagement was approved and Scotland was set on a road leading to warfare, suffering and further division. By this time Gillespie's fragile health was broken, yet he continued to pour his remaining energy into opposing the Engagers. He was appointed Moderator of the 1648 General Assembly which sat from 12 July until 12 August. Afterwards he went to Kirkcaldy to seek relief from the consumption (tuberculosis) which was ravaging his body. The hope was unfulfilled. In his final hours, as death approached, his wife said to him, 'The time of your relief is now near, and hard at hand'. His final

2. *Sermons Preached before the English Houses of Parliament by the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly of Divines 1643–1645,* ed. Chris Coldwell (Dallas, Naphtali Press, 2011), pages 289–384. Hereafter *Sermons*.

3. *Sermons*, p. 338.

4. *Sermons,* p. 348.

5. W. D. J. McKay, *An Ecclesiastical Republic. Church Government in the Writings of George Gillespie* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1997), chapter 2.

6. *A sermon preached before the right honourable the House of Lords in the Abbey Church at Westminster, upon the 27th of August, 1645 being the day appointed for solemne and publique humiliation: whereunto is added a Brotherly Examination of some passages of Mr. Colemans late printed sermon upon Job 11.20, in which he hath endeavoured to strike at the root of all church-government* (London: Printed for Robert Bostock, 1645), p. 31ff; another ed. (Printed by F. Neile for Robert Bostock, 1646), p. 28ff. *Nihil respondes: or, A discovery of the extream unsatisfactorinesse of Master Colemans peece, published last weeke under the title of A brotherly examination re-examined. Wherein, his self-contradictions: his yeelding of some things, and not answering to other things objected against him: his abusing of Scripture: his errors in divinity: his abusing of the Parliament, and indangering their authority: his abusing of the Assembly: his calumnies, and namely against the Church of Scotland, and against my selfe: the repugnancy of his doctrin to the solemne League and Covenant, are plainly demonstrated* (Printed at London for Robert Bostock, 1645). *Male audis or An answer to Mr. Coleman his Malè dicis. Wherein the repugnancy of his Erastian doctrine to the word of God, to the solemne League and Covenant, and to the ordinances of Parliament: also his contradictions, tergiversations, heterodoxies, calumnies, and perverting of testimonies, are made more apparent then formerly. Together with some animadversions upon Master Hussey his Plea for Christian magistracy: shewing, that in divers of the afore mentioned particulars he hath miscarried as much, and in some particulars more then Mr Coleman* (Printed for Robert Bostocke, 1646). *Aarons rod blossoming, or, The divine ordinance of church-government vindicated so as the present Erastian controversie concerning the distinction of civill and ecclesiasticall government, excommunication, and suspension, is fully debated and discussed, from the holy scripture, from the Jewish and Christian antiquities, from the consent of latter writers, from the true nature and rights of magistracy, and from the groundlesnesse of the chief objections made against the Presbyteriall government in point of a domineering arbitrary unlimited power* (London: Printed by E. G. for Richard Whitaker, 1646). These all are available in 'The Works of Mr George Gillespie' in *The Presbyterian's Armoury,* 2 volumes (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846).

words were, 'I long for that time. O, happy they that are there'. Shortly afterwards he went to meet his King. When he died on 17 December, 1648, he was a month short of his thirty-sixth birthday, having made in those years a profound contribution to Scottish Presbyterianism of abiding significance.

David McKay■

The Sermon Manuscript

It is truly a notable find to have discovered even an incomplete manuscript of notes of a sermon preached by George Gillespie, and even more significant that the sermon was preached at such a key point in Scottish history and on such a text as the last portion of Psalm 2. It is unfortunate that it is half or less of a full sermon, and not Gillespie own manuscript. However, because all his sermons delivered while in London that were left in manuscript there to be published about this same time were destroyed by malicious Sectaries, and because until now the only known examples were the two sermons before the English Houses of Parliament, one must appreciate finding even a portion of another example of his preaching. It is generally known that George Gillespie prayed, preached and advocated keenly against the Engagement (see the prior introduction by Dr. McKay),[1] but it seems to have been largely unknown and omitted from the history books that Gillespie preached before the meeting of the parliament that would approve it.[2] One can find the fact that he was appointed to preach on this occasion buried in the records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies edited by Mitchell and Christie, which were not transcribed and published until 1892. And since that time, it still seems to have escaped notice. This record, and the provenance of the note taker, confirm that the sermon is genuine. "Edinburgh, 25 Februarij 1648." "The Comission appoints Mr. George Gillaspie to preach befor the Parliament the day of their first meiting."[3]

This sermon appears in a manuscript notebook belonging to George Maxwell.[4] The volume is a small leather bound notebook in good condition, with four raised bands on the spine, simple double blind tooling in double fillets, with two clasps, size 17 cm x 13 cm. The pages are not numbered.[5] The length is approximately 390 leaves pages, with a considerable blank section from f.268 to the Genesis material in the back which is in reverse order. There is a wide margin generally and there are not the same amount of contractions, cross-outs and general scrappiness that would reflect notes taken at the time of delivery. Sermons by or presumably by John Carstares at Cathcart most frequently appear. Carstares was minister at the time for that parish. In addition to the sermon preached by George Gillespie before the parliament, there are notes of sermons by David Dickson, James Durham, Patrick Gillespie and others.[6] The Genesis notes are by Maxwell himself and are mathematical calculations on the genealogies.

Sir George Maxwell (1622–1677) was of the Scottish gentry at the time of the Engagement and a Protester in the subsequent Protester-Resolutioner division in the Kirk. He was also one of the leading figures that drafted the Remonstrance "which pledged that they would not fight for the king [Charles II] until he had supplied concerete (sic) evidence of genuine repentance for his past sins and until he abandoned the company and councils of malignants."[7] In February of 1648, he inherited his grandfather's estate in Nether Pollock, three miles from the parish church in Cathcart. He was advanced to heir by his aged grandfather, George Maxwell (d. 1648), over

1. February 15, 1648. "The clergy of this town continue to preach against the intention that they think the Scots have of invading England and of joining with the friends of their king. Gillespie, who has had seven or eight sermons on this subject, prayed God last Sunday that he would preserve them from the latest surprises of the King of England, and filled his prayer with sundry imprecations against his prince." *The Diplomatic Correspondence of Jean De Montereul and the Brothers De Bellièvre: French Ambassadors in England and Scotland, 1645–48,* edited with an English translation, introduction and notes by J. G. Fotheringham. Publications of the Scottish History Society, volume 29 and 30 (Edinburgh: Printed … by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1898–99), 2.402.

2. The parliament record merely states, "After divine service." The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, ed. K.M. Brown et al. (St Andrews, 2007–2018), 1648/3/1. Date accessed: 19 March 2018, http://rps.ac.uk/trans/1648/3/1.

3. *The Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland holden in Edinburgh the Years 1646 and 1647,* edited by Alexander F. Mitchell and James Christie (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1892), 367. Wodrow also mentions it. "When Mr Gillespie was bussy studying his sermon that he was to preach before Parliament to-morrow …." *Analecta,* vol. 3 (1843), 111.

4. Collection, Maxwells of Pollok, Glasgow and Renfrew, 16 items/notebooks; T-PM 114/1, Glasgow City Archives, Mitchell Library, Glasgow; Sir George Maxwell, Summaries of sermons at Cathcart, Glasgow and elsewhere, 10 Aug. 1647(?)–31 Dec. 1648;* in reverse, notes on Genesis, c.i.–xxxi. *The year is supplied by the Mitchell Library from the contents and the question mark is theirs.

5. The pagination given in the outline was derived by a manual inspection of the volume by Matthew Vogan.

6. Durham was licensed to preach in Irvine on May 18, 1647 and ordained and admitted minister of Blackfriars on December 2, 1647. James D. Marwick, *Charters and Other Documents Relating to the City of Glasgow: A.D. 1175–1649* (Glasgow, 1897), dcxxxii. Kyle D. Holfelder, "James Durham," in *Dictionary of National Biography*.

7. John Roach Young, *The Scottish Parliament, 1639-1661: a political and constitutional analysis,* Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow (October, 1993), p. 429. With others, he later felt compelled to renounce the Remonstrance. Cf. Kyle D. Holfelder, *Factionalism in the Kirk during the Cromwellian Invasion and Occupation of Scotland, 1650 to 1660: The Protester-Resolutioner Controversy,* Ph.D thesis, The University of Edinburgh (December 31, 1998), p. 71, 122. See his life in William Fraser, *Memoirs of the Maxwells of Pollok,* 2 volumes (Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1863), 1.61–77.

his father, John (d. 1666), because both were clergymen and the elder George believed his grandson had the business acumen the two lacked. Maxwell "was young, highly educated, an active man of business, and well qualified to represent the ancient house of Pollok." He maintained personal diaries in small palm-sized notebooks, as well as notebooks of sermons and lectures he attended.[8] Maxwell had a distant relation through marriage to two famous ministers of the time. Maxwell's grandmother's brother's daughters married John Carstares, his parish minister, and James Durham.[9]

George Maxwell, who was knighted in 1649, sat as a member of part of the 1648–1649 meeting of the Scottish Parliament, attending sessions 2–5 representing the shire of Renfrewshire ("Maxuell of Nethir Pollock, Renfrewshire).[10] However, given the great importance of the opening session and the issue at stake (approving or not approving the Engagement), he must have been in attendance when parliament opened for the first session on March 2, 1648,[11] along with others such as Robert Baillie.[12] He presumably was in attendance for the worship service appointed prior to the opening of Parliament and took these notes of Gillespie's sermon.[13] It seems less likely he copied the sermon from another's notes, but took them himself. The notes record some use by Gillespie of Greek and Hebrew, and it is clear from his other notes and books that Maxwell had some familiarity with these languages. It is most likely he took draft notes as Gillespie preached, either in pencil or with ink and quill on a portable writing desk, which may have been in shorthand or abbreviated or 'scrappy' with cross outs as would be usual for such notes. He then would have put these notes in finer form as he copied them into his notebook. For some reason he stopped copying, leaving blank pages to apparently come back later to fill in and complete the sermon. There is no clue as to why he never did. Presumably the six leaves (f89–f94) were enough space for the remainder, but if not, perhaps this was a factor? The pages left blank do suggest he had more of the sermon he could fill in, rather than that his original notes were incomplete.

The following is an outline of the contents of the notebook containing the Sermon on Psalm 2:10–12 by George Gillespie. If place, date, text or attribution are missing from the outline, none was immediately discernible. This is followed by the transcript and a modernized text presented in parallel columns.

Outline of T-PM 114/1

f1. Paisley, August 10, first sermon, Mr. A. Dunlop.
f10. August 15, 1647.
f21. Cathcart, Jan. 9, 1648, John Carstares, Isaiah 45:22–24.
f25. Cathcart, Jan. 16, 1648, "at ane fast for compliance with the enemie," Carstares, Psalm 51:6–13.
f32. Cathcart, Jan. 17, 1648.
f36. Glasgow, Jan. 22, "David Dick[son] expunded for the preparation sermon," 1 Corinthians 11:23.
f39. Carstares' sermon was followed by one by Patrick Gillespie.
f44. Sunday, Jan. 22, Patrick Gillespie, Psalm 42.
f46v. Sunday, Jan. 22, 1648, 'being the communion day,' David Dickson, Isaiah 12:1.
f53. Jan. 22, afternoon, Robert Ramsay.
f57. Matthew 26:40.
f62. Glasgow, James Durham, Psalm 3.
f65. Joshua 24:19.
f70. Psalm 4.
f73. Joshua 24:19.
f78. Ezekiel 10:9.
f80. Hebrews 8:10.
f82–88. Edinburgh, Before Parliament, March 2, 1648, George Gillespie, Psalm 2.
f89–f94. 6 blank pages.
f95. Psalm 57.
f97. Jeremiah 4:14, sermon, before noon.
f100v. March 5, 1648, afternoon, Colossians 4:2, sermon.
f104. Cathcart, Sunday, March 20 1648, Carstares, Psalm 42.
f132. Fenwick, May 8, Isaiah 44, John Neave, Newmilne.
f142. Glasgow, May 15, R. Ramsay.

8. Diaries do not survive in the collection for the same period as this notebook.

9. George Maxwell the elder married Jean Mure, the daughter of William Mure of Glanderstone. Jean's brother, also William Mure, had through two marriages a number of children including half-sisters Jean and Elizabeth Mure, who became, respectively, Mrs. Carstares and Mrs. Durham. Cf. *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland Enjoying Territorial Possessions or High Official Rank*, volume 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1834), 455.

10. "Pollok is a well-known area on the south side of Glasgow. The lands are now Pollok Country Park where the Burrell Collection is located, the estate was given to the City of Glasgow in 1966. The present Pollok House dates from 1752 but Haggs Castle is still standing." Cited from a draft life of Sir. George Maxwell, by Matthew Vogan.

11. March 2 through 10 June 10, 1648.

12. Baillie was in Edinburgh for some eight weeks and during that time attended the Parliament meetings with others such as Dickson and Gillespie, until he needed to return to Glasgow for meeting of synod and other matters in late March. Letter to William Spang, March 27, 1648, in *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie,* ed. David Laing, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Printed for Robert Ogle, 1841–42), 35ff.

13. *Members of Parliament: Return of the Names of Every Member Returned to Serve in Each Parliament from the Year 1696 Up to 1876, Specifying the Names of the County, City, University, Borough or Place for Which Returned: Also Return from so Remote a Period As Can Be Obtained Up to Year 1696, of the Surnames, Christian Names, and Titles of All Members of the Lower House of Parliament of England, Scotland and Ireland, with the Name of the Constituency Represented and Date of Return of Each,* 2 volumes (London: Ordered by The House of Commons to be Printed, 1878–79), volume 2, "Parliaments and conventions of the Estates of Scotland," 1357–1707, p. 571.

f144–47. Glasgow, May 15, Dickson, Lamentations 3:30.
147v. Eastwood, May 21.
167v. Lamentations 3:41.
171–3. Lamentations 3:41–42.
173v. Cathcart, July 9.
212v–219. At the renewing of the covenant, last day of December, 1648, Mearns (in Renfrewshire).
220–268. blank.
f4–22. Reverse from back, notes on Genesis 1–31.

Transcription Conventions

A question mark (?) denotes some level of uncertainty in a word or letter or takes the place of illegible letters.

Hyphens and apostrophes are inserted without notice. Common contractions such as *yt* for *that*, are expanded without notice.

The caret symbol (^) denotes an interline insertion above the line in question unless otherwise noted (i.e. marginal or below line). The inserted text will be underlined.

Insertions of missing letters, etc., are in square brackets [ ].

The downwards two-headed arrow (↡) marks an original page break.

The vertical bar (|) denotes original line breaks.

All paragraph breaks are original unless otherwise noted.

Scripture quotations were not denoted in the original, but are set in italics in the transcription. Latin or any other quotations are set off by quotation marks inserted without notice.

By Mr Geo. | Gillespie |

at the par |liament sit |ting down |
march 2. | 1648.[1]

Ps. 2. v. 10 ~~121~~ 11. 12.

10. Be wise now therefore O yee | kings, be instructed yee judges | of the earth. | 11. Serve the lord with feare | and rejoice with trembling. | 12. Kiss the Son least he bee | Angrie and yee perish from the | way when his wrath is kin-|dled but a litle. |

This psalme is ane evangelicall |
psalme concerning Christ Jesus |
& his kingdome. Ther be three |
paralell places ^<u>thereof</u> in the new Testa- |
ment ~~answering~~ applied to Ch. [Christ] |
the first two verses: Act. 4.25: |
who by the mouth of thy serv- |
vant David hast sayd, why did the |
heathen rage and the people |
imagine vaine things? [v. 26] *The kings* |
of the earth stood up and the rulers |
were gathered together against |
the lord & against his Christ. ↡
[v. 27] *for of a truth against thy holy* |
child Jesus whom thou hast an- |
onited, both Herod & pontius Pi- |
late with the gentiles & the |
people of Israell wer gather- |
ed together. And another plac |
v. 7 [Ps. 2], *thou art my son this day* |

Sermon on Psalm 2:10–12

At Divine Service Prior to the Opening of Parliament, March 2, 1648.

By George Gillespie.

Psalm 2:10. *Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. 11. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little….*

This psalm is an evangelical psalm concerning Christ Jesus and His kingdom. There are three parallel places [to this Psalm] in the New Testament applied to Christ. 1. The first two verses [in] Acts 4.25–26: *who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the lord and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together,* and another place, verse 7, *thou art my son this day*

1. This is a side-heading in the right margin.

have I begotten the[*e*] is also |
applied to Christ heb. 1. 10. And |
a thrid place v. 9. *Thou shalt* |
break them with a rod of iron |
thou shalt dash them in pieces |
as like a potter's vesselles [*sic*]. Christ |
ſpeakes it of ~~he~~ himselfe rev. 2. |
27. *(and he shall rule them with* |
a rod of iron: as the vessells of |
a potter shall they be broken |
to shivers) even as I received of |
my father. And rev. 19.15 *And out* |
of his mouth goeth a sharpe |
sword, that with it he should |
smite the nations: and he shall |
rulle them with a rod of iron. |
And now the prophet after he |
hath ~~sho~~ layd open the attempt |
of the wicked world, and of the |
kings and princes of the earth |
againſt the kingdome and governe- |
ment of the Son of god in the three |
firſt verses, he shewes then ↓
how god laughes all ther desins to |
ſcorne, and how in deſpight of all |
ther malice god will establish |
the kingdom of Christ, he conclud- |
es with this exhortation *be wise* |
now therfor o yee kings, be inſtruc- |
ted yee judges of the earthe which |
is not so much ſpoken to these mad |
counsellors and wicked conſpirers |
againſt Christ. Ther was less hope |
of these, but bee wise o kings |
saith, bee inſtructed all yee judges |
of the earthe as the septuagint read- |
es it, take example from Christes |
opposers, and see ther tragicall end |
how god ſpeakes to them in his |
wrath and vexes them in his sore |
diſpleasure. And this is the scope |
of the text. Foure particulars |
ar in it considerable. 1. [I.] the per- |
son exhorted the kings & judges |
of the earth. 2. [II.] the thing exhorted |
to be wise, be inſtructed.[2] 3. the rea- |
son of the exhortation, be wise |
therfor, be inſtructed therfor, |

have I begotten thee, is also applied to Christ [in] Hebrews 1:10. And a third place, verse 9, *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces as like a potter's vessel.* Christ ſpeaks it of Himself [in] Revelation 2:27, *And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.* And [also in] Revelation 19:15, *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.*

And now the prophet after he has laid open the attempt of the wicked world, and of the kings and princes of the earth againſt the kingdom and government of the Son of God in the three firſt verses, he shows then how God laughs all their designs to scorn, and how in deſpite of all their malice God will establish the kingdom of Christ, he concludes with this exhortation, *be wise now therefore o ye kings, be inſtructed ye judges of the earth,* which is not so much ſpoken to these mad counselors and wicked conſpirers againſt Christ, [as] there was less hope of these, but "be wise O kings," "be inſtructed all ye judges of the earth," as the Septuagint reads it, [says to] take example from Christ's opposers and see their tragic end, how God *ſpeaks to them in His wrath and vexes them in His sore diſpleasure*. And this is the scope of the text.

Four particulars are [here] considerable. I. The person exhorted, the *kings* and *judges of the earth*. II. The thing exhorted, *to be wise, be inſtructed*. III. The reason of the exhortation, *be wise therefore, be inſtructed therefore.*

2. The notes end abruptly before the third and fourth points are reached.

the originall is rendered by Tre- |
melli[us] "nunc ergo:"[3] now therfor |
4. the opportunitie of the exhorta- |
tion, now. be wise now, bee in- ↡[4]
structed now least otherwise ther- |
after it be too late. |
[I.] The exhortation is spoken |
to the kings and judges of the |
earth, the holy ghost gives ma- |
gistrates the titles & dignities |
don to ther places. Therfor the |
holy ghost is no leveller. I say |
the holy ghost is no leveller |
either if wee compare magis- |
trates with god, or with the |
mediator or with their subjects |
^or with the saints[5] in all of these appears no le- |
velling. [1.] In regard of god, magistrates[6] |
ar god's ministery & deputies. They |
ar the ministery of god for good |
rom. 13. 2. If we compare them |
with Jesus the mediator, though |
magistrates indeed be not pro- |
perlie the vicegerents of Christ |
as mediator, yet they ar not |
coordinat[e] but subordinat[e], Christ |
is the only king of his Church |
and they ar his Servant. So ther |
is no levelling, for if they re- |
bell, ~~if~~[7] he will sett his feet |
upon ther necks, *bring hither* |
these *mine enemies*, that *would* |
not that I should reigne over them ↡
4. [*sic* 3.] compare kings with ther subjects |
ther ar higher & lower powers, and |
wher ther be som higher & som |
lower ther is no levelling. 4. com- |
pare kings with the Saints, and that |
either as they ar inhabitants of the |
world, and so they must be subject |
as weell as other; Christian li- |
bertie doth not exeem them from |
subjection to magistracie. but doth |

3. The text appears to read "Tremelli g" for "Tremellius." The contraction or letter pair looks like a "g." The same appears in the word "Jesus" on page 4 of the manuscript.

4. "bee in" is significantly smeared/obscured.

5. This last clause is inserted in the left margin.

6. Maxwell begins to write an "le" (perhaps starting to write levellers?)then draws a line downwards (/) and writes "magistrates underneath the "le" extending further than normal into the right margin.

7. This second "if" may be struck through.

The original is rendered by Tremellius, "nunc ergo:"[1] *now therefore.* IV. The opportunity of the exhortation, now, be wise now, bee instructed now, lest otherwise thereafter it be too late.

I. The exhortation is spoken to the kings and judges of the earth. The Holy Ghost gives magistrates the titles and dignities done to their places; therefore, the Holy Ghost is no Leveller.[2] I say the Holy Ghost is no Leveler, either if we compare magistrates with God, or with the Mediator, or with their subjects or with the saints. In all of these appears no leveling. 1. In regard of God, magistrates are God's ministry and deputies. They are the ministry of God for good (Rom. 13:4).

2. If we compare them with Jesus the Mediator, though magistrates indeed be not properly the vicegerents of Christ as mediator, yet they are not coordinate, but subordinate. Christ is the only king of His Church and they are his servant.[3] So there is no leveling. For if they rebel, He will set His feet upon their necks—*bring hither* these *mine enemies*, that *would not that I should reign over them* (Luke 19:27).

3. Compare kings with their subjects, there are higher and lower powers, and where there be some higher and some lower there is no leveling.

4. Compare kings with the saints, and that either as they are inhabitants of the world, and so they must be subject as well as others; Christian liberty does not exeem[4] them from subjection to magistracy, but

1. See Emmanuel Tremellius, Franciscus Junius, and Théodore de Bèze, *Testamenti Veteris Biblia Sacra* (1579; Hanover: 1602), 475.

2. *Leveller*: Advocates for removing social and other societal distinctions, and for popular sovereignty.

3. See the introduction regarding this distinction, and page 262.

4. Exeem: To exempt from an obligation, duty, jurisdiction, punishment, etc. (Dictionary of the Scottish Language, www.dsl.ac.uk).

lay ^on firmer ties and bands, or if |
wee look on the saints as they ar |
"municcepes cælorum,"[8] burgesses of |
heaven, ther is yet no levelling. |
when it comes to ther eternall pri- |
vilege they shall judge the world |
& kings amongst the rest. *doe yee* |
not know saith the apostle[9] *but the* |
saints shall judge the earthe. |
So the holy ghost therfor is no |
leveller. And kings ar heer the |
~~They are heer exhort~~. judges |
of the earth, understand earth |
in ane 3fold notion it. 1. "terra |
quam terimus" the earth wee tread |
on. 2. "terra quam gerimus" the |
earth wee carie about us and that |
is our bodies, both those ar sub- |
ject to the magistrate even |
as weell in regard of the saints. ↡
as weell as other men that is, the |
lands goods & bodies of the saints |
ar subject to kings though not |
in ane arbitrarie way. 3. Ther |
is "terra quam querimus," the |
earth wee seek after. our hea- |
venlie inheritance and in that |
respect the saints shall be Christ's |
assessors, and kings shall be |
judged by them. they shall bind |
ther nobles with chaines and |
ther princes with fetters of |
iron. |
I will mak no farder use |
of this then to tak away that |
old calumnie, which was the |
calumnie of the prophetes and |
apostles[10] and of Christ himselfe |
and no wonder if it be also |
the calumnie of godly minis- |
tery now a dayes that they ar |
unfriends to magistrates but |
wee have not so learned Christ |
those ar best subjects to the king |
that ar best subjects to god. and |
let profaine men say what they |
please when a temptation & ther |
interest meet together they |

lays on firmer ties and bands; or, if we look on the saints as they are *municeps cælorum*, burgesses of heaven, there is yet no leveling. When it comes to their eternal privilege, they shall judge the world and kings amongst the rest. *Doe ye not know,* says the apostle, *but the saints shall judge the earth* (1 Cor. 6:2). And kings are here the judges of the earth. Understand earth in a threefold notion. (1) "Terra quam terimus," the earth we tread upon. (2) "Terra quam gerimus," the earth we carry about us, and that is our bodies. Both these are subject to the magistrate, even as well in regard of the saints as well as other men; that is, the lands, goods and bodies of the saints are subject to kings, though not in an arbitrary way. (3) There is "terra quam querimus," the earth we seek after; our heavenly inheritance; and in that respect the saints shall be Christ's assessors, and kings shall be judged by them. They shall bind their nobles *with chains* and their princes *with fetters of iron*. (Psalm 149:8).

I will make no further use of this than to take away that old calumny, which was the calumny of the prophets and apostles, and of Christ himself, and no wonder if it be also the calumny of godly ministry nowadays, that they are unfriends to magistrates. But we have not so learned Christ (cf. Eph. 4:20). Those are best subjects to the king that are best subjects to God. And let profane men say what they please, when a temptation and their interest meet together, they

8. Municeps cælorum.
9. Expanded from the contraction "apsle".
10. Expanded from the contraction "apsles".

shall be found but rebells to kings |
who are rebells to god. Let it not |
be started at when religion is ↡
made use of to say it is ane way not |
to give Cesar his own. |
[II.] The 2d particular wee promised |
to speake of was the deutie exhorted |
unto *be wise, be instructed.* And |
from this I observe 3 things. 1. |
ther is heer a paritie and a kynd |
of levelling. And in this sence |
the holy ghost is a leveller |
though in the sence now last spoke |
of the holy ghost is no leveller. |
Ther is a levelling albeit not |
of places & powers yet ther is a |
levelling of hearts & spirits, which |
even in kings and judges must |
be as much brought in subjection |
under the yoke of Christ. for these |
words *be instructed be wise* is ap- |
plied to magistrates as weell as |
others, because they stand as much in |
need of wisdom as other, but that |
they stand as much in need of in- |
struction would be furder chosen. |
The septuagint uses a word παδει |
ρα[11] which is a disciplinarie word |
be nurtured, be disciplined, and the |
hebrew word comes from a root |
rsy yasar which signifies binding |
ezeck 3. 25. *but thou o son of* |
man behold they shall putt bands |
upon thee, & shall bind the[e] with them ↡
ps. 149. 8. *to bind ther kings with* |
chaines & ther nobles with |
fetters of iron. And by a meta- |
phor it is drawn to signifie |
reproofes & rebukes prov. 9. 7. *he* |
that reprooves a scorner getteth |
to himselfe shame, & he that re- |
buketh a wicked man getteth him- |
selfe a blot. usuallie it signifies |
chastising ps. 6 at the beginning |
lord in thy wrath reproove me |
not, neither chasten me in thy |
hote displeasure. ~~ps 49 10.~~ ps 118. |
18. *the lord hath chastened me* |
sore, but he hath not given me |

shall be found but rebels to kings who are rebels to God. Let it not be started (i.e. startled) at when religion is made use of to say it is a way not to give Cæsar his own.

II. The second particular we promised to speak of was the duty exhorted unto, *be wise, be instructed*. And from this I observe three things.

Observation one. There is here a parity and a kind of leveling, and in this sense the Holy Ghost is a leveler, though in the sense now last spoken of the Holy Ghost is no leveler. There is a leveling, albeit not of places and powers, yet there is a leveling of hearts and spirits, which even in kings and judges must be as much brought in subjection under the yoke of Christ. For these words, *be instructed, be wise,* are applied to magistrates as well as others, because they stand as much in need of wisdom as others, but that they stand as much in need of instruction would be further chosen. The septuagint uses a word παδει ρα (*sic* παιδεύθητε), which is a disciplinary word, "be nurtured, be disciplined," and the Hebrew word comes from a root rsy (yasar), which signifies binding: *but thou O son of man behold they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them* (Ezk. 3:25); *to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron* (Ps. 149:8). And by a metaphor it is drawn to signify reproofs and rebukes. *He that reprooves a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot* (Prov. 9:7). Usually it signifies chastising, Psalm 6 at the beginning, *Lord in thy wrath reproove me not, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure;* Psalm 118. 18, *The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me*

11. *Sic* παιδεύθητε.

over to deathe. Therfor in a word | kings & judges must be content to | subject themselfes to discipline as | weell others & had need of it as | weell as others. And there is a | laying low of great spirits, when | the mightie potentates & rulers | of the earthe must lay down ther | neck to the yoke of Christ as | much as the meanest underling | in Christ's kingdom. The gates of | heaven ar not layd wyder open | for kings & for parliament men | nor[12] it is for others, but they must | be emptied of themselves and must ↡ stoop as low as Lazarus. otherwise | no enterie. And so ther is heer a | levelling of hearts & spirits for | *whosoever* will *not receive the* | *kingdom of god as a litle child shall* | *not enter therin*.

[Obs. 2.] The 2d point observeable is the | pertinencce of this exhortation *be* | *wise o yee kings, bee instructed o* | *yee judges.* Surelie if such annother | as this had come from us & not | from the holy ghost it should have | been esteemed verie impertinent | "ar wee foolles that thou bid us be | wise, or bairnes[13] that wee had need | of instruction," this is a part of | the language of the tyme, but the | holy ghost saith be wise now | o yee kings, "Et nunc Reges ad | mentem redite," turne to your wits | againe, as if they had been out of | ther wittes, and so they wer when | They though[t] to shake the coords | of Christ from of[f] ther shoulders | Job 32. 9. *great men ar not all* | *wayes wise* and no mor ar kings | *neither doe the aged understand* | *judgement.* And rev. 17. 15 [*sic* 17]. it was no | great peice of wisdom when the ↡ kings choose rather to give ther | crownes to the beast then to Jesus | rev. 17 [*sic*], but 1 Cor 3. 15 [*sic* 18]. *if any man* | *among you seemeth to be wise* |

12. Nor: "than"; i.e. "than it is for others."
13. Bairnes: children.

over to death. Therefore in a word, kings and judges must be content to subject themselves to discipline as well [as] others and had need of it as well as others. And there is a laying low of great spirits when the mighty potentates and rulers of the earth must lay down their neck to the yoke of Christ as much as the meanest underling in Christ's kingdom. The gates of heaven are not laid wider open for kings and for parliament men than it is for others, but they must be emptied of themselves and must stoop as low as Lazarus. Otherwise, no entry. And so there is here a leveling of hearts and spirits, for *whosoever* will *not receive the kingdom of God as a little child* [he] *shall not enter therein* (Mark 10:15).

Observation two. The second point observable is the pertinence of this exhortation, *be wise O ye kings, be instructed O ye judges.* Surely if such another as this had come from us[5] and not from the Holy Ghost, it should have been esteemed very impertinent. "Are we fools that you bid us be wise, or children that we had need of instruction?" This is a part of the language of the time, but the Holy Ghost says *be wise now O ye kings.* "Et nunc Reges ad mentem redite."[6] Turn to your wits again, as if they had been out of their wits, and so they were when they thought to shake the cords of Christ from off their shoulders. Job 32:9. *Great men are not always wise,* and no more are kings*, neither do the aged understand judgment.* And, Revelation 17:17, it was no great piece of wisdom when the kings choose rather to give their crowns to the beast than to Jesus, but, 1 Corinthians 3:18, *if any man among you seemeth to be wise*

5. In other words, "if such words like this had come from us…."
6. This is the Latin of verse 10 as Calvin renders it. Cf. "Commentarium in librum Psalmorvm, in *Iohannis Calvini Opervm Omnivm Theologicorvm, Tomus Tertius* (Geneva: Johannem Vignon, Petrum and Jacobum Chouët, 1617), 7.

in this world, let him become a |
fooll that he may be wise; for the |
wisdom of the [*sic*] *world is foolish-* |
nes with god. And therfor this exhorta- |
tion is so much the moe pertinent |
as kings & great men think them- |
selves less to stand in need of it. |
But yet they ought to think them- |
selves foolles till they tak the testi- |
monies of the lord for ther coun- |
sell. If it had been sayd, be re- |
ligious, or sober or temperat many |
would have thought the exhorta- |
tion the mor pertinent, yet the |
spirit of god lightes on that ~~ex-~~ |
~~hortation~~ wherin kings think |
themselves learned enough.
Obs. 3. religion is no enemie |
to wisdom, only it disinguishes true |
spirituall wisdom from carnall |
& sensuall understanding. Sum of |
all wisdom is Job 28 at the end |
after he hath sayd wisdom is not |
to be found in the earth, nor in the |
depth of the floods nor in the land |
of the living he concludeth *unto* |
man he sayd, behold the feare of |
the lord, that is wisdome, & to depart ↡
from evill is understanding. Many |
pitch upon that place mat. 10. 16. *be* |
wise as serpents, and does heerby allow |
unto themselves a great deall of la- |
titude in policie, and extend it even |
to dissimulation. And therfor I will |
tak the moe paines to open up the |
true meaning. Ther is one part of |
the serpent's wisdom wherby it pre- |
serves itselfe, and this is imitable |
and another part of its wisdom |

in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. And therefore, this exhortation is so much the more pertinent, as kings and great men think themselves less to stand in need of it. But yet they ought to think themselves fools, till they take the testimonies of the Lord for their counsel.[7] If it had been said, "be religious," or sober or temperate, many would have thought the exhortation the more pertinent; yet the Spirit of God lights on that wherein kings think themselves learned enough.

Observation three. Religion is no enemy to wisdom, only it distinguishes true spiritual wisdom from carnal and sensual understanding. [The] sum of all wisdom is [in] Job 28 at the end, after he has said wisdom is not to be found in the earth, nor in the depth of the floods, nor in the land of the living, he concludes, *unto man he said, behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.* Many pitch upon that place, Matthew 10:16, *be wise as serpents*, and do hereby allow unto themselves a great deal of latitude in policy, and extend it even to dissimulation.[8] And therefore, I will take the more pains to open up the true meaning. There is one part of the serpent's wisdom whereby it preserves itself, and this is imitable; and another part of its wisdom

7. Cf. Psalm 119:24.

8. It is not clear if Gillespie has in view Scottish politicians with which he and other ministers had many conversations about the Engagement leading up to the opening of Parliament, or particular books advocating for this policy of dissimulation, or both. Machiavelli's idea that the prince must be "a great pretender and dissembler" had been in print for more than a century (1532; cf. *The Prince,* trans. W. K. Marriott {1908}, chapter 18, p. 143). Saavedra has three essays on the prince's use of dissimulation. This work appeared in Spanish in 1640 and in Latin in 1643. Published in Amsterdam, the work would have been available in London at the time of the Westminster Assembly (cf. *The Grand Debate* {Naphtali Press, 2014}, Appendix: Westminster Abbey Library: And Other Theological Resources of the Assembly of Divines (1643–1652) 402). Saavedra alludes to some of the same actions of the serpent but not with the detail that Gillespie does. "… Serpents, the emblem of carefull and prudent Majesty, and in the sacred Writs the Hieroglysick of Prudence, for their cunning in defending their heads, in stopping their Ears against all Inchantments…." And he alludes to Matthew 10:16, "The greater the Prince is, the greater care he ought to be crown'd with, not the Sincerity of Innocent Doves, but the prudence of subtle Serpents." Diego de Saavedra Fajardo, *Idea principis christiano-politici symbolis* (Amstelodami: apud Joannem Jacobi fil. Schipper, 1659), Essays 43–45, 324–343; English: *The Royal Politician represented in one hundred emblems,* trans. Sir James Astry, 2 vols. (1700), 1.305, 317. Bacon was comfortable with some "seasonable use" of dissimulation in his *Essays* (1597). "Of Simulation and Dissimulation," in *The Essays: Or, Counsels Civil and Moral of Francis Bacon,* ed. Fred Allison Howe 1908), 18. Daniel Tuvill (Toutevill, Tutevl) wrote under D.T., *The Dove and the Serpent* (1614), expanding upon "Bacon's own combination of 'serpentine wisdom with the columbine innocency,'…" *Essays Politic and Moral and Essays Moral and Theological,* ed. John L. Lievsay (Charlottesville: Published for the Folger Shakespeare Library [by] the University Press of Virginia, 1971), xi.

wherby it layes snares againſt man |
to doe him evill and this is not to |
be imitate, therfor it is expresslie |
added in that sam place *be simple* |
as doves. The imitable part of the |
serpent's wisdom hath been pointed |
out in 5 particulars by antient |
wryters. The firſt 2 ar expressed |
by Epiphanius her. 27. and the 1. |
is, which Jerome also observes |
when the serpent is persued, saith |
he know that his life is in his |
head, therfor he wrappes his who[le][14] |
body about his heade, and so exposes |
his haill body to a ſtroake rathe[r] |
than the head. Therfor if wee |
will follow this peece of serpen[t] |
wisdom, let our choise care be for |
the fame of Jesus Chriſt & his truth |
& his honor, for he is our heade |
& rather let us expose kings & king- ↡
domes and lives & eſtates to the |
hazard, befor wee putt one point |
of his glorie or intereſt to hazard |
and if this were reſpected it might |
soon end moſt of our present |
differences. Doe for your honor, |
for your lands and for any thing |
else you please, so be the honor |
of Jesus have the firſt roome. |
2. It is added ther also by the sam |
Epiph. that neither the serpent cometh |
out of his holes to the water |
leaſt he should poison the water |
he leives his poison behind him |
so before wee come to hearing or |
prayers or any other exercise of
religion let us leive our profa
nitie & wickednes behind us. 3. |
Auguſtine on ps. 58 telles us of |
a 3[d] point of the serpent's wisdom |
that fering inchantments, he |
layes the one eare to a ſtone or |
to the ground & ſtoppes the other |
with his taill. The holy ghoſt pointes |
at it in these words. Like the deafe |
adder which will not heare the |
voice of the charmer, *charming* |
never so wiselie. would god wee |

whereby it lays snares againſt man to do him evil, and this is not to be imitated. Therefore, it is expressly added in that same place, *be simple as doves*.

The imitable part of the serpent's wisdom has been pointed out in five particulars by ancient writers. The first two are expressed by Epiphanius (Her. 27).[9] 1. And the first is, which Jerome also observes, when the serpent is pursued, saith, he knows that his life is in his head, therefore he wraps his whole body about his head, and so exposes his hail body to a ſtroke rather than the head. Therefore, if we will follow this piece of serpent wisdom, let our choice care be for the fame of Jesus Chriſt and His truth and His honor, for He is our head, and rather let us expose kings and kingdoms, and lives and eſtates to the hazard, before we put one point of His glory or intereſt to hazard. And if this were reſpected it might soon end moſt of our present differences.[10] Do for your honor, for your lands and for anything else you please, so be the honor of Jesus has the firſt room.

2. It is added there also by the same Epiphanius,[11] that neither the serpent comes out of his holes to the water, leſt he should poison the water, he leaves his poison behind him, so before we come to hearing or prayers or any other exercise of religion, let us leave our profanity and wickedness behind us.

3. Auguſtine on Psalm 58 tells us of a third point of the serpent's wisdom, that fearing enchantments, he lays the one ear to a ſtone or to the ground and ſtops the other with his tail.[12] The Holy Ghoſt points at it in these words: like the *deaf adder* which will not hear the voice of the charmer, *charming never so wisely* (Ps. 58:4–5). Would [to] God we

14. The text here runs to the edge of the page.

9. *Sic.* 37. See "37. Againſt Ophites," in *The Panarion of Ephanius of Salamis, Book I Sects 1–46,* translated by Frank Williams (2nd ed., Leiden: Brill, 2009), 267–268. See *The Homilies of Saint Jerome, Volume 1, 1–59 On the Psalms,* translated by Sister Marie Liguori Ewald, Fathers of the Church (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964; 1981; 2001), 363–364. "Juſt as a serpent that sees someone coming to ſtrike it inſtinctively makes a coil of its entire body and protects its head, even so these heretics hide themselves in the winding utterances of Ariſtotle and the other philosophers and so shield and defend themselves."

10. This is a reference to the difference over what would be called the Engagement which was subsequently approved by the majority of the parliament, though it would be opposed by a majority of the Kirk's General Assembly.

11. Epiphanius, p. 268.

12. Cf. *Works of St. Auguſtine: A Translation for the Twenty-First Century,* edited by J. E. Rotelle, 42 volumes (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1995), volume 3/17. "Juſt as snakes, you see, in order to avoid burſting out and leaving their dens when they are being charmed, are said to press one ear to the ground and block the other with their tails." Cited from *Ancient Chriſtian Commentary on Scripture,* edited by Thomas C. Oden, *Old Teſtament VIII, Psalms 51–150,* edited by Quentin F. Wesselschmidt, (IVP, 2007), 35.

could stop our eares at the voyce |
of the charmers. For ther be char- |
mers that charme indeed verie |
wyselie, but look who amongst |
you all is wysest if you mak ↓
no conscience to avoyd the compa- |
nie of men who are not for god & re- |
ligion but walkes by the rulles of |
crooked carnall policie. you shall |
be stollen of[f] your feet, & leadd of[f] |
forth with the workers of iniqui- |
tie. 4. Agustine in annother place |
telles ~~us also~~ of a 4th particular |
of the serpent's wisdom: he thrustes |
himselfes through a hole or clift |
of a rock and by this meanes rubbes |
of[f] his old skin & gettes a new one. |
he applies it to our enterie in at |
the straite & narrow gate. Plin. |
lib. 3. cap. 27. sayes that he scratch- |
es himself amongst the juniper |
~~trees~~ bushes. wee must goe tho- |
rou the breirs of mortification. |
5. Plinius in that same place addes |
that wither the serpent hath con- |
tracted a dimnes of sight, he doth |
anoint his eyes with ane herbe |
which he calles "marara," and this |
recovers the cleerenes of his sight. |
Let us of our blindness seeke of Jesus |
that eye salve wherby wee may |
be cured that they that see not may |
see & they that see may be made |
blind. |
Annother branche of the exhorta.ơ[15] ↓
is *be instructed*, or disciplinated |
This points at 5 things in the |
context. 1. *be instructed*. say not |
as Christ's rebells v. 3. *Let us* |
breake ther bands asunder & |
cast ther coards from of[f] us, *but* |
serve the lord with feare, it is god |
& not man you have to doe with |

could stop our ears at the voice of the charmers. For there be charmers that charm indeed very wisely, but look who amongst you all is wisest if you make no conscience to avoid the company of men who are not for God and religion, but walks by the rules of crooked carnal policy.[13] You shall be stolen off your feet, and lead off forth with the workers of iniquity.[14]

4. Augustine in another place tells of a fourth particular of the serpent's wisdom: he thrusts himself through a hole or cleft of a rock and by this means rubs off his old skin and gets a new one.[15] He applies it to our entering in at the strait and narrow gate. Pliny (lib. 3. cap. 27),[16] says that he scratches himself amongst the juniper bushes. We must go through the briers of mortification.

5. Plinius in that same place adds that wither the serpent has contracted a dimness of sight, he anoints his eyes with an herb, which he calls "marara," and this recovers the clearness of his sight. Let us of our blindness seek of Jesus, that eye salve whereby we may be cured, that they that see not may see and they that see may be made blind.

Another branch of the exhortation is *be instructed,* or disciplined. This points at five things in the context. 1. *Be instructed*. Say not as Christ's rebels (v. 3), *Let us break their bands asunder and cast their cords from off us*, but *serve the Lord with fear.* It is God and not man you have to do with. Either you must

15. Rather than finish the word it appears Maxwell strikes out and adds a period, apparently to note the abbreviation of "exhortation."

13. This carnal policy was noted in the 1648 renewal of the covenant and confession of sins, some months after this sermon. "… we have followed, for the most part, the counsels of flesh and blood, and walked more by the rules of policy than piety, and have hearkened more unto men than unto God." ("A Solemn Acknowledgment of Publick Sins, and Breaches of the Covenant," October 6, 1648, in *The Confession of Faith,* etc. {Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1855}, 366). Archibald Johnson, Lord Wariston later condemned it at length in Causes of the Lord's Wrath (.

14. "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity…" Psalm 125:5.

15. Cf. Augustine, *Christian Instruction,* translated by John J. Gavigan, in The Fathers of the Church, volume 2 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947; 2002), 82–83. "It is well known that a serpent exposes its whole body, rather than its head, to those attacking it, and how clearly that explains the Lord's meaning when He directed us to be 'wise as serpents.' We should, therefore, expose our body to persecutors, rather than our head, which is Christ. Thus, the Christian faith, the head so to speak, may not be killed in us, as it would be if, preserving our body, we were to reject God! There is also the belief that, having forced itself through a small opening in disposing of its old skin, the serpent gains renewed vigor. How well this agrees with imitating the wisdom of the serpent and stripping off the 'old man' that we may put on the new, as the Apostle expresses it; and we must strip it off passing through narrow places, since the Lord says: 'Enter by the narrow gate.'"

16. Pliny, *Natural History, Volume III: Books 8–11,* translated by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library (Harvard University Press, 1940; 1983), 73.

either you must admitt what |
flesh & blood comptes heavie else |
else [*sic*?] thou close not kyndlie with |
Jesus on his owne termes. So this |
is one point of instruction. a |
2d is *bee instructed* & *serve the* |
lord with feare that is mak not |
bold with respecting Chr. cause & |
kingdome or his glorie or ser- |
vants, but seeke *the lord with* |
feare.

admit what flesh and blood comptes (i.e. counts) heavy, else you close not kindly with Jesus on His own terms. So this is one point of instruction.

2. A second is *bee instructed* and *serve the Lord with fear* (v. 11); that is, make not bold with respecting Christ's cause and kingdom or His glory or servants, but seek *the Lord with fear*.

Chris Coldwell
Matthew Vogan■

In Brief: George Gillespie, Psalm 2 and Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom (Extracts)

At the reading of these passages in Saravia and Camero, horror and amazement have taken hold on me. O wisdom of God, by whom kings do reign and princes decree justice, upon whose thigh and vesture is written, "King of kings and Lord of Lords," make the kings of the earth to know that their laws are but *regulæ regulatæ* [*regulated rules*], and *mensuræ mensuratæ* [*measured measures*]! "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son" (Ps. 2:10–12), and lay down your crowns at the feet of the Lamb that sits upon the throne,[1] *discite justitiam moniti*.[2] And remember that this is the beginning of wisdom, by casting pride away, to addict yourselves to the dominion of Christ; who, albeit He has given the kingdoms of this world to your hands, and *non aufert mortalia, qui regna datio cælestia*,[3] yet has He kept the government of His church upon His own shoulder (Isa. 9:6; 22:21). So that *rex non est proprie rector ecclesiæ sed reipublicæ; ecclesiæ vero defensor est*.[4] *A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies* (Naphtali Press, 2013), 281–282.

But those that have written against them [the Photinians] have corrected their definition in this particular, because Christ is properly King of his Church only. *A sermon preached before the right honourable the House of Lords in the Abbey Church at Westminster, upon the 27th of August, 1645 being the day appointed for solemne and publique humiliation: whereunto is added a brotherly examination of some passages of Mr. Colemans late printed sermon upon Job 11.20, in which he hath endeavoured to strike at the root of all church-government* (London : F. Neile for Robert Bostock 1645), 43. Cf. In *Works* (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), page 11.

But peradventure some man will be bold to give another answer, That the Lord Jesus reigneth over the church even in a political respect, but that the administration and influence of his kingly office, is in, and by, and through, the civil magistrate, who is supreme judge, governor, and head of the church under Christ.

"To this I answer, Hence it would follow, 1. That Christ's kingdom is of this world, and cometh with observation, as kingdoms of this world do, which himself denieth, Luke xvii. 20 ; John xviii. 36. 2. It would follow, That Christ doth not reign nor exercise his kingly office in the government of his church under Pagan, Turkish, or persecuting princes, but only under the Christian magistrate, which no man dare say. The civil magistrate, 3dly, is God's vicegerent, but not Christ's, that is, the magistrate's power hath its rise, origination, institution, and deputation, not from that special dominion which Christ exerciseth over the church as Mediator and Head thereof, but from that universal lordship and sovereignty which God exerciseth over all men by right of creation, in so much that there had been for order's sake, magistrates, or superior powers, though man had not fallen but continued in his innocency; and yet, by the law of nature and nations, there are magistrates among these who know nothing of Christ; and among them Christ reigneth not as Mediator, though God reigneth over them by the kingdom of power. 4thly. If the magistrate be supreme head and governor of the church under Christ, then the ministers of the church are the magistrate's ministers as well as Christ's, and must act in the magistrate's name, and as subordinate to him, and the magistrate shall be Christ's minister, and act in his name." "Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster," in *Works* (Edinburgh Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1846), 110. This text also appears in *Aaron's Rod*. See *Aaron's Rod Blossoming, or, The divine ordinance of church government vindicated* (London: Printed by E.G. for Richard Whitaker, 1646), 208–231. Cf. *Works* (Edinburgh Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), 96–107, specifically page 137.■

1. Calvin in Psalm 2:12. Cf. Commentaries, IV, 2.22–27.
2. Virgil, *The Aeneid* (VI, 620). "Having been warned, learn justice."
3. *in distributing heavenly authority, he does not remove mortal things.* Cf. Cœlius Sedulius, *Hymnus*, line 31–32; Migne, *PL* 19.765.
4. *The king is not properly the ruler of the church, but of the state; but he is the defender of the church.* Gillespie may be referencing the words of Isaac Casaubon's *De Libertate Ecclesiastica* ([Paris]: 1607).

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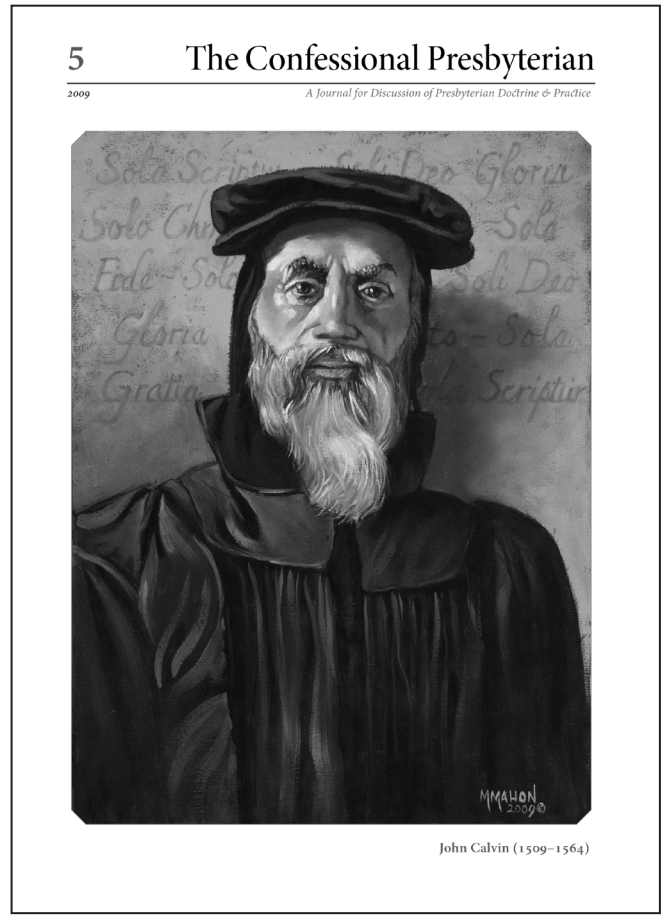

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The Man in Linen: A New and Old Interpretation of Ezekiel 9–10. **Continued from Page 36.**

big gap between an angel and God. However, as the list of passages above shows, God often manifests his glory through his angels. God and angel often seem to merge in appearance, if not ontologically. Therefore, when it comes to an *appearance* of God *in a theophany*, the distance between God and angel is not so large, however big the ontological difference might be.

Some might conceivably object that such a preincarnate appearance of Christ would jeopardize the uniqueness of the incarnation of Christ. For this reason, I have chosen the appearance of Christ as the Angel of the Lord. This Angelic appearance of Christ would have looked human, was angelic, and was further Christophanic. There is no need to suppose that this appearance of Christ looked exactly like Jesus would look centuries later, or like other theophanies or Christophanies. My position would thus be able to safeguard the uniqueness of the incarnation of Jesus Christ without precluding the possibility of the second person of the Trinity appearing in the Old Testament.

The Larger Picture

The interpretation on offer here has several implications both for the larger picture of Ezekiel, and for Ezekiel studies. To start with the Ezekiel implications, one rather obvious conclusion is that judgment oracles and visions, which largely predominate in the first part of Ezekiel, are still tempered with mercy and lovingkindness. There is always a remnant that God will spare, a remnant that does not bow the knee to Baal. Mercy can and often does interrupt judgment. As has been noted, the Shekinah glory had been in the process of leaving the temple and Jerusalem. The appearance and commission of the man in linen puts a temporary stop on that process, while the remnant is marked. God is both merciful and just. My position argues that it is God, the second person of the Trinity, who himself does the marking. Surely, this would be a cause for hope!

Many people believe that the God of the Old Testament is merely a God of judgment and holiness. This is a significant distortion. God is slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness, as the oft-quoted words of Exodus 23 make plain. Even when the patience of God has run out with regard to the guilty, that does not mean his patience has come to an end with regard to those less guilty, or with those who are innocent of particular sins.

If God marks those who are his by a sign, then this marking in Ezekiel is of a piece with both circumcision, in the Old Testament, and baptism, in the New Testament. The Lord marks those who are his, not for his own sake, as if he needed a reminder, but for the sake of angels and humans. There are differences between, say, baptism, and the mark in Ezekiel 9. Baptism is a new covenant ordinance that marks the inclusion of a person within the visible church, whereas the mark of Ezekiel 9 merely marks those to be saved from destruction. However, the idea of some kind of "marking" system distinguishing one group who is to receive grace from another group that will not receive grace is similar in both Ezekiel 9 and in circumcision/baptism.

In Ezekiel studies, while the position I advocate has been held in the past, it is rare, largely because of a reluctance among the majority of Old Testament scholars to seeing Jesus in the Old Testament. There are many reasons for this, not least including the Enlightenment, which has fragmented all knowledge and has contributed to a divorce between Old Testament and New Testament. A second reason has surely been the Holocaust. No one desires to offend the Jews, given what they went through in World War II. However much the Jews have suffered, their suffering does not make their reading of the Old Testament correct, nor does it make the Old Testament *their* Bible. Of course, there are scholars who would reject my conclusions while not laboring under these influences. Still, these influences do make positions such as mine less likely in the eyes of many scholars. While I write based on Christian assumptions, I hope also that the truth of Jesus' words in John 5 and Luke 24 concerning the meaning of the Old Testament will also receive strong elucidation here. The Old Testament really is all about Jesus Christ.

How does this paper contribute to Ezekiel studies? A sharper understanding of what is happening in Ezekiel 9–10 furthers understanding of the whole section 8–11, and what significance the presence of the Angel of the Lord might have in a context where the Shekinah glory is, in general, leaving the temple in Jerusalem. Understanding who the man in linen is will also prevent unnecessary bifurcations of the text into diachronically separated layers. I hope also that this paper will contribute to an understanding of the unity of Ezekiel as a whole. If it is true that sections of text once thought to be indicative of diachronic differences in the text can be shown not to support that position, then more synchronic approaches will become more attractive to scholars. This will only prove more conducive to a theological understanding of the text, and promote a complete reciprocity between systematic theology and exegesis.▪

Shot through with Personality: Establishing Man's Freedom within the Sovereign Plan of God. **Continued from Page 200.**

considered specifically the relationship between divine

sovereignty and human freedom and waded into the mystery of the way creatures relate to the Creator, the finite to the infinite, the one to the many, man to God.[139]

We conclude that Van Til, in congruity with the Westminster Confession of Faith, avoids the rationalism of both Arminianism and Lutheranism by way of his representational principle, which maintains a robust covenant theology that provides an exhaustively personalistic atmosphere in which the relationship between God's sovereignty and human freedom can be properly understood. The self-sufficient triune God of Scripture, in whom unity and diversity are eternally harmonized and equally ultimate, is the foundation of the representational principle, which is expressed by the covenant idea that reaches all reality, charging man's entire atmosphere with personality as he is always operating within the plan of God. The fact that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, as the confession unapologetically affirms, is the *only* environment in which the will of man can operate, his choices can be meaningful and secondary causes are *established*. In fact, "if one allows that anywhere at all man deals with facts or laws that are not based upon the self-conscious, everlasting self-affirmation of God, one is to that extent bound to a static or fatalistic view of reality."[140] And so God's sovereignty does not *take away* (contra Arminianism and Luther's semi-determinism) or *limit* (contra Sproul and Melanchthon's synergism) man's freedom, but rather *establishes* it. Van Til summarizes his own conclusion in which we can hear echoes of Westminster Confession of Faith 3.1,

> We found … that the Reformed covenant theology remained nearest to this Biblical position. Other theories of the will go off on either of two byways, namely, that of seeking an unwarranted independence for man, or otherwise of subjecting man to philosophical necessitarianism. Reformed theology attempts to steer clear of both these dangers; avoiding all forms of Pelagianizing and of Pantheizing thought. It thinks to have found in the covenant relation of God with creation the true presentation of the Biblical concept of the relation of God to man. Man is totally dependent upon God and exists with all creation for God. *Yet his freedom is not therewith abridged but realized.*[141] ▪

139. Van Til, "The Will in its Theological Relations," 2.

140. Van Til, *IST*, 278.

141. Van Til, "The Will in Its Theological Relations," 77.

Psallo. **Continued from Page 231.**

In the latter, we remember how the Lord threatened His ancient people with bondage to their enemies in another land if they turned from Him, and He also encouraged them with liberty in their obedience. Spiritually, those who fear the Lord are delivered from sin's bondage, such that they are not enslaved to their lusts which bring even the good things of this life under that cruel mastery. They walk according to the law of liberty (James 1:25; 2:12), making a holy use of all the Lord gives them.

The metaphor of the vine as it relates to the wife of this blessed man speaks of a fruitful vine that grows to the uttermost extremity of his house. Several things are in order here: First, note fruitfulness. The blessing intimated here is the blessing of children, made more explicit in what follows. The fruit of the vine in Israel was a source of much joy, and those years in which the vine flourished were highly prized. But more, note here that this one vine grows to the utmost (Heb. יְרֵכָה) portion of the house, translated in the KJV as "sides." The word is used in the Scriptures to speak of the extremity, the uttermost parts of a place (2 Kings 19:23; Isaiah 37:24; Jeremiah 25:32; 31:8; 50:41). I take this to mean, by implication, that this blessed man has one wife—there is no room for two—because this vine grows to all the extremities of his house—this picture of domestic happiness is not marred, as it was so often the case in Old Testament Israel, by polygamy, or divorce—his house is full with this one fruitful vine, which makes his heart glad.

The metaphor of the olive trees as they relate to his children is also instructive and encouraging. They are called olive plants, even perhaps transplants. They are like an olive orchard—planted, ordered, cultivated, cared for, and themselves issuing a product that is desirable, and speaks of true riches. Note that they are gathered around this man's table—they are not estranged, but intimate. He brings them into his closest circle—he gathers them to his table, there to do all that this lovely circumstance suggests. They have a place to gather together, to enjoy the good things of this life, to hear the instruction of a father, to interact with one another, and to present themselves before God in thankfulness for His bountiful goodness to them. Truly, while perhaps considered "old-fashioned" by many, this picture of a godly family regularly gathered around the dinner table, intimate, interacting with one another, hearing instruction, and praying together giving thanks to the Lord, is a timeless reminder of His goodness. Indeed, this is a picture of true riches beyond what is commonly possessed. This man has a domestic situation steeped in loveliness and peace. His labor furnishes a table, his wife fills his affections without a rival and brings him an opulent joy, and his children, well-ordered and close in proximity and affection, cause

his face to shine (Psalm 104:15). The Psalmist has well said, "This man is blessed!"

In the second stanza, we have translated הִנֵּה כִי־כֵן as "behold indeed thus…" owing to the intensifying and demonstrative nature of those words in this context. Here the Psalmist introduces another aspect of this blessing to be considered by all those who fear the Lord. Note that this blessing is out of Zion. With many authors, receiving the Psalms as praise for God's people of all ages, we understand Zion to speak not of the city in The Middle East, but to the Church, which was in the Psalmist's day centered in that city in which the Lord had chosen to place His Great name, and which continues today wherever His name is proclaimed in verity (Hebrews 12:22–24). And so we learn here, as we do elsewhere in the Psalter, the high regard toward the visible Church the Lord presses to His people (Psalm 87:1–3). His blessings spoken of above are said in this second portion to flow "out of Zion". This might at first seem confusing—the Church does not provide the labor, the wife, and the children of this blessed man. How then can these blessings be said to flow out of Zion? The solution is not really that obscure—it is the blessing that the Lord provides in His Church that leads to the fear of the Lord, walking in His ways, and in this way she is instrumental to these earthly encouragements. As the Church preaches faith and repentance (Acts 20:21), as she proclaims the commands and counsels of the Lord, she sets the stage for that God-fearer to believe, and to do what he has heard proclaimed in Zion, and thus is encouraged by these blessings. Further, we learn that this blessedness from the Lord is not only a private, family or domestic enterprise, for the Psalmist adds that the godly man's desires are not only for children and grandchildren, but that Zion herself would flourish and be in peace. It is for this reason that we see the use of the Divine name Lord, for these blessings are blessings "in Covenant" flowing from Zion, where the Lord has Himself covenanted with His people in Jesus Christ.

Thus the Psalmist has described the encouragement of the Lord to us to fear Him and to walk in His ways by a domestic loveliness and prosperity, and a Church furnished with posterity, good, and peace. In a day when these institutions of God's own establishment, marriage and family on the one hand, and the Visible Church on the other, are discouraged, and would by some even be destroyed, this Psalm reminds us of true blessedness—that it comes from God, mediated ordinarily to us through Zion, visited upon our families, and enjoyed by those who are steeped in the ways of the Lord. These divine institutions are not subject to men for their existence in this world. They are founded, firmly established, maintained, and blessed by the Lord, as are all those who walk in His ways.

Todd L. Ruddell▪

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Collected Sermons of James Durham

If I had lived in his [Mr. Durham's] time, I should never, I think, have wanted to hear any other preacher. *C. H. Spurgeon.*

Finally, all of Durhams's 133 extant sermons have been brought together in two massive volumes, in a beautiful, critically edited, newly typeset edition, with an excellent introduction by Chris Coldwell. The first volume contains his fourteen moving sermons on the unsearchable riches of Christ delivered as Communion sermons, several sermons on the blessedness of dying in the Lord, and scores of additional sermons, many of which have been almost impossible to obtain even on the antiquarian book market. These sermons address themes such as covenanting with God, adhering to Christ by faith, remission of sins through Christ's blood, and sweet communion with Christ in heaven. Volume 2 consists of Durham's well-known but out-of-print sermons on Isaiah 53—seventy-two sermons in all on Christ's sufferings for His people which together form a classic comparable to Friedrich Krummacher's "The Suffering Savior." The sixty-ninth sermon on making use of Christ's intercession is a masterpiece that is alone worth the price of both volumes. *Joel R. Beeke.*

English Puritanism and Scottish Presbyterianism in the seventeenth century had many bright and shining lights. Of these, James Durham (1622–1658), ranks alongside the greatest of his generation, for his theological depth, faithful preaching, and particularly for his moderate spirit at a time when such was in scarce supply. "No Scotchman of that age was more profoundly venerated" (Walker). Durham, whose father and grandfather served the king as Clerk of Exchequer, was seemingly destined to the life of a Scottish laird, yet through several remarkable providences he came to study for the ministry under David Dickson, and did so well that it is said he could have served as a professor of divinity in any university. Yet, while it was his desire to be of use in that capacity, Durham's brief ten year ministry was spent preaching for the most part in the Inner-Kirk of Glasgow Cathedral. He came to excel in 'case divinity' or 'cases of conscience,' and it was thought that he poured so much of himself into his studies for sermons and lectures that it brought about his early death at the age of thirty-six.

Durham's sermons and expositions left an impression that lasted for centuries, and while he was mostly overlooked in the resurgence of interest in the Puritans in the 19th century, in the late 20th century publishers brought renewed attention with various editions of some of his works. Most of his lectures (Ten Commandments, Song of Solomon, Job, John's Revelation, and Treatise on Scandal) have been republished in recent years (though most now need new editions). The remaining works are sets of sermons, many of which have not seen new editions since the 18th century, and original editions are extremely rare. The publishers are pleased to offer for the first time all the sermons of James Durham in these two uniform volumes.

Collected Sermons of James Durham: Sixty-one Sermons. 960pp. This volume contains all the 'shorter' sets of sermons: The Blessedness of the Death of those that Die in the Lord, The Unsearchable Riches of Christ (communion sermons), Heaven Upon Earth (sermons on conscience), the Great Gain of Contenting Godliness, the Great Corruption of Subtle Self, as well as miscellaneous sermons that appeared in various publications. The last includes a recent transcription from manuscript of one of Durham's most important sermons preached at the beginning of the Protester-Resolutioner schism in Scotland. All have been uniformly edited, crossed referenced where appropriate, and prefaced with a new life of Durham.

Collected Sermons of James Durham: Christ Crucified: or, The Marrow of the Gospel in 72 Sermons on Isaiah 53. Last published in 1799 and first republished in 2001 by Naphtali Press, this new critical edition has been collated anew against the earliest editions, and the text significantly corrected and augmented with editorial notes. Spurgeon says of these sermons "This is marrow indeed. We need say no more: Durham is a prince among spiritual expositors," and inscribed his personal copy with "much prized." The same can be said of all the sermons.

*The Pulpit Library, volume 3, *Sermons by the Revd. C. H. Spurgeon* (London: Stevenson, 1858), 117.