18 The Confessional Presbyterian

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Editorial

Near the end of his magisterial two-volume account of the life of George Whitefield, Arnold Dallimore lists Whitefield's six major faults. The first three he attributes to immaturity since they were abandoned by Whitefield later in life. The fourth and fifth he acknowledges as relatively minor. But the sixth fault, according to Dallimore, "was grievous, and lasted until his death." What was this sixth grievous fault? "He did not fully recognize the evil of slavery… and he was influential in having slavery introduced in Georgia" (Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the 18th Century Revival*, 2 volumes [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1995], 2.520–521).

Robert Lewis Dabney lived in a later era but he shared this fault. In fact, for Dabney, the fault went far deeper, since he not only endorsed the system of slavery in the southern states, he also supported the practice of chattel slavery in general. But more than that, Dabney wrote on many topics with what can only be described as real racial animus – not just toward those of African descent, but toward Mexicans and others who were not of European origin.

It is true, many of the most grievous examples of Dabney's racism come after the war years, and we would be poor students of history if we did not understand that his bitterness over the outcome of the war and the early days of Reconstruction added fuel to the fire of his racial views.

But we must also acknowledge that these views were held and expressed earlier in his life as well. Thomas Haviland-Pabst shows us the historical context in which Dabney lived and ministered. While different emphases emerge at different points, it is clear that Dabney, and the culture from which he emerged, had significant blind spots, especially concerning race. Some of these had devastating consequences.

These views influenced many aspects of Dabney's thought. In Zachary Garris's study of education, he notes the way in which Dabney's views on race played a significant role in his response to potential educational schemes. Zachary Groff notes the same. Ryan Biese summarizes it well when he notes that Dabney's brilliance on so many topics, "makes his views on race all the more shocking and reprehensible."

And so it is fitting that we begin with an article that addresses this directly, T. David Gordon's contribution, "Whither Robert Lewis Dabney?". The question of whether men like Dabney should be given a hearing is an important one. Gordon forcefully makes the case that they should be. Scripture does not ignore the greatness of men who committed grievous sins and demonstrated even lifelong cruel cultural blindspots. Dabney, in the midst of his sin, was used by God, and has had a significant influence because of that.

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Whither Robert Lewis Dabney?

By T. David Gordon

As I write this, over two centuries have passed since Robert Lewis Dabney was born on March 5, 1820 to Charles Dabney and Elizabeth Randolph Price, of Louisa County, Virginia. In a forward-looking, past-despising generation such as ours, it might seem impossible, or at least improbable, that a person who never used an indoor toilet would have left words or deeds that might interest or influence us today. Christians resist such "chronological snobbery," as C. S. Lewis called it, as we resist "the tyranny of the living," as Chesterton designated it. As worshipers of the God of Abraham, and inheritors of the gospel that was proclaimed *to* Abraham (Gal. 3:8), we are at least partially—but not entirely—immune to the disregard for history that characterizes our peculiarly insane cultural moment.

In addition to our culture's aversion to anything or anyone who is not contemporary, we live in an age where many mistakenly believe we can atone for our nation's most grievous national sin by "cancelling" any who lived during the time of the African slave trade, who did not also devote themselves wholeheartedly to its eradication. Thomas Jefferson's presence at Monticello today consists merely as a foil for visitors to wag their fingers at, despite the fact that Jefferson's proposal for educating and re-colonizing the slaves was probably the most-generous, and best-thought-out proposal ever drafted. The Virginia legislature defeated his proposal, but posterity grants no credit to him for making the effort. Surely, therefore, we must also cancel Dabney, who made no such proposal to the Virginia legislature, and even defended his native Virginia on constitutional grounds. Blindness, however, to the faults of our native culture, is common to all humans in all times; only exceptional individuals have the insight and courage to swim against their cultural tides. How many readers of this essay use Apple products, with full knowledge that China exploits the very workers who produce them (or their parts)? How many of Lebron James's fanboys continue to purchase his China-manufactured sneakers (at insane prices)? Robert Lewis Dabney did not rise above or protest against the sins of his culture, but very few others in his day did. Grant himself owned slaves during the War (both his own, and those who were part of Julia Dent's dowery), and later said that he was not an abolitionist until late in the War.

Historians, and those who benefit from reading history, evaluate individuals within their own cultural context, not by the standards of subsequent generations. The first steam-driven tractor did not appear until 1871, in England. Within less than a decade, slavery disappeared from other parts of the Americas (notably Venezuela) because a tractor was far less expensive than a comparable slave-labor force. Had it been invented a decade before, slavery would have disappeared from the United States (as it did in Venezuela) without a shot being fired. It is very easy for those of us who daily eat food that was mass-produced in large industrial factories driven by electrical power to object to the manual labor that was necessary to the production of food in the nineteenth century. The next century will likely find our agri-industry to have been inhumane to animals, injurious to the environment, and damaging to the humans who eat food that has so many unhealthy components. Indeed, Michael Pollan[1] and others have already raised such concerns, but we blithely dismiss those concerns, because they are inconvenient.

If we are to "cancel" Dabney, and refuse to benefit from his contributions because, like ourselves, he was

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1. Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (Penguin, 2007).

unable to acknowledge what to later generations seems obviously wrong, we should go all the way and cancel our entire culture (not just the South), and remove all books, essays, and reviews by all public individuals prior to 1868,[2] because the Three-Fifths Compromise was ratified by all thirteen colonies, not just by the Southern colonies. Our history, and all human history, is the record of imperfect individuals in imperfect cultures contributing imperfectly to the betterment of their fellow-citizens. Dabney contributed far more to the betterment of his culture than his cancellers have contributed to ours. Conceding his imperfection, let us benefit from his contributions.

The sheer range of Dabney's competences would have made him unusual in any day: minister, scholar, seminary professor, farmer, architect, headmaster of a private school, house-builder, husband, father, chief of staff to Gen. Thomas J. Jackson (and Jackson's first biographer), and author of a considerable number of reviews, essays, articles, and books as remarkable for their range as for their number.

Reared in a Christian home, Dabney attended Hampden-Sydney Academy (now College) in Prince Edward County, Virginia, founded by Samuel Stanhope Smith on the model of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton), which Smith had attended before studying theology under the Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon. The College was named for John Hampden (1594–1643) and Algernon Sydney (1622–1683), Englishmen who had devoted and sacrificed their lives to the principles of representative government and full civil and religious freedom, whose lives and writings had profoundly influenced many colonialists, including Patrick Henry and James Madison. Dabney's well-informed political writings and lectures before, during, and after the American Civil War, were surely profoundly informed by his college years at Hampden-Sydney,[3] which later also housed the Union Theological Seminary in Virginia (now Union Presbyterian Seminary, and located in Richmond), where Dabney both studied and later taught.

As we ponder together whither and whether Dabney might influence us today, I would like to examine several areas of his adult life, to see if those areas remain important, and, if so, whether Dabney, as Abel, might continue to speak even though he is now many years dead.

Dabney as Architect and Builder

It is fairly commonplace in the twenty-first century for people to labor in a specialized arena, some working in academics or research, others working in healthcare, some in construction. Such a division was less common in Dabney's day, and he was involved in the role of architect in four church-buildings, and both designed and did much of the physical labor on his "Stony Point" cottage while pastoring at Tinkling Spring, placing many of the stones himself, and planting an orchard there also, though the family lived there for only eight months.

Dabney was also involved as the chief or exclusive architect of four Virginia church-buildings (Tinkling Spring, Briery Church, College Church, and New Providence Presbyterian Church), still standing today, several preserved in the National Register of Historic Places. When the old College Church at Hamden-Sydney became too small, there was consideration of making some adjustments to increase seating, but this would require removing the section for the blacks. Dabney and others undertook considerable expense to build a new building (designed by Dabney), with room to seat five hundred whites and three hundred blacks (segregated). The tower, designed for the center front of the building, was never built, so the building (yet standing and in use) does not have the pleasant lines that Dabney had designed for it. The concern to assure that there would be space for the black population to worship with the white population was more progressive than we sometimes think in our day, and was analogous to Thomas J. (later "Stonewall") Jackson teaching Bible classes on Sunday afternoons for the blacks in Lexington, when he taught at the Virginia Military Institute there.[4]

One thing that has not changed since Dabney's time is the challenge of building a new church-building without destroying the church itself. Some individuals—both then and now—have fairly firm opinions about real estate matters, and Dabney testified to the presence of such individuals at Tinkling Spring:

> "The wood-work is well forwarded, and we shall have the shell of a house, at least. I fear, however, that by the time the house is finished there will be no congregation to worship in it.… Both parties in these altercations are to blame, some for meddlesomeness, and some for repelling that meddlesomness in too rash a manner. Meantime, by an exertion of great forbearance, I steer clear of both, and try to keep the peace between

2. In the year 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment was adopted, which repealed the Three-Fifths Compromise.

3. After two years at Hampden-Sydney, Dabney took some time off from school to assist his mother, and later completed his college studies at the University of Virginia.

4. Dabney narrated Jackson's practice of teaching the blacks on Sunday afternoons on pages 93–96 of his *Life and Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. Thomas J. Jackson* (New York: Blelock, 1866).

> them, but in vain. The Scotch-Irish are the most inflexible people in the world when they are right, and the most vexatiously pig-headed and mulish when wrong, on the face of the earth…" (letter dated July 30, 1849).[5]

Husband and Father

Families in rural or small-town America in the nineteenth century were literally closer than they have become since the second half of the twentieth century. The family home and small family farm were not assisted by any of the labor-saving electrical or fuel-based machines of a later time. Each family ordinarily was its own small economy, with shared duties proper to age and ability; the Dabneys were no exception. Were it not for the occasional duty at General Assembly, Presbytery, or other ecclesiastical duties, no record of Dabney's correspondence with Lavinia would exist, and much of that was occupied either by ecclesiastical reporting and household reports. Some glimpses exist that provide a small window into a marriage that appears to have been mutually beneficial, and affectionate. When Dabney was attending the General Assembly in New York in 1856, he wrote to Lavinia every few days, and in his final letter, he included this:

> Many of the members left this morning. I have spent today in shopping and sight-seeing. But there is a drawback in my pleasure: you are not with me to share it. Sometimes I think that if you could not come consistently with duty (and I know you could not), I ought not to have consented to come and see or enjoy anything without you, and that it is selfish to do so. But I know your love will not judge thus. I see a great many things which are extremely interesting; but I am not happy, except for a few minutes when I forget myself.[6]

Those who knew him only through his writings might have thought him austere, unsympathetic, or even censorious; but those who actually knew and lived alongside him (at Tinkling Springs, or at Union Seminary), described him very differently. After Dabney's death, the Rev. Dr. Thornton R. Sampson, president of Austin College and former student of Dabney at Union, characterized him as follows.

> He was a kind neighbor, a tender and most affectionate husband, and an over-indulgent parent and a most faithful friend. In fact, he scarcely seemed, with all his acumen, to be able to see the faults of a friend, and his judgment possibly failed him oftener in speaking or writing of those whom he loved than at any other time.[7]

The Dabneys were blessed with six boys, but three died of diphtheria, Robert and James in 1855, and Thomas in 1862.[8] The first two died within a month of each other, and Dabney's letters to his brother, Charles William Dabney, after each death, are painful for any parent to read. After Jimmy died, he wrote:

> He was intelligent to the last, even after he became speechless, and his appealing looks to us and to the physician could have melted a stone. Some half hour before he died, he sank into a sleep, which became more and more quiet, until he gently sighed his soul away. This, my dear brother, is the first death we have had in our family, and my first experience of any great sorrow. I have learned rapidly in the school of anguish this week, and am many years older than I was a few days ago.[9]

Several weeks later, Robert joined his brother James in death, and Dabney wrote his own brother again:

> When I turned away from Jimmy's corpse to my lovely infant (the third son, Charles), my affections and my fears seemed both to flow out towards him with a strength delicious and agonizing. I never tired of folding him in my arms, as the sweet substitute for my loss, nor of trembling for him also, lest the loss should extend to him. But when Bobby was taken, and our little one remained our only hope, it seemed to me, I was both afraid and reluctant to centre my affections on him.… This is strange, perhaps inexplicable. Death has struck me with a dagger of ice. He has not only wounded, but benumbed.[10]

Character

Those who knew Dabney personally regarded him as being profoundly, even disturbingly, honest. He admired

5. Thomas Cary Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (1903; rprt. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), p. 109.
6. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 165.
7. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 538.
8. The remains of Robby and Jimmy reside in the cemetery at Hampden-Sydney college, marked by two small, blank stones of hardly a foot high, and an obelisk of about five feet between those two stones, on which are written the full names of both boys, along with a citation from 2 Samuel 1:23, omitting the reference to Saul and Jonathan, reading: "Lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided." Later, in 1862, Thomas's remains were buried nearby, and, after Dabney and then Lavinia died, their remains were returned from Texas to Virginia where they were buried alongside their boys. Keen-eyed visitors to the graveyard today will discover a marker also for Dabney's junior colleague and successor at Union, Thomas E. Peck.
9. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 168.
10. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 172.

honesty in others (especially in his sister Betty), and was committed to it as the essential component of human society, as the trait that most cultivated trust. Thomas Cary Johnson, editor of *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, recalled an anecdote that was typical and telling:

> When his *Collected Discussions* were being brought out, there was some criticism of one of the articles to be presented in the first volume. The critic made the point that the article objected to would injure Dr. Dabney's reputation if republished. The Doctor, on hearing this, turned somewhat sharply to us, and said: 'What do you think of this? Do you like the plan of trimming a man, whose life and work you would perpetuate, to suit your notions, and handing the resultant down as if it were real?' We made answer, that it seemed to us that, if a man's works and life were worthy of preservation through the medium of the press, they and he should be handed down as they were, warts and all. He replied emphatically, 'The truth demands it, sir.'[11]

Such forthrightness is less appreciated now than it was then, as our culture now expects not only tolerance, but affirmation, of any and every viewpoint, without any warts.

Teacher

Other than two years at a classical school he founded in Tinkling Springs, nearly all of Dabney's teaching took place in his thirty years at Union Seminary, then on the campus of Hampden-Sydney College near Farmville, Virginia, where his influence greatly increased the size of the student body and the financial security of the Seminary (apart from the war years, during which both were largely decimated). He began as Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Polity (1853–59), and then moved into the chair of Theology from 1859–1883 (minus some disruption when he served as chief of staff for Jackson during the war), before moving to Austin, Texas in 1883, where he spent his final fifteen years of regular teaching as a founding member of the faculty of the University of Texas. During his thirty years at Union, he occasionally taught also as an adjunct at Hampden-Sydney College.

The mind that addressed philosophical or theological matters with great acumen disclosed the same acumen in the classroom. In his theology classes, it was his custom to assign a particular theological locus to his students, with reference to its appearance in Turretin's (then-Latin) systematic theology, with the assignment that they present a brief statement of the matter and its likely resolution in a two-page composition. Dabney would read each, and at the next class discuss the matter in its entirety, supplementing and correcting, as needed, both Turretin's efforts and those of his students. One such student said this about Dabney as an instructor:

> Dr. Dabney was a born teacher, and he loved his work. It has been my privilege, as a student, to sit at the feet of some of the most distinguished scholars and teachers of America, Great Britain and the continent of Europe, such as McGuffey, Gildersleeve, Davidson, Delitsch [*sic*] and Luthardt; but Dabney was the peer of any, and in some respects the superior of them all. He always left his impress upon the mind of his students. One might differ with him in conclusions, but could never deny the force and aptness of his reasoning. His thorough mastery of the subject, his clearness and thorough analysis of it, his forceful, apt illustrations, and his sympathetic recognition of the students' difficulties, gave him most remarkable force as a teacher.[12]

Preacher

Though Dabney's initial sermons as a licentiate may not have been either to his liking or those of his auditors, he fairly quickly became recognized as a fine preacher, of the "didactical" sort. In the nineteenth century, "didactic" was not a pejorative term, equivalent to "tedious;" to the contrary, it was a descriptive term, indicating that the would-be persuader did not aim directly at the passions, but appealed to the understanding first, providing reasonable grounds for interpreting the text or applying the text as the preacher did. In his *Lectures on Sacred Rhetoric*, one of Dabney's "Seven Cardinal Requisites of the Sermon" was that it be, as he put it, "instructive." In his description of what this means/meant, he wrote:

> But the instructive sermon is that which abounds in food for the understanding. It is full of thought, and richly informs the mind of the hearer … it is opposed also to those which seek to reach the will through rhetorical ornament and passionate sentiment, without establishing rational conviction.… Religion is an intelligent concern, and deals with man as a reasoning creature. Sanctification is by the truth. To move men we must instruct. No Christian can be stable and consistent save as he is intelligent.[13]

11. Preface, T. C. Johnson, *Life and Letter*, p. v.

12. Dr. Thornton Sampson, in Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 538.

13. R. L. Dabney, *Lectures on Sacred Rhetoric, or a Course of Lectures on Preaching* (1879; rprt. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1979), pp. 117–119.

Dabney's emphasis on instructiveness should not be mistaken as rationalism or impiety. In his earliest years as a minister, his mentor Dr. White had instructed him: "Preach as if your preaching was everything, and then pray as if it were nothing." This blending of scholarship with piety was a characteristic of both of the two seminaries established by the Presbyterians in 1812: Princeton and Union. This blend was perhaps what occasioned the remarkable remembrance of F. P. Ramsay about Dabney's preaching:

> In the early part of 1886 I went on a Sabbath morning to the Franklin Square Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, as I was accustomed to do, being then a student in the Johns Hopkins University. For some cause I was quite late, and was disappointed at seeing a stranger in the pulpit with Dr. Lefevre, whom I expected to hear. There was no introduction of the stranger after my entrance, and there was no one near me to tell me his name. His appearance did not much impress me, and my first conjecture was that some elderly brother had come in on Dr. Lefevre, and courtesy had been constrained into putting him up to preach. Then when announcement was made, or when I recalled that on next Sabbath the Lord's Supper was to be administered, I conjectured that the pastor had invited some fellow-Presbyter, personally liked by him, to preach during the week preceding, the pastor of some small country charge.
>
> The stranger read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and his subject was "The Vicarious Atonement." The method was to state and refute the false or incomplete theories of the atonement, and then to establish the true theory. The discourse lasted an hour or more. I was soon listening with profound interest. I abandoned my previous conjecture concerning the identity of the speaker. When he had been speaking perhaps half an hour, stating with the clearness of light false theories, and crushing them to powder under resistless logic, I came to the conclusion that it must be Dr. Dabney. I had never seen him or his picture, but had heard his students talk of his teaching, and was familiar with his writings; and I saw in the giant reasoner, aflame with scorn of error and of subterfuge, yet bowing with meekness at the cross, one so like our great Dabney, that Dabney it must be. And so it turned out to be.[14]

That the identity of the unknown preacher could be guessed by the nature of the discourse itself is a testimony both to Dabney and to a culture that antedated moving pictures (and almost antedated photography itself).

Not long after his death on January 3, 1897, memorial services were held in many places to commemorate Dabney's life. Perhaps the most prominent was the one held at the College Church in Hampden-Sydney, of which building Dabney had been the architect. Clement Read Vaughan and Givens Strickler both spoke (among others), and Dr. Moses Drury Hoge, himself only two years from his own passing, concluded with a marvelous address, in part of which he said this:

> …a man was ordinarily regarded as having fulfilled the great end of life when he had been successful in any one department of useful labor, but that it had been the privilege of the man whose loss we mourn to-day to be distinguished, first, as an able and impressive expounder of the Word in the pulpit; second, as one of the strongest writers on philosophic, secular and theological themes; and, third, as one of the most successful of teachers in a Seminary devoted to the training of young men for the gospel ministry; that it was his rare lot not only to win distinction in each, but to combine and nobly employ all three of these great instrumentalities for wide and permanent usefulness.[15]

At least in the estimate of Hoge, Dabney's labors in the pulpit were listed "first." There is little reason to doubt Hoge's estimate, and plenty of reason for those of us who know Dabney almost exclusively by his writings to lament never having had opportunity to hear him preach or teach.

Theologian

Perhaps Dabney is most remembered for his ability as a theologian. No less an individual than Archibald Alexander, the first professor at Princeton Seminary when it was founded in 1812, referred to him as "the best teacher of theology in the United States, if not in the world."[16] This high praise is all the more remarkable for the fact that Princeton's own Charles Hodge was twenty-three years older and more experienced than Dabney, and was still teaching theology at Princeton at the time Alexander made the statement. Hodge himself attempted

14. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 477.

15. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 527.

16. R. L. Dabney, "Preface," in *Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney*, vol. 1, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1966), page v; and Alexander's son, Joseph Addison Alexander, also a Princeton instructor, called Dabney "the most learned man on the continent" in *Life and Letters,* page 198.

to persuade Dabney to leave Union Seminary in Virginia to join the Princeton faculty, writing him twice in 1860, urging him to relocate, as did Hodge's Princeton colleague, Alexander T. McGill (each to no avail).

Thomas Cary Johnson, biographer of Benjamin Morgan Palmer as well as Dabney's biographer, said Dabney was entitled "to the first place among the theological thinkers and writers of his century," and remarked that "Dabney's Theology marks him out as very much superior to Charles Hodge as a thinker of profundity and power, and a stimulator of thought."[17] Nor was Johnson picking on Hodge by comparing him unfavorably to Dabney; Johnson regarded Dabney as being greater than other theologians of the era also:

> The three great theologians of the century were Shedd, Thornwell, and Dabney.… Of these three, Dabney's theological writings entitle him to the highest place.… What is maintained in this estimate is that Dabney's writings entitle him to the first place amongst the theological thinkers and writers of his century.[18]

This high estimation of Dabney's ability as a theologian continued well into the twentieth century. Dr. Morton Smith, in the "Foreward" to the 1985 reprint of Dabney's *Theology*, said, "I can think of no finer work than R. L. Dabney's *Lectures in Systematic Theology* to be made available *for our generation* (emphasis mine)." And Smith noted that Europeans Auguste Lecerf (France) and Herman Bavinck (Netherlands) regarded Dabney as one of America's outstanding theologians.

Philosopher

In light of the high praise for Dabney as a theologian, T. C. Johnson's comment about him as a philosopher is striking, as he ranked him with Archibald Alexander and Jonathan Edwards:

> Many of Dabney's friends and admirers have claimed for him a nobler preëminence as a philosopher than as a theologian.… Dr. Dabney … crushed the objections to these truths, and vindicated our knowledge of them, our right to hold them, as Dr. Alexander did not, and perhaps, could not do. For sheer philosophical mental might, we suppose that old Jonathan Edwards was more nearly Dr. Dabney's equal. Even in this case, the greater caution of Dabney pulls the balance in his favor.[19]

In the twenty-first century, Edwards is routinely, nearly universally, regarded as America's preeminent Christian philosopher, and many do not even know about Dabney at all, and certainly not as a philosopher.

In addition to numerous smaller articles, Dabney wrote two significant philosophical volumes. The first, *The Sensualist Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century Considered*, appeared in 1875. In this volume, he examined and repudiated the positivism of thinkers such as August Compte and Herbert Spencer, who reduced all knowing to what the senses experience, rejecting any notions of *a priori* or intrinsic thoughts. For many years he regarded this as his most able book. B. M. Palmer said this about it, and about the character of its author:

> That wonderful subtlety of mind which penetrates the core of a subject,… that incisiveness of expression…, that firmness of grasp and positiveness of tone which belong only to those of the strongest convictions; that honesty of mind that leads to the embrace of what is held to be the truth, and a corresponding fearlessness in its defence, and that glow of indignation against the wickedness and impudence of error—all these make the book the impression of the man who wrote it.… What he believes, he believes thoroughly, and his blows against falsehood go out straight from the shoulder."[20]

Over twenty years passed before Dabney wrote his final philosophical treatise, *The Practical Philosophy*, in 1897, which grew out of his teaching as Professor of Moral Theology at the University of Texas in Austin. The Rev. Dr. A. R. Cocke, said this about the *Practical Philosophy*:

> Dabney's name will abide because of several distinct additions to the philosophy of the ages as presented in this volume. *The Practical Philosophy* can take rank beside Kant's *Critique of the Practical Reason*.… Dabney's expression of Free Agency is by far the most satisfactory I have ever seen. Edwards's masterly work on the will cannot equal our author's discussion, either in clearness or in full bringing to light of all the facts…Dabney solves the problem and easily unties this difficult knot.… As a philosopher, this man was so preëminent that it is safe to say he will appear larger to men one hundred years from now than he did to his contemporaries.[21]

Again Dabney was compared favorably to Edwards

17. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 556. While Johnson also taught at Union Theological Seminary, he did so several years after Dabney had left Union for Texas, so they were never colleagues.
18. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 557.
19. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 558.
20. *Southern Presbyterian Review* xxvii, #3 (1876): 491.
21. Johnson, *Life and Letters,* pp. 560–61.

(this time as a philosopher), and as Kant's equal. Dr. Cocke may have estimated Dabney rightly, but he appears to have over-estimated the appreciation for Dabney a century later.

The Author

The amount of Dabney's literary efforts is nearly as breath-taking as its range. His major works include:

—*Memoir of Rev. Dr. Francis S. Sampson* (1855), whose commentary on *Hebrews* Dabney later edited (1857).

—*Life and Campaigns of Lieutenant General Thomas J. Jackson* (1866).

—*A Defense of Virginia, and Through Her, of the South, in Recent and Pending Contests, Against the Sectional Party* (1867).

—*Lectures on Sacred Rhetoric* (1870).

—*Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology* (1871; 2nd ed. 1878), later republished as *Systematic Theology*.

—*Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century Examined* (1875; 2nd ed. 1887).

—*Practical Philosophy* (1897).

—*Penal Character of the Atonement of Christ Discussed in the Light of Recent Popular Heresies* (1898, posthumous), on the satisfaction view of the atonement.

In addition to these important books, Dabney wrote many occasional addresses, articles, and reviews, now collected in at least five volumes of *Discussions* (1890–1999), edited by C. R. Vaughan. The range of his considered thoughts in the *Discussions* is remarkable. In addition to the expected ethical, philosophical and theological writings, he addressed geology, jurisprudence, political philosophy, psychology, educational theory ("The Influence of the German University System on Theological Literature"), homiletics ("An Exposition of 1 Corinthians iii.10-15"), missions ("The World White to Harvest: Reap, or it Perishes," "The Gospel Idea of Preaching") and commentary on contemporary political events. He reviewed large-scale theologies of Robert J. Breckinridge, Charles Hodge, Alexander Campbell, and W. Robertson Smith. To my knowledge, he wrote nothing about architecture or farming, but he practiced both, and was competent in each, as evidenced by the lasting quality of his constructions.

The high praise extended to Dabney as a theologian and philosopher probably accrues to this remarkable range of his intellectual competence; the *breadth* of matters he considered perhaps contributed, if ironically, to his *precision* in dealing with many particular matters in philosophy or theology. He was also a remarkably prescient writer; his essays on secular education suggest that he had time-travelled a century and a half to our present moment. In the Preface to the 1984 reprinting of Dabney's *The Practical Philosophy*, Dr. Douglas Kelly rightly observed many good traits in Thornwell, Shedd, Hodge, Alexander, and Palmer, and then said:

> …yet in one important way—if in no other—the events of this rapidly concluding twentieth century have shown that Dabney excels them all. Dabney was a far-seeing prophet in a way that few theologians of the nineteenth century—or any other time—have ever been…. It is appropriate that his final work should contain some of his most remarkable prophecies. Believe it or not, Dabney forsaw [*sic*] the life and death struggle that would take place between secular totalitarianism and Christian liberty in America in the latter part of the twentieth century."[22]

Citizen

Educated as Dabney was, under the influence of Englishmen (Hampden and Sydney) who had suffered for their efforts to establish republican government in England, and to separate civil and ecclesiastical authority, he was an early believer in the American republic, and the principles that governed the majority of its founders. In full consistency with his views about the spirituality of the church, which caused him to evade/avoid specific recommendations of a political nature from the pulpit, he would occasionally declare his mind on matters of public policy from other venues than the pulpit, and from the pulpit could and did exhort people to their proper Christian duties of submission to lawful government.

From five years prior to the attack on Fort Sumpter until just after, Dabney issued four public addresses urging the avoidance of war: "Christians, Pray for Your Country" (29 March, 1856 in the *Central Presbyterian*); "The Christian's Best Motive for Patriotism" (1 November, 1860, sermon preached in the College Church at Hampden-Sydney on a fast-day called by Synod); "A Pacific Appeal to Christians" (March, 1860, in the *Central Presbyterian*); and "On the State of the Country" (20 April, 1861 in the *Central Presbyterian,* just 8 days after South Carolina fired on Fort Sumpter, and before Virginia had seceded). In these addresses, Dabney reflected a common understanding of the American Republic at the time in Virginia, that the Constitution was

22. Robert L. Dabney, *The Practical Philosophy* (1897; rprt. Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1984), "Preface to New Edition," second page, unnumbered.

an agreement between otherwise-independent states, an understanding at odds with the (Jeffersonian) understanding of the Republic as a "social contract" among individuals.[23] As Dabney himself put it:

> It is to me simply incredible, that a people so shrewd and practical as those of the United States, should expect us to have discarded, through the logic of the sword merely, the convictions of a lifetime…. The people of the South went to war, because they sincerely believed (what their political fathers had taught them, with one voice, for two generations) that the doctrine of State-sovereignty for which they fought, was absolutely essential as the bulwark of the liberties of the people."[24]

Reading these addresses, even a century and a half after the war, there is little to object to in these several calls to avoid/evade a national war; Dabney's tone, as well as the substance, of these addresses was and is genuinely "pacific." During the war, Dabney served briefly as chief of staff for Gen. Thomas J. Jackson (whose wife was a first cousin of Dabney's wife), and later wrote the first biography of Jackson, which remains in print.

It was only after the war ended that Dabney published his much fuller work, *A Defence of Virginia, and Through Her, of the South [in Recent and Pending Contests Against the Sectional Party*] in 1867. This work was and is almost certainly the reason we raise the question, "Whither R. L. Dabney?". Dabney's defense of his native Virginia (and service under Jackson) may have been regarded as tolerable, perhaps even admirable, to post-war sensibilities. But Dabney's defense of the African slave trade (chapters II–IV), followed by his biblical (chapters V and VI), ethical (VII), and economic (VIII) arguments in its defense made him a pariah in non-southern states then, and in virtually all of them for the last century or more.

Dabney's Legacy

At first glance, it is inexplicable that Dabney is not more widely known or appreciated in our day. He was, after all, compared favorably to Charles Hodge, W. G. T. Shedd, James Henley Thornwell, and Jonathan Edwards. As a philosopher, he was regarded as the equal or superior to Edwards and Kant, and well-travelled individuals such as Thornton Sampson regarded him as either the peer or superior to all theological instructors in America or abroad. His book on preaching remains in print, and his auditors regarded him as near-famous as a preacher. How could it possibly be that we speak frequently of Hodge, of Alexander, of Edwards, of Shedd, and not of Dabney? How can every sophomore philosophy student know of Kant, while even some Ph.D.'s in philosophy have never heard of Dabney? The obvious answer, of course, was his unwillingness to condemn all forms of human slavery *per se*. I suspect, however, that there are three other, somewhat-more-pernicious factors that account for the near-silence about a man of such extraordinary achievement and virtue.

First, of course, is the self-celebratory hubris of contemporaneity. Few things are more instinctive to the unregenerate, natural man than to be self-centered; and the first cousin to self-centeredness is the blithe assumption that my generation is wiser than any other, which renders one's self and one's generation immune to comparison, since the past is excluded and the future is not-yet-here. Such a notion may be, even more than patriotism, the last refuge of a scoundrel. It is so self-serving (on the short range) to simply assume that we have nothing to learn from those who preceded us; yet it is also self-destructive, for we thereby set the example for the next generation to dismiss us.

Second is our tendency to notice hypocrisy or inconsistency in others while conveniently overlooking it in ourselves. We criticize Dabney and banish him from our thoughts for not rising above the conventions of his culture by condemning slavery in any form, yet we blithely read Saint Paul regularly, who expressly did not evoke apostolic authority to demand the release of Onesimus by Philemon, and made no efforts to emancipate the many Roman slaves in his day.

A third, and much-more recent, trend is the tendency of cancel culture to remove, effectively, from the arena of human companionship any whom we disagree with in any way, functioning with a young child's naïve belief that everyone is either entirely good or entirely evil. Emory's Dr. Mark Bauerlein[25] attributes this tendency of the younger generation to be due to the fact that they are practically non-readers; Bauerlein believes that the literary experience introduces and reinforces awareness that all humans since the Fall are internally conflicted, which is why Yale's Harold Bloom regarded Shakespeare as the "inventor" of the human,[26] because

Continued on Page 275.

23. See Thomas Fleming, *The Great Divide: The Conflict Between Washington and Jefferson that Defined a Nation* (DeCapo Press, 2015).

24. Dabney, *Life and Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. Thomas J. Jackson* (Sterling and Albright, 1865), pp. vii–ix.

25. Mark Bauerlein, *The Dumbest Generation Grows Up: From Stupefied Youth to Dangerous Adults* (Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 2022).

26. Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (New York, Riverhead, 1998).

To Die For A Cause:
Robert Lewis Dabney, Confederate Christian†

By Thomas Haviland-Pabst

Each of us find ourselves within a particular time and culture. We, for better or for worse, are a product of that time and culture. This is a virtually inescapable reality. And, this is a lesson of history, that is to say, history teaches us, as we look upon the lives of those who have lived before us, something about ourselves. This is no less the case with Southern history, and in particular, the life and thought of Robert Lewis Dabney. It is the purpose of this paper to explore R. L. Dabney in his socio-political, cultural, and religious context, that is, to look at Dabney through the lens of the prevailing currents in which he lived, and to determine, as far as one is able, how much he embodied or conflicted with these currents.

The Sociopolitical, Cultural and Religious Context

The Antebellum South[1]

Before Dabney's relationship to his broader context can be explored, we must first look at what exactly defined his context. The period of the South called by historians the Antebellum Period is characterized by a complex array of socio-political and cultural forces. These include (but are not limited to): a classical republicanism, conservative religion, ideals of honor and chivalry, and the upholding of the institution of slavery. An attempt will be made to provide a sketch of these various trends while recognizing that they are in many ways influential upon and connected to one another.

Classical Republicanism[2]

Mark Noll, in *America's God*, speaks of the ambiguity that surrounded the term republicanism. Alexander Hamilton, for instance, saw the cornerstone of republicanism to be "the prohibition of titles of nobility," and John Adams defined it as a government where all people, rich or poor, master or servant, would be subject to the laws. Thomas Paine contrasted republicanism with monarchy, with the former promoting the interests of the people, individually and collectively construed, and the latter promoting its own interests. Despite this diversity, Knoll notes two themes that emerge: (1) "fear of abuses from illegitimate power", and (2) "a nearly messianic belief in the benefits of liberty."[3]

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†This essay is dedicated to my dear friend, Rev. Jeff Windt (PCA), a true man of God and one of the best preachers I have heard.

1. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. xvi, dates the Old South from 1800–1860 but for our purposes, we will focus on the antebellum, or "before war," period of Southern history here (or perhaps, sub-period is more appropriate), which is dated from 1830–1860, as this is when the sectionalism, and hence, cultural homogeneity of the South began to be strengthened, as we will see below. But given the fact that the antebellum period lies within the longer Old South period, occasionally both we and authors we cite will use "Old South" and "antebellum" somewhat interchangeably.

2. Now, although this discussion focuses on a particular form of republicanism, it is recognized that there was more diversity in the Southern political landscape, but it is fair to say, that the element that we will discuss was prominent at the beginning of the antebellum period, and grew in further prominence as the South moved toward secession, thus its emphasis here. See James Oakes, "From Republicanism to Liberalism: Ideological Change and the Crisis of the Old South," *American Quarterly* 37(Autumn, 1985): 552, 553, who states, despite the attempts of many to describe the white South as simply "republican," that in fact, there was a "flourishing two-party" with the "Whigs and Jacksonian Democrats" who had deep antagonism toward one another. Furthermore, not only is the discussion on republicanism complex, but also, many of the characteristics that we will discuss, such as religion and slavery, are much more complex than can be discussed here in detail. But, suffice it to say, as with classical republicanism, we will be here detailing the basic trajectory of the antebellum South as it moves toward secession.

3. Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 55, 56.

Although there are various expressions of republicanism, for our purposes, two will be mentioned, that of the Northern and Southern parts of the United States. The difference between the two conceptions can be boiled down to an individualistic vs. collectivistic orientation. That is to say, the South, in contrast with the North, was more "deferential, class-stratified, and socially organic"; it was an "ideal of social stability" and a place to demonstrate one's honor. The North, unlike the South, placed "commercial individualism" with republicanism, saw the ideal as "individual fulfillment," and stressed achievement over honor, and thus, the future over the past.[4]

At this point, it needs to be noted that the South lay in a broader "transcontinental" conservative tradition, which included the North. The shared views of John C. Calhoun and Joseph Story, a Southerner and Northerner, respectively, demonstrate this reality. Both believed in a "constitutional democracy," that is, a "representative government" which is opposed to a "participatory" or radically egalitarian democracy. Underlying this is the recognition by both men that social stratification was inevitable, and thus, a "propertied elite" was needed to guide society. Moreover, public safety was prioritized over expanded individual rights.[5]

The similarities between these two men demonstrate the continuity that the South shared with the "transcontinental" conservatism. And yet, there was disagreement between the transcontinental conservatism, to which the Northern conservatism belonged, and Southern conservatism. This difference was found in the Southern critique of capitalism, or "the free labor system."[6]

For the Southerner, this form of economy would lead to the exploitation and impoverishment of workers by masters who would not assume actual responsibility for them. Rejecting the socialist solution, which viewed humans to highly, the South saw the solution to be the "restoration of personal servitude for all laboring classes, regardless of race."[7] Thus in a free-labor economy, society would be undermined as the authority that God has ordained would be undermined, only to be replaced by a society driven by "egotism" and "personal license."[8]

The Northern view of natural rights, or political freedom, was undergirded by a belief in the validity, and indeed, superiority of a "free-labor system and market," and, as such, it conflicted directly with personal servitude.[9] With the Southern rejection of the free market system, there was a rejection of its corollary, individual liberty. Various influential Southerners, such as Calhoun, defined individual liberty as the right of the individual to enjoy the privileges that belong to his station in society. Thus, liberty was, contrary to the natural and "inalienable" view of the North, contingent upon "the collective will of society" and thus not natural to a person.[10]

In sum, even though some of the characteristics of Southern classical republicanism were shared with its Northern (and transcontinental) counterpart, it is unique and distinguishable in its particular sense of the individual in relation to society, or more particularly, the rights of the individual within their station in society.

Honor, Chivalry and Gentility

Honor was a primary ethic of the antebellum South, and in fact, periods leading up to this time. Bertram Wyatt-Brown lays out three main components of honor: (1) "honor is the inner conviction of self-worth"; (2) "[it] is the claim of that self-assessment before the public"; and (3) public evaluation of the individual claim, or reputation.[11]

Wyatt-Brown then proceeds to distinguish between two types of honor. First, there is "primal honor," which is drawn from an "Indo-European" ethic. The second is "gentility," a form of honor influenced by a "Stoic-Christian" ethic, which was cultivated by English humanists. The latter is a refinement and complement to the former but the three characteristics noted above bind together these two different expressions of the ethic of honor.[12]

The expression of primal honor had four main aspects in the South. First, honor was equated with valor, particularly, "revenge against familial and community enemies." Second, it was the inseparable connection of others in the formation of a personal identity and self-worth. Third, physical appearance and "ferocity of will" were an indication of inner worth. And, fourth, a "defense of male integrity."[13]

4. Noll, p. 216

5. Eugene D. Genovese, *The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University, 1994), pp. 28, 41–43.

6. Genovese, *The Southern Tradition*, p. 31.

7. Genovese, *The Southern Tradition*, p. 32.

8. Eugene D. Genovese, *The Slaveholders' Dilemma: Freedom and Progress in Southern Conservative Thought, 1820–1860* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), p. 37.

9. Genovese, *The Slaveholders' Dilemma*, p. 61.

10. Genovese, *The Southern Tradition*, pp. 52, 53.

11. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, p. 14.

12. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 34, 87.

13. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, p. 34. The first three characteristics of primal honor will be discussed more thoroughly below, and while more could be said, the forthcoming discussion should

Valor, or bravery, was intimately connected with defense of one's family and community. It was up to the man to be brave and courageous in the face of adversity and conduct himself in a manner that shirked fear or cowardice, not merely for himself but for the sake of his family, who was dependent upon him for their defense and protection.[14] Wyatt-Brown discusses how the origin of this aspect of "primal honor" is rooted in the Old World. Men such as Jefferson Davis and John C. Calhoun were raised hearing Old World stories of "warrior heroism, notions of the correct role of women and mothers, wives and daughters, and the duties attending manhood." [15]

Honorable revenge was the inspiration of various episodes of Southern history. For example, Andrew Jackson, after the murder of a white family by Creeks, spoke of the men being compelled to avenge them in order to restore honor. For the Southerner, like "ancient peoples," death was inevitable, but to die in the protection of kin or to humiliate an enemy in vengeance "was to win eternal glory."[16]

Thus, bravery, while a personal attribute, was intimately connected with the family. And, therefore, the need of kin was important to demonstrate valor, and conversely, without kin, or illegitimacy of birth, a major reason for existence was removed. In sum, to have kin, unless otherwise demonstrated, was to "have moral stalwartness."[17]

The importance of family for demonstrating the moral rectitude or valor of a man leads to the next aspect of primal honor, that is, the inseparable connection of the opinions of others to gauge one's own worth. Whereas modern society thinks in terms of conscience and guilt, the more collectively oriented honor and shame, which can include inner virtue or vice, moves beyond mere inner assessment by heightening the importance of social opinion. Thus, a Southerner would say "I wish to not be regarded as a liar" rather than "I do not lie," that is, integrity was equated with an unblemished reputation. How one spoke, carried oneself, or acted either commended or degraded the individual in the eyes of others.[18]

Given the stress on outward appearance, it naturally follows that honor would include bodily appearance as a demonstration of character. The response of Southerners to such things as "poor health, small stature, or any other physical defect" was similar to the treatment of those without kin. To have an "impressive stature" was seen to be a sign of divine favor, and, similarly, "mind, body, blood, hand, voice, head, eyes, and even genitalia" was a vehicle by which honor or disgrace was carried out.[19]

Blood, for nobility, transferred appropriate qualities. The heart, holding hidden intentions, needed to be open toward friends, and closed toward those without honor. The right hand was as "signal of respect" for friends, and vengeance for enemies. And, with the eyes, one either "witnessed honor" or "looked down in deference or shame." The head, though, held preeminence as the "seat of the social self," thus how one covered it showed status. And, finally, the genitalia were simultaneously "the most sacred and most vulnerable aspect of the body." So, for example, a slave who lusted after a white woman suffered castration, at first by law, but later by "community justice alone."[20]

As was mentioned above, gentility is a more refined form of primal honor. The contribution of this form of honor is its coupling of moral virtue with social position or rank. Wyatt-Brown lists three aspects that were necessary for gentility: "sociability, learning, and piety." Sociability was the "*sine qua non*" of gentility from various times to various places, whereas piety was added later, due the influences of the Second Great Awakening in the early nineteenth century. And because learning was "an expensive commodity" in the plantation South, it did not hold the same prestige as in New England.[21]

Although sociability consisted of "Southern hospitality," it was more than this. It identified the Southerner, distinguishing him from the Yankee. Because Southern gentleman put less stress on learning, to Northerners they appeared to be ignorant and rough around the edges yet showing some of the qualities of gentility. Wyatt-Brown speaks of Josiah Quincy meeting President Andrew Jackson. In this meeting, Quincy describes Jackson as "… in essence, a knightly personage … mistaken on many points … but vigorously a gentleman in his high sense of honor and … straight forward courtesies."[22] Southern gentlemen were, in effect, seen to command ease of conversation and graciousness toward others.[23]

Although ideals of education differed little, in the South, from the "early Republican Yankees," for both

adequately demonstrate the general character of primal honor for the purposes of this paper.

14. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 34–36.
15. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, p. 38.
16. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 42.
17. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 43, 44.
18. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 45–48.
19. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 48, 49.
20. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 49, 50.
21. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 89, 90.
22. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, p. 91.
23. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 90–92.

saw it as of importance for equipping "young men for the world," learning was not always received enthusiastically. Thus, although learning marked one as a gentleman, too much of it was seen with disfavor, and this is due to an "anti-intellectual streak in Southern society" with sociability, and manliness (or the reputation thereof), having prominence.[24]

But, despite the relative de-emphasis of learning in Southern gentility in light of the North, reference to and reading of the Greco-Roman classics in Southern gentility did mark a departure from primal honor. The Stoic influence upon primal honor placed greater value upon "pursuit of the just, the beautiful, and the true" than popular reputation of valor. It found expression in the "Aristotelian ideal of *megalopsychia*," that is, "pride in one's self worth and achievements," "greatness and openness of heart," and "high-mindedness." Around the time of the Renaissance, it was both a rejection of the asceticism of the monastery and "Teutonic and Celtic boasting," thus, self-assessment was tied to actual inner worth, not public repute. The effect of this is that misfortunes were to be handled graciously, and good times were to be enjoyed in moderately, because one was to have a "modest self-appraisal" and "restraint."[25]

Southern gentility, and learning, however, began to be eroded in the antebellum South as old deferences to society and to hierarchy were more and more incompatible with "white democracy." Because of the anti-intellectual theme of the South, the decorative and learned genteel stood in contrast to the "plain" culture of country folk, planters, and yeomen. And, further, the priority placed upon sociability and manliness in Southern gentility limited intellectual pursuits for Southern intellectual gentility.[26]

In the late antebellum period, the growth of evangelicalism altered that which defined Southern gentility, which was already standing on fragile ground. Consequently, the virtue of piety was attached to the concept. But, with this, there was a bit of ambiguity in how piety and the church as an institution related to gentility. The Stoic form, discussed above, still upheld honor, or repute, as the "criterion for excellence of character," thus, alienation from God or one's own sensibilities were not seen as important of a motivation for moral conduct as repute.[27]

With this, prior to the antebellum period, clergy was viewed with suspicion and ascribed a status on par with women. This is as due to numerous factors including the struggle for power, and the fear that a naïve public would succumb to clerical influence. Furthermore, sermons that did not disturb genteel tastes were seen to be most acceptable.[28]

A gentility influenced by evangelicalism redefined honor as having respect for people of every station of life, for by doing so, respect from all would be earned. Thus, even a slave could enjoy honor by respecting those below and above him, and, in turn, soliciting their esteem. The temper of society was seen to have shifted with this influence. Benevolence societies were supported, missionaries welcomed, and religious journals read by these new gentlemen. Furthermore, the Sabbath was kept, church attendance increased, and temperance was promoted. The Christian gentlemen were kind toward all, lesser and greater, stranger or despised, not grudgingly but sincerely. Thus, evangelicalism gave substance to gentility.[29]

Although there is much discontinuity between the primal honor and Stoic, and thelater Christian, gentility, the Southern appropriation of the Chivalric ideal helps to demonstrate how they could, while at times conflicting, relate to one another.

Chivalric virtues were birthed in medieval times with knights who served kings and lords. They believed in

24. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 92–94. Although, there does appear to be this tendency in the Old South, it can be nuanced differently. Richard M. Weaver, *The Southern Essays of Richard M. Weaver,* ed. George M. Curtis, III and James J. Thompson, Jr. (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1987), p. 226, states, "… the Southern mind is not by habit analytical. In fact the Southern mind has little capacity for analysis and I think one could almost say that it is opposed on principle to analysis. There seems to exist a feeling that you do not get at the truth of a thing—or that you do not get at the truth worth having—by breaking the thing in pieces. … The Southern mind is, on the other hand, synthetic and mythopoeic—it seeks out wholes, representatives, symbols."

25. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor, p.* 95.

26. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 97–99. See Drew Gilpin Faust, *A Sacred Circle: The Dilemma of the Intellectual in the Old South, 1840–1860* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977) pp. 6, 7, who states, "… many Southerners … were well aware of the intellectual deficiencies of their region. Achievements in the realm of the mind brought neither fame nor fortune …," which resulted in a feeling of "isolation and marginality" among intellectuals caused them to form intellectual clubs in which they could feel support for their intellectual gifts in an adverse South.

27. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 99, 100.

28. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, pp. 101, 102. E. Brooks Holifield draws out the concept of the genteel as evaluators of clergy in his *The Gentleman Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795–1860* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1978), pp. 36, 37, where he states, "It became a commonplace that a minister's usefulness depended on his reputation, especially in the eyes of the 'improved and elevated' classes of society, the 'best families.' And, later, he writes, "While their sermons often dealt with guilt—the transgression of prohibitions—many of the clergy were more anxious about the threat of shame: fear of being exposed and found wanting."

29. Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor, pp.* 103, 104.

being merciful to fallen enemies, because they could be on the fallen side next battle. Yet, their fearlessness, and, in fact, recklessness in service to kings was motivated by a desire for fame. Furthermore, they increasingly placed "faith in a reputation for loyalty, generosity, courtesy, justice, and general Christian bearing."[30] The minstrels who sung the knights praises, encapsulated in *The Song of Roland,* while exaggerated in their praises of the knights, fixed in the European mind "an image of knightly generosity and Christian virtue" which was passed to, most especially, the Old South.[31]

Southerners read such literature as *Jerusalem Delivered*, which asked how Christian charity related to the duel. Southerners in such areas as South Carolina, Tennessee, and even a Southern influenced Democratic Party in California referred to themselves as "the chivalry." As this reference to the chivalric tradition grew, promising youth were described as "knights" or "knightly." Whether or not adherence to this ideal was pretentious, it served to encourage slave-masters to be more kind and Christian in their treatment of slaves.[32]

Genovese puts it well, "… slaveholders, like feudal aristocracy, sought . . . to bring the Christina life down to earth and to carry their own souls up to heaven."[33] This was done by referring to the "chivalrous Christian knight" who provided an example of "[m]eekness in the ferocious warrior" and "ferocity in the meekest of men."[34] And with this, we see the combination of primal honor, which emphasized valor, ferocity, and a need to vindicate one's honor, by force if necessary, with the more genteel honor which sought to be more prudent, self-controlled and meek.

To conclude, the ethic, or code, of honor, in its various forms, served as guide of ethical conduct for Southerners. The prominence of some form of honor, whether of the primal variety, the genteel, or a mixture of the two, is undeniable, and pervasive in the antebellum South. It is fair to say that honor, along with religion, held preeminence in the Southern mind. Here, it is important to note that much of honor is rooted in a distinctly European, in contrast to American,[35] worldview, and so it can be said that this, along with other factors, led to the isolation of the more distinct Southern identity from the broader American landscape.

Slavery

Slavery, which is called the peculiar institution of the South, was imported from Europe, and in fact, it was an aspect of the entirety of American life during the colonial period and seen as a necessary evil in order to maintain the prosperity of society. But during and after the Revolutionary War, opposition against this institution grew both in the North and in the South. Such eminent men as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, both Southerners, were voices of opposition.[36] One could say that there arose two basic positions with regard to opposition: (1) immediate abolition; and (2) gradual emancipation.

Contention with the institution also found a place in Presbyterian churches of the South. In 1792, Rev. David Rice of Kentucky, in a pamphlet, gave numerous reasons for the injustice of slavery including: the lack of protection of female chastity, "the violent separation of families," "the deprivation by law of religious and moral instruction," among others.[37] But, although many recognized that slavery was an evil, they, following the doctrine of spirituality of the church, believed that it was not the churches prerogative to interfere with the institution as any reformation or abolition of it would fall under the sphere of civil authority. That is, it was an evil, yes, but still a practical solution seemed out of reach,[38] and thus, it was not a matter of Christian communion.

In 1812, Rev. George Bourne published a book entitled *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable.* In this book, he viciously and unsparingly attacked slaveholders, and, in fact, he covered many of the arguments that later abolitionists would use, and, as such, "he may be regarded as one of the first of the fiery advocates of immediate abolition." Following his book, the Presbytery of Lexington, to which he belonged, brought up the fact that he had brought unwarranted charges against various members of the Presbyterian church. In his letters to fellow ministers, he urged for the "immediate ejection of every slaveholder from the church." And consequently,

30. Eugene D. Genovese, "The Chivalric Tradition," *The Sewanee Review*, 108 (Spring, 2000): 189.

31. Genovese, "The Chivalric Tradition," p. 189.

32. Genovese, "The Chivalric Tradition," pp. 190, 191.

33. Genovese, "The Chivalric Tradition," p. 195.

34. Genovese, "The Chivalric Tradition," p. 195.

35. Richard M. Weaver, *The Southern Essays*, pp. 211, 213, writes: "The first step toward understanding … the Southern mind and temper is to recognize that the South, as compared with the North, has a European culture … [not in the fully developed sense] … but more European than that of New England. … The South never showed the same interest in seceding from European *culture* [in contrast to political system] that the North and West showed. … The South retained a [European] outlook … while the North was developing in a different direction away from this—was becoming more American …"

36. Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, vol. 1, 1607–1861 (Richmond, Va: John Knox Press, 1963), p. 323.

37. Thompson, *Presbyterians*, 1.324.

38. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, 1.325–6.

he put on the table the idea of slavery as a matter of Christian communion.[39]

In "the early decades of the 19th century there was a steady drainage of antislavery Southerners to the North."[40] Rev. James Hoge, son of Dr. Moses Hoge, is one such an example of relocation to the North because of slavery. It can be stated that this exodus to the North by antislavery clergy in fact promoted the pro-slavery cause in the South. This occurred on two fronts: first, free discourse about slavery was substantially removed in the South, and second, Southern antislavery advocates joined forces with the Northern abolitionists. The latter is important because the immediate abolition advocated by them caused the South to take the defensive, as we will see.[41]

In January 1831, the prominent Northern abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, published the first issue of his "fiery journal" titled *The Liberator*. And, a short eight months later, on August 21, Nat Turner, along with "four or five companions," which increased to seventy, killed roughly sixty whites who were mostly women and children. This rebellion, and rumors of others, hardened the hearts of Southerners who were fearful for their safety. In 1832, the Virginia Legislature sought to discuss the abolition of slavery. In attendance were about sixty "emancipators," sixty anti-abolitionists, who stressed the impossibility of the task of emancipation, and about a dozen compromisers who favored gradual emancipation. This mixture demonstrates the diversity regarding the slave question in the South, and yet, "no practical plan could be agreed upon," and fear, due to the Nat Turner insurrection, caused the legislation of further restraints upon slaves including "silencing of Negro preachers" and "strict regulation of night religious assemblies."[42]

Thus, by the mid 1830s, "a consensus emerged that opposition to slavery represented a crime against society."[43] This arose since the open discourse concerning the issue had largely been removed, as well as the vehement opposition by the Northern abolitionists. Therefore, an institution which only decades ago had been universally accepted in America, and upon which the South felt dependent, was being assailed, and the positive good argument for slavery was born.[44]

Thomas Roderick Dew, reviewing the debate of the Virginia Legislature, mentioned above, brought forth an array of arguments "religious, philosophical, and historical" demonstrating the positive good of slavery. This, combined with the increase of antislavery sentiments in the North and a few Southern states (eastern Tennessee, western Virginia, and Kentucky), caused a polarization of pro-slavery and anti-slavery advocates with the former investing much time and emotional energy into combating what was perceived as anarchist and atheistic sentiments of the abolitionists.[45] And, in sum, the Old South moved from a period where pro-slavery and antislavery sentiments existed side by side, even in ecclesiastical settings, to a period where pro-slavery became an ideological hegemony in the South.

Religion

Mitchell Snay describes the role of religion as "central to the culture and society of the antebellum South."[46] The three characteristics of antebellum thought discussed—classical republicanism, honor, and slavery—have been dramatically impacted and deeply influenced by religion. In fact, to say, with Snay, that religion is central to the antebellum era would not be an overstatement. The influence of religion is seen more clearly when one understands that it was "simultaneously . . . an institution, a theology, and a mode of discourse."[47]

As was touched on above, the Southern brand of conservatism was distinguished from transcontinental conservatism in its critique of a free market economy, and, in its place, the assertion of the need for society to maintain its hierarchical structure by defining freedom in the context of the collective rather than something that is natural and intrinsic to a person. Although, as we have seen, this view of society is partially rooted in the concept of honor, it is also rooted in a distinctly Christian emphasis. In order to understand this, Southern conservatism and slavery need to be discussed together.

We noted above that slavery moved from a benign acceptance to advocacy of gradual emancipation, and, with this, arguments for the immediate abolition of the institution. And, in response to the latter, Southerners began advocating a positive good argument. Although, the Christian argument for slavery, and a classical republicanism, is not exactly synonymous with a positive

39. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, 1.329–330.

40. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, 1.336.

41. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, 1.337, 338; Anne C. Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800–1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), pp. 192, 193.

42. Thompson, *Presbyterians*, 1.340, 341.

43. Michael Wayne, "An Old South Morality Play: Reconsidering the Social Underpinnings of the Proslavery Ideology," *The Journal of American History* 77 (Dec., 1990): 838.

44. Thompson, *Presbyterians*, 1.342.

45. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, 1.342–9.

46. Mitchell Snay, *Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), p. 3.

47. Snay, *Gospel of Disunion*, p. 6.

good argument,[48] on the spectrum from blatant opposition to strong promotion of the institution, the Christian argument lay closer to the latter.

Thus, it was argued that "slavery" was "the best possible bulwark" against the destructive and "un-Christian" influences of a free-market, industrial capitalism upon society.[49] Southerners saw a free-market economy as inevitably ending up in a clash between the richer and poorer classes as the employer would not care for the needs of his employee. This freedom would undermine the order given by God, which is for the safety and benevolence of society.[50]

By establishing a ruling class that is guided by Christian principles, the needs of the servants, or, in this case, slaves would be taken care of by God. Social order took three forms: (1) the family, wherein basic social dependence is experienced; (2) the household, which constitutes "the basic unit of the economy and community"; and (3) the polity or community "writ large as region and nation." These three aspects of the social order were understood by Southerners to be aspects of a Christian society in which they lived, which was maintained or destroyed by adherence to Christian principles.[51]

First, the hierarchal relationship that exists between men and women, with the latter being subordinate to the former, provided the original prototype of God's ordained hierarchy concerning social relations. Thus, family order and male authority, contained within this original social relation, was extended to other distinctions such as class or race. Second, in the household, Southerners saw God's ordination of property, with "property included in human beings." That is to say, property was seen as "inherent in man's social nature," and thus, not a creation of society, or, furthermore, the state. And, in contrast to more Northern sentiments, they denied that property existed in "one's own person and labor power," but rather in the social role of the white male "as head of the household."[52]

The Southern household with its concept of property and family was virtually inseparable from its expression of social hierarchy and order. On a societal level, household designated the same concept as family, and with this, society was seen as a "network of household," with members of society encouraged to view society as an extended family. This naturally extends to the institution of slavery whereby slaves were seen as members of the family under the organic authority of the master. Thus, the master was to protect as well as discipline the slave as if he was a child of his household.[53]

Although the head of the family, whether broadly or narrowly construed, was superordinate to the other members of the household, his authority was not arbitrarily wielded, but rather, his authority was only legitimate in as far as he adhered to "the entire body of laws and commandments laid down in the Old and New Testaments."[54] In this we see clearly the influence of Christianity as providing the ideal of ethical behavior for those who enjoyed such as station in society, but, the Christian correction brought forth to address the abuse and neglect of slaves indicates that not all in fact met this ideal.

Now, at this point, in needs to be mentioned that although Christian concerns did influence how Southerners viewed the very fabric and structure of their society with its peculiar institution of slavery, it would be naïve to think that this was merely a one-way street.

Although political questions were impacted by Christians in the South, this wasn't the case because Christians were, at base, political lobbyists. This is demonstrated by Southern adherence to the doctrine of the spirituality of the church which asserted that the church was a distinctly spiritual, in contrast to civil, institution. That is, civil affairs were left to the government, and spiritual affairs left to the church.[55]

But, if an issue began to impinge upon the sphere of the church, than it was the duty of the church to speak. The rise of abolitionism, as discussed above, "pushed religion into the political realm," as it, by its criticisms, made slavery a moral, and, hence, spiritual issue. This is in large part the case because the master-slave relation was seen as a moral relationship, and it was this relationship which was contended against by abolitionists.[56] And, with this, the use of the pulpit by Northern ministers to preach abolition conflicted with the Southern ministers' separation of the church from civil affairs,

48. Loveland sees that evangelicals distinguished themselves from the positive good argument by rejecting that it is in fact an absolute good, but rather that it is the best possible relationship that can exist between the white and "the negro," that is to say, "they did not defend slavery in the abstract, but only Negro slavery as it existed in the South." Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, pp.* 207, 208.Thus, in the denial of the positive good of slavery, they were tragically blatant regarding their own racism.

49. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese, "The Divine Sanction of Social Order: Religious Foundations of the Slaveholders' World View," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 55 (Summer, 1987): 211–212.

50. "The Divine Sanction of Social Order," pp. 218, 219.

51. "The Divine Sanction of Social Order," p. 219.

52. "The Divine Sanction of Social Order," p. 220.

53. "The Divine Sanction of Social Order," pp. 220, 221.

54. "The Divine Sanction of Social Order," p. 221.

55. Snay, *Gospel of Disunion*, pp. 9, 10.

56. Snay, *Gospel of Disunion*, pp. 10, 11.

with the latter not recognizing the precarious nature of their own position. Consequently, abolition was linked closely with infidelity to the church.[57]

In sum, the Southern clergy gave religious substance to the "civil" institution of slavery, which, in turn, vindicated the actions of the slaveholders, while provided a corrective to the same. But, it seems, the fact that Southern clergy rose to the occasion is, in part, because they were themselves Southerners and heirs of the unique socio-political landscape of the Old South. That is, they were both influential of, and influenced by, the society in which they lived. [58]

In addition to the influence of Christianity on the broader hierarchical aspects of society such as slavery, it also has a hand in influencing Southern society with regard to its code of honor as is discussed by Wyatt-Brown. As was mentioned above, and will be repeated only briefly here, at the outset of the antebellum period Christianity proved to be influential in how people understood the more secular based concept of honor as it integrated the evangelical virtues of piety, morality, and charity into the more reputation-oriented "primal" and Stoic honor, forming a distinct Christian form of honor, namely, Christian gentility.

In conclusion, conservative religion had vast influence in the Old South as it often substantiated or gave meaning to the very fabric of Southern society, namely, a classical republicanism defined by the institution of slavery. Even the competing code of ethics characterized by honor was shaped by the values and ethics of religion, which subsequently created a distinctly Christian synthesis and shape to this code.

Synthesis is perhaps the best word to describe antebellum religion in this regard. Religious values were so intimately wedded with the secular values of the culture that it is often hard to distinguish between what is religious and what is secular. Clergy were a main voice for the issues of the day by way of their preaching and their writing. Moreover, the use of Scripture, as noted by Noll,[59] was prominent in the socio-political landscape. Although at times ambiguous and complex, the role of religion as central to antebellum Southern life is undeniable.

The Civil War

Those things which characterized the antebellum South, namely, a classical conception of republicanism, with its denial of the natural rights of the individual; honor, with its emphasis on reputation as the gauge of one's worth; slavery, as an institution at this time peculiar to the South, and defended prolifically; and, religion, of the conservative variety, which, as we have seen, undergirds and lives in mutual relationship with those other aspects of the Southern mind that we have discussed already existed prior to the Civil War in antagonism with the mind of the North, and thus, they directly contribute to the rise of the conflict that is known by various titles including "the War Between the States," "the War for Southern Independence," "the War of Northern Aggression" and "the Civil War."

In 1858, Abraham Lincoln accepted the nomination to the United States Senate, and during his speech, declared his antipathies for the institution of slavery. In his words, the South heard the voice of an element of the North which was ready to destroy that institution upon which they depended. Later, in 1859, thirteen men and five blacks, led by John Brown, seized Harper's Ferry, a town in Virginia, with the hopes of provoking a slave uprising.[60]

The action of Brown and his men provoked a two-sided response. To the North, his actions were one of courage; he was seen as a saint and martyr. And, to the South, they were seen as the "logical consequence" of abolitionist sentiments, and an affront to the safety of the South. In 1860, not long after the Brown incident, the presidential election commenced, and Abraham Lincoln, nominee of the Republican Party, was regarded by the South as a radical concerning slavery, and he "ran on a platform pledged to shut slavery out

57. Snay, *Gospel of Disunion*, p. 13

58. Snay, *Gospel of Disunion*, p. 12. This almost inseparable relationship between Southern Christianity and Southern society becomes clearer as one sees how Northern conservatives were influenced by the growing abolitionist sentiments of the antebellum period. Snay noting the similarities between Northern and Southern conservative Christians, that is, both (1) "… feared the disruption of the public order and the threat to traditional boundaries between religion and politics;" and, (2) "… argued that slavery was essentially a political and not a religious question," writes, "The rise of abolitionism did cause a predicament for conservative Northern clergymen, but the pressures from their society pushed them away from proslavery. They sought to find out what they considered legitimate and less threatening forms of Christian action against slavery," which, in effect, "divided the Northern clergy into two polar factions," namely, abolitionists, who thought that churches were defending slavery, and, conservatives, who moved away from the activism that was implicit in evangelicalism. Snay, *Gospel Disunion,* p. 34. See also Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order,* pp. 53, 62–62, who notes the move from viewing ministry as a divine calling to viewing it as a profession like any other, which is another example of the clergy being influenced by society.

59. Mark Noll, "The Bible and Slavery," in *Religion and the American Civil War*, ed. Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout and Charles Reagan Wilson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

60. Thompson, *Presbyterians*, 1.552.

of the territories." Later in the year, Lincoln was elected as president. All the Northern states voted him except New Jersey. Yet none of the slave states did. To Southerners, his victory was seen as "a sectional victory of the North over the South," which marked the endangerment of their way of life.[61]

Georgia, South Carolina, and others demanded secession upon hearing news of Lincoln's election. At the time, upper South states such as Virginia and North Carolina were not as quick to urge secession, but it was a qualified hesitancy. That is to say, they would remain in the Union provided the Northern States repeal any unconstitutional rulings against slavery and as long as the Lincoln administration does not attempt to coerce those States which may secede. But in the "deep South" a movement toward secession was unstoppable. Therefore, the "border states" such as Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky represented one sentiment, that is, one of caution, while the lower Southern states such as South Carolina and Louisiana pushed for secession.[62]

On December 20, 1860, South Carolina passed an "Ordinance of Secession," removing themselves from the union that they held with the other States. But many saw the decision of South Carolina as rash. For example, an address titled "To the Clergy and Laity of the Christian Churches of the Country," which was signed by many outstanding Presbyterian ministers as well as faculty, or former faculty, of various colleges and universities, pleaded with their Southern brethren to "explore every possibility of pacification" to give the North another opportunity.[63]

Early in the next year, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas followed South Carolina in the path of secession. To illustrate the differing sentiments of the South, on February 4, 1861, "representatives of seceding states" organized a "provisional government for the Confederate States of America," and, on the same day, the Virginia legislature invited "distinguished leaders" representing 21 states to attempt to find a peaceful road. But, the attempt of Virginia was of no avail as the seceded states sent no representatives.[64]

On April 12, South Carolina began its attack on Fort Sumter. On April 15, Lincoln issued a call "for volunteers to suppress insurrection and preserve the Union," which resulted in the secession of Virginia from the Union, on April 17, followed by North Carolina and Arkansas. The secession of the Southern slave states and the attack on Fort Sumter sparked the Civil War.[65]

With the Civil War and the political secession of numerous Southern states underway, the question of nationalism arose. Although many have seen the Southern creation of national identity as either "spurious" or "myth," Faust urges us to recognize that no matter how we think to construe it, Southerners themselves saw the Confederacy as a nation.[66] She states, "The creation of Confederate nationalism was the South's effort to build a consensus at home, to secure the foundation of popular support for a new nation … The formation of this new national ideology was thus inescapably a political and social act …"[67]

Southerners during the time following secession sought to shape this national identity with a national flag, "relicks," poems, songs and monuments as well as the inauguration of a Confederate president, Jefferson Davis, in 1862. But, the view of prominent "European … thinkers" of "political differentiation" saw a nation based on "a separate race, language, religion, and history" was problematic for Southerners who had virtually everything in common with Northerners.[68]

In order to correct this, Southerners "school texts" sought to restore "a purity of diction" that would remove both "Yankee degeneracies" and "Africanisms," thus returning to "English linguistic roots." Also, the Southern cause was identified with the struggle of other now successful "nationalist movements" or "fledging nations" such as the French Revolution, the Dutch republic, and the Polish and Greek rebellions.[69]

Furthermore, they identified with the "American War of Independence" thus cementing the Southern struggle in that of 1776, giving the South a needed history and legitimacy as its quest for independence was seen as the "fulfillment of American nationalism" which could only be preserved by secession from the previous union.[70]

To conclude, the political nation that arose out of the secession of the Southern states is intimately connected to, and indeed defined by, the antebellum characteristics that we have discussed. Farmer puts it well when he says, "… before the idea of secession and separate nationhood could become viable, a degree of the self-consciousness and self-confidence had to be produced in the Southern mind," and, although, as we saw with the Nat Turner uprising, this "self-confidence" combined

61. Thompson, *Presbyterians*, 1.552, 553.
62. Thompson, *Presbyterians*, 1.554, 555.
63. Thompson, *Presbyterians*, 1.560.
64. Thompson, *Presbyterians*, 1.561.
65. Thompson, *Presbyterians*, 1.561
66. Drew Gilpin Faust. *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge, La: Louisiana State University, 1988), pp. 1–6.
67. Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, p. 7.
68. Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, pp. 8–10.
69. Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, pp. 11–13.

with a fear of black insurgency, "… even nations build upon a foundation of slavery, are not born out of fear alone. The concept of nationhood involved a *zeitgeist* around which a people can cohere. A metaphysical confederacy … had to precede a physical Confederacy."[71]

The Postbellum South

After the defeat of the South, the period of Reconstruction and following was met with upheaval, chaos, and uncertainty. The Southern cause was championed by the promoters of secession, and the antebellum themes of the South were solidified leading up to the Civil War. Now, this solidification of Southern identity was met with the less than solid, indeed, unclear, painful and uncertain reality of a defeated cause.

But this cause did not die out. Rather, it shifted. Although a political independence was not a reality that the South would enjoy, the Lost Cause was birthed, which replaced the desire for a Southern political national by providing a "separate cultural identity."[72]

In 1866, Edward A. Pollard, the Richmond editor, called for a war of ideas in *The Lost Cause* in order to maintain the Southern identity. He was one of many voices who were seeking to forcefully reestablish what was perceived by Southerners to be their unique identity as God's peculiarly blessed and chosen people. That is to say, Southerners saw themselves as a virtuous people who had fought for the cause of God against "the atheistic north."[73]

The Lost Cause was birthed out of "[t]he antebellum and wartime religious culture," and was a combination of Christianity and regional history.[74] Also, it was a response to the fear and insecurity that Southerners felt in their relationship to the North. The North, unlike the South, was characterized by a heterogeneous religious culture, which many felt threatened the stability that they knew. That is, antagonism with the North challenged the "Southern religious hegemony."[75]

This combination of history and religion that characterizes the Lost Cause is described by Wilson as a "civil religion."[76] A civil religion is defined by the interpretation of historical experiences by transcendental values which in this case are religious values. The Southern civil religion, unlike the broader American civil religion, was "less optimistic, less tolerant, and more homogenously Protestant."[77] The American civil religion was birthed out of the Revolutionary War in order to provide significance and belonging to a diverse immigrant society, whereas the Southern variety was birthed out of a dead nation, an unrealized ideal, and, thus, was more rooted in cultural than political realities.[78]

Anthropologically speaking, the religious aspect of the Lost Cause is apparent as one considers that it possessed those qualities which define religion in general. These include: "symbols, myth, ritual, theology, and organization."[79]

To illustrate this, numerous aspects of the Lost Cause can be mentioned. First, "stain glass windows were placed in churches to commemorate Confederate sacrifices," which explicitly linked "Confederate images"

70. *Faust, The Creation of Confederate Nationalism, p. 14; James C. Cobb, Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 54–56.*

71. James Oscar Farmer, Jr., *The Metaphysical Confederacy: James Henley Thornwell and the Synthesis of Southern Values* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), pp. 15–16.

72. Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865–1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), p. 1.

73. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood,* pp. 7, 8.

74. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood,* p. 8.

75. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood,* p. 10.

76. See Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 7, 8, who qualifies this description by stating: "… this study … avoid[s] the terms 'myth' and 'civil religion' that have largely dominated examinations of the Lost Cause [here, it's important to note that Wilson includes myth in his understanding of the Lost Cause as civil religion]," for he prefers to use the term "tradition," which "still conveys the cultural importance implied by 'myth' or 'civil religion.'" But, later, despite his reservations with "civil religion" as a description, he basically agrees with Wilson's approach when he writes, "The scholars who consider the Lost Cause a form of southern civil religion … probably take the [religious] metaphors too literally, but they are certainly correct about the cultural importance of the Lost Cause. It helped to explain … how and why [Southerners] lost the war that marked the end of the Old South."

77. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, p. 13.

78. Snay, *Gospel of Disunion*, p. 5, describes the broader American "civil religion," writing: "Secular and religious motifs were woven into the belief that America had a unique role in bringing the Kingdom of God to this world. Millennialism fused with the political ideology of republicanism, convincing Americans that their social and political institutions had a providential destiny to serve as a model for all humankind." See also James P. Maddex, Jr,'s article, "Proslavery Millennialism: Social Eschatology in Antebellum Southern Calvinism," *American Quarterly,* 31 (Spring, 1979): 46–9, where he states: "Nineteenth century American Christians [believed that] [t]he deepest faith they could invest in their social system was to believe that God was shaping it into the form of the future millennial society … [thus] [t]he future of society … focused the question of national goals—whether slavery or wage labor would eventually be the American system," and later, he speaks of how antislavery and proslavery proponents attempted to situate the question of slavery in the millennium. Thus, it can be said that the antebellum South's "civil religion" was, in fact, a subset of the broader American "civil religion," sharing with it a God-focused vision of society but, after the Civil War, the Southern variety transformed and moved away from the commonalities it shared with the broader American civil religion as it detached from political realities in large part.

79. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood, p.* 11.

with "religious ideals."[80] Second, "[w]artime artifacts" as well as those Bibles that were "touched by the Cause" were considered sacred and holy. Third, numerous rituals can be noted including: (1) hymns (e.g., "Stonewall Jackson's Way"); (2) "Confederate Memorial Day"; (3) the wartime hero funeral; and (4) the dedication of monuments to Confederate heroes.[81]

Furthermore, although the Lost Cause was a prominent theme of Southern Protestantism at the time, not all Protestant leaders supported the movement. Therefore, it had a distinct organizational identity rooted in voluntary societies such as the Confederate veterans' group, and later, the Klu Klux Klan. Because of this distinctive identity, Southern ministers who were celebrators of the Lost Cause were indispensable in linking their own denominations with institutions unique to the Lost Cause.[82]

But most important of all for this civil religion was its myth and theology. The Civil War was a crusade upon which the Southern heroes endeavored to defeat the forces of evil, expressed in the Yankee. The Yankee "symbolized a chaotic, unrestrained Northern society that had threatened the pristine, orderly, godly Southern civilization."[83]

This myth of a virtuous South facing off against an evil North undergirded the theology of the Lost Cause. Unlike revival movements, which focus on the future, the theological goal of the Lost Cause was to restore the golden era that was believed to have existed in the Old South. Thus, the Lost Cause sought to warn against falling from the virtue of the past, promote reforms in moral behavior, encourage people to turn to Christianity, and raise up future generations in the Southern traditions and heritage.[84]

With this, the Lost Cause taught that the defeat of the South was not due to slavery but rather the failure of the South to live up to their duty of caring for the slaves spiritually and physically. But, despite some concession of the neglect of the slaves, the institution of slavery was still seen as the divinely ordained means of bringing Christianity to Africans.[85]

And so proponents of the Lost Cause urged Southerners to avoid a repeat of the chastisement which came with defeat by learning from the lesson of the war "that one should follow conscience despite risks of defeat."[86] That is to say, the Civil War was a war of principle on the part of the South, thus, although the North received the materialistic victory, the South had the spiritual one as it maintained its spiritual integrity.[87] This concept of the virtuous Old South found full expression in the equation of the South with Zion which was combined with a warning to not be "at ease in Zion" by maintaining vigilance against evil.[88]

But, the Lost Cause movement, with its moralistic focus and attempt to draw Southerners back to the virtuous Old South ideal, was faced with challenges at home as a New South began to emerge. In fact, Wilson notes that "the plans for a New South were popularized in the same period that saw the triumph of the myths of the Old South and the Lost Cause."[89]

The New South was, in effect, the encroachment of Northern realities on the South, in the minds of Lost Cause adherents. This movement, which urged laissez-faire capitalism and industrialism as the solutions to Southern problems, became the brunt of criticisms by Southern clergy who saw signs of spiritual decline in the South as the New South materialism conflicted with Confederate spirituality.[90]

The arrival of the New South movement marked a movement away from that which defined the Old South which the Lost Cause so vigorously promoted. The aristocracy of the plantation began to be replaced by a "new elite" consisting of "industrialist, large merchants, and railroad officials," which contrasted markedly with the old way of paternalism, that is, hierarchy with a moral and spiritual focus.[91]

Many of those who lived before the war and had a place in it began to feel displaced and passed by in this New South reality.[92] But second and third generation postwar Southern ministers saw hope in the New South and saw it as a challenge to the South to show the nation that they were able to handle their new wealth, and in turn, demonstrate to the nation their moral and spiritual superiority. This sentiment tempered the force of those older Lost Cause ministers who decried the growing New South influence.[93]

These younger clergy created a mediating position between a materialistic society and the vision of the Lost Cause by still urging Southerners to draw upon

80. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood,* p. 25.
81. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood,* pp. 26–29.
82. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, pp. 14–15.
83. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, p. 40.
84. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, pp. 11, 12.
85. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, pp. 68, 69.
86. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, p. 41.
87. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, p. 70.
88. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, pp. 77, 78.
89. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, p. 84.
90. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, p. 79.
91. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, p. 91.
92. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, pp. 87–89.
93. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, p. 98.

their heritage, keeping in mind that the North represents the antithesis of a moral and spiritual nation with its love of money.[94] And with this, the need for a Lost Cause began to be eclipsed, and adherents of it began to feel this reality.[95]

Robert Lewis Dabney through the Eyes of his Context

Having described many of the characteristics of Southern thought from the antebellum, Civil War, and postbellum period, we will now turn to the task of understanding R. L. Dabney, as best we can, in light of these factors.

Early Childhood

Robert Lewis Dabney was born on March 5, 1820, in Louisa County, Virginia,[96] that is, ten years before the beginning of the antebellum period. He passed away on Jan. 3, 1898, almost thirty three years after the end of the Civil War.[97] Thus, he is a man who, it can be said, is representative of the Old South of which he was an able, eloquent and passionate defender.

It can be said of Dabney that he was born into a privileged class. Although his family is not "among the great planting aristocracy or in the highest ranks of the F. F. V.s," their roots lay deep into the Virginian past. The first of Dabney's descendants acquired 1,200 acres of land in Virginia in 1667, and later progeny moved westward, finally reaching the "eastern fringe of the Piedmont" in what later became Louisa County. Because of the vast land wealth that the Dabneys' possessed, Dabney men "held important positions as sheriffs, justices, and military officers in their counties."[98]

Robert Dabney was born on a part of the plantation, Walnut Grove, which was in the family's possession since 1724, and in 1830, his father, Charles Dabney, "accepted his patrimony" and the family moved to the main plantation. This plantation consisted of 550 acres land cared for by two dozen slaves, and thus, Dabney learned from his father how to run the plantation and supervise the work of the slaves.[99]

The combination of his family's repute,[100] land wealth, and deep-seated Virginian history shaped Dabney's identification with gentility, and moreover, with the South by way of Virginia. For Dabney, it was beyond question that he and his family were right in owning and commanding slaves who were distinguished racially, intellectually, and morally from the Dabneys' elevated status, which also lay in contrast with those poorer neighbors with less extensive land holdings and less refined tastes.[101]

At this time, the most tangible and important elements of government were found at the county level for most Virginians, and it is here that the Dabney family "enjoyed singular distinction." With the exception of "the House of Delegates," Charles Dabney, Robert's father, was a member of the county court, commanded the county militia, and elected to state legislature not by popular vote but by his status in society as a large landholder. This further accentuated the reality for Dabney that social distinction was both essential and important.[102]

As a religious family, and as Virginian Presbyterians,[103] the Dabney children were raised with a mixture of affection and strict standards of conduct and piety. Therefore, practices of a sinful nature as well as unworthy companions were to be avoided. Both of Robert's parents showed signs of piety by actively praying and reading Scripture. Later, Charles Dabney brought debt on the family and died in 1833, leaving Robert Dabney with the responsibility of filling the role of male head of the household at the age of thirteen. Earnestly attempting to meet this challenge, his family called him the "old gentleman."[104]

College Years

On June, 1836, Robert Dabney entered Hampden-Sydney College. At first reserved, distrusting of others, and an object of pranks, he later recognizing that

94. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, p. 98.
95. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, pp. 87, 88.
96. David Henry Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney: Apostle of the Old South," (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1967), p. 1.
97. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 314.
98. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 1.
99. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 3.
100. Furthermore, Dabney's maternal ancestry enjoyed even greater status as his great-grandmother, a Randoph, shared blood ties with "one of the most prominent families of Virginia and could claim common kinship with John Marshall, Thomas Jefferson, and John Randolph of Roanoke." Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 2.
101. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 4. Dabney, in a letter to his mother, reflects this sentiment by stating, "… with the exception of the family, your neighborhood is a rude and dreary one …" Robert to Mother, April 19, 1849; in Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 4.
102. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 5.
103. This trait further endeared the Dabneys' to distinction as Virginian Presbyterians were on "the forefront of the movement for independence" as well as a "potent influence in the development of education" as they opposed and partially frustrated Jefferson's attempted establishment of a "complete public school system." Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 7.
104. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 7–11.; Thomas C. Johnson, *Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (1903; repr. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), pp. 29, 45.

"his manners needed polishing," while dismissing the company of young ladies, sought out the company of "elderly gentlewomen" whom he saw as representing true Virginia, and joined the "Philanthropic Society." But, cognizant of his mother's sacrifice to give him an education, as well as his own hostility toward others, caused him to earnestly pursue his studies, gaining him an "almost saintly" reputation from fellow students.[105]

Dabney, desirous to pursue "prominence in public life," strived for oral and written eloquence by writing his own political speeches rather than the rote memorization of the words of famous politicians. These speeches provide the seminal thought of Dabney especially as it related to politics. In one speech, for example, he "proposed more restrictive immigration laws" in order to protect the self-reliance and stability of American society from the worthless ("exuviae") fermentations of Europe. [106] Having received the highest grades faculty could grant, Dabney's intellectual and leadership abilities were apparent and so he was elected to "president of the Philanthropic Society."[107]

Although forced to return to his family's plantation to resume his duties, "a spiritual revival" occurred at the college shortly before his departure, the seed of which found fertile soil in Dabney.[108] For the next two years, he worked as "plantation master and school teacher," and, again, we see Dabney gentility assert itself as the "caste" of a former tutor was too low for him to submit to his supervision in teaching at a school.[109] Therefore, he started his own school, but still with an eye toward a continuance of his education.[110]

Deciding that changes in faculty at Hampden Sydney were not to his standards or liking, as well as his tentative desire to enter into the ministry, he decided to enter the University of Virginia for its wider variety of courses in order to prepare him for ministry, leaving the plantation in December, 1839. But this change in atmosphere, and culture, as students at the University were recruited from "the wealthiest and most aristocratic families in Virginia," caused Dabney to retreat to his familiar skepticism and hostility.[111]

This hostility caused him to critique everything ranging from the grounds of the university to its faculty. With the latter, he made various assessments. The manners of two Englishmen teachers he found "more repulsive than the Yankees." He despised the innovation of the chemistry teacher, and the appearance of "an English Jew" teacher "whose strange appearance placed him in danger of being imprisoned as a lunatic." And, thus, except for a few native Virginians, he though the faculty ill-chosen. This attitude reflects his xenophobia, and further, his sentiment that outside forces were not sympathetic to the ways of Virginian life.[112]

The immorality and barbarity of his classmates draws out further Dabney's sense of gentility. For Dabney these students shirked obedience of the campus rules by refusing to relinquish personal weapons, avenged their honor even, at times, when offended by professors, by applying "well-seasoned cowhide" to their backs, prolifically engaged in drinking, gambling, frivolously spending, and, in general, lacked interest in learning. Further, he saw their status as coming from "successful merchants, upstart lawyers and politicians" with nothing to boast of but wealth, whose polished appearances matter little in gauging one's one worth.[113]

At this point, one can note how Dabney's ideal of gentility conflicted with others of his time. The students, under Dabney's assessment, had many of the characteristics of Stoic gentility. They prized sociability, as indicated by their drinking and gambling; displayed manliness, as indicated by the vindication of their honor; and demonstrated the anti-intellectual bent of the peculiarly Southern gentility. Furthermore, they flaunted polished appearance and manners rather than engage in morally upright pursuits.

But, perhaps more precisely, following Dabney's description, the students demonstrate the tension that existed between the primal honor, with its bravery, ferocity, and the like, and Stoic gentility, which stressed refinement and sociability. They were a caricature of refinement in their polished appearances and manners, but Dabney, who embodies the more moralistic, pietistic expression of gentility, while not having as much polish or aristocratic manner, saw moral behavior, and implicitly, piety, as the true mark of the genteel. With this, he didn't in fact differ extraordinarily from them for he prized refinement, albeit with a moral emphasis, and saw their lack of true character in light of his own tastes, experience, and sense of station.

105. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 11–14.
106. Robert to William, September 8, 1836; in Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 14–15.
107. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 15–16.
108. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 16.
109. William to Robert, September 4, 1837; in Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 17.
110. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 16–17.
111. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 17–18.
112. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 20–21; Johnson, *Life and Letters of Dabney*, p. 51.
113. Robert to Mother, May, 8, October 24, 1840, December 15, 1841; in Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 23.

Seminary Years

He entered Union Theological Seminary in October, 1844, ignoring his older brother William's advice to pursue preaching at a "gentlemen's church."[114] Not seeing those with whom he was familiar, he disparaged the company of the other seminarians, seeing them as uninteresting and below his social station, albeit kind. Hence, he doubted the ability of his fellow students to set the "tone of manners and feelings" in their respective communities,[115] but, he reasoned, perhaps a ministerial position accompanying their rank could be found. Despite the gentlemanly assessment of his humbler companions, he felt himself more at home here than the University.[116]

The seminary was an "essentially Southern institution," serving, primarily, the "Synods of Virginia and North Carolina," and reflecting the Old School theological conservatism and rejection of doctrinal innovation. It was here that Dabney's belief in a full Calvinistic system, "the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible" as well as the value of a "Presbyterian polity" were solidified. Moreover, although Dabney chose ministry over public service, he saw religious and secular causes as connected, asserting that it was the task of the minister to protect the lesser educated against those "false opinions" which threatened the order and institutions of society,[117] and thus, the political dimensions of "Popery and atheism" were as important to comprehend as "the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions."[118]

The 1850s[119]

Dabney both enjoyed the benefits and was a supporter of slavery, but more than this, he was a loyal Virginian, and consequently, Southerner, the decline of which he felt keenly. He felt that the North had already taken so much from the South that "the Fugitive Slave Law" was thrown to the South "as a bone to quite [our] snarling." While believing that the Northern states would avail themselves of the opportunity to trample the South if given the chance, he urged moderation, discerning "two major weaknesses" in the North. First, he saw the socialism of Europe as weakening the individual necessary for Northern success. Second, he saw the rise of false religion, namely, "Universalism, Unitarianism, and Catholicism" as sapping Northern strength. Thus, the South may rise above the North in a moral superiority that would trump its "territorial and material" inferiority.[120]

Moreover, the South must render the attacks of the abolitionists void by safeguarding for slaves "all those rights which are a part of our essential humanity," because, unless this is done, and slavery is brought under God's law for humans, it is "morally vulnerable." Furthermore, he stressed that the South must expose the heresies of abolitionist by use of the Bible, which will have the double effect of drawing true Northern Christians to their side and compel staunch abolitionists to "assume an anti-Christian position."[121]

Dabney assumed his professorial duties at Union Seminary on October, 1853.[122] Dabney, along with others, began two publications. The first, *The Presbyterian Critic and Monthly Review*, appeared in January of 1855, and the second, *Central Presbyterian*, was founded in autumn of the same year. The latter replaced the old *Watchman and Observer* and had the goal of being a moderate voice amidst the sectional radicalism both of the North and South. It was in these pages that Dabney rebuked Southerners of their sins, encouraged Christians to emulate Christ's forgiveness, and warned of impending disaster if sectional hatred continued.[123]

In "Christians, Pray for Your Country," an editorial article in the *Central Presbyterian*, he sought to address "the danger of *disunion*." After discussing the growth of "anti-slavery agitation … for twenty-five years" with its cause moving from an "impotent principle of *Abolition*" to the "national question of *Free-Soil*,"[124] urges his readers to pursue a Christian attitude in the face of potential civil conflict. In dramatic and powerful fashion, he states:

> Civil feud has ever been known as the most bitter of all. "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong

114. *Here, again, we see the influence of gentility upon Dabney.*
115. Robert to Mother, February 6, 1845; in Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 30.
116. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 30–31.
117. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 34–35.
118. Robert to William, December 14, February 2, 1845; in Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 35.
119. Much could be said about Dabney's statements during this period, but, here, we will merely focus on a few representative examples.
120. Robert to William, January 15, 1851; in Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 49–50.
121. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 50–51.
122. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 64.
123. Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," p. 75.
124. Dabney gives definition of free-soil by stating, in their words: "'The national domain belongs to the Federal government, of which we hold the effective control; and while we claim no right to dictate in your domestic concerns, we resolve that this common domain [i..e Western territories] shall not be polluted by the encroachment of slavery,'" to which Dabney provides the retort, "[t]his common domain was purchased by the money, toil, and blood, of us and, our fathers, as well as by yours; and we will have our share in its enjoyment." Robert Lewis Dabney, "Christians, Pray for Your Country," *Central Presbyterian* (March, 1856); in Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological,* vol. II, (1890; reprint, London: Banner of Truth, 1967), p. 393.

> city, and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." The very tenderness of brothers' love makes them more tender [*sic*] to the injury. The strength of mutual obligation which should have bound them to offices of kindness enhances the hot indignation of mutual outrage…. Brothers! should we not rather weep tears of blood at the wretched and wicked thought, that the common prowess, which hath as often made North and South side by side carry dismay and rout into the ranks of common enemies, that terrible prowess, which, in North and South alike, withstood all the force of the British lion while we were in the gristle of our youth …[125]

Here, we can note Dabney's recognition of North and South as brothers, who have a "mutual obligation," and his exhortation for Christian brethren to weep at the thought that those who, with "common prowess," withstood the British Army. Later, drawing on the Christian faith of his readers, he states:

> Christians of America, will ye suffer this? If such a crime against God and man be wrought in this land of thirty thousand evangelical ministers and four millions of Christians, how burning the sarcasm which will contain against your Christianity? … What, was there not enough of the oil of love in all these four millions of the servants of God of love to sooth the surging billows of party strife? … Were not all these strong enough to throw the arms of love around their fellow citizens, keep down the hands that sought each others' throats, and constrain them by a sweet compulsion to be brethren?[126]

In sum, it would be a blemish upon the Christians of America if they could not avoid conflict. We see in this period of his life a tension between his attitudes toward a North who seems on the precipice of "trampling" the South, but who are both morally inferior to the South and stand on less biblical ground in their anti-slavery sentiments, and a North who consists of brethren, "fellow citizens," who, indeed, share in the same basic American heritage with Southerners. Below, as the danger of disunion becomes more evident, we will see Dabney continue to be a voice of moderation.

On the Eve of the Civil War

In November 1, 1860, a fast-day was held, by appointment of the Synod of Virginia to pray for reprieve from those political convulsions which were seizing the nation, both North and South. At this time, Dabney, with his skill as a preacher, gave a sermon titled "The Christian's Best Motive for Patriotism." He begins by reminding his audience that "[t]he Kingdom of Jesus Christ . . . in whose prosperity the hopes of a suffering race are all involved . . . alone can arrest the flood of sins and woes which now sweeps generation after generation into ruin …."[127] From this, he begins to discuss how "political agitation is most unfavorable to spiritual prosperity." Not only do "political convulsion" serve to grow, in great manner, "all forms of vice," but "[w]ar is the grand and favorite device of him who was a liar and murder from the beginning, to obstruct spiritual good, and to barbarize mankind."[128] Then, he again turns to the theme of how truly bitter strife is between those who were once brothers. Poignantly, imagining the reality of war, he states:

> And, then, this vast frontier must be forted and guarded. This hostile neighborhood, so dangerous because so intimate, must be watched on either hand by armies; and these armies become . . . as much the machines of internal oppression as of outward defence [*sic*]. Our future growth of men and wealth would be swallowed up by the devouring maw of strife.[129]

Again, Dabney calls his audience to think of how such a war would stand with their Christian reputation, proceeding to speak on the duty of Christians in light of political convulsions:

> … first, Christians should everywhere begin to pray for their country…. The guilty churches of all our land should humble themselves before a holy God for their Christian backsliding and national sins…. Let … the ministers of the Lord, weep … [saying] Spare thy people, O Lord … [and furthermore] go humble [*sic*] confessions of our sins, individual and social…. not … sins of fellows-citizens of another quarter of the Confederacy … [but] our own sins…. You have allowed too often the man of violence, the duelist, professing his pretended "code of honor" … Last: Every Christian must study the things which make for peace.… they will demand of others nothing more than their necessary rights, and that in the tone of moderation and forbearance.[130]

125. Dabney, "Christians, Pray for Your Country," pp. 396–397.
126. Dabney, "Christians, Pray for Your Country," p. 398.
127. Dabney, "The Christian's Best Motive for Patriotism," in Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological,* vol. II, (1890; reprint, London: Banner of Truth, 1967), p. 401.
128. Dabney, "The Christian's Best Motive for Patriotism," p. 402.
129. Dabney, "The Christian's Best Motive for Patriotism," p. 404.
130. Dabney, ibid., pp. 406–7, 412.

Later, on January 4, 1861, mere months before the Civil War began, Dabney writes, in a letter to Dr. Moses D. Hoge:

> I have considered the state of Northern aggression as *very ominous* for many years … But I do not think that Lincoln's election makes them all more ominous than they were before…. I consider [his] election no proper *casus belli*, least of all for immediate separate secession, which could never be the right way under any circumstances. Hence, I regard the conduct of South Carolina as unjustifiable toward the United States at large, and towards her Southern sisters, as treacherous [and] insolent … She has *worsted* [*sic*] the common cause [and] forfeited the righteousness of our position ….[131]

Here we see Dabney, although still suspicious of "Northern aggression," urging caution in relation to Lincoln's election and, moreover, denying that "immediate" secession is ever right. This stands in contrast to the sentiments, and consequent actions, of South Carolina, which we discussed above. Thus, moderation is still the theme of Dabney's thought, and he proceeds to discuss what would be the right course in the wake of events such as the secession of South Carolina:

> … the Legislature of Virginia ought, *on the first day* it meets, to call a State Convention. It ought also to take immediate steps for a concern of the Southern States … to present a united front to the North, for two objects—to demand firmly our rights [i.e., to own slaves] *within the Union*, and to limit any Federal or Northern collision with South Carolina within the limits defined above.[132]

And, with this, he remarkably sees the North with a kind heart stating, "… we should all remember that America is one in race, in geography, in language, in material interests. Even if we angrily divide, there will be powerful interests to draw us together again…."[133]

Civil War

The Civil War commences, and Virginia, following the rest of the South, secedes from the Union on April 17, 1861. On April 20, three days after the Virginian secession, Dabney published a letter to "Rev. S. I. Prime, D. D., one of the editors of the *New York Observer*" entitled "On the State of Our Country."[134]

He begins by stating that his purpose is to "lay this final testimony before the Christians of the North on behalf of myself and my brethren in Virginia, that the guilt lies not at our door."[135] Prior to this, we note how he had called "Christianity in America" to "save the land from fratricidal war," but now, in passionate fashion, he states:

> … it was the Christians of Virginia, combined with other citizens, who caused her to endure wrongs until endurance ceased to be a virtue; to hold out the olive branch, even after it had been spurned again and again; to study modes of compromise and conciliation, until the very verge of dishonor was touched … to decline all acts of self-defense even which might precipitate collision…. So long-suffering, so reluctant to behold the ruin of that Union to which she contributed so much … [even] her own sons were disgusted by her delays and driven to fury and despair by … the taunts of her enemies.[136]

From this, he proceeds to intensely describe how the North mistook Virginian moderation for cowardice and dishonorable submission, but Virginia has arisen "in her immortal youth … a Minerva radiant with the terrible glories of policy and war, wielding that sword which has ever flashed before the eyes of aggressors …."[137] For Dabney, the time for moderation and dispassionate talk is past. Virginia will not lie down in passive submission, she will fight! He states with much anger and passion:

> … her too generous concessions of right have been met by the insolent demand for unconditional surrender of honor and dignity … the infamous alternative has

131. Dabney to Dr. Moses Hoge, January 4, 1861, in Johnson, *Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, pp. 221–22.
132. Dabney, "The Christian's Best Motive for Patriotism," pp. 222–23. The limits above are that the United States President should, as the head of said government, "hold the forts; to strengthen your garrisons; to do anything defensive in them you choose, till they lawfully change owners by equal purchase." This would be proper according to Dabney because South Carolina now considers itself a foreign nation, but they have, in fact, taken United States "soil and property." The limitation here is that the US President should give South Carolina the opportunity to purchase the land and property that was previously hers, and if the United States President sought to subdue South Carolina without offering "redress of her federal grievances," than South Carolina would be vindicated if she wages with the U.S. government. Dabney, "The Christian's Best Motive for Patriotism," p. 222.
133. Dabney, "The Christian's Best Motive for Patriotism," p. 223.
134. Dabney, "On the State of Our Country," *Central Presbyterian* (April, 1861); in Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological,* vol. II, (1890; reprint, London: Banner of Truth, 1967), p. 421.
135. Dabney, "On the State of Our Country," p. 421.
136. Dabney, "On the State of Our Country," pp. 421–22.
137. Dabney, "On the State of Our Country," p. 422.

> been forced upon her, either to brave the oppressor's rod or to aid him in the destruction of her sisters and her children, because they are contending nobly if too rashly, for rights common to them and her … Hence, there is but one mind and one heart in Virginia … there is flung back with high disdain the gauntlet of deathless resistance. In one week, the whole State has been converted into a camp.[138]

But, one must ask, what of South Carolina, and the firing on Fort Sumter? Has not Dabney gone against the very moderate and cautious stance he presented merely months before in his letter to Dr. Hoge. Rather, he sees the actions of South Carolina related to this event as just since the North initiated the "first act of war … when fortresses, intended lawfully for her protection, were armed for her subjugation." Moreover, "armed preparations were twice made to reinforce these means of her oppression," to which South Carolina, upon continual action, "proceeded to what was *an act of strict self-defense*—the reduction of Fort Sumter."[139]

So, even if one does not agree with Dabney's reasoning in this regard, it is clear that his earlier moderation has been replaced with a passionate sense of the "righteous" cause of the South in conflict with the wickedness of the "Northern aggression." One can note, at this point, the tension between the genteel and primal forms of honor found in the South. Earlier, we see a more moderate, caution, and reasonable man in Dabney, indeed, a gentleman. But, when war is inevitable and secession as a reality, he quickly turns to "primal" honor, or the vindication thereof.

The North, by way of the federal government, has infringed upon and mocked the honor and dignity of the South by seeing her as a weak, submissive woman, but rather, she is fierce and ready for battle. Here, we see the manly valor expressed by vindication of honor, by force if necessary, which characterizes "primal" honor crop up in Dabney's passionate letter. Ironically, in the fast-day sermon "Christian's Best Motive for Patriotism," Dabney criticizes Southerners for tolerating the "man of violence, the duelist," yet, images of honor in the above letter carry with them the same code which he criticizes, albeit on a broader level. The one man vindicated his honor by way of the duel, now the South vindicates her honor by way of the same valorous violence.[140]

Once the Virginian secession was complete, both the young of his church and of his seminary classrooms volunteered to the "18th Virginia Volunteers." At this time, Dabney, leaving pastoral duties of College Church to his co-pastor, B. M. Smith, he sought a commission as a chaplain in the summer to watch over young soldiers. Having received a "state commission," he followed the 18th Virginia into northern Virginia.[141]

During his time with the 18th Virginia, he was reacquainted with "the recently minted 'Stonewall' Jackson," whom he knew as a relative by marriage (Dabney's wife was a cousin to Jackson's wife), and also "through shared contacts" such as William S. White, a "longtime ministerial friend." This once acquaintance between the two men led to a friendship. During this time he wrote numerous letters to his "womenfolk" back home.[142] In a letter to his sister Betty, on July 12, 1861:

> I hope you all are not permitting any apprehension for my safety to distress you. I am not so romantic in my ideas as to think of mixing up secular and sacred callings. If our regiment were actively engaged in battle, I should expect to give my assistance to the surgeons in ministering to the wounded, a place harrowing indeed to the sympathies, but exposed to little danger under any circumstances.[143]

And on July 19th, he writes:

> I assure you, I am a *non-combatant*, and intend to remain so. I have persisted in refusing to get any uniform or side arms. I shall make it my business to attend upon the wounded in time of action . . .You know it is the rarest thing in the world to hear of a surgeon attacked; in civilized warfare they and their benevolent work are considered as sacred.[144]

And, again, recounting a skirmish between Virginia regiments, including his own, and "Yankees," he asks his sister to tell his mother (on July 22) "… not to be uneasy about me, for I do not intend to expose my life

138. Dabney, "On the State of Our Country," pp. 422–3.
139. Dabney, "On the State of Our Country," p. 426.
140. See Weaver, *The Southern Essays*, pp. 165, 166, who also notes a connection between the duel and the Southern secession. He states, "The South went into the first modern war thinking it was a duel, an 'affair of honor,'" then he proceeds to discuss how the South, equating the war with the duel, thought that warfare was, in effect, "a game," which, like the duel, followed certain prescribed modes of action. This contrasted with the Northern approach to war, that is, "total war," or the "systematic" destruction of the enemy.
141. Sean Michael Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Pub, 2005), p. 110.
142. Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 111.
143. Robert to Betty Dabney, July 12, 1861, in Johnson, *Life and Letters of Dabney*, p. 238.
144. Dabney to his mother, July 19, 1861, in Johnson, *Life and Letters of Dabney*, p. 239.

to danger; I do not consider it my duty."[145] Yet, his biographer T.C. Johnson notes that Dabney did not inform his family that he didn't avoid danger when he rode "as an orderly for his colonel during the battle of Manassas."[146]

After the summer, numerous forces drew him back home. First, Union Seminary, with fourteen students, would remain open. So, in a letter to his brother, he states, "It would have been utterly useless for me to ask them for a furlough for a year. The only terms … would be by just resigning my place …" Also, that same year, the "Spring Resolutions" were passed by a "Northern majority in the Old School General Assembly," which decided for the entire Old School Presbyterian Church that "active" allegiance must be given to the "Federal Government at Washington."[147]

Due to these "Spring Resolutions," the presbyteries in the Confederate States of America declared its independence from the Northern church in the summer of 1861.[148] The Synod of Virginia met in the fall of '61. All of the presbyteries had severed their connection the Northern church and "appointed commissioners to organize a General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America." At this time, Dabney was the retiring moderator for the Synod of Virginia, and was appointed to be the chairman for a committee to take action with regard to disunion from the Northern General Assembly. The report of this committee approved of the actions toward separation, because allegiance to the Federal Government was "unjust, harsh and unconstitutional."[149]

Dabney's thoughts on this are, in many ways, parallel to his "On the State of Our Country," albeit without the same passionate tone. By making Federal allegiance mandatory, "the sin of rebellion" was equated with political secession, and thus, subject to the censure of the church. For him, it was a person's allegiance to their own state which stood closest to him, and, after this, to the federal government. Thus, ultimate political loyalty lies with the states, and a Virginian citizen would be rebellious for not following the Virginian secession. Although the election of Lincoln destroyed the "fundamental intent" of the constitution, which was to join together sovereign states that would give to the federal government direction over those affairs which were "common … to all" by creating a new union, it would be wrong to be forced to recognize these "new terms of union," since the American government was founded on "the right of people to choose." This new union, a perverted one, was a tyranny not worthy of obedience.[150]

On February 22, 1862, Dabney's sister Betty died, and it was on this same day that Jefferson Davis was elected as president of the Confederacy.[151] Further, the "conscription law" was passed by the Confederate government around this time, removing the remaining few students from Union Seminary. Subsequently, Dabney began desiring another tour as a chaplain.

During this time, "Stonewall" Jackson's wife was sent to live with her cousin: Dabney's wife. Due to intercession of Jackson's wife, Dabney was offered "the position of chief of staff" by Jackson. Dabney, unsure of this proposal, visited Jackson "at Swift Run Gap in April 1862" in order to explain his unfitness for the position and "to secure a chaplain's commission." Jackson would not hear his objections, and he was consequently placed in the office. [152]

During his five months with Jackson as his chief of staff, he combined the chaplain and soldier callings, that is, "he preached on Sundays" when the enemy was not engaged, and preached on other occasions as well. Additionally, he "helped the army kill the 'enemy.'"[153] Due to his acquiring of a "second bout of camp fever," which almost killed him, he was given clearance by a doctor to remain home in order to recover, and "in September 1862" Jackson accepted his resignation. [154]

In 1863, Dabney began to write *Defence of Virginia and the South*. He "conceived of fighting for the Confederacy with his pen,"[155] saying, "labors of scholars, while humbler, are no less necessary to the welfare of our country, than those of a soldier."[156] The motivation for his writing of *Defence* draws us to an important theme, namely, fighting for the cause as a Christian writer and scholar, rather than as a soldier. For Dabney, as for so many others in the South, the cause that was fought for was indeed a Christian cause. Statements from two sermons will help to illustrate this theme in Dabney's thought.

In December of 1862, after resigning from the

145. Robert to Betty Dabney, July 22, 1861, in Johnson, *Life and Letters of Dabney, p.* 241.
146. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 241.
147. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, pp. 243, 244.
148. See also S. Donald Fortson III, *The Presbyterian Creed: A Confessional Tradition in America, 1729–1870* (Milton Keynes, U.K.: Paternoster, 2008), pp. 182–83.
149. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 244.
150. Dabney, "Declarations of the PCCSNA," in Lucas, *Dabney*, pp. 112–113.
151. Johnson, *Life and Letters*, p. 249.
152. Lucas, *Dabney,* p. 115.
153. Lucas, *Dabney,* p. 115.
154. Lucas, *Dabney,* p. 117.
155. Johnson, *Life and Letters of Dabney*, p. 273.
156. Dabney, "Autobiography," in Lucas, *Dabney*, p. 117.

Confederate Army, he gave a sermon commemorating the death of Abraham C. Carrington titled "The Christian Soldier." In discussing the "duties of patriotism," he states, "Civil government is God's ordinance, and if it be just, one of his greatest temporal blessings." The appointment of institutions both to maintain "internal order" and "external" defense against aggressors is "of divine appointment," and, thus, it is "our duty" to "to sustain our government with *heart* and *hand*."[157] He further states:

> I therefore believe that there is nothing opposed to an enlightened Christianity in a warm patriotism for our particular country. This feeling made up of several elements: a legitimate regard for our own welfare and worldly estate, interest in that of our families, and a wider benevolence towards our fellow-citizens; together with an honest pride in the glories of our history, and in the justice of our institutions, with the attachments of local affection to the very scenery and soil of our native land.[158]

Later, speaking of the "criminality" of an unprovoked war, and the impropriety of a "passive," non-resistant nation, he states, "… the injured party are entitled to their redress, and are justified in inflicting on the injurers such chastisement as will compel their return to justice, even including the death and ruin which they were preparing against their inoffensive neighbors."[159] After setting the stage for the defensive nature of the war on the part of the South, Dabney states that his purpose for this is to "ground firmly your belief in the righteousness of the calling of the Christian soldier. God has authorized him. The objects for which he contends are excellent, noble, yea of supreme value."[160] Drawing further on Christian values, he states:

> The godly soldier is called to defend also the far dearest interests of the church of God, involved in so many ways with those of the country in which it is planted. He protects all of these precious objects by the exercise of the noblest attributes of manhood, courage, self-devotion, faith in God.[161]

From this, he notes that "[t]he glory of the soldier's prowess has always" stirred up the hearts of the people, and how some see this as a "remnant of the more bloody and ruthless ideas of Paganism … unworthy … of a Christian age" where the "true hero" is the philosopher, the inventor, or the peaceful man. But, says Dabney, although there is a "black deformity … [a] counterfeit" to "*true* military glory," these attest to the latter reality rather than deny it.[162]

From these he begins to describe what characterizes the "true glory of the Christian soldier." First, his courage is not unthinking and amoral; rather, it is courage because it is found in a duty to uphold "the home, the life and the love." That is, "Christian courage is but another name for self-sacrifice."[163] Second, "the temper of the Christian soldier is also one of high faith and profound submission to God," that is, he accepts God's hand as he, with every nerve, "strain[s] to perform the task allotted by providence of the hour, manfully, and if in its performance death or defeat is met, all is well."[164] Then, Dabney continues by saying:

> I am not one of those who hold that these sentiments are the birth only of pagan ferocity, or unholy pride. The principles of personal honor and the love of glory have been perverted among us into a code of wickedness and bloody retaliation [the duel], for which we now doubtless suffer the chastisement of an offended God…. But there is a true glory and a true honor, that which cometh from God and not from man: the glory of duty done, of obstacles overcome, of fears resisted, and of generous sacrifices made to a worthy cause, the honor of an integrity of principle stronger than the sense of pain or the fear of death. He deserves most of the honor who from pure motives braves the direst evils and pays the costliest sacrifice for the noblest object.[165]

Thus, we see Dabney integrating the cause of the war, a defensive war, with the heart of the soldier. The duty of this soldier is rooted in his Christianity, and so, he takes up his duty as a soldier not out of base ferocity, but out of duty toward his family, his society, and, also, the church. Furthermore, he is a man, in his martial duties, who has a deep faith and submission toward God. Buta clearer expression of this combination of martial honor with Christian virtue is seen in his sermon titled "True Courage," in which he states:

157. Dabney, "The Christian Soldier," in Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological,* vol. I, (1890; reprint, London: Banner of Truth, 1967) p. 614.
158. "The Christian Soldier," pp. 614–615.
159. "The Christian Soldier," p. 616.
160. "The Christian Soldier," p. 616.
161. "The Christian Soldier," p. 617.
162. "The Christian Soldier," pp. 617, 618.
163. "The Christian Soldier," pp. 618, 619.
164. "The Christian Soldier," p. 620.
165. "The Christian Soldier," p. 622.

> *… he is the bravest man who is the best Christian. It is he who truly fears God, who is entitled to fear nothing else.* [That is to say,] [h]e whose conduct is governed by the fear of God, is brave, because the powers of the soul are in harmony. [Also, he believes that] … [b]y that almighty and omniscient providence, all events are either produced; or at least permitted, limited, and overruled…. Each particular act among the most multitudinous which confound our attention by their number, or the most fortuitous, which entirely baffle our inquiry into their causes, is regulated by this intelligent purpose of God.[166]

Previously, Dabney notes that the glory that comes from God is of a man who self-sacrificially gives himself for that which he cares about. But, in this sermon, the connection between soldier and Christian is eclipsed as he asserts that the "bravest man is the best Christian." Thus, it is not merely one who is honorable in battle, but one who fears God and trusts in his providential hand, namely, the Christian. To put it another way, the most honorable, and worthy of glory and esteem, is the Christian man.

Now, concluding this section on Dabney during the Civil War period, we can note that he was fierce in his indignation from the start of it, moving away from his earlier moderation. The "War of Northern Aggression," as perhaps he would see it, has placed the South on the defensive, and thus, their war is a just war. Having served both as a chaplain to a regiment, and as the chief of staff to "Stonewall" Jackson, albeit for only a short time, he is thoroughly immersed in the "righteous" cause of the South.

But, because he couldn't serve in the lines of battle, he chose to fight with the eloquent word of his pen. Consequently, two works were produced by him during this time: *A Defence of Virginia (and Through Her, of the South*) and *Life and Campaigns of Lt. Gen. T. J. Stonewall Jackson*. The former, written in the latter years of the Civil War, wasn't published until its end in 1867, and the latter was finished "a little before the surrender at Appomattox."[167] Although these works were written during the War, they reflect the thought of Dabney even as he entered the postbellum period. In fact, both *A Defence* and *Life of Jackson* were printed after the war, in 1867, and much of his concern in these works will be seen, albeit more strikingly, as we move into the next era.

Postbellum[168]

At the end of the Civil War at Appomattox, we see Dabney hiding himself "in Buckingham … to escape being carried off to a Northern prison. When he came back to Hampden-Sidney, he found his wife and children safe, but his home pillaged."[169] Given to thoughts of leaving the United States, in a letter to his brother, he writes:

> … the least *tolerable* part of the United States would be a good neighborhood in the Valley of Virginia; fewer free negroes to blight it … but I have no idea of removing to settle again *anywhere* under Yankee despotism. The real motive … for seeking a new country is not the petulant feelings of pride galled by defeat, nor any reference to future hard times … It is a regard to the moral well-being of myself and children…. To my children, life under a mean, brutal despotism must be a gradual school of lax principle and degraded aim. If history teaches us anything, it teaches that the subjects of such governments always become a mean people.[170]

Later, in a letter to Dr. Hoge, he writes:

> I do not see what reasonable ground of hope there is … When we said, during the war, that we were contending for everything which makes the heritage of a free, Christian people dear to them, I, for one, believed what I said, and as I see we are whipped, I must regard all this as lost…. It appears to me that there are only two prospects for the South. Parts of it will continue under the present paralysis, until they sink permanently … Other parts, as Northern Virginia and the Valley, will again see material prosperity; but only by being completely Yankeeized.[171]

Here, we see Dabney, upon defeat, pitting an evil Yankeeism against a once-righteous South, and, given the defeat of the South in the war, he expressed a deep sense of hopelessness, even toying with the idea of leaving the country. Later, in the same letter, he writes:

166. Dabney, "True Courage," in Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological,* vol. III, (1890; reprint, London: Banner of Truth, 1967), pp. 456–458.

167. Johnson, *Life and Letters of Dabney*, p. 281.

168. Given the fact that Dabney lived some 33 years after the end of the Civil War, we will only trace in brief some of the main events during this period of his life while giving attention what seems expedient in order to gain an understanding of Dabney during this period, hence, selections will be limited.

169. Johnson, *Life and Letters of Dabney,* p. 292.

170. Dabney to his brother, August 7, 1865, in Johnson, *Life and Letters of Dabney,* p. 304.

171. Dabney to Dr. Moses Hoge, August 16, 1865, in Johnson, *Life and Letters of Dabney,* pp. 304–305.

> … people do not allow for the poisonous moral effects of an oppressive government…. I fear the independence, the honor, the hospitability, the integrity, the everything which constituted the Southern character, is gone forever. The Yankee said they would conquer the South, or exterminate it. They *have done* the latter, literally.[172]

After discussing a variety of options of where to leave to such as Brazil, New Zealand, and Australia,[173] he writes:

> Isn't it a little queer that I should be lectured on the great crime of deserting the interests of Southern Christianity, I, who have devoted my life to Virginia, and persistently refused the most brilliant allurements to the Fifth Avenue, New York, or to Princeton, for my dear love to our own mother? These plans … of emigration are prompted by the same fidelity, because I fear that the only way to save Virginia is to take her out of Virginia…. to take Virginia, along with myself, away from that race [the Yankees].[174]

We see here Dabney's thought that the only way to preserve the "Southern character" is, perhaps, to remove her to somewhere else away from the dangers of the North. Now, this is not merely a Southern identity, but a Southern Christianity that he wishes to preserve. He states, "… the only way to save any of the true Christianity of the South is to transplant it as quick as possible."[175] He later gave up his thought of emigration.[176] Continuing his pastoral duties at College Church, Dabney, deeply affected by the loss of the war, "did an unusual amount of pastoral visiting … No people could have had a pastor who sympathized with them more."[177] Not only do we have a man who still held to his ideas, as he so vehemently reasserted above, and yet, he is no longer a member of the same society. That is, the institution of slavery which was so fundamental to it was now abolished, and those slaves, who, as we noted earlier, were only able to be slaves in relation to whites, according to prevailing opinion, were now emancipated. With this, the question of the ecclesiastical office in relation to African-Americans had to be answered.

At a meeting at the Synod of Virginia on Nov. 9, 1867, Dabney gave a speech about the ecclesiastical equality of "Negroes." This speech arose when a resolution for an overture to be brought before the General Assembly was proposed, which stated, concerning the ordination to "the full work of the gospel ministry" that "ordination … is to be given to all those called of God to, and qualified for the work, without respect of persons."[178] When a motion for "indefinite postponement" was rejected, and a debate about the issue arose, Dabney felt the need to speak.[179]

He speaks to the statement that "ordination" is "without respect of persons," by stating that all present would "assent to this general proposition," but then, he asks, "… in which meaning is it meant to be taken?" First, he states that if evidence of "God's *call* and *qualification*" can be seen as "fatally defective" with regard to blacks as there exists "an insuperable difference of race, made by God and not man, and of character and social condition, makes it plainly impossible for a black man to teach and rule white Christians for edification," then he "adopts it." Second, he states, concerning the resolution, "Or does it mean that it is right to ordain a black man—if we have any such—possessed of the piety, integrity and learning required by our standards, to preach to black Presbyterian congregations, if we have any? Then I adopt it."[180]

After asking if it in fact means that black men would be "co-equal member[s]" of the presbytery, and seeing approving nods in this direction, he states, "I am utterly opposed to you," and he goes on to call this "agitation … unpractical" as "the negro is not coming to you." Rather, he insists, "[they] wholly prefer the Yankee to you." Further, he voices his doubts that a "negro" exists who could "come fully up to that high standard … which our constitution requires"; instead, the overture will be passed and used as a "pretext for a partial and odious lowering of our standard in favor of negroes."[181]

Sadly, Dabney's racism continues to swell in this speech. First, they would not be worthy to be equal members of the presbytery with the white man; second, they could not even obtain to the high standards required of Presbyterian ministers, and, in fact, we would have to lower the bar because of their lack. But, more blatantly, he states, "I oppose the entrusting of … our church in any degree … to black rulers, because that

172. Dabney to Dr. Moses Hoge, August 16, 1865, in Johnson, *Life and Letters of Dabney,* p. 305.
173. Johnson, *Life and Letters of Dabney*, pp. 305–306.
174. Dabney to Dr. Moses Hoge, August 16, 1865; in Johnson, *Life and Letters,* p. 307.
175. Johnson, *Life and Letters,* p. 305.
176. Charles Wilson Reagan, "Robert Lewis Dabney: Religion and the Southern Holocaust," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 89 (Jan., 1981), p. 83.
177. Johnson, *Life and Letters of Dabney*, p. 318.
178. Dabney, "Ecclesiastical Equality of Negroes," in Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological,* vol. II, (1890; reprint, London: Banner of Truth, 1967), p. 199.
179. Dabney, "Ecclesiastical Equality of Negroes," p. 200.
180. Dabney, "Ecclesiastical Equality of Negroes," p. 201.
181. Dabney, "Ecclesiastical Equality of Negroes," p. 202.

race is not trustworthy for such position. There may be a *few exceptions*—I do not believe I have seen one, though I have known negroes whom I both respected and loved in their proper position."[182]

Later, he says:

> They have measured accurately the degrading effects of subjugation, of poverty, of grinding oppression, of despair, upon a people once chivalrous…. They know the ever-increasing assumption of the negro's [*sic*] character, growing in indulgence. Hence … once political equality is confirmed for blacks … [it will lead to] … *social equality* … Yes, sir, these tyrants [the North] know that if they can mix the race of Washington and Lee and Jackson with this base herd which they brought from the fens of Africa … the adulterous current will never again swell a Virginian's heart with a throb noble enough to make a despot tremble.[183]

Here, we see Dabney at his worst. The plotting Yankee, knowing that the weakening of Southern society will degrade "the chivalrous" South, which will, in turn, lead to the mixing of the black and white races. The former he describes as a "base herd" and the latter holds within its ranks such men of esteem as Washington and Lee. This Yankee plot will prevent any "noble" Southern sentiment to oppose the "adulterous," despotic North.

One might surmise at this point that Dabney is merely angry, resulting in his racist and anti-Northern remarks. It needs to be recognized that his racism,[184] and anti-Northernism, had existed before the war, during the war, and now after the war. But his anger toward the North finds even fuller expression in the 1870s as the Northern Presbyterian church pursues reunification with the PCUS.

In 1870, at the PCUS General Assembly in Louisville, Kentucky, Dabney was elected to be moderator of the Assembly and "discovered that delegations from the Northern united church … had come to seek fraternal relations."[185] While cordial, Dabney referred "the whole matter to the committee of foreign correspondence," whose head was B. M. Palmer. The report of this committee demanded that all Northern political platforms must be "disavowed" and all "broad church men" be removed. This report was rejected by some, and Dabney, sensing the danger of reunion with the Northern church stated, "Mr. Chairman, I do not forgive. I do not try to forgive. What! Forgive these people, who have invaded our country … spread desolation and ruin over our land! … they have destroyed us."[186]

As this theme of reunion continued, Dabney continued to have responses. A series of articles titled "Fraternal Relations" serve to demonstrate his opposition to a North/South reunion.[187] He says:

> Good men [say] that past grievances ought not to prevent "fraternal relations" with those whom we recognize as, notwithstanding the wrongs they have done us, Christian brethren. This seems almost self-evident: that we should not be *unfraternal* toward admitted *fratres*! But we ask: What are "fraternal relations?"… We have allowed the Northern Presbyterians … to assume that "fraternal relations" are nothing else than a certain very questionable … custom of interchanging annual compliments and flatteries by dignified delegates.[188]

From this, Dabney goes on to state that it is the Southern church that has maintained "fraternal relations," and it was, in fact, they who were "unchurching us, usurping our spiritual liberties, hounding on a civil faction to seek our blood." Therefore, "they [are] the only parties who have ever interrupted fraternal relations," yet, they call the Southern church "uncharitable" for not restoring "fraternal relations."[189] So, in sum, if they ruptured the bond, they are the ones that need to restore it. Furthermore, reunion, for Dabney, would be dangerous.

182. Dabney, "Ecclesiastical Equality of Negroes," p. 203.
183. Dabney, "Ecclesiastical Equality of Negroes," p. 206.
184. Dabney's *A Defence of Virginia [And Through Her of the South] in Recent and Pending Contests against the Sectional Party* (Harrisonburg, Va: Sprinkle Pub, 1991), p. 25, demonstrates in thorough detail his racist attitudes toward African-Americans wherein he says: "…. the African race, such as Providence has made it, and where He has placed it in America, slavery was the righteous, the best, yea, the only tolerable relation." Lucas, *Dabney*, p. 118, says of this book: "[its] … burden … [is] to demonstrate that slavery per se was not a sinful social and economic relation. … Dabney ranged widely through historical, biblical, and economic arguments" to prove this.
185. Lucas, *Dabney*, p. 151. See also Fortson, *The Presbyterian Creed*, pp. 232–38.
186. Lucas, *Dabney*, pp. 151, 152. This contrasts striking with an early sentiment he expressed fourteen years earlier. Overy states: "In 1956, when as a delegate to the General Assembly meeting in New York [Dabney] made his first trip into the far North, he carefully reported to Virginia Presbyterians the harmony and good will he had seen. …. he announced proudly that the Presbyterian Church [united, North and South] remained the only 'great conservative religious body' standing undividedly 'in the breach.'" Overy, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 78–79.
187. Dabney, "Fraternal Relations," *Southwestern Presbyterian,* January 4; February 15, 1877; in Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological,* vol. II, (1890; reprint, London: Banner of Truth, 1967), p. 472.
188. "Fraternal Relations," p. 481.
189. "Fraternal Relations," p. 482.

Responding to the argument of some that the North and South churches "were formerly associates, they bear the same name … they profess to hold the same doctrines and constitutions," and therefore, "special intimacy" should be shared between the two churches, he states:

> Because we do [share much with them], we should have least to do with them. It is not from Yankee Congregationalism … or even Northern Popery, that the present danger arises! No; the peril of having principles sophisticated—an imminent peril—is from these former associates; and it is because of the former intimacy that the peril rises thence.[190]

Thus, for Dabney, given the closeness of the two bodies, the North is a greater danger to the South than even Roman Catholicism. So, we have seen both his continued adherence to a racist South, formerly defined by slavery, and we have seen his distrust and caricature of the North, a sentiment that is corollary of the pride of place the old way of the South has in his mind and heart. But, further, as a voice of the Lost Cause, he gave a speech at the "Annual Commencement of Hampden-Sydney College, June 15, 1882, before the Philanthropic and Union Literary Societies" titled "The New South."[191] Here, he echoes the classical republicanism (of the Southern variety), which denied natural rights, when he says:

> Our fathers valued liberty, but the liberty for which they contended was each person's privilege to do those things and those things only which God's law and Providence gave him a moral right. The liberty of nature which your modern asserts is absolute license; the privilege of doing whatever a corrupt will craves … But now, by this new Republicanism, the supreme law is the will or caprice of what happens to be *the major mob*, the suggestion of the demagogue who is most artful to seduce.[192]

Southern classical republicanism also critiqued the free-market economy of the North, seeing it as inevitably creating worsening conditions for the employee. Dabney, reflecting this, states:

> Once the commonwealth owned all the highways by water and by land, and each private citizen might become a carrier of if he chose. Now the highways of property of great carrying corporations, who command more men as the disciplined *employees* than the government's own standing army, before whose revenues the whole income of commonwealths are paltry trifles; to whose will legislatures bow. Each of these roads point virtually to New York.[193]

He goes on to discuss how manufacturing has moved from "the occupation of people *in their homes*" to "vast factories, owned by monopolies," which "now undersell the home products everywhere." With the mass of capital collected by these monopolies, "the free-holding citizen is sunk into the multitudinous hireling proletariat."[194] He then proceeds to compare the old way of wealth with the new way:

> When our late constitution was enacted, American citizens enjoyed a general equality of fortune and comfort, which made a real, republican equality of rights practical…. The richest citizen was only a farmer, somewhat more abounding than his neighbor in the breadth of his fields…. some of our "kings of industry" count their incomes by almost [$20,000] dollars a day. Set … a Vanderbilt … beside the hireling laborer in his tenement-lodging, who is his theoretical EQUAL! Yes, the starving hireling's vote … shall count for precisely as much as the vote of Vanderbilt…. This enormous inequality in wealth will seek to protect, to assert itself in politics. But our new-fangled Republicanism asserts that, politically, the Vanderbilt shall be the precise equivalent of the pauper. It leaves the rich man no legitimate form, for the assertion of his superior weight or the protection of his superior interests in the State.[195]

And because the rich man will seek a way to assert his "superior weight," wealth will become corrupt, and with it, the "institutions of the land." Later he speaks of directly of the "new South," saying:

> "The North triumphed by its wealth." Here is the temptation of the New South, to which I already see ominous symptoms of yielding, to make wealth the idol, the all in all of sectional greatness…. young men … exclaim: Let us develop! develop! develop! Let us have, like our conquerors, great cities … great factories and commerce … then we shall cope with them…. [Although] a knowledge, and hardy, diligent practice of

190. "Fraternal Relations," p. 483.
191. Dabney, "The New South," in Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions,* 4 vols. (1890–97; repr., Harrisonburg, Va.: Sprinkle, 1994), IV, p. 3.
192. "The New South," pp. 6, 7.
193. "The New South," p. 7.
194. "The New South," p. 8.
195. "The New South," p. 9.

> the industries of production are among the civic virtues which it behooves the New South to cultivate…. you have to learn … how to combine possession of great wealth with the personal practices of simplicity, hardihood and self-sacrifice.[196]

Here, we see Dabney, recognizing that some industry needs to happen, while at the same time encouraging his audience to have strong characters characterized by such traits as "self-sacrifice." One can recall that this concept of "self-sacrifice" draws us back to Dabney's earlier portrayal of the truly glorious soldier as having bravery in battle out of "self-sacrifice," thus, he probably is implying here a Christian character. And, like a Lost Cause proponent, he says, "It behooves the New South … to see it to retain all that was true in its principles or ennobling in its example." And later, he says, "… constitution and laws may change, but honor, justice and right are immutable."[197] Drawing on the old, brave history of the War, he states:

> As long as the hearts of the New South thrill with the generous though defeated endurance of the men of 1861; as long as they cherish these martyrs of constitutional liberty as the glory of the State and its history, you will be safe from any base decadence. If the [next] generation … learns to be ashamed of these men … that will be the moral death of Virginia.

Like those in the Lost Cause "tradition," Dabney calls the youth of a new generation, indeed, of a "New South," to remember the glorious sacrifice of the martyrs of "constitutional liberty," as well as the principles and "ennobling" examples of the Old South past. These principles, in Dabney's mind, are Christian principles, and these examples of heroic soldier-martyrs draw on his earlier combination of the soldier's glory with the Christian's honor.

To put it differently, his description of these soldiers as martyrs, drawing on Christian conceptions, and his encouragement to his audience that the remembrance of them will guard them "from any base decadence," seems to fit with Wilson's thesis of the Lost Cause as a civil religion, that is, the interpretation of history by transcendental, or, in this case, religious realities. In sum, with the exception of direct statements about race, Dabney drew upon many of the themes that we have seen in our discussion of the antebellum South, and the basic "cultural" preservations of its ideals in the postbellum Lost Cause, as he addressed a "New South" generation.

196. "The New South," pp. 18, 19.
197. "The New South," pp. 21, 22.

Evaluation/Synthesis

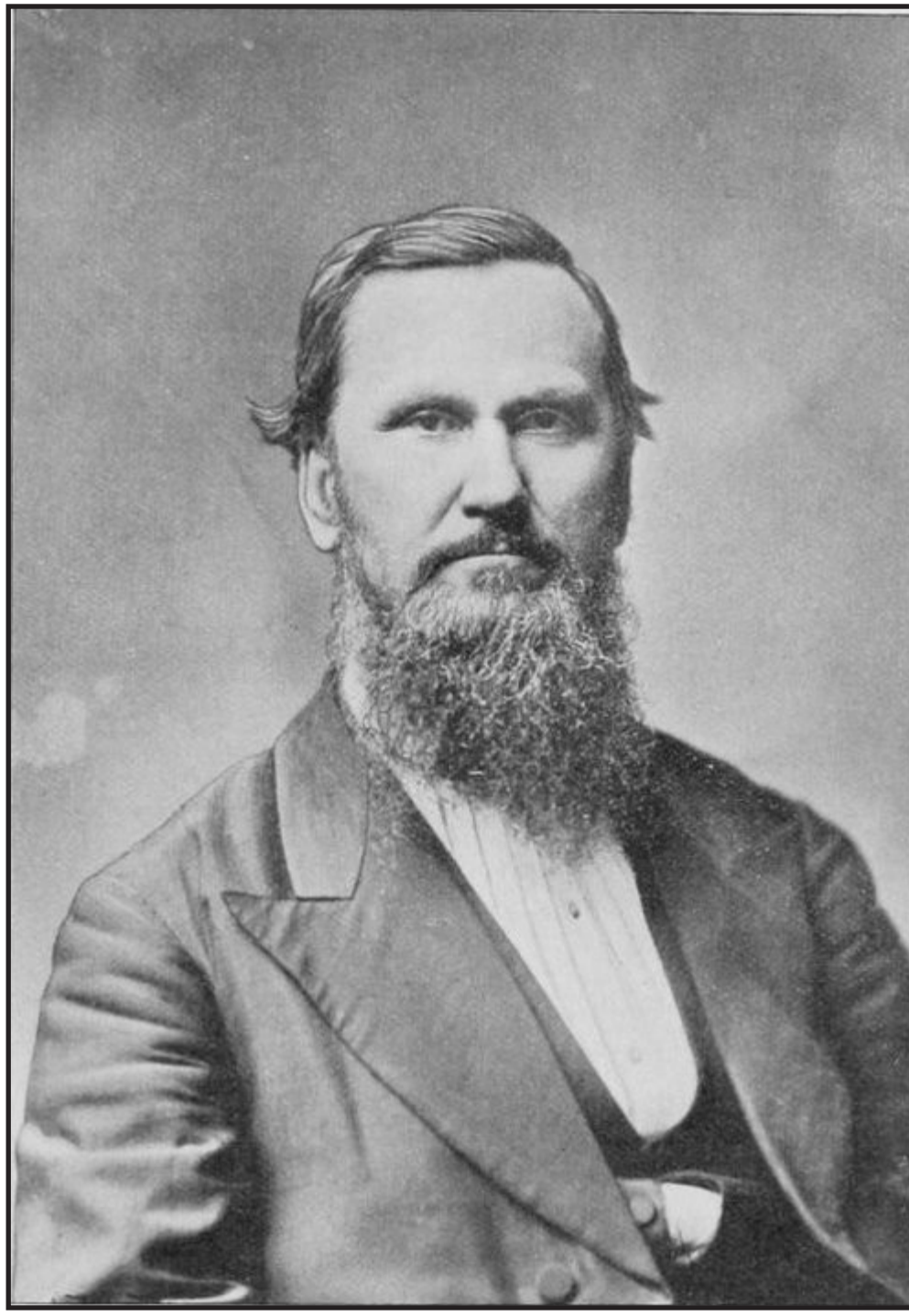
Having looked at Dabney's life, while occasionally noting the context in which he lived, it is the purpose of this section to evaluate and synthesize that which we have learned of him.

Dabney, born in 1820, ten years before the "antebellum" period, to a family who, although not belonging to the wealthiest members of society, still had a prominent social standing and place in the region of Virginia in which they lived. In fact, the Dabneys' had lived in Virginia since the latter half of the 17th century, and as a large land-owning family, they enjoyed the privileges of the station by holding various positions of power and influence and by possessing the one commodity that marked one as belonging to the higher strata of society, namely, slaves.

Undeniably, with the upbringing of Robert Dabney on a plantation, learning the task of caring for and directing the slaves by his father, he was enmeshed from the start in what would qualify as a distinctly Southern upbringing. For him and his family, this meant a Christian form of gentility, where reputation was prized alongside piety. But they were not merely Southern gentry, they were Virginian gentry, and thus, they strongly identified with, and found a home in Virginia. This identification was strengthened in their identity as Virginian Presbyterians. The blending of the aristocratic ideals of a large land-holding family, a strong sense of regional loyalty, and an emphasis on piety and Presbyterianism were the beginning influences brought to bear on Dabney's life.

Later, we see this loyalty to his region, and more importantly, to his family and sense of identity play out in his college and seminary years with his initial impression when entering into Hampden-Sydney College, the University of Virginia, and later, Union Theological Seminary being one of skepticism toward, and distrust and disparagement of, his fellow students. In fact, one could describe his attitudes during these periods as prudish and unusual for a young man, but, alas, this was his way.

Throughout these years, it seems that he is self-conscious about his station in life. He disparaged working under a particular school tutor, because he was of a higher caste, and, later, in the face of wealthier aristocratic students, we see him recoil in disgust at their



Robert Lewis Dabney, Hampton Sydney, Va., 1872 or 1873. Frontispiece, *In Memoriam Robert Lewis Dabney* (Knoxville: University Tennessee Press, 1899).

juvenile and unbecoming behaviors, and, consequently, lack of attention to their studies. Although belonging to the Virginian gentry, by right of birth and family repute, he did not merely frolic in this station, but rather had a sense of sacrifice and hard work. Thus, perhaps here, we can detect the particularbrand of gentility to which he belonged, that is, a more pietistic, moralistic, and, at least implicitly, Christian one, which, forsaking

the rough and forceful characteristics of those who he saw as flaunting their station, focused on the value of character not merely repute.

Coupled with, and perhaps inseparable from his gentility, we see his fierce allegiance to all things Virginia, and consequently, animosity toward all that is not, in his assessments of both students and professors. At the University, he only favors those teachers who seem to reflect Virginia's best, and he despises and distrusts those who are foreign and outside, and with this, we see his early hostility to what he saw as the antithesis of the Virginian, namely, the Yankee. Upon attending seminary, those below his station were seen to be uninteresting and not reflecting those genteel manners which would guide the community. But, more positively, it is here that his Christian and, moreover, Presbyterian identity was fostered.

As we enter his thirties, which is also known as the "late antebellum period," his animosity toward the Yankees continues to grow as the "peculiar" Southern institution of slavery is in the throes of attack. He is both a benefiter and supporter of this institution, and sees it as necessary to the integrity of a Southern society, with the outside, and basically non-Christian, influences of the North seeking to encroach upon the South, but the South is the one who holds moral superiority. Thus, we see the blending of slavery, paternalism, and Christianity occurring in Dabney's mind, reflecting the characteristics of many Southerners at that time.

But, despite his strong beliefs, Dabney was also a voice of moderation during this period of his life. Seeing the damage that would result if sectionalism continued, he earnestly pleaded with and rebuked Southern readers in the pages of different religious journals. This stands in striking contrast to the theme of "anti-Yankee" sentiment that we have already seen, or so it seems. Perhaps a better way to understand it is to recognize that Dabney, while distrusting outside influences, and even sensing the growing aggression of the North, was also a gentleman and a Christian.

As a gentleman, reasonableness, moderation, and caution are prized over violent retribution, or manly valor in combat. That is, passion is less favorable than dispassionate reason and thoughtfulness. This becomes clearer as we recognize that, as the Civil War approached, not only he but many in Virginia were opposed to such a passionate and ill-meaning action as secession. But, also, as a Christian, violent recourse was not an option nor was passionate hatred. Rather, Christian love, forgiveness and restraint, which honored God's reputation, were better than a premature violence which served the opposite effect of dishonoring Christ and Christianity.

Later, as Civil War seemed more imminent in 1860–61, we see Dabney directly criticizing the "primal" form of honor, which fueled the duel, and which now fuels secession. Again, in the train of a more Christian gentility, the premature insolence of the South Carolinian secession stands in marked contrast to the moderation and reasonableness of Dabney's attitude. But, as Civil War commences, the primal honor which he formerly combated begins to override his prior modesty and forbearance.

The South, and, thus, Virginia, has been dishonored by the Northern persistence. It is at this time that we see Dabney clearly employing the vocabulary of the "code of honor," and also, it is at this time that we see a marked shift in Dabney's tone from a strident unionist with proslavery sentiments, to a proslavery, pro-secession, and pro-war advocate. Following the train of the just war theory, he sees the war as entirely permissible as a righteous South is being coerced and invaded by a tyrannical North. Thus, theirs is a defensive, and, hence, just war.

The primal honor which characterized his words as the war began meets with his responsibilities as a chaplain, a non-combatant. Here, he is in the same place as a surgeon, and thus, removed from the ability to partake in the display of honor and bravery that characterizes a man in war. Perhaps it was this pull toward primal honor which caused him, unbeknownst to his family, to ride "as an orderly for the colonel" during a battle. Later, he blended the roles of soldier and minister when he served as "chief of staff" to "Stonewall" Jackson. But, a poor constitution, which led to constant sickness throughout his life, also caused him to resign from the army as chief of staff.

From here, no longer able to contribute to the war effort by serving on the field, he contributed by writing two powerful books that promoted and defended the Southern cause and way of life. That is to say, he fought with pen rather than sword. Later, he gave two sermons, one of which was in honor of the fallen "Stonewall" Jackson. In these sermons, we see his attempts to bring the honor of the soldier, perhaps a "primal" honor, under the greater honor that is enjoyed by those who follow Christ. Even more, he redefines bravery as preeminently possessed by those who fear God.

Thus, it seems, he is seeking to lift the Christian, and consequently, the Christian minister and teacher, into a place of preeminent honor. Although a soldier garners fame and glory, the true glory of a soldier comes

when they, while desiring peace and safety, sacrifice themselves for others—an action which all Christians are required to do as their head, Jesus Christ, has done. It seems fair to say that he is attempting to navigate the tension that exists between the valorous, primal honor of the man on the battlefield with the moderate, reasonable, and pietistic (and scholarly) man of gentlemanly honor. Clearly, he is the latter in many respects, and, as a passionate lover of his section, a passionate lover of her institutions and ways, and a passionate lover of the Christian faith that she powerfully seemed to embody, he needs to find a way to serve and sacrifice for his home, family and love.[198]

Now, turning to the postbellum period, we see Dabney, who has such passion, zeal and love for his section and his God, which are not mutually exclusive, turn into a man of anger and unforgiveness. As a man of integrity, and truly believing what he claimed he believed, it is understandable the internal crisis he felt. But, with this, the distrust of the "Yankee" already solidified into animosity during the Civil War only to turn into a complete distrust of all Yankees even those who share a common Presbyterian and Christian heritage.

Also, given that the institution of slavery was so bound up with the moral integrity of the South in the minds of Southerners, not least in Dabney's mind, it is understandable that he feels that there is no other recourse but to leave a situation of spiritual darkness (i.e. Yankee rule). To put it another way, his regional loyalty is still fierce, yet, he has no home to rest as Virginia, and the South, has been dramatically changed. Therefore, hope of a righteous society is also lost, which contained those values which are eminently good and honorable. He, like the South, is, in a word: crushed.

His adherence to the Old South dogma of the proper relation to exist between the black and white man finds forceful expression as he opposes ecclesiastical equality with blacks. To him, like before, they merely stand in a servile and diminished position in relation to the white man. In fact, not only will they be unable to qualify as Presbyterian ministers, but also, the bar will need to be lowered for them because of their, it seems, intrinsic ineptitude. For Dabney, they are closer to cattle than they are to great men such as Washington and Lee. That is, they are belonging to a different species of human, although earlier he had challenged the abuses and neglect toward slaves and spoke of their "essential humanity." Thus, a postwar Dabney was, perhaps, an even a more passionate and convinced racist than before the war.

As late as 1882, when Dabney is in his sixty-second year, he is still a staunch defender of an older way, a now perhaps dead way, the Old South. The powerful lecture titled "New South" shows a competent understanding of socio-economic issues but, moreover, it shows a strong adherence to the doctrine that teaches that "free labor" capitalism is inherently destructive to society. This criticism, and his continual plea with his audience to remember the Christian-soldiers, the Christian, and thus, righteous cause of the Old South, places him in the tradition, the myth, and the civic religion that is the Lost Cause. So, his is a prophetic voice, not looking forward, but rather, looking back to a glory-filled past (the quintessential "good old days") and calling the new generation of Southerners to repent and behold her former glory.

The next year "he accepted the position of professor of philosophy" at the newly constituted University of Texas, which, in effect, became his "southwestern exile." Shortly after this, he founded "the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary," and later, in 1888, asked his friend Thomas C. Johnson to teach there. But, in 1890, he again remembered his old home, Virginia, and desired the company of the gentry of that land; at the same time, he began to see the growth of "Yankee" sentiments in the University of Texas. Later, in 1894, he was asked to resign.[199]

The diminishing quality of the University he attributed to the decline of the South after the fall of the confederacy as well as the influence of Yankees on campus. Exhibiting his characteristic despondency toward all that was not becoming of him, he was repulsed by Texas, and although he would die there in 1896, he asked his son to bury him in Virginia.[200] Wilson describing the scene, says, "The old minister died … and Charles Dabney returned his father's body, clothed in Confederate uniform, to Virginia, where he rests at Hampden-Sydney."[201]

As Dabney nears the end of his life, in exile, and estranged from his long residence and home in Virginia, we see a man who held on to his convictions about what is a right and ordered society, and how this society upholds a pious, conservative and God-fearing religion. Truly, just as he pronounced his views with integrity before the war, here, we see him hold on to

198. Lucas, *Dabney*, p. 129, also reflects this view when he states: "According to Dabney's way of thinking … he was as heroic, as honorable as Jackson himself—for they both feared Jesus Christ above all else. This redefinition of honor and manhood … was Dabney's attempt to rationalize his avoidance of the war and to reclaim his manly honor."
199. Charles Wilson Reagan, "Robert Lewis Dabney: Religion and the Southern Holocaust," pp. 86–87.
200. Reagan, pp. 88–89.
201. Reagan, p. 89.

them, for to do otherwise would be to lose himself and all that he stood for, and, in turn, be a traitor to the glorious Old South.

Concluding Thoughts

No matter how you dice it up, Dabney, perhaps like all of us when analyzed by one sitting in a time distant from our own, is a complex man. He is a man who provides a picture into a different way of life, namely, the Southern way. He is a man who embodies some of the best that conservative, and Reformed, religion has to offer. He is a man who, despite potential disgust with him, had achieved great things and left a mark on the society in which he lived, but, furthermore, his impact is still felt, albeit perhaps more as the foil rather than the protagonist.

Upon reflecting on Dabney in his broader Old South context, one is left with the impression that any of us could be misguided and deceived by the culture in which we live. Truly, a man of such great intelligence as Dabney, who was able to effectively wield the intellectual swords of theology, economics, history, and politics, among others, could see the inherent contradictions in his position as both a Christian and a Virginian, slaveholding gentleman. Or could he?

It is easy for us to look at the man and think that we would somehow triumph over the evil that was slavery for we deeply cherish the truth that all are the same in the sight of God, all our equalized by sin and salvation. But, if we were in fact, from the start of our lives, the wielders of a power over human beings that literally and truly robbed them of their freedom, forcing them to do our will rather than their own, would we emancipate them from our control?

As a complementarian in my view of women in the church, some of the thoughts of the Southern sense of hierarchy resonated as true. Truly, a society without order is anarchy, a chaotic rumble, only fit for those who are, at best, unchristian … or so the sentiment goes. Romans 13 speaks of the role of government in God's plan, that is, his sustaining of government for the purpose of providing order and protection for the innocent. In a society, especially among the younger generations, where all allegiance or obedience to authority is questioned and deeply distrusted, it seems that perhaps Dabney and friends had a point.

So, to conclude, Dabney is a prime example of how the church interacts with culture. With regard to the North in which he and others perceived the seeds of irreligion, Dabney was against the culture. He was fiercely antagonistic to the North, and all that it stood for, and, yes, although his Christianity was mixed with the values of honor and a classical republicanism, there was something within him as a man of God, as a Christian, and as a pastor-theologian, that perceived rightly some of the dangers inherent in American realities.

Regarding the South, he was nursed at her breast, and feed with her food from the day he was born. Not only was he a Southerner, but he was a fairly wealthy, upper-strata Southerner (at least for a while), so he had much invested in the old ways and roads of the South.

Like so many others of his day, his Christianity was blended with his culture, and, at times influences it, as with reforming of slavery abuse and neglect, with his contention against duels, and at times conforming to it. Sadly, the latter is the more prominent heritage in many ways. Southern Christianity, especially during the prewar, and war times (and some, like Dabney, the postwar times), was, it must be said, a syncretistic religion which was so tragically blind to its moral failures concerning the African that it exerted much effort and will to uphold his bondage.

Now, returning to earlier thoughts of this section, we must not be deceived in thinking that we stand above Dabney because of our refined and purified conscience, and high sense of good. Rather, we need to see Dabney as a complex man. That is to say, a deeply religious man; a man who lived most of his adult life serving his family and the church, both local and universal, and a man who believed with all the integrity of his heart that the Southern way was the right way. Would that God, and Christ, our perfect high priest and savior, keep us from falling and bowing down to the often shouting and seducing voice of a culture with a seared conscience.▪

Deviant Old School Calvinism?

Robert Lewis Dabney and the Doctrine of God

By Scott Cook

Introduction

Robert Lewis Dabney (1820–1898) identified with the Old School movement within the American Presbyterian church. The Old School men were thoroughly conservative, both theologically and culturally. As the Edwardsians and New School winds of change blew through Presbyterianism from the Northeast, the Old School men objected to theological novelty. They argued in defense of the Calvinism of the Westminster Standards. As such, the Old School Presbyterians believed that ministers should strictly subscribe to the Standards when they take their ordination vow. That is, they believed that a minister should subscribe to the whole system of doctrine expressed in the Westminster Standards. Dabney's identification with the Old School, then, would suggest that he held strictly to all the significant propositions of the Standards. The reality, however, is more complicated. The doctrine of God is one area in Dabney's theology where he rejected, or at best modified, the older Calvinist doctrine of God.

The reasons for Dabney's deviation from the Standards regarding the doctrine of God are complex and complicated. The Westminster Divines were pre-Modern men. Rene Descartes' (1596–1650) seminal work *Meditations on First Philosophy* was not yet three years old when Parliament convened the Divines in Westminster in 1643. It would be over one hundred years after the conclusion of the Assembly that David Hume (1711–1776) would awaken a young Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) from his "dogmatic slumber." The Divines, then, were working with a theological inheritance that was Patristic, Scholastic, Lutheran, and Reformed—all of which belonged to the pre-Modern world. R. L. Dabney, by contrast, came of age in the Modern world and in the New World. There is a great deal of historical, sociological, theological, and philosophical differences between the world in which Dabney was raised and that of the Westminster Assembly. Dabney, as a man of his time, constructed a doctrine of God that was out of step with the Westminster Standards and the tradition of Classical Theism.

This paper argues that Dabney's doctrine of God stands in opposition to the doctrine of God in the Westminster Standards. Put more specifically, Dabney rejected the Westminster Standards' view of the simplicity, eternity, immutability, and impassability of God, along with the Westminster view of Trinitarian Personhood. One significant reason for Dabney's deviation from Westminster is his particular understanding and use of Scottish Common Sense Realism. Dabney borrowed from the strand of Scottish Common Sense Realism as popularized in America through the writings of Sir William Hamilton (1730–1803). Hamilton's version of Common Sense was a blending of the insights of Thomas Reid (1710–1796) and Immanuel Kant, making consciousness a fundamental principle for epistemology.

This study of Dabney will proceed along the following lines. First, we will set out the doctrine of God in the Westminster Standards. Second, there will be a basic introduction to Scottish Common Sense Realism in general, and William Hamilton's version in particular, along with Dabney's direct comments on the subject. Third, we will walk through Dabney's doctrine of God regarding simplicity, eternity, immutability, impassability, and Trinitarian Personhood, showing his deviation from the Westminster Standards. Finally, the paper will conclude with reflections on how Dabney's subscription

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to the Standards regarding the doctrine of God fits into the overall narrative of Old School Presbyterianism and the subscription controversy.

The Westminster Assembly and the Doctrine of God

The Westminster Assembly addressed the doctrine of God in the Confession and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. The Assembly also commended the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed in the larger group of documents associated with the publication of the Standards. While the Divines articulated views unique to the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition in many areas of theology (such as covenant theology and church government), the Assembly stands in continuity with the Patristic and Scholastic traditions concerning the attributes of God. Scholars refer to the traditional Christian view of God as "Classical Theism."

Classical Theism is a specific form of monotheism that was central to Occidental theology for over a millennium and was also present in various Jewish, Muslim, and pagan theologies.[1] Classical Theism is a nexus of theological loci shaped by the absolute independence of God. God exists without relying upon creation.[2] God's independence guarantees His freedom from the limitations of finite, contingent existence. Advocates of Christian Classical Theism argue their view of God is philosophically rigorous and biblically sound. Classical Theists borrowed freely from pagan philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, to explain their view of God.[3] However, Classical Theists argue their system of thought does not depend on philosophical speculation alone. Philosophical categories often assist in expressing God's transcendence, but the relationship between Classical Theism and pagan philosophy is one of co-belligerence, not mere dependence.[4] The Classical Theist argues that his speculative arguments help to explain the God who transcends man's thought as the sky transcends the earth.

The core conviction of Classical Theism is that the Scriptures assert God's independence from His creation. Moses describes God in Genesis as the One who exists before the cosmos, time, or space. Moses asks God at the burning bush, "What is your name?" God's reply is pregnant with far-ranging theological implications. "'I AM WHO I AM.' And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:14–15). Most theologians understand the Divine Name to reveal God's independence or aseity. [5] Moreover, both the Old and New Testaments teach the aseity of God.[6] The Church Fathers were the first to articulate Christian Classical Theism.[7] The Medieval Scholastics codified and systematized it.[8] The Reformers received it and passed it down to their Protestant successors.[9] Classical Theism is, in other words, the traditional position in Christian theology.[10]

The Confession of Faith takes up the doctrine of God after first detailing the nature of Scripture. The Confession emphasizes that the living God is infinite in His essence and actions. The Assembly affirmed,

> There is but one only living and true God, who is 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, working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal most just and terrible in His judgments; hating all sin; and who will by no means clear the guilty.[11]

The Divines were clear in their affirmation of Classical Theism, specifically with regard to the attributes under

1. See Brian Davies, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 5; Howard Kreisel, "Maimonides' God: The God of Abraham or the God of Aristotle?," in *Judaism as Philosophy*, Studies in Maimonides and the Medieval Jewish Philosophers of Provence (Academic Studies Press, 2015), pp. 3–18.

2. Davies, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 5–8.

3. T. M. Forsyth, "Aristotle's Concept of God as Final Cause," *Philosophy* 22, no. 82 (1947): 112–23; B. A. G. Fuller, "The Theory of God in Book Λ of Aristotle's Metaphysics," *The Philosophical Review* 16, no. 2 (1907): 170–183; George A. Lindbeck, "A Note on Aristotle's Discussion of God and the World," *The Review of Metaphysics* 2, no. 5 (1948): 99–106.

4. John M. Frame, *Aristotle & Plotinus: Early Christian Thought vs. the Philosophers* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Media, 1976).

5. Augustine, *The City of God*, ed. Marcus Dods (New York: Modern Library, 2000), bk. XII.2.

6. Robert M. Grant, *The Early Christian Doctrine of God* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2015), pp. 3–14.

7. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *The Doctrine of God: A Global Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), pp. 57–81.

8. Kärkkäinen, *The Doctrine of God*, pp. 82–100.

9. Kärkkäinen, *The Doctrine of God*, pp. 101–7; *Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary,* ed. Matthew Barrett and Michael Scott Horton (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), pp. 189–241.

10. For a fuller definition of Classical Theism, see David Ray Griffin, *God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy* (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox, 2004), pp. 15–31; Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2003), vol. II–III.

11. Westminster Confession of Faith 2.1.

consideration in our study. The Confession affirms that God is both simple and impassible as God is "a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions." The Divines also affirm the immutability and eternity of God when they write that He is "immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible." This same language appears in the Shorter Catechism's well know definition of God. God is, according to the Shorter Catechism, "a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth."[12] The Larger Catechism uses language similar to the Confession and the Shorter Catechism.[13]

The Westminster Confession further adds that God is absolutely independent of creation and is not in any way dependent upon His creation. "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," the Divines wrote.[14] The Confession takes the strongest possible view of God's aseity. According to the Confession, creatures do not add to the glory of God when they praise Him, nor do the events of history add to the knowledge of God as those events unfold. God is 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." Furthermore, God's knowledge "is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature; so as nothing is to Him contingent or uncertain."[15]

The Confession also addresses the doctrine of the Persons of the Trinity. For the Divines, the simplicity of the divine nature maintains the unity of the Persons as to their essence while the Persons are distinguished from each other by their relationships of origin. The Assembly affirms the traditional position of the Western church that the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, and the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son.[16] The Divines write, "[i]n 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."[17] The Divines discuss the nature of Trinitarian Personhood in the Larger Catechism, albeit in a passing comment. The Larger Catechism refers to the eternal generation of the Son and the double procession of the Spirit as "personal properties."[18] The language of "personal properties" developed in the Middle Ages, particularly in the work of Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173). Victor defined Persons as "an incommunicable existence of the divine nature."[19]

The Language of the Westminster Standards reflects the Classical Theist tradition. The Confession does not go into great length defending or elaborating on its Classical Theism. The unanimity between all parties within Christendom, both Catholic and Protestant, likely explains the Confession's lucid brevity concerning the doctrine of God. Dabney's doctrine of God stands in contrast to the Confession's formulations, particularly with regard to simplicity, immutability, eternity, impassibility, and Trinitarian Personhood.

R. L. Dabney, Old School Presbyterianism, and Scottish Common Sense Realism

Dabney and Old School Presbyterianism

Dabney's fertile mind brought together a number of influences as he dialogued with the doctrine of God found in the Westminster Standards. Sean Michael Lucas paints an accurate portrait of Dabney's intellectual life by noting the confluences of Old School Presbyterianism and Scottish Common Sense Realism. Lucas writes, "Dabney's intellectual world was dominated by patterns that hailed from a synthesis of intellectual values that characterized American theology in the antebellum: the rationality of the Scottish moral philosophy, the evangelical Calvinism of Old School Presbyterianism, in the classical republicanism of the early American Republic."[20]

Old School Presbyterianism was a nineteenth-century theological movement among Presbyterians who reacted to two significant issues in theology and polity.[21] In 1801, the Presbyterian Church adopted a Plan of Union that allowed for cooperation with Congregationalist churches. The Plan allowed for Congregationalist churches to join Presbyteries and Synods without subscribing to the Westminster Standards. The Plan worked

12. Westminster Shorter Catechism Q 4.
13. See Westminster Larger Catechism Q 7.
14. Westminster Confession of Faith 2.2.
15. Westminster Confession of Faith 2.2.
16. Westminster Larger Catechism Q 9.
17. Westminster Confession of Faith 2.3.
18. Ibid, Q 9–10.
19. Richard St. Victor, *On the Trinity*, trans. Ruben Angelici (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), p. 164.
20. Sean Michael Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Pub., 2005), p. 219.
21. D. G. Hart and John R. Muether, *Seeking a Better Country: 300 Years of American Presbyterianism* (Phillipsburg, N.J: P & R Publishing, 2007), pp. 121–27.

for a time until concern grew among the Presbyterians about the presence of Edwardsian or New Theology in the Presbyterian Church through the influence of the New England Congregationalists.[22] Those Presbyterians who were concerned that bringing in the Congregationalists compromised the constitutional integrity of the Church and that of the Calvinistic theological commitments of the denomination came to be called the "Old School." Those who embraced the presence of Congregationalist churches and argued for a broader or more lenient doctrinal attitude were known as the "New School."

The Old School advanced the older Orthodox form of Calvinism both in theology and in polity. They viewed Presbyterian polity as an expression of the divine ordinances of God. Hence, Presbyterian government is not a mere social convention or a pragmatic option. Presbyterianism is the divinely instituted method of church government. The Confession of Faith was the standard for the Church. Ministers and elders, the Old School argued, should subscribe to the theology of the standards in its entirety, while the New School preferred a loose system of subscription.[23] James McGoldrick explains

> "[w]hen it became clear that the Congregational ministers serving Union churches were espousing a New Divinity, that is, an adulteration of historic Calvinism, some orthodox Presbyterians complained. Because they insisted on adherence to the Westminster Standards, they became known thereafter as *Old School* Presbyterians in contrast to the innovators in doctrine labeled *New School* Presbyterians. Old School exponents, in addition to seeking confessional subscription, wanted stricter church control over missionary endeavors. John Witherspoon was a vigorous spokesman for old school concerns, and Princeton was the intellectual center of that movement."[24]

One might presume that Dabney would hold to the Westminster Standard's position on the doctrine of God, given that Dabney belonged to the Old School Party. However, this paper will show the exact opposite. Dabney criticizes the Classical View of God and favors one that conforms more to Modern theological and philosophical systems.

Dabney and Scottish Common Sense Realism

There is no question among Dabney's interpreters that he was committed to Scottish Common Sense Realism (SCSR). Dabney was no slave to any particular teacher of SCSR; instead, his use of SCSR evidenced his eclectic and independent style as a thinker. Lucas captures the importance of SCSR in Dabney's theology, calling SCSR "the glue that held much of [Dabney's] thought together."[25] Dabney devoted a chapter of his systematic theology to "the sources of our thinking," wherein he lays out an SCSR approach to human knowledge. When Dabney took up his pen to write against the materialist philosophy that came about through the influence of Locke's empiricism, Dabney turned to SCSR for the key weapons for his criticisms. Dabney continued to use SCSR in his defense of Scripture, substitutionary atonement, natural theology, and the laws of causation.[26] While the secondary literature has noted the importance and prevalence of SCSR in some areas of Dabney's theology, there are no studies that show how SCSR influenced Dabney's doctrine of God.[27] Hence, this study seeks to make further original contributions by showing how SCSR influenced Dabney's theology proper, creating an anti-Scholastic impulse.

As previously stated, Dabney devotes a section of his systematic theology to the sources of our thinking. Some might ask why a systematic theology should devote this much attention to the source of our knowledge when other fields of study proceed directly to their subject matter without elaboration on the first principles of inquiry. Dabney gives a twofold answer to this question. First, systematic theology is more comprehensive than other fields of study, and hence it is fitting to reflect on important epistemological questions. In addition to its comprehensive nature, theology is much more closely tied to psychology than most other areas of thought. Mathematicians and scientists might have widely different philosophies of science, but they work with the same physical set of data. The theologian, however, works not with physical objects but with "abstract ideas and

22. Nathan P. Feldmeth et al., *Reformed and Evangelical Across Four Centuries: The Presbyterian Story in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2022), pp. 145–48.

23. See Morton H. Smith, "The Case for Full Subscription," in *The Practice of Confessional Subscription*, ed. David Hall (Lanham: University Press of America, 1995), pp. 185–205.

24. James Edward McGoldrick, *Presbyterian and Reformed Churches: A Global History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), p. 213.

25. Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 21.

26. Ibid., pp. 20–21; see also David Kinney Garth, "The Influence of Scottish Common Sense Philosophy on the Theology of James Henley Thornwell and Robert Lewis Dabney" (thesis, Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1979; UMI reprint, 1982).

27. See Ligon Duncan, "Common Sense and American Presbyterianism: An Evaluation of the Impact of Scottish Realism on Princeton and the South" (thesis, St. Louis, MO, Covenant Theological Seminary, 1987).

judgements."[28] This, therefore, is why Dabney chooses to devote a chapter to "mental science," which studies "those fundamental facts and laws of spirit, upon which theological questions most turn."[29]

Dabney begins his reflection by raising the question of whether man is born with innate ideas. Dabney answers very clearly: no. The mind is, however, constituted with certain *innate powers* that generate *a priori laws* that determine how we interact with the information given by our senses. While Dabney appreciates John Locke's arguments against innate ideas, he argues that Locke has gone too far in making man a *tabula rasa*. Locke's radical empiricist impulses have created a sensualist psychology—Dabney's preferred term for what we would call *materialistic* psychology—that confuses the occasional cause (sense experiences) for the efficient cause (abstract ideas produced by reason itself).[30]

Locke's sensualistic epistemology cannot be correct, given the very nature of our thought. We intuitively compare different sense experiences with one another, and this reflexive impulse is not taught or learned from sense experience itself. The mind, Dabney argues, is active in the knowing process.[31] The mind has "permanent *essentia*" and attributes, and the presence of these attributes implies that the mind is an active agent furnished with innate powers.[32] Locke has further misunderstood the fundamental nature of these "primary intuitions" of the mind. While the sensualist treats all knowledge as being derived from our senses, the very notion of "derived" implies that it is based on something even more fundamental. Treating our "primitive judgments" as derived in no way answers how we gain the most fundamental portion of our knowledge structure. This move merely pushes the question back one more level without giving any actual answer. At this point, Dabney begins to move in a SCSR direction by arguing that our primary judgments and intuitions are beyond justification. "Unless then, some things are seen to be true intuitively," Dabney writes, "there can be no reasoning. And these unproved truths are the foundations of all that we prove."[33]

After giving a brief summary and refutation of Hume's and Montague's skepticism,[34] Dabney turns to a constructive account of primary judgments. It is at this point that we can see a strong debt to SCSR. Primary truth is established by three different tests. First, intuitive truths are primary. That is, they are not derived in any way from some antecedent truth. They are "seen to be true without any dependence upon a premise."[35] Second, intuitive truths are necessary. The mind must accept this truth because rejecting it leads to a direct contradiction. Third, intuitive truths are universal in at least two senses. Primary truths are believed by the mind in all possible situations and also by all "sane" people.[36] Clearly, this is a thoroughly SCSR approach to fundamental epistemological principles.

Having laid out the three key attributes of primary judgment, Dabney moves to establish the primary judgments that are fundamental to our knowledge. These include axioms, man's immaterial nature and identity, and the law of cause and effect. In proving that each of these constitutes a primary or intuitive judgment, Dabney follows the same general pattern of argument exemplified in his discussion of axioms: the sensualists argue that axioms are derived from our sense experience. But, Dabney counters, there is a group of axioms that cannot be derived from sense experience. The axiom "divergent straight lines will never meet if produced to infinity"[37] cannot be based on our sense experience. No eye has ever seen an infinite line. Moreover, axioms of universal truth cannot be established on the basis of scientific observation because a universal truth cannot be drawn from a limited case study.[38] Dabney further shows that axioms are primary judgments because they are necessary judgments. Axiomatic truths are necessary in a very specific sense. It is not that their negation cannot be conceived; Dabney argues that there are many modern scientific breakthroughs that primitive man could not have conceived. Rather, necessary truths are necessary because their denial entails an inevitable contradiction.[39] In SCSR fashion, Dabney makes an appeal to the consciousness of man: The opposite of the axiom "the whole is greater than its parts" is not logically possible, as the consciousness of man will tell us. Therefore, axioms are not only primary; they are necessary. Dabney completes his argument for axioms being intuitive judgments by showing that they are universal judgments. The sensualists will argue that axioms are not universal because there is so much disagreement over their truthfulness. *Ex nihilo nihil fit* was once universally accepted

28. Robert Lewis Dabney, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh; Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), p. 79.
29. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 79.
30. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 79–80.
31. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 80–81.
32. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 81.
33. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 81.
34. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 81–82.
35. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 83.
36. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 83.
37. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 83.
38. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 84.
39. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 85.

but now is in much dispute. To this objection, Dabney replies that this does not prove that there are no universal axioms; it only proves that the human mind is an "imperfect instrument."[40] Dabney counters that if this same standard is applied to our knowledge across the board, we will find that no part of our knowledge is safe from the thinking of uninformed men. In Dabney's mind, the qualification for universality does not rest upon raw statistics. Only qualified men—or what Dabney would refer to as "sane men"—are able to be consulted to determine if an axiom is universal. Taking this into account, Dabney argues that axioms are accepted by sane men everywhere, and this settles the question.[41]

The material in Dabney's systematic shows that he adhered to SCSR. Yet Dabney never held to any particular teacher in the SCSR tradition with slavish devotion. C. R. Vaughn rightly notes, "[p]hilosophical speculations, no matter how acute or profound, were to him nothing worth if they brought out conclusions at war with common sense. He was a truer disciple of the great Scottish school than Sir William Hamilton himself. An enthusiastic believer in the possibility and the value of a real philosophy, he repudiated every theory which discounted its conformity with the primitive intuitions of the human understanding."[42] Indeed, it would be out of character for Dabney to hold to any philosopher, even the great William Hamilton, without criticism. Dabney distinguished himself by his ability to criticize the thought of ally and foe alike. Thomas Cary Johnson explains, "[e]ven Dr. Dabney's adversaries admitted the searching, trenchant, and powerful character of his criticism. This great work is much more than a criticism of the false systems passed under review. It is an exposition and defence [*sic*] of the true philosophy as well; and its author is absolutely independent. If Hamilton, or any other giant, has taught somewhat amiss, Dabney takes issue. He swears in the words of no master."[43] Johnson notes that Dabney differed from Thornwell in that he was not beholden to William Hamilton in the same manner as Thornwell was.[44] In summarizing Dabney's relationship with William Hamilton, Johnson strikes a note of balance and carefulness when he writes

> "If it be undertaken to set forth Dr. Dabney's affinities with reference to the more distinguished representatives of the Scotch School, it must be said that he admired Reid more than Hamilton, as a thinker; that he usually found himself on the side of Reid in cases wherein Hamilton differs; that he regarded many of Hamilton's innovations as foreign to the very genius of the Common-sense system. Particularly, he did not agree with Hamilton in his doctrine of consciousness as the generic, universal or inclusive faculty. He made it, with Reid, a particular faculty. He would not say, 'I am conscious of a tree;' but, with Reid, "I am conscious of the perception of a tree." His theory of perception was also more like Reid's, but much more fully wrought out and clarified of errors. He deplored in Hamilton his speculations concerning the relative validity of human cognitions, and his doctrine of 'the unconditioned;' and he shows that the extravagances of Hamilton, where they are not the results of verbal ambiguities, are the fruits of a sensualistic heresy foisted into the bosom of a rational system."[45]

Johnson is right to note that Dabney's appropriation of SCSR was critical and selective. Moreover, he is right to note that Dabney often criticized Hamilton and sided with Reid. In the tenth chapter of his *The Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century, Considered*, Dabney gives an extended criticism of Hamilton regarding the validity of *a-priori* notions.[46] For instance, he gives extended criticism of Hamilton's view of consciousness and its relationship to the absolute, unconditioned reality.[47]

However, one area where there is significant agreement between Dabney and Hamilton is the importance of consciousness in epistemology. Dabney makes continual reference to the dictates of consciousness as he discusses the doctrine of God. In doing so, he treats consciousness as having the same regulative position in epistemology as it does in William Hamilton. Hamilton made consciousness the fundamental principle for all epistemological inquiries.[48] "Hamilton says that consciousness "constitutes the fundamental form of every act of knowledge" and that consciousness is

40. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 85.
41. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 85.
42. Robert Lewis Dabney, *The Discussions by Robert Lewis Dabney, Volume 1: Theological and Evangelical*, ed. C. R. Vaugh (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1890), pp. xii–xiii.
43. Thomas Cary Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (Richmond, VA: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1903), p. 370.
44. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 557.
45. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 560.
46. See Robert Lewis Dabney, *The Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century, Considered* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T CLARK, 1876), pp. 208–79.
47. Dabney, *The Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century, Considered*, 208–23.
48. John Veitch, *Hamilton* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1882), pp. 36–49.

"the source from whence we must derive every fact of the Philosophy of Mind."[49] Moreover, Dabney follows Hamilton in the three tests that he gives for intuitive truths of consciousness: that the truths of consciousness are intuitive when they are primary, self-evident, and incomprehensible.[50]

By way of summary, Dabney was an Old School Presbyterian who held to SCSR. Dabney was a slave to no theologian or philosopher. However, he was influenced by Thomas Reid and William Hamilton. With Hamilton, in particular, Dabney holds consciousness as a key to epistemology. The decision to give consciousness regulatory status in matters of epistemology will have seismic implications in Dabney's doctrine of God. As we shall see in the next section, Dabney's emphasis on consciousness causes Dabney to reject or modify the Classical Theist doctrine of God.

Dabney and the Doctrine of God

Divine Simplicity

Dabney takes up the concept of God's simplicity under the heading of natural theology. Beginning with a substratum theory of metaphysics, Dabney argues that properties reveal the true substance, the *subjectum* or *substratum*¸ to us. There are two types of substances: immaterial spiritual substances and material substances. Spiritual substances are immaterial and manifest the properties of consciousness, thinking, feeling, and willing. Material substances are the opposite of spiritual substances, being inert, unconscious, lifeless, and thoughtless.[51] Reason requires that we assign the First Cause to the category of spiritual substances. The First Cause produced man, the *Homo sapiens*, who thinks and reasons. Therefore, since an effect cannot be greater than its cause, the First Cause is a thinking being. Moreover, the choice to create implies the use of will. Additionally, the producer of life must have life itself, and the producer of motion cannot be material because "matter shows us, in no form, any power to originate motion."[52] Hence, the first cause is a spiritual being who is conscious, thinks, wills, and feels.

Dabney then considers whether God is a mixed being like man, both spirit and material. He answers that God is not a compound being like man. He recognizes that it is the habit of divines to say that "the divine substance [is] an absolute simplicity."[53] Dabney agrees with this statement if it is taken to mean that God is uncompounded, homogeneous, and not composite like an atom. God is the First Cause and, hence, must be spiritual, eternal, and independent. A composite being can have none of these attributes. God as the Creator has neither beginning nor end; he is not subject to the disintegrating power of death. Therefore, God cannot be a compound being.[54]

However, Dabney's commitment to the homogeneity of God's nature must not be taken as support for the doctrine of divine simplicity (DDS). Dabney explicitly raises the core issue of DDS, the identity of God's attributes with one another, and is initially agnostic on the issue. He describes his understanding of DDS as "that as God is immutably what He is, without succession, His essence does not like ours pass from mode to mode of being, and from act to act, but is always in all modes, and exerting all acts; hence His modes and His acts are Himself. God's thought is God. He is not active, but activity."[55] As far as it goes, Dabney seems to grasp the theology of DDS quite clearly. It is, therefore, quite telling when Dabney begins to argue against DDS. If DDS, argues Dabney, entails of view of simplicity that is stronger than the type of simplicity ascribed to the soul of man, then it is not an acceptable doctrine. The thought of a man is nothing external to man; his thought does not exist beyond his mind. The thought of man is but the soul thinking.[56] To accept a stronger version of simplicity would necessarily entail a form of pantheism where God's being is comprised of the sum series of his consciousnesses and actions; moreover, this sort of thought leads not only to identifying God's being and actions but also identifying God with all the effects of his actions. Hence, the works of God become part of the being of God.[57]

Dabney's rejection of DDS continues as he deals with the question of whether God's attributes are identical with his essence. Dabney defines the attributes of God as "those permanent, or essential, qualities of his nature, which he has made known to us in his word."[58] These attributes are not to be thought of in terms of being part of the essence. Dabney refers to any notion that would view the attributes as divisible portions of

49. William Hamilton, *The Metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton: Collected, Arranged, and Abridged, for the Use of Colleges and Private Students*, ed. Francis Bowen (Cambridge: Sever and Francis, 1865), p. 175.
50. Hamilton, *The Metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton*, pp. 175–80.
51. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 42.
52. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 43.
53. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 43.
54. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 43.
55. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 43.
56. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 43.
57. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 44.
58. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 147.

his being as a "gross idea."[59] Dabney refers to the divine nature as a "monad" and explains that the attributes of God, such as omniscience, are not separable attributes from his essence. Rather, the attributes are "a power or quality" of the infinite substance.

At this point, Dabney references the classical notion that as a result of God's absolute simplicity, each of his attributes is metaphysically identical to every other attribute. Dabney questions the viability of such an understanding of simplicity. Referring back to his discussion of this question under the heading of natural theology, he concludes again that this formulation of divine simplicity is nothing more than pantheism. He argues that "literally" identifying the attributes with one another does not leave room even for virtual distinctions between the attributes. The only difference between them in the classical system of simplicity is "nominal" at best.[60] Dabney again asserts his objections to such thinking: if God's will and intellect are identical, then he must create all possibilities; if God must create all possibilities, then there is no distinction between the *scientia simplex* and the *scientia visionis*;[61] if God must create all possibilities, then he has no freedom, and the works of God are made infinite.[62]

In addition to indicting the classical view of divine simplicity for having a tendency toward pantheism, Dabney levels a second charge that demonstrates his commitment to SCSR. Identifying God's mind and will, Dabney argues, violates "our rational consciousness."[63] Every man understands that there is unity in his spirit, and every man also understands that to think, to will, and to sense are three different faculties of the spirit. Because God is also a spirit, we are fundamentally bound to believe the same is true of God, even though he is infinite in spirit while we are finite. To reject that God's will and intellect are distinct, as our faculties of mind and will are, would be a violation of the fundamental law of reason, Dabney says. The classical model of simplicity requires the elimination of the distinction between substance and attributes. Such a model, according to Dabney, is incapable of being understood by the human mind. This line of reasoning appears to be heavily influenced by William Hamilton's understanding of SCSR, in that Dabney is arguing from the inviolability of consciousness.

Dabney next considers the incomprehensibility of God and his attributes. He appears to anticipate the objection that he is destroying God's incomprehensibility by making God's essence conformable to the human mind. Dabney acknowledges that God is infinite, and hence God and every one of his attributes will be, on some level, incomprehensible. We cannot comprehend the truth of God's attributes, but we can apprehend them. Dabney bases his formulation of the knowledge of God on two key arguments: First, we can apprehend God in the way Dabney lays out because we are made in the image of God. Both man's rational and moral qualities are finite reproductions, if you will, of God's infinite "essential qualities." Second, God's rational and moral faculties must work similarly to ours because God uses human words to describe himself. God reveals himself as being wise and intelligent, and the Bible, as Dabney puts it, "does not use words dishonestly."[64]

The implications of Dabney's view appear to be twofold. First, Dabney clearly does not accept the classical formulation of divine simplicity that, as we have seen, has been the hallmark of both Catholic and Reformed Scholastic Christianity. Second, Dabney's formulation of divine simplicity implies some form of composition in the divine being. Dabney might not wish to use the word "composition," but Dabney's view entails some form of composition or complexity within the divine essence since God's intellect and will are distinct faculties.

This reading of Dabney is further solidified by his discussion of the complexity of divine motives in his article, *God's Indiscriminate Proposals of Mercy*. Dabney takes up the issue of how Scripture can make seemingly universal statements about the scope of God's mercy while we know all along that God has only elected some to salvation. Dabney's answer to this is that God can and does have feelings of sympathy for all mankind, even those whom he purposes to damn. The fact that God has mercy for all, Dabney writes, is not inconsistent with his desire to damn some of those for whom he feels sympathy. Rather, God may have desires towards the wicked that he chooses not to act upon. As an illustration of how this works, Dabney points to the historical figure

59. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 147.
60. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 148.
61. Dabney is working with distinctions that come from Reformed Orthodox theologians. *Scientia Simplex* is the necessary knowledge that God has of himself and all possibilities that he might bring about. This knowledge is a result of God's complete, exhaustive, simple knowledge of his own nature. *Scientia Visionis* is the knowledge that God has of everything that he will bring to pass according to his divine will. Like most scholastic distinctions relating to theology proper, there is a slightly different set of terms used by the Scotist tradition, that gives a voluntaristic flair to the same context, such as *scientia libera sive voluntaria* for *scientia visionis*. For further information, see Richard A Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academics, 2003), vol. III, pp. 407–408.
62. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 148.
63. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 148.
64. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 149.

of George Washington. When Washington issued the death penalty, in accordance with the law, to one Major Andre, Washington did so reluctantly. He fervently expressed his regret and did not want to have Andre executed. However, Washington was duty-bound and so ordered his execution, all the while having the power to pardon him if he wished.[65]

Dabney uses this as an example of how he believes the motives of God toward the non-elect to be complex. Hence, God could express his desire for mercy toward some whom he will ultimately damn for some greater reason. Dabney, in fact, clearly makes the case that this analogy between human psychology and divine psychology holds up in this discussion, even when taking the differences between finite and infinite existence into account.[66] As Dabney takes up the task of refuting potential objections to his scheme, the first potential objection he turns to is the doctrine of divine simplicity. Dabney's scheme of reasoning from the human to the divine is not commonly found in Calvinist thought because of the doctrine of the "absolute simplicity" of God.[67] This doctrine teaches that God is far simpler than even the human soul. There are absolutely no categories of composition—not even substance and attributes—that the traditional view of simplicity will allow in the divine being.

As Dabney argues against the classic view of simplicity, he rehearses many of the arguments mentioned in his systematic theology. He continues to use SCSR argumentation in order to establish the validity of reasoning from our psychology to God's. DDS is beyond the possibility of proof because it is outside the possibility of man's reason.[68] Hence, it is perfectly reasonable, Dabney argues, to think that God's "conative propensions" are not identical with the final product of volition.[69]

Dabney's doctrine of divine simplicity, as he expounded it in his *Systematic Theology,* explains some of his direct comments upon the Westminster Confession of Faith. He seems to believe that the Westminster Confession of Faith avoids some of the scholastic speculations of the Medieval tradition regarding simplicity. In Dabney's lecture, *The Content of the Confession*, his contribution to the memorial volume on the Confession, he praises the Confession for its biblical emphasis and its moderation.[70] The Divines showed their commitment to Scripture by refusing to use philosophers and philosophical systems in the Confession. According to Dabney, the Divines knew the arguments of the realists and nominalists, of the Thomists and the Scotists. The Westminster Assembly, however, refused to appeal to the authority of respected theologians or philosophers and simply used Biblical language to address theological issues.[71]

As an example of the moderation of the Westminster Divines, Dabney cites the Confession's handling of the doctrine of the Trinity. The Confession stays close to Scripture and the early ecumenical creeds, Dabney argues. "It teaches that while God is one infinite, single, spiritual substance, there have been from eternity three modes of subsistence, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, whose distinctions are real, permanent and personal."[72] The term "real" is potentially problematic. If Dabney intends real as the opposite of "false," then there is no tension with divine simplicity. If Dabney intends real as the opposite of "nominal," then Dabney rejects simplicity in favor of a real distinction between the Persons.

The moderation of the Divines caused them, according to Dabney, to break with the Patristic, Scholastic, and Reformational idea of the Trinity that God is *actus purus*. The Divines reject the psychological model of the Trinity, as is found in the thought of Thomas Aquinas.[73] The Thomistic view leads more readily to an abstract notion of the Persons that has more in common with the idealistic philosophies of Heraclitus or Hegel. As Dabney argues against the Scholastic notion of *actus purus*, he raises a question that implies a distinction between substance and faculties in God. "Now, does this metaphysic give us objects which satisfy the meaning of Scripture, where it testifies to us that the three subsistencies [sic], while each divine, are distinct and personal? Or does it give us mere abstractions in the place of Persons? Does this theory, or does it not, destroy the fundamental distinction of the reason between substance and its powers?"[74] Clearly, Dabney sees a great gulf between the doctrine of God in the Westminster Confession and the Scholastic tradition. He fails to realize that the language of the Confession and Catechism reflect the Scholastic tradition that Dabney finds so problematic.

65. Robert Lewis Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*, vol. I (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), pp. 284–88.
66. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.287–88.
67. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.289.
68. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.190.
69. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.291.
70. Robert Lewis Dabney, "The Doctrinal Contents of the Confession—Its Fundamental and Regulative Ideas and the Necessity and Value of Creeds," in *Memorial Volume of the Westminster Assembly, 1647–1897* (Richmond, VA: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1897), p. 93.
71. Dabney, "The Doctrinal Contents of the Confession," pp. 93–95.
72. Dabney, "The Doctrinal Contents of the Confession," pp. 95–96.
73. Dabney, "The Doctrinal Contents of the Confession," pp. 96.
74. Dabney, "The Doctrinal Contents of the Confession," p. 96.

We may now see, in conclusion, that Dabney clearly does not hold to the doctrine of divine simplicity as classically formulated. Dabney is similar to Charles Hodge in that he allows for there to be real distinctions between the divine attributes themselves. Dabney goes further than Hodge in allowing for the reason and will of God to be separate, with God's motives in his decree being complex. This complexity comes from the existence of different and conflicting motives, or active powers, that are not identical with the divine essence nor with the volitional end-products of God's will.

Immutability

Dabney's comments on immutability under the heading of natural theology are brief relative to his material on the other attributes. It is also worth noting that his notion of immutability appears to be very close to that of the classical tradition. Dabney says that immutability is the property whereby God is incapable of change. This extends to every aspect of God's being and existence: his attributes, nature, and purposes are all incapable of any change.[75] Dabney appeals to God's unchanging purpose in order to demonstrate how God maintains his immutability even while he acts as creator and sustainer of the world. The act of creation implies no change in God because he had eternally purposed to create the world. Since Dabney is explaining immutability from the standpoint of natural theology, he does not defend immutability from Scripture. Rather, he appeals to the attributes already established by reason that require God's immutability. God is a necessary being, and hence he cannot be anything other than what he has always been. God is self-existent, and hence there is no being that can change him. God is a simple being, and hence God is incapable of change because he has no parts or composition which are necessary for any change. Finally, Dabney appeals to the perfection of God. God is absolutely perfect, and hence any change would imply changing for the better (which is impossible) or changing for the worse (which would deny his absolute perfection). Dabney concludes that of all the attributes of God, it is his immutability that reason grasps most clearly of all.[76]

As Dabney turns from natural theology to revealed theology, Dabney's thoughts on immutability continue to be brief and concise. After summarizing the implications of natural theology for the immutability of God, Dabney continues to argue that there is no change in God whatsoever. God's nature is unchanging as are his mental and volitional states. For God to be immutable in nature, he must also be unchanging in his knowledge. God is infinite in knowledge, and therefore he cannot have any new information presented to him. Since his nature and knowledge are ever the same, there cannot be any changes in his will since there can be no new information nor any new disposition of his nature to necessitate a change in will.[77]

Dabney appeals to a number of Scriptures (Numbers 23:19, Psalm 52:26, and Hebrews 6:17) in order to show that the Scriptures proclaim that God is without any change in his being. Dabney concludes his section on God's immutability by defending the doctrine against some of the most common objections to it. Some object to immutability by appealing to the incarnation: Christ taking human nature to himself surely constitutes a change in God. But this is not the case, replies Dabney, because of the nature of the hypostatic union. The Second Person of the Trinity assumed a real human nature to himself, but he did so without any substantial change in the divine nature. The natures were not comingled into a new third nature, and the incarnation did not produce any change in the will of God since the incarnation was planned from all eternity. Moreover, some appeal to the act of creation as proof that God is not eternal. Echoing his earlier comments under the heading of natural theology, Dabney argues that the act of creation was according to the eternal plan of God. He actually goes so far as to argue that if God failed to create, then he could be said to change because this would constitute a real change in the divine plan. Finally, some object to divine immutability on the ground that God forgives sinners, constituting a real change in God's attitude towards sinners. In response, Dabney appeals to a traditional argument that the change in the relationship between God and the sinner happens exclusively on the part of the sinner. No change, Dabney argues, happens from God's side. The different way that the repentant sinner is treated is required by the immutable nature of God.[78]

This is one case in which we can see no substantial variation from Classical Theism. Indeed, we even see Dabney channeling many of the arguments of the tradition in defense of God's immutability while interacting with a changing world and in the incarnation. Why does Dabney not deviate on this point? Perhaps it is because he sees this attribute as being clearly required in Scripture and that immutability does not, at least on the surface, violate the principle deliverances of consciousness.

75. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 45.
76. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 45.
77. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 152–53.
78. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 153–54.

Dabney never appeals to consciousness, one way or another, when considering the doctrine of divine immutability. That in itself is a significant fact. In the case of this one attribute, we see Dabney not working from the nature of human consciousness as the regulative principle for understanding this doctrine. And that makes this one doctrine where Dabney stands in continuity with the classical tradition and in conflict with Hodge.

Eternality

Dabney uses the eternality of God at the beginning of his reflection on the attributes of God revealed in natural theology. He starts with eternality because it is "the most obvious" of all the attributes in the eyes of natural reason. Dabney defines eternality as the attribute of God's nature whereby he is without beginning and without end. He notes that the "divines" add a third aspect to eternality, that God exists without succession in his being. Together these three elements (without beginning, without end, and without succession) are the key aspects of how the church has defined God's eternal nature.[79]

Reason proves that God must be without a beginning because he is the first cause. As the first cause, there could not be a time when he did not exist. Either he would not be the first cause, or the world could not exist because nothing would exist that could bring the first cause into existence. Hence, reason proves that God must be eternal since he is the first cause of all the created universe. Reason also necessitates that God must be without an end. Pagan religions and philosophers alike demonstrate that our reason proves God to be eternal by virtue of the fact that they uniformly ascribe immortality to their god(s).[80] This universal expression of the immortality of the divine is rationally established from God's independence, self-existence, and necessary existence. Since reason establishes that God has all of these attributes, the only logical conclusion that reason can draw is that God must also be without end. Dabney notes that there is one possible exception to this line of reasoning: If one argues that God is powerful enough to annihilate himself and that he could will such an end, then it would be possible for God to have no beginning but to have an end. However, Dabney objects that this hypothesis of divine suicide is completely impossible because God is simple, whereas the only known form of destruction is disintegration, which implies composition. Moreover, God would not be a necessary being if he were able to be brought to an end. Therefore, God does not have the power to destroy himself. So Dabney concludes that reason clearly testifies that God is without beginning and without an end.[81]

When it comes to the third aspect of the classic definition of God's eternality—that God exists without any succession in his divine being—Dabney is suspicious. Dabney takes Turretin and Dick as his primary foils in his argument against successionless existence. "God is immense," writes Turretin, "but if his existence were measured by parts of duration, it would not be incommensurable." Dabney takes exception to this line of reasoning, going as far as saying it is completely illogical. Dabney argues that the Schoolmen themselves make a distinction between *essentia* and *esse*. The end toward which Dabney moves with this distinction is that we can measure God's existence without measuring his essence. Dabney likewise takes exception with arguments for God's successionless existence based on his simplicity and immutability. Turretin writes, "[B]ecause [God is] simple and immutable, He cannot exist in succession, for the flux of being from past to present and present to future would be change, and even change of composition." Dabney undercuts Turretin by arguing for a distinction between subsistence and essence. God can exist in succession in his subsistence without introducing any composition or change into his essence. Dabney also argues that a subsistence in succession does not imply composition of the essence and the "*momenta*" of time. He appeals, most curiously, to Immanuel Kant for proof of his assertion.[82]

Dabney next turns to the argument of Scottish theologian John Dick, who holds that God must exist in a successionless eternality because the idea of an infinite succession in the past is logically impossible. Dabney argues that because Dick concedes that there is an infinite succession of moments in the future, an infinite succession of past moments is also possible. Dabney grants that the human mind cannot conceive of an infinite succession of moments in either the past or the present. The issue for Dabney with the classical view of eternality is not that God does not experience succession in his nature or essence. The problem for Dabney comes when succession is denied in the operation of God's consciousness. The idea of successionless consciousness comes, Dabney argues, from an analysis of the divine consciousness in light of man's consciousness. The argument is that since God's thoughts are eternally present in his consciousness, God's consciousness must not experience succession like man's consciousness does. However, Dabney is not convinced that for

79. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 38.
80. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 39.
81. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 39.
82. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 39.

man's consciousness to be unsuccessive necessitates that God's consciousness must be the same.[83]

Despite his arguments against the idea of successionless eternality, Dabney appears to conclude on an ambiguous note. He argues that God is unsuccessive in his subjective consciousness; however, God's knowledge encompasses the world of successive change. Therefore, Dabney argues that it is impossible for God to have "no relationship" to successive change in his consciousness because he truly knows the world. Dabney says that debating these matters will only lead to "antinomies" that cannot be solved.[84]

Dabney further confuses the issue when he takes the matter up again under the heading of revealed theology. He rehearses his reservations with the idea of successionless eternality. However, Dabney gives his approval of God's eternality being a *punctum stans*, the standing point or eternal now. "[T]he past and the future," writes Dabney, "are as distinctly and immutably present in the divine mind, as the present." He appeals to the "striking" phrase of Isaiah 57:15—"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity"—and to the Divine Name of Exodus 3:15. What is so striking about this is that Dabney appears to contradict himself, or else he does not understand the true nature of the *punctum stans*. Boethius lays out the idea of an eternal present in his *Consolation of Philosophy*. He clearly sees the eternal now of God's eternality as an explanation for God's successionless eternality. In fact, Scholastic theologians use the idea of the eternal present as an illustration for successionless eternality. So either Dabney doesn't understand the *punctum stans* or else he is contradicting himself.[85] One cannot hold to the *punctum stans* with regard to God's essence and deny the logic consequent, i.e. successionless existence, to God's consciousness.

With regard to God's eternality, we see that Dabney again deviates from Classical Theism. Dabney's Kantian approach where God's subsistence can experience succession without introducing change into his essence combines with Dabney SCSR appeal to human consciousness as the regulative principle of theological discourse. The result is that Dabney rejects the classical view of eternality, though his acceptance of the *punctum stans* is, to say the least, anomalous and unexpected.

83. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 39–40.
84. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 40.
85. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 152.
86. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 153.
87. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 153.
88. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 153.

Impassibility

Dabney takes up the subject of divine impassibility both in his *Systematic Theology* and also in his *Discussions on Theology*. As we examine Dabney on this subject, we will discover that Dabney's understanding of impassibility is similar to his understanding of eternality: he is critical of the Scholastic position but in a slightly confused and inconsistent manner. Dabney's writing on impassibility in his *Systematic Theology* is much closer to the historic Reformed position. Dabney does not consider impassibility under its own independent heading. Rather, he considers impassibility within the context of divine immutability. In doing so, he is certainly within the bounds of the classical tradition at this point. He points to the language of the Westminster Confession, which teaches that God has "neither parts nor passions" to begin his discussion. Dabney appears to take exception to the Westminster view when he writes, "That he has something analogous to what are called in man active principles, is manifest, for He wills and acts; therefore, He must feel."[86] Notice that Dabney is arguing from human psychology to divine psychology—a common tool of argumentation in the SCSR tool chest. This causes him to invert the classical categories of analogical predication: man becomes the primary analog in his relationship to God. However, Dabney balances this affirmation of divine feelings by arguing that these "active principles" must not "be conceived of as emotions, in the sense of ebbing and flowing accesses of feeling."[87] These divine principles exist without the "agitation and rush" common in human passions. Dabney says that these divine feelings are "ineffable, fixed, peaceful, unchangeable, calm, although springs of volition."[88]

So far this is a mixed presentation of the issue of divine impassibility. Dabney is, on the one hand, rejecting the classic language about divine impassibility by suggesting that God has feelings. On the other hand, however, Dabney is rejecting any notion of change or agitation in divine psychology. He argues that while the human mind finds these principles of action "incomprehensible," they illustrate why those Christians who are most sanctified exhibit the least amount of passion and agitation. The sanctified Christian does experience holy motivation to action from moral indignation, but this is not the same as generic human wrath. Such agitation that comes with human passion is, says Dabney, incompatible with God's blessedness. Moreover, Dabney argues that the objects of divine feelings are ever present in the mind of God so that there is no change in him. Dabney concludes by addressing the issue of divine wrath and repentance. Dabney stands with the

tradition in that he describes divine wrath and repentance as "anthropopathism." Dabney explains that this means "that the outward manifestations of his active principles were as though these feelings arose."[89]

So far, Dabney has been only mildly critical of the classical doctrine of impassibility. In fact, one could argue that Dabney's view differs from the tradition only on the level of semantics. His position, one might argue, is substantially that of the Scholastic and Reformed Divines. While there is much merit to such an argument, there is one significant deviation from the tradition that becomes more evident in Dabney's other writings on impassibility. Notice that Dabney treats these divine principles of action in a separate category from God's intellect and will. These principles of action are "springs of volition," and hence, they are not divine volitions themselves. The tradition has been fairly uniform in interpreting divine emotional language as an anthropopathic description of divine volitions themselves, not the *causes* of divine volition. This creates a breach between Dabney and the Reformed tradition, which will demonstrate itself in other areas of Dabney's writing.

This deviation from the classical tradition is more pronounced as Dabney discusses divine impassibility in his discussion of *The Indiscriminate Proposals of God's Mercy*. Dabney begins by giving his assent to several main features of divine impassibility: that God cannot have any passive principles in him that would imply mutability, that God is the source of all effects, and that he is not acted upon by the world.[90] However, Dabney then argues that any formulation of divine impassibility must not violate two key principles. First, while God does not have fluctuating emotions, he does have active principles. These active principles are "affections of his will" that are distinct from the cognitive functions of the divine nature. While we must affirm that there is some anthropopathism in Scripture, Dabney argues that we must not let the anthropopathic nullify Scripture's attribution of "active affections in some mode suitable to [God's] nature."[91] Second, impassibility must not be formulated so as to deny that the actions of creatures are the real, objective occasions of the "action both of the divine affections and will."[92] There are some theologians—we are not sure who Dabney has in mind because he never names them—who seem to give the impression that God is angry with himself, lest in admitting that God is angry with someone outside himself they deny his aseity and immutability. When we say that God is angry with sinners, Dabney argues, we must be comfortable saying that God is actually angry with them, and not angry with himself.[93]

We can see in this passage that Dabney begins to distance himself from the traditional understanding of divine impassibility even more. Here, Dabney actually ascribes "affections" to God's divine life. We must grant that Dabney is being very careful not to undercut divine immutability and independence, but the key issue here is that Dabney is creating a space for these divine affections outside the bounds of God's intellect and will. And it is at this point that we can see some confusion in Dabney. In his systematic theology, Dabney wrote that God's active principles were "springs" of divine volition, but up to this point in *God's Indiscriminate Proposals of Mercy*, Dabney appears to make the distinction between divine volitions and divine affections less clear. He speaks of the active principles being "of the will" of God. Are these active principles distinct from the divine will, or are they identical? There is some ambiguity here, but this will become clear as we move forward in the text.

Dabney defends that real conditions in the world are the occasions for his active principles on the basis of human reason. "Now, our rational nature," writes Dabney, "compels us to think these active principles relevant only when they act towards their proper objectives."[94] This conforms with his SCSR impulses, and his general appeal to human consciousness and psychology in explaining divine psychology. This is no threat, Dabney says, to God's immutability or sovereignty because the external events to which he is genuinely acting towards exist according to his sovereign plan, and the external circumstances are eternally present in God's mind and will.[95]

As Dabney begins to pull the threads together, he clarifies that these active principles are distinct from God's intellectual and volitional powers. These active principles, Dabney writes, are eternally directed towards an object, "which combine all the activity of rational affections with the passionless stability of his rational judgments, and which, while not emotions…are yet related to his volitions in a way analogous to that which obtains between the holy creature's optative powers and his volitions."[96] Dabney is quick to acknowledge that we cannot comprehend this picture of divine psychology.

89. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 153.
90. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.291.
91. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.291.
92. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.291.
93. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.291–92.
94. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.292.
95. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.292–93.
96. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.293.

However, Dabney says that this way of framing divine impassability must be true, because it is the only blueprint which is allowed by Scripture that does not "both transcend and violate man's reason."[97] As Dabney moves on to further discuss divine active principles, he continues to argues, in SCSR fashion, from human psychology to divine psychology, and makes it abundantly clear that God's active principles are distinct from his will. Active principles are the optative source of volitions. Put another way, Dabney is saying that these divine affections are the motives that produce divine volitions.[98] Whatever one may think about this model's effectiveness in explaining the anthropopathic language of Scripture, it is clear that Dabney deviates from the Scholastic tradition on any number of levels. With Dabney's deviation from divine simplicity (as discussed earlier in this article) also comes a logically inevitable deviation from divine impassability. This is exactly what we see occurring in Dabney. The chief operating principle behind the rejection of divine impassability is, again, the anthropocentric logic found at the very heart of SCSR.

Another discussion of impassibility is found in Dabney's reflection on the emotions of Christ. Dabney argues that God "actually feels, according to his infinite benevolence"[99] pity towards those whom he will not save. A key example that Dabney points to is Jesus in Luke 12:41–42. This is the famous passage where Jesus weeps over Jerusalem. Dabney implies that some of the more stringent Calvinists would argue that Jesus weeping over Jerusalem only speaks to the affections of his human will and does not speak to his divine will. Hence, Jesus could weep over all of Jerusalem according to both natures because in his divine will he only allowed for mercy to be extended to the elect in the city. Dabney replies that this approach is wrongheaded for a number of reasons. First, it would give the impression that Jesus' human nature was more compassionate than his divine nature.[100] Second, Dabney argues that we must also be hearing some of the divine nature when Jesus speaks of how, in the past, he has wanted to gather the people of Jerusalem to himself but they would not come and how, in the future, he would come in judgment.[101] And third, Dabney believes that such interpretations violate the traditional understanding of the two natures of Christ. It is not faithful to Scripture to say that "if you have seen me, you have seen the Father," does not apply when Jesus weeps over Jerusalem. Moreover, such an interpretation would put the two natures of Christ in opposition to one another. "[W]hile we are none of us Monothelites,"[102] Dabney writes, "we cannot admit to any defect of concert and symphony between the will of the perfect humanity and that of the divine."[103]

The discussion of Christ's emotions is markedly different from the more general discussion of God's active powers. Dabney is more Scripture-focused, appealing to the text rather than to human psychology. But the anti-scholastic impulse is still present, and we can see this beginning to affect his view of the hypostatic union.

In summary, Dabney deviates from classical theism regarding God's (lack of) passions in significant ways. He leans on his SCSR method of reasoning from human consciousness and psychology to argue that God must have something analogous to human emotions in his divine being. We have emotions that act as "springs of volition," causing us to make decisions and to act. God, in Dabney's thinking, must have the same sort of active principles in his volitional mechanisms, the classic arguments for simplicity notwithstanding.

Trinitarian Definition of Personhood

Dabney begins discussing Trinitarian Personhood by referencing classical Scholastic terms that are used in explaining the Trinity. Some of the Scholastics, Dabney argues, confuse words for concepts so that they think they have explained a concept when in reality they have only explained a few words. Dabney points to the differences between the Greek and Latin-speaking theologians in regards to the word "essence."[104] The Greek Fathers have only one word for essence (*ousia*), while Latin theologians use three different terms: the nature of a thing (*essentia*), the state of existence of a thing (*esse*), and the subject to which the essence belongs (*substantia*).[105]

97. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.293.
98. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.293–94.
99. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.305.
100. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.308.
101. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.308.
102. For Further information on the Monothelite controversy, see: *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers.* , ed. Philip Schaff ([S.l.]: Wm B Eerdmans Pub Co), vol. XIV, pp. 328–342; Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1930), vol. IV, pp. 489–511; Walter A Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 732.
103. Dabney's argument that the divine and human wills must be in perfect concert with one another needs further clarification; his construction of the two wills of Christ is not as obviously correct as Dabney would lead us to believe. Pope Agatho, a strong proponent of dyothelite Christology, argues that Christ saying "not My will, but Thine," demonstrates that there are two wills in the one Person of Christ. Can Dabney explain how Christ could make such a sentence, if there is absolute identification, as he seems to be arguing, between the human and divine wills in Christ?
104. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 174.
105. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 174.

In turning to the word for Personhood, Dabney notes the difference between *person* or *subsistence* and *substance* or *essence*. Subsistence is distinct from substance in that subsistence is, according to Dabney, the mode by which a substance exists.[106] Dabney points to matter and spirit as examples of this distinction. Both matter and spirit have substance. Yet matter and spirit subsist in radically different ways. Moreover, God's infinite spirit exists as a simple, infinite substance, but God's spirit subsists in three Persons, or three modes of existence. While this distinction is helpful, Dabney is quick to add the caveat that these terms do not explain away the mystery of the Trinity. Dabney says that the student who reflects honestly on these terms will come to the conclusion that he has "no clearer affirmative conception of the personal distinction" of the three members of the Godhead than before he learned the meaning of essence or subsistence.[107] Dabney adds the term "person" to the conversation regarding subsistence. Noting the Greek (*prosopon*) and Latin (*persona*) words for person, he argues that the Greek word carries more freight than the Latin term. *Persona* only implies the "*role* sustained for the time being." However, both the Greek and Latin terms fail to convey the sense of individual existence that the modern use of the word "person" implies.[108]

Dabney then takes up the issue of the ancient heresies of Patripassianism, Sabellianism, and Arianism.[109] After refuting each of these heresies, Dabney gives a definition of the orthodox understanding of the Trinity, which involves defining a Trinitarian Person as "the subsistence of a threefold personal distinction, marked by a part of the properties of separate personalities, (in some inscrutable manner, entirely compatible with true unity) as intelligence, active principles, volition, action."[110] Dabney speaks further about these personal properties: "The distinction of the three Persons, each by its property, incommunicable from one person to another, and the existence consequently of eternal relations between them."[111]

Notice that, on the one hand, Dabney is fairly traditional in his understanding of personal properties. He speaks of the personal properties being incomprehensible to us, which is a common motif in the tradition of Classical Theism. He also speaks of the incommunicable properties with the eternal relationships between the Persons of the Godhead. On the other hand, take note that Dabney gives a rather radical definition of Trinitarian Personhood. The classical tradition has tended to keep the categories of knowledge and will separate from the category of Personhood. Knowledge and will are part of the divine nature, shared in simplicity among the three Persons. But Dabney does not follow this pattern. Dabney deviates from the tradition by using intellect, emotions (or as Dabney calls them "active principles"), will, and action as principles which differentiate the Persons from one another. Perhaps the most striking aspect of Dabney's conception of Personhood is the mention of action as a distinguishing marker of Personhood. The tradition up to this point has uniformly confessed that *operata trinitatis ad extra indivisua sunt*. It is possible that Dabney does not reject this maxim—he could be thinking of the intra-trinitarian operations of begetting, filiation, and spiration. However, Dabney offers no elaboration on this point, and so it is hard to understand his precise meaning. Regardless, no Classical Theist uses "action" as part of the definition of personal properties.

There is no direct evidence that SCSR has informed Dabney's thinking with regard to Trinitarian personal properties. There is no explicit appeal to human consciousness, human psychology, or the deliverances of man's reason. The categories of intellect, volition, active principles, and actions are not presented by way of argument but by bare assertion. It is impossible for us to know with certainty what Dabney's reasons for using these categories were. But while Dabney's reasons may be omitted, it is clear that he does not hold to the Classic Theist construction of Trinitarian Personhood.

Conclusion: Dabney, the Doctrine of God, and the Westminster Standards

As is often the case, Robert Lewis Dabney does not fit into pre-established categories or patterns. Dabney identified with the Old School Presbyterian movement, yet, as we have seen, he rejected significant elements of the traditional Calvinist doctrine of God. He clearly rejected divine simplicity along with the notions of eternality, impassibility, and Trinitarian Personhood. Most curiously, Dabney does not explicitly object to the Classical Theist view of immutability. The lack of objection is odd given that one cannot reject the Westminster view of simplicity and eternality and also embrace the traditional view of immutability because of the interrelatedness of these doctrines. What big-picture conclusions should one take from this study? We suggest

106. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 174.
107. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 174–75.
108. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 175.
109. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 175–77.
110. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 177.
111. Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 177.

that there are a number of areas in Dabney's thought where further work is needed.

Dabney and Old School Theology. One way that this article suggests further work is needed concerns Dabney's relationship to Old School Presbyterianism. Old School men were known as traditional Calvinists who held strictly to the theology of the Westminster Standards. One would assume that Dabney held to the Classical Theist doctrine of God as found in the Westminster Standards. However, we have shown that such an assumption is not well founded. Dabney explicitly criticized the Scholastic doctrine of God while being seemingly unaware of the Scholastic formulation of the doctrine of God in the Westminster Standards. Are there other areas in Dabney's thought where he is more critical towards the Westminster Standards?

Dabney and SCSR. Another area where more scholarly work is needed regards Dabney's relationship to SCSR. Dabney was a realist who owed a great debt to the Scottish tradition, no doubt. However, there is little in the scholarly literature on the differences between Dabney and prominent representatives of SCSR in the American Context. Dabney's particular form of SCSR was influenced by Hamilton but idiosyncratic to Dabney. What are the exact contours of his epistemology and its relationship to the tradition of SCSR?

Dabney and the doctrine of God. Perhaps most obviously, this article raises larger questions about Dabney's doctrine of God. Our work focused on five essential components of the doctrine of God. There are, however, more areas that need to be explored. Moreover, Dabney's doctrine of God also raises questions about how human thought and language relate to God. Dabney's appeal to consciousness gives an anthropocentric character to his epistemology. God's transcendence must conform to the dictates of human consciousness, or, as Dabney argues, our theology would violate the consciousness of man. Man's consciousness, however, is inviolable. The traditional view of analogical predication is that God is the primary analog regarding human thought and predication. Can the same be said of Dabney's epistemology, where human consciousness plays such an important role in theology?▪



The College Church at Hampden-Sydney College was designed by Robert L. Dabney circa 1860. Dabney was co-pastor of the church with his brother-in-law B. M. Smith (1858 to 1874). He also taught at the college in various capacities when there would be a vacancy in the teaching staff. Photograph copyright © MorrisS, and used here under the CC BY-SA 4.0 license, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en. The picture was orginally in color and has been lightened and slightly cropped. Dabney opposed the use of the pipe organ. One was installed later in about 1890 (Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, volume 2 (1973), p. 430.

Robert Lewis Dabney and the Problem of Original Sin

By C. N. Willborn

Introduction

Robert Lewis Dabney (1820–1898) is one of the most interesting personalities of nineteenth century American religious life, if not American social life in general. Before the Civil War divided the United States, Dabney was a revered professor at the Old School seminary in Farmville, Virginia—Union Theological Seminary. A native Virginian, he had declined an invitation from Charles Hodge to join him at Princeton. He was a strong Unionist right up until the day Virginia voted to secede from the Union. Indeed, he had some scathing remarks for South Carolina when she led the South in secession. He served in the Confederate Army assisting General Jonathan Jackson and preaching to many troops. After the War he became embittered over the affairs of Reconstruction and eventually left Union for Texas. In Austin, Texas he became part of the founding of the University of Texas where he taught the Philosophy courses. He was also instrumental in the founding of Austin Theological Seminary (1884) with fellow Presbyterian minister, R. K. Smoot. After losing his eyesight around 1890 he continued to publish and travel up until his death on January 3, 1898.

We live in a day when his Reformed theology is loved by many while he is personally rejected by perhaps many more. The latter ban on Dabney is due to his great sin of partiality in regard to men and women of color. The embitterment that seems to have led to his partiality, often referred to as racism, became most pronounced after the War ended in 1865. Still, with this sin visibly portrayed in writings, he was considered by contemporaries who disagreed with his view of race as a most impressive teacher of Reformed theology. A. A. Hodge's evaluation is often cited, crediting Dabney with being the greatest teacher of theology in the United States, if not the world. W. G. T. Shedd, the preeminent theologian at Union Seminary (NY) said Dabney was, in his estimation, the greatest living theologian of his time. But Dabney was more than a theologian and philosopher. He was an active churchman and loving family man. In his domestic life Dabney was much blessed with a wife he described as "the first and last love affair of my life." His devoted wife was Lavinia Morrison, daughter of Rev. James Morrison, a Presbyterian minister.

The Dabneys were blessed with six sons from their marital bliss, three of whom lived to maturity. Dr. Charles W. Dabney, the eldest, was a distinguished author and educator. He served as President of the University of Tennessee and later as President of the University of Cincinnati. The younger sons were Samuel B. and Lewis Meriwether, both of whom became notable lawyers in Texas. Dabney died in Victoria, Texas and left behind his three sons and beloved wife, after fifty years of marriage. The bodies of he and Lavinia await the resurrection united to Christ in the seminary cemetery on the campus of Hampden-Sydney College in Farmville, Virginia.

In the Virginian's theology he often took moderate positions. He was committed to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms as the best and soundest summary of Scripture doctrine. Concerning the Westminster Standards he said they were characterized by two "remarkable traits." They are marked, argued Dabney, by their "scripturalness, and … moderation."[1] He argued that the Westminster Divines "avoid every excess, and every extreme statement. They refrained, with a wise moderation, from committing the church of God on either side of those

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1. Francis Beattie, Charles R. Hemphill and Henry V. Westcott, eds., *Memorial Volume of the Westminster Assembly, 1647–1897* (Richmond, VA: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1897), p. 93.

'isms' which agitated and perplexed the professors of the Reformed theology."[2]

He illustrated the moderation of Westminster with the doctrine of the Trinity, which he said they argued not on metaphysical grounds or rationales, "but passes it all by in dead silence, neither approving it or deigning to refute it…. Because it is wholly extra-scriptural."[3] Another doctrinal position he includes as moderately offered by Westminster is lapsarianism—being neither infra- nor supralapsarian. Some of the men involved in the composition of the Westminster Standards were known supralapsarians. Others were not. And so, they simply asserted "that the decree is sovereign, and God's election of his redeemed unconditioned; but further it will not go…. Without naming or sanctioning the sublapsarians it adopts the mildness of their theory, while it refuses to raise or to approve the proposition that the several parts of God's infinite and eternal thought have or can have any real order of sequence in his own consciousness."[4] Again, he brings up the doctrine of the will in the prelapsarian, Edenic state of mankind. Some, like Jonathan Edwards, argued from philosophical necessitarianism that Adam necessarily sinned in the garden. Dabney averred this position to be philosophical rather than scriptural and preferred to simply state the fact of Adam's sin rather than try to prove it extra-scripturally. Westminster too seems to offer an account without meandering into the metaphysical. Again, he calls upon the topic of millennialism, which was a much-debated topic in his day. The Divines believed in the second advent of Christ and so present it in simplest of Biblical terms. They refuse to dogmatize because, as he said, "these unfulfilled prophecies [that relate to the millennial question] are obscure to our feeble minds. It is too modest to dictate a belief amidst so many different opinions."[5]

To the topic of this paper, the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, we find Dabney arguing Westminster's moderation once more. The Divines were certainly aware of the debates surrounding the transmission issue. "Joshua La Place was asserting mediate imputation," Dabney explains," and Garrissoles was denouncing him as a betrayer of the whole doctrine…. Again our wise divines refused to follow this debate beyond the limits of express Scripture."[6] The Assembly concluded on this topic, "that the guilt of Adam's first sin is imputed and his corruption conveyed to all the race except the divine Son of Mary…. But further the Confession will not go."[7] Dabney's rendering of this doctrine has been labeled as "Agnostic" by Warfield. His doctrine of the origin of sin was "an attempt," according to Warfield, "to accept the fact of the transmission of both guilt and depravity from Adam without framing a theory of the mode of their transmission or of their relations one to the other."[8]

According to Dabney, a serious question surrounds the teaching on imputation of Adam's sin. "How can it be justice, for me, who gave no consent to the federal arrangement, for me, who was not present when Adam sinned, and took no share in it, save in a sense purely fictitious and imaginary, to be so terribly punished for another man's deed."[9] This question has provided the impetus for many scholars to seek philosophical, rational, and biblical solutions to this dilemma of reason.

Historically, Dabney explains, there are five descriptive answers to this question. They all focus on the *mode* by which Adam's sin affects his progeny.[10] First, there is the "Wesleyan" view that eliminates the accusation through the second Adam's repair of the first Adam's condition. Second, is the solution offered by Edwards and his peculiar doctrine of "arbitrary identity." Third, is the "Realistic" view of Baird and Shedd which proposes a "generic unity" between Adam and his posterity. Fourth, is the "mediate imputation" view of Placæus and some of the nineteenth century New England school. Finally, the position taken by Turretin in opposition to Placæus and adopted in a form by the Princeton school—"immediate imputation."[11] Taking into account

2. Beattie, *Memorial Volume*, p. 95.
3. Beattie, *Memorial Volume*, p. 97.
4. Beattie, *Memorial Volume*, p. 97.
5. Beattie, *Memorial Volume*, p. 101.
6. Beattie, *Memorial Volume*, p. 100.
7. Beattie, *Memorial Volume*, p. 100.
8. Benjamin B. Warfield, "Imputation," in *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 9.308. Warfield correctly lists Robert W. Landis as a proponent of this view as well.
9. Robert L. Dabney, *Systematic Theology* [hereafter ST] (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), p. 338.
10. John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1959), p. 42. "If the union existing between Adam and his posterity is analogous to that which exists between Christ and his people and may thus be called representative union, the next question that arises is that of *the mode* by which the sin of Adam comes to be reckoned to the account of posterity" [italics added].
11. Dabney, ST, pp. 338–42. See also George P. Hutchinson, *The Problem of Original Sin in American Presbyterian Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1972), p. 75. Also of note is Warfield's list of "diverse types of theology" among Presbyterian scholars—"Federalistic," "New School," "Realistic," and "Agnostic." The question arises as to where Warfield would place Edwards; in the Princeton, "Federalistic" line or the "New School" line? Gerstner hints that Warfield may have seen Edwards as belonging to the immediate imputation school. See John Gerstner, *The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Powhattan, VA: Berea

the varied positions held, even within Reformed camps, led one twentieth century theologian to say, "The greatest problem in theology is that of the origin of sin."[12] More particularly the gnarly question of how Adam's sin affects his progeny has entangled theologians.

In this paper we shall attempt to examine Dabney's many and varied interactions with the varying views on this very important doctrine. This is necessary to present his "agnostic" position with any degree of accuracy. In doing this, we shall find Dabney summarily dismissing some positions (e.g., mediate imputation) while dealing in greater detail with Jonathan Edwards and Charles Hodge. As one of his reviewers said: "He arrays himself against Turrettin [*sic*] and Dr. Hodge no less than against Placæus and the Arminians."[13] Similarly, his biographer, Thomas C. Johnson has reminded readers: "Dr. Dabney was almost as little inclined to commit himself to immediate imputation as to mediate. He did up Breckinridge thoroughly, without altogether pleasing Princeton in the end."[14] R. J. Breckinridge was the Danville Seminary professor who encouraged Robert Landis to pursue the thorny issue.

Since Jonathan Edwards is so intimately associated with New England Theology, we shall first comment on Dabney's view of Edwards before we turn our attention to his dealings with Charles Hodge. Hodge is important because of his continuing widespread influence upon evangelicalism and the particularly widespread dissemination of the immediate imputation view. Finally, we shall consider Dabney's position in relation to the *Westminster Confession* and *Catechisms* and Calvin.

Dabney and Jonathan Edwards' "Arbitrary Identity"

While refraining from labeling Edwards as "unorthodox," John Gerstner maintained that "[t]raditional Reformed orthodoxy never did (and does not today), accept Edwards' identity doctrine."[15] If this is true, and Dabney certainly thought so, then how can Edwards' view of imputation, which is built upon this philosophical invention, be acceptable? While Gerstner thinks Edwards' view of imputation is within orthodoxy, Dabney considered it as mere speculation and, as such, "worthless."[16]

Unlike W. G. T. Shedd, Dabney seemed to find no doctrine of imputation in Edwards.[17] This is because Dabney forced Edwards to be consistent with his philosophical foundation of "arbitrary identity" or "personal identity." It is true that Dabney never alleges that Edwards explicitly denies imputation, but it is, nevertheless, evident that he does not believe Edwards' reasoning for imputation provides for an acceptable imputation doctrine.

In his *Systematic Theology*, Dabney asserted: "We find President Edwards endeavoring to evade the objection, by asserting that our federal oneness with Adam is no more arbitrary, in that it was constituted by God's *fiat*, than our own personal identity: for that also is constituted only by God's institution."[18] The Pelagian objection is that we are not, in any *real* sense, one with Adam, therefore, we cannot justly be punished for something he did. Edwards would say that we are one with Adam in the sense that just as Adam was divinely constituted, so every person is individually divinely constituted.[19]

This, Dabney objects, does not answer the opposition. Because our existence does not depend on a previous relation, that is, Adam as our natural head, "our existence is nothing else than a result of the will of God, sovereignly ordaining to restore our existence out of *nihil*, by a perpetual recreation."[20] Thus, as Gerstner has noted in relation to Edwards' teaching, "All members of the posterity repeat the very same sin as Adam. It is *not truly imputed* to them but repeated by them. It is true continuous repetition—a continuous creation."[21] That is Edwards' arbitrary or personal identity of mankind, and Dabney sees no imputation but rather some form of repetition that warrants liability for one's sin.

Gerstner maintains a similar conclusion to Dabney by interjecting a telling quote from Edwards: "It is not derived down naturally but God withholds his Spirit

Publications, 1992,93), 2.329. Samuel Baird, on the other hand, directly aligns him with Hopkins in the lineage of Placæus. For his discussion see "Edwards and the Theology of New England," in *The Southern Presbyterian Review* 10 (January 1858): 587.

12. Morton H. Smith, *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols. (Greenville, SC: Greenville Seminary Press, 1994), 1.291.

13. Anonymous, "Dr. Dabney on Imputation," in *The Southern Presbyterian Review* 24 (January 1873): 32.

14. Thomas Cary Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), p. 159.

15. John Gerstner, *The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Orlando, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 1993), 2.333.

16. Dabney, ST, p. 339.

17. William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), p. 171. In a footnote to a lengthy quote from Edwards' "Original Sin," Shedd states contra to Hodge that Edwards "explicitly imputes the guilt of the *first rising* of evil desire as well as of the corruption resulting from it."

18. Dabney, ST, p. 338.

19. Jonathan Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven and London: Yale, 1970), 3.390–91; also quoted in Gerstner, *The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 2.324–26.

20. Dabney, ST, p. 338.

21. Gerstner, *Rational Biblical Theology,* 2.326–27.

from them in judgment for their first sin."[22] Dabney anticipated a conclusion such as Gerstner's when he summarized Edwards' "personal identity" in the following manner:

> Because our existence is dependent and successive. Its sustentation is a perpetual recreation. Its succession is a series of moments of which one moment's existence does not cause or produce a succeeding moment's, not being coexistent with it, as cause and effect must always be.[23]

The inevitable conclusion is that God deals with mankind in each *moment* of time in a manner consistent with, indeed identical to, His dealing with Adam. This is the "identity" the human race has with Adam. The identity is not one of a *true* federal and/or natural relation.

Earlier it was stated that Dabney seemingly perceived Edwards to teach no imputation at all. It certainly appears, from a consistent reading of Edwards arbitrary "personal identity" view, that this is correct. G. C. Berkouwer refers to J. Ridderbos' study of Edwards' theory of identity to suggest that Edwards' is some form of realist, albeit not that of Shedd, Breckinridge and others. In addressing this, Berkouwer provides a quote that supports Dabney's thesis. "Such a view," says Ridderbos, "does not stress an imputation *per se* but 'the result of the unity, which consists by God's decree, between Adam and his posterity.'"[24] Gerstner concludes the same while acknowledging that some have seen Edwards as a proponent of the mediate imputation teaching.[25] We are united to Adam by a decree of God, said Edwards, therefore is there a place for imputation or natural generation?

It is obvious that Dabney did not view Edwards in the mediate school for he discussed that position under a separate head and never once referred to Edwards. He certainly could not place him in the federal school of immediate imputation as could Samuel Miller.[26] It is not clear, however, whether Dabney aligned Edwards with the New England theology as did Archibald Alexander and Samuel Baird. The logic of Dabney's argument against Edwards however could certainly lead to such a conclusion. Dabney, on the other hand, disdained any hint of speculation. Perhaps he felt there was a degree of speculation in Baird's and Alexander's conclusion. Whatever the case be in relation to the New England theology, Dabney did not find Edwards' position on transmission of Adam's sin tenable or particularly orthodox. "Hence," he wrote, "we repudiate this Edwardsian speculation as worthless, and contradicted by our own intuitions."[27]

Dabney's Relationship to Hodge's Immediate Doctrine

In addition to Edwards as a foil for his position, Dabney took a manly posture against his fellow Old School Presbyterian contemporary, Charles Hodge. In so doing, he espoused perhaps even more clearly his own position. As stated above, Dabney's position is that of an "agnostic," believing that man inherits Adam's sin but is not sure how or rather in what order. The latter position was first espoused in seed form by Robert J. Breckinridge (1800–71) at Danville Seminary in Kentucky. Breckinridge was a familiar name to many due to the political nature of his family and through his publications in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* and subsequently in his own, *Danville Review.* In his systematic treatment of Scripture published in 1858, he summarily offered this position:

> It is infinitely certain, that God would never make a legal fiction a pretext to punish as sinners, dependent and helpless creatures who were actually innocent. The imputation of our sins to Christ, affords no pretext for such a statement; because that was done by the express consent of Christ, and was in every respect, the most stupendous proof of divine grace. Nor is the righteousness

22. Gerstner, *Rational Biblical Theology,* 2.327.

23. Dabney, ST, p. 338.

24. G. C. Berkouwer, *Sin* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p. 456. Berkouwer goes on to suggests that Edwards' scheme "is the real basis of realism." However, he adds, this is not the realism of Shedd and others.

25. Gerstner, *Rational Biblical Theology,* 2.328–29. It was this very fact, that Edwards "had rejected all of imputation but the name," that drove A. Alexander, in the *Princeton Review*, to conclude that Edwards was explicitly evident in the New England theology that bore his name. Baird follows Alexander's evaluation to conclude: "This doctrine of mediate imputation—although, practically, it or something similar is inevitable, upon adoption of Edwards' theory of identity—is irreconcilable on logical principles with that theory.... The view thus taken by Placæus, met with no countenance at the time; and in it he had but few followers, until the rise of Edwards and Hopkins. Of the school of the latter, Edwards was the real founder—the Socrates." See Baird, "Edwards and the Theology of New England," in *The Southern Presbyterian Review* 10 (January 1858): 386–87.

26. Samuel Miller, *The Life of Jonathan Edwards, President of the College of New Jersey*, in *The Library of American Biography*, vol. 8, ed. by Jared Sparks (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, & Co., 1837), pp. 1–256.

27. Dabney, ST, p. 339. For a treatment of Dabney's critique of Edward's speculative bent see Sean Michael Lucas, "'He Cuts Up Edwardsism by the Roots': Robert Lewis Dabney and the Edwardsian Legacy in the Nineteenth-Century South," in *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* ed. D. G. Hart, et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), pp. 200–14.

> of Christ ever imputed for justification, except to the elect: nor ever received except by faith, which is the grace of the Spirit peculiar to the renewed soul. In like manner the sin of Adam is imputed to us, but never irrespective of our nature and its inherent sin. That is, we must not attempt to separate Adam's federal from his natural headship—by the union of which he is the Root of the human race: since we have not a particle of reason to believe that the former would ever have existed without the latter. Nay Christ to become our federal head, had to take our nature.[28]

It was Breckinridge's contention that there is a distinguishable though inseparable relationship of sin imputed and the sinful corruption of human nature. To put it another way, inherent sin and imputed sin are not to be confused, but also not to be dealt with one without the other. There is a communication of the two without priority.

Here is where Breckinridge left the matter, but he urged his theological successor in the seminary, Robert W. Landis (1809–83), to expound the doctrine as he perceived it. Landis produced a sizeable volume on the topic, which was published posthumously.[29] Warfield said of the position, as espoused by Landis and Dabney, it is "characterized by an attempt to accept the fact of the transmission of both guilt and depravity from Adam without framing a theory of the mode of their transmission or of their relation one to the other."[30]

As noted before, a serious question surrounds the teaching on imputation of Adam's sin. "How can it be justice, for me," wrote the Virginian, "who gave no consent to the federal arrangement, for me, who was not present when Adam sinned, and took no share in it, save in a sense purely fictitious and imaginary, to be so terribly punished for another man's deed?"[31] This question provided the impetus for many scholars to seek philosophical, rational, and biblical solutions to this dilemma over the course of many centuries. It takes a serious concern about any possible accusation of injustice in God and attempts to relieve the tension.

The primary difficulty, as Dabney saw it, was that the immediate, precedaneous imputation doctrine—both of Turretin and Hodge—was built upon the presupposition of an exact parallelism with the imputation of Christ's righteousness. A critic of Dabney acknowledged this presupposition in Turretin and the Princeton school. At the same time, he denied that Dabney proved any "want of parallelism between the two federal transactions."[32] This supposed exact parallelism, Dabney explained, is "an analogy … not a perfect parallel."[33] On this ground, he disputed Charles Hodge's "doctrinal use" of Romans 5:12–21.[34]

The first issue Dabney wanted to exploit was the condition of Adam's posterity. Hodge insisted that Adam's posterity, considered in their individuality, are not personally sinful and therefore guilty of personal sin. They are, Hodge averred, liable to punishment alone. With the Realists, Dabney viewed this position as opening the door to charge of injustice in God. Somehow, Dabney reasoned, we are not only liable because of Adam's sin, but really and personally sinful in our first state of existence, since punishment cannot exist without prior guilt.

From this point he addressed Hodge's "rigid parallelism" between Adam and Christ. In fairness to Hodge, it should be noted that Hodge does refer to his parallelism as an analogy and he does admit points of difference.[35] Dabney, however, was not satisfied with Hodge's qualification and pressed Hodge for a greater consistency in his explanations of the Adam/Christ parallel.

The primary point Dabney wished to make was that an exact parallelism leads to untenable consequences for the Reformed scholar. An *ordo salutis* derived from an exact or rigid parallelism is one best characterized as synergistic and thus Arminian. George Hutchinson, writing in the twentieth century, observed:

> There is good reason to charge Hodge with ultimately falling back upon the Wesleyan doctrine of universal redemption. For in his attempt to escape the charge of Nominalism he maintains, following Calvin, that no man is finally condemned for Adam's sin alone (that

28. Robert J. Breckinridge, *The Knowledge of God, Objectively Considered* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1858), 1.498–99.

29. Robert W. Landis, *The Doctrine of Original Sin* (Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1884); 541 pages. George Hutchinson has described the book accurately when he said "the book is bulky and maddeningly repetitive" (*The Problem of Original Sin,* p. 61, n2).

30. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Studies in Theology* (1932; rprt. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1988), p. 308. This article was first published in the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge,* 1909.

31. Robert L. Dabney, ST, p. 338.

32. Anonymous, "Dr. Dabney on Immediate Imputation," p. 52.

33. Robert Lewis Dabney, *Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney*, 3 vols., (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), 1.263. Dabney also believes that Hodge is aware that "all Calvinistic doctors" teach this truth!

34. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.262. Dabney is simply concerned for the consequences of Turretin and Hodge's strict "immediate" doctrine. Dabney said: "But we shall show that the doctrinal use which is attempted to be made of the passage is not only unnecessary to the analogy of faith, but untenable and self-contradictory."

35. Hodge, ST, 2.203.

> is for a *peccatum alienum*) as the Nominalists taught, but also for his own inherent hereditary depravity. But Hodge further maintains, in order to defend his doctrine of universal infant salvation, that hereditary depravity is insufficient grounds for the final perdition of an individual. No one will ever be finally condemned who has no actual sins to atone for, that is, for original sin alone. On what basis, then, is such a person saved? By the gracious redemption of Christ of course; there is no other way of salvation. But if every naturally born son of Adam is under condemnation, and if all these, except who live to commit actual sin, are saved by the redemption of Christ, how can one escape the inference that Christ redeemed all except those who voluntarily reject that redemption by means of actual sin?[36]

Hutchinson's conclusion was that this was effectively the doctrine of Wesley and the New School theologian, Henry B. Smith. "At least," he says, "it appears to be, in effect, the doctrine that all are in principle condemned in Adam while all are in principle redeemed in Christ."[37] Readers should note that in his *Systematic Theology*, Hodge argued from Romans 5:12–21 that the "all" in Christ must have been absolute, leaving infants dying in infancy as the only class of people to which it could apply. His Romans commentary on these verses, however, takes a more traditional approach to the text by arguing that "all" related to those who shall be saved through union with Christ.

Neither Dabney, nor Hutchinson, imputed universal salvation to Hodge, but both foresaw a great threat to the Reformed church if Hodge's exegetical approach was accepted. Dabney, rather, took a more moderate position on issues from lapsarianism to imputation. Rather than seeing the various elements or consequences of the fall unfolding sequentially, he saw them as a whole. Hodge held with others in the tradition "the consequences of the fall, namely guilt and depravity, must come upon the race in the same order in which they occurred in Adam." Dabney responded: "Now common sense tells us, that when a holy creature [i.e., Adam] committed his first sin, the depravation of his heart, the falling under guilt were, temporally speaking, synchronous: but that, causatively speaking, the depravation, or subjective corruption, must precede, and the guilt follow."[38] Hutchinson provides helpful commentary on Dabney when he said, "Now if this was the case with Adam, who was not corrupted of God but of himself, how could it be any different with his posterity? Temporally, they are guilty when corrupted and corrupted when guilty; but causatively, put first things first, they are guilty because corrupted rather than corrupted because guilty."[39] Dabney's position was one of non-commitment to any precedence in the order in which Adam's sin is conveyed to his progeny.

Already we have seen that Dabney considered the most common and difficult objection to imputation as the question of justice—"How can it be just for God to impute the penalty of a sin, except in a purely fictitious sense, which does not rightfully belong to a person?" Hodge, he believed, could not answer the objection as long as he insisted on emphasizing federal union with Adam while relegating natural union to a place of near silence. Granted, Hodge did acquiesce to the truth of natural union as it is presented in the Standards of the Reformed churches and in the Holy Scripture as it related to the corruption of human nature. Indeed, he admitted that Adam was not only the federal head of mankind, but the natural spring of humanity. Union with Adam was thus both federal and natural in differing respects.[40] However, Hodge retained federal liability to punishment without grounding it in the imputation of Adam's guilt. All that was imputed, according to Hodge, was liability to punishment. Murray reckons that Hodge wrongly attributed this to his definition of αμαρτία as singularly being reckoned to Adam's progeny. Dabney identified this as an inconsistency.

Dabney penetrates this concession on Hodge's part with characteristic incisiveness. Hodge agreed with qualifications that the ground for imputation is *natural* as well as federal union. He is forced to do so because his own church's doctrine stated: "Our first parents…being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation."[41] This natural union results in a depraved and corrupted human nature. Therefore, at such a time "as their existence doth actually unite them to Adam" they are condemned[42] due to union with corrupted Adam.

It is true that Dabney found a good deal of agreement with Hodge's doctrine of sin. For instance, he found Hodge's exegetical work in relation to Romans 5:12–21, overall, as extremely helpful. On this he said, "we have no theoretic motive to reject Dr. Hodge's exposition;

36. Hutchinson, *The Problem of Original Sin*, p. 105.
37. Hutchinson, *The Problem of Original Sin*, p. 105.
38. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.269.
39. Hutchinson, *The Problem of Original Sin*, p. 78.
40. Hodge, ST, 2.196.
41. Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.1, 3.
42. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.271. Dabney calls this simultaneous existence of corruption and guilt "one coëtaneous complex."

for his exegetical conclusions contain nothing inconsistent with our doctrine."[43] However, he remained convinced that Hodge drew harmful conclusions that might provide a "slippery-slope" for many into Arminianism, especially as they applied his principles to Christ's redemptive work. It is clear that neither Dabney nor Hodge denied the imputation of Adam's sin. The argument arises over "the grounds of that imputation and its consequences," as Hodge admits.[44] What was imputed and was there a priority in transmission? Hodge said liability to guilt was imputed. Dabney said both liability to guilt *and* culpability for Adam's sin are transmitted, but in what order he maintained we do not and cannot say. Reformed orthodoxy taught that God imputed the guilt of Adam's sin to his posterity as their federal head, that this imputed sin warranted condemnation, and that original sin entailed the corruption of human nature through natural generation. The above observations illustrate that new options arose in nineteenth century American Reformed thought in ways that perhaps even proponents did not recognize as modified ideas.

Dabney's Position Presented

While Dabney is not willing to expound a theory as to a specific mode whereby Adam's sin is imputed to his race, he is certain that one's view is important, indeed, "decisive of his whole system of theology."[45] He argued his "agnostic" view from three grounds—Calvin, confessionally, and biblically. We shall consider them in the following order. First, he argued his case as being consistent with Holy Scripture, especially Romans 5:12–21. It is in this context which he also places himself in company with Calvin, therefore, we shall intertwine our comments on Calvin with our look at Romans 5:12–21. Second, he argues from the language of the *Westminster Confession* and *Catechisms*.

Before addressing particulars of Dabney's position, it is important to remember that he did not argue for either immediate or mediate imputation. He believed these distinctions to be contrived and, therefore, such that they cast dark clouds across the Biblical teaching and bring confusion to the "intuitions." Dabney stated his convictions in unquestionable clarity.

> My conviction is, that this scheme [i.e., the development of "immediate, precedaneous imputation"], like the supralapsarian, is a novelty and an *over-refinement*, alien to the true current of the earlier Reformed theology, and some of Placæus' day were betrayed into the exaggeration by the snare set for them by his astuteness, and their own over-zeal to expose him.[46]

With this ever in mind, we proceed to Dabney's first witness—Scripture and Calvin.

Dabney's Argument from Scripture and Calvin

First, he considered 1 Corinthians 15:21–49 as very instructive. Dabney is careful to show the marked differences evident within the passage when he wrote: "In almost every thing they [i.e., the first Adam and the second Adam] are contrasted; the one earthy, the other heavenly; the one source of death, the other of life; yet they have something in common."[47] Yes, there are differences. What is this which they hold in common? It is their "representative characters," said Dabney.[48]

Verse 22 was an important verse for Dabney: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive." Dabney made no commitment to a mode of imputation at this point. He simply said: "Adam is *somehow* connected with the death of his confederated body" [italics added].[49] He continued to sound like Turretin and Hodge as he speaks of the imputation of Christ's righteousness for the redemption of the elect and the imputation of Adam's guilt for mankind's ruin. The difference, however, is understood when he differentiates between the two so as to annul the parallelism. The difference, Dabney explained, is that one is natural while the other is supernatural and thus not parallel but analogous.

Next, Dabney gives the fundamental teachings of Romans 5:12–17. Justification through faith is the theme being elucidated by the Apostle. "Adam's federal headship and our sin and death in him," he avers, is being used by the author to illustrate the main point.[50] The significance of Adam's use as a type of Christ "is indisputably this: that like as we fell in Adam, we are justified in Christ."[51] Again, it is easy to see that Dabney is making no commitment to a mode of imputation. Rather, he is most comfortable in simply stating the obvious intent of the text.

As he proceeds through the text, he drew three primary significations. First, in verses 12–14, "all men sinned and were condemned in Adam; death, the established penalty of sin, passing upon them through his

43. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.262.
44. Hodge, ST, 2.204.
45. Dabney, ST, p. 350.
46. Dabney, ST, p. 347.
47. Dabney, ST, p. 331.
48. Dabney, ST, p. 331.
49. Dabney, ST, p. 331.
50. Dabney, ST, p. 331.
51. Dabney, ST, p. 331.

sin."[52] Second, in verses 15–17, Dabney saw the truth that Adam's sin is imputed. He provides further commentary on this in his *Discussions* as he draws from Calvin.

So, on verse 15, Calvin said:

> What the apostle delivers, 'perished through the offense of one,' understand thus: that corruption is transfused from him into us. For neither do we thus perish by his fault as though we were ourselves without fault; but because his sin is the cause of our sin, Paul ascribes our death to him. Our sin I call what is inborn in us…. Moreover it is important to note here two differences between Adam and Christ … that in Adam's sin we are not condemned through imputation alone…, but we thus sustain its punishment, because *we are also guilty of fault*, so far, to wit, as our nature vitiated in him is involved in guilt before God…. The other difference is, that the benefit of Christ does not reach to all men, as Adam's involved his whole race in condemnation (emphasis added).[53]

There is no doubt that Dabney approves of Calvin's assessment. It is possible to conclude that the crux of Dabney's doctrinal differences with the Princetonian is contained in this passage.

Of special interest is Calvin who understood "we suffer his punishment, because we also ourselves are guilty."[54] This alone does not support Dabney's view, indeed, all Reformed presentations of imputation could claim this statement. However, when Calvin continued, the situation changes. Owen's translation is crystal clear where it stated: "as our nature is vitiated in him, it [i.e., our nature] is regarded by God as having committed sin." Calvin denied that imputation alone explains our guilt before God. Our guilt before God can only be understood first in terms of *peccare*, which "signifies to be corrupted and vitiated … we are all imbued with natural corruption, and so unrighteous and perverse."[55] Second, our guilt involves Adam's guilt. These two aspects of original sin are to be understood as having been communicated to Adam's progeny without distinction of priority. Dabney embraced this *in toto* as exhibited in his discussion of Hodge.

In following Calvin at this point in his understanding of Romans 5, he leaves the imputation issue open, neither favoring the immediate or the mediate view of imputation.[56] This is the essence of Dabney's "agnostic" doctrine of imputation where he views the elements of original sin as "one coëtaneous complex."

Finally, Dabney argues, from verses 18 and 19, that the legal language of καθιστηναι δικαιοι and δικαιωσιν ζωης "prove that it is a forensic change which is implied. Then it follows that likewise our legal relations were determined by Adam."[57] This is helpful in seeing the analogous relationship of the two Adams and in defining the differences between the two federal relationships. It is important to remember that all of this, natural corruption (vv 15–17) and legal imputation, not simply one aspect, is imputation for Dabney. Still, remembering that he is not committed to an order of transmission from Adam to his progeny.

Dabney and the *Confession* and *Catechisms*

Throughout the writings of Dabney, one finds reference to the Standards whereby he executed his theology. Indeed, his *Systematic Theology* is framed according to the *Westminster Confession*. In his discussions of the doctrine at hand, he referred many times to the *Confession.* In a few instances, he pointed out departures from the *Confession*. More often, however, he simply raised the *Confession* as the standard, asking men to say no more than the document to which they subscribed.[58]

He was very pleased that the Westminster Assembly had refrained from extremes and excesses on issues such as decrees (i.e., supra- and infralapsarianism), eschatology, and imputation (i.e., immediate and mediate). Douglas Kelly noted: "Dabney certainly followed the advice of the Scottish Commissioner Henderson to the Westminster Assembly of the 1640s: 'Let us avoid all scholastical disputes and unnecessary distinctions.'"[59] Because the Assembly succeeded in this regard, remaining so thoroughly biblical, Dabney could say one year before his death: "the Confession will need no amendment until the Bible needs to be amended."[60]

52. Dabney, ST, p. 332.

53. Calvin cited in Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.261–62.

54. John Calvin, *Commentaries on The Epistle of Paul the Apostle To The Romans*, trans. and ed. John Owen, *Calvin's Commentaries*, 22 vols. (1844–1856; repr. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 19.210.

55. Dabney, *Discussions,* 1.261.

56. See Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.262 where he stated: "Calvin's exposition seems, on the whole, founded on the truest insight into the apostle's scope, and the fairest and most scholarly."

57. Dabney, ST, p. 332.

58. Dabney's spirit concerning this doctrine was perhaps heightened by the refusal of one presbytery to admit Dr. Baird on the basis of his disagreement with Dr. Hodge. Cited in Hutchinson, *The Problem of Original Sin in American Presbyterian Theology*, p. 71, n. 38.

59. Douglas Kelly, "Robert Lewis Dabney," in *Southern Reformed Theology,* ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), p. 45.

60. Robert L. Dabney, "The Doctrinal Contents of the Confession of Faith," in *Memorial Addresses of the Westminster Assembly, 1647–1897* (Richmond: The Presbyterian Committee on Publication, 1897), p. 94.

Drawing from the *Shorter Catechism* Question 18, Dabney begins by telling us that "original sin is the general term, expressing both elements, of imputed guilt and total depravity."[61] Note that sinful man's condition consists of: 1) the guilt of Adam's sin; 2) lack of original righteousness; 3) corruption of nature "whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually" (*Westminster Larger Catechism* 25). It is from this fallen man that "all actual transgressions" flow. All of this is *original sin* for Dabney.

Original sin is "so called because *native*, and because the fountain of all other sin."[62]

Native is a very important concept if we are to understand Dabney's opposition to immediate imputation. Native relates to that aspect of mankind identified by Dabney as *habitus*. According to Doug Kelly, "*habitus* … essentially meant [for Dabney] the basic dispositional and motivational complex at the roots of the human personality that determines what one's character is and thus what one's choices and actions are."[63] This *habitus*, with which men are constituted, is described by Dabney as "vicious," "evil," and "perverted."[64] Is depravity to be found "in the perverted *habitus* of the will, causatively corrupting and blinding the understanding, and thus qualifying the soul as a whole morally evil?"[65] For Dabney, the answer is, absolutely!

So, man in his native state, possesses a *habitus* that involves the guilt of Adam's sin, lack of original righteousness, and corruption of nature. This is *original sin* for Dabney. Does this mean that this "vicious," "evil," and "perverted" disposition of soul is God's product. Dabney would answer, absolutely not! This original sin "does not change or destroy any part of [the soul's] substance."[66] The *essentia* of the soul, originating with God, remains the constant metaphysically.[67] These descriptive terms for the depravity of man are for Dabney not attributes "but *accidens* of the human soul."[68] God, therefore, is free from any accusation of having made man sinful and thus being the author of sin.

So far Dabney has said that original sin, as defined above, is native to man's being. Original sin is a "soul" issue. This is clearly seen in the *habitus* or disposition of man in his individual origination. This "evil" disposition is accidental to the soul not of the essence of the human soul. In this way, Dabney seeks to guard God from heinous accusations.

Two questions arise at this point. First, how does he reconcile his view that original sin "is not a substantial corruption of the soul"[69] with the *Confession* when it says the first man became "wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body"? (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, 6.2). Second, and perhaps most germane to our purposes, how is this original sin communicated to Adam's progeny?

First, quoting from Chapter 6 of the *Confession*—"wholly defiled, in all the faculties and parts of the soul and body"—Dabney explains that too often the temptation has been to think of the faculties of man compartmentally.

> But when we thus discriminate the faculties, we must not forget the unity and simplicity of the spirit of man. It is a *monad*. And, as we do not conceive of it as regenerated or sanctified by patches; so neither do we regard it as depraved by patches. Original corruption is not, specifically, the perversion of a faculty in the soul, but of the soul itself[70] (emphasis added).

He begins by describing the soul of man as a *monad*. This serves in preserving the church from the type of compartmentalizing that only serves to generate Arminian conclusions or, at best, an inconsistent Christian anthropology.[71] Then he quickly alludes to the soteriological implications. This perspective is typical of Dabney's ability to think beyond the immediate topic to the effect a given conclusion will have upon one's doctrinal system in general. Finally, he speaks to the question raised above when he says that as a monad the soul itself, not a single faculty, is affected by original sin. A reading he might possibly give to the *Confession* might sound like "every aspect of the soul—intellect, will, and affections—has been negatively disposed toward God." This reading is vindicated by Dabney's lucid interpretation of this passage of the *Confession*.

> We mean, first, that as to the chief responsibility of the soul, to love God, every soul is totally recreant…. Second … there is [in the acts of the unregenerate] a fatal

61. Dabney, ST, p. 322.
62. Dabney, ST, p. 322.
63. Kelly, "Robert Lewis Dabney," pp. 51, 52.
64. Dabney, ST, pp. 569–79.
65. Dabney, ST, p. 572.
66. Dabney, ST, p. 322.
67. When Dabney speaks of God as the originator or creator of the soul, he is not speaking as a creationist. He prefers to understand the origin of the soul as an "insoluble mystery" consisting of both divine and human causation. While he sounds like a realist so far as he goes, he refrains from labels. See ST, pp. 320, 321.
68. Dabney, ST, p. 322.
69. Dabney, ST, p. 322.
70. Dabney, ST, p. 323.
71. For Dabney on this topic see ST, pp. 298, 570, 571, 578.

> defect as to God, which places them on the wrong side of the moral dividing line…. But third, native depravity is total, in this sense; that it is so far as man's self-recuperation is concerned, decisive and final.[72]

In this manner, he presents the *Confession* as supportive of his eventual position on "imputation." It is becoming clear that Dabney's position, free from the "over-refinements" of the immediate school, is, at least, confessionally consistent.

Now, the second question attached to Dabney's *habitus* view of original sin is how this is passed along to Adam's posterity. One would expect Dabney to simply refer to *Westminster Larger Catechism* 26: "Original sin is *conveyed* from our first parents unto their posterity *by natural generation,* so as all that proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin" (emphasis added). Instead, he includes this as one of nine "proofs of a native and total depravity."[73] From these "proofs" he enters his discussion of "imputation." To the insensitive reader, this may be seen as no more than a capitulation to the modified view of Hodge. To the scrutinizing student, however, Dabney is unveiling the cautious nature of his system of thought.[74]

"It is not Adam's sin which is imputed to us," says Dabney, "but the guilt (obligation to punishment) of his first sin. This much misunderstood doctrine does not teach that Adam's act was actually made ours. This consciousness repudiates."[75] There are "legal consequences" to Adam's sin. These "legal consequences," extend to "ours in his."[76] This is the result, according to Dabney, that Adam's progeny is treated as Adam because of what he did.

The logical question is "upon what grounds does God so act toward Adam's race"? Dabney answers briefly, yet clearly: "The grounds of this *legal union* we hold to be two; 1st the *natural union* with him as the root of all mankind; 2d the *federal relation* instituted in him, by God's covenant with him."[77] Here is Dabney's position in skeletal form. This is his version of the so called "agnostic" doctrine of imputation. It provides Dabney a position consistent with and defensible by the *Confession* and *Catechisms* without the complications of Hodge's "over-refinement."[78] He certainly cannot be accused of unnecessary distinctions. He has given no time to priorities in that which is communicated to mankind from Adam. He has said no more than the Standards. The latter was a chief gripe of his against Hodge.

Analytical Conclusion

The opening premise was that the origin of sin poses the greatest problems in theology. We have discussed a very important aspect of hamartiology as we have examined the imputation of Adam's sin. Even more specifically, we have endeavored to explore the view of one of American Presbyterians' most able theologian/churchmen, Robert Lewis Dabney. He has been presented through various avenues. From his critique of Jonathan Edwards to his intricate evaluation of Charles Hodge, his vast concerns have been expressed.

It is easy to see that he truly believes that no doctrine can be isolated from one's system. Therefore, in discussing the origin of sin and its communication to Adam's progeny, Dabney's discussions broach a variety of theological topics. For example, he is compelled to include discussions on the origin of the soul, the constitution of the soul, human ability, regeneration, and justification. Indeed, one's view of the mode whereby Adam's sin is imputed is decisive of his whole system of theology. Dabney may not satisfy everyone's concerns, but he is true to his presupposition.

In calling Dabney's view "agnostic" one should not assume that imputation is devalued or ignored by this complex man. Imputation is central to his theology. As will be discussed later in this analysis, imputation is a Scriptural truth. Dabney's objection is to the "over-refinements," which in his opinion erect false distinctions like "immediate" and "mediate." His commitment to the doctrine of imputation becomes evident early in his examination of the older Edwards' doctrine of original sin.

Dabney found no doctrine of imputation in Edwards. Regardless of Edwards' sentimental use of the term, Dabney is concerned that Edwards' presuppositions be revealed and pressed to their consequential ends. Once they are evident, he is convinced Edwards' "imputation" is merely an impersonal identity based upon God's sovereign design. This was seen in Dabney's explanation of Edwards' doctrine of "arbitrary/personal identity" wherein man is united with Adam only by Divine decree.

For Dabney, Edwards' explanation of the existence of

72. Dabney, ST, pp. 324, 325.

73. Dabney, ST, pp. 324–28, for a discussion of the nine proofs of native depravity in man.

74. Dabney is here exhibiting a caution as he surely recognizes that he cannot argue for "natural generation" alone. If he were to he would, of course, be doomed when he enters into his exposition of Romans 5:12–19.

75. Dabney, ST, p. 329.

76. Dabney, ST, p. 329.

77. Dabney, ST, p. 329.

78. See *Westminster Larger Catechism* 22 and 26 for justification of this conclusion.

sin and its transmission neither answers the common objection against God's justice, nor provides adequately for parallel discussions such as the origin of the soul or justification. Further, while Dabney does not say so explicitly, Edwards provides, not only the foundation but the impetus, for the New England theologians to eventually deny the foundational tenets of orthodox hamartiology and, thus, undermine the Reformed soteriology as well. Samuel J. Baird develops this ably in his *A History of the New School.*[79]

One could wish that the Virginian would have provided as detailed a critique of Edwards as he did of Hodge for example. He did not, but there is enough mixed throughout his theological and philosophical writings to see where he would provide a challenge to Edwards. Perhaps no one of his generation was more able to delve into Edwards' philosophical interests than Dabney.[80] This, of course, makes him eminently qualified to deal effectively with Edwards' theology as has been shown.

Unlike his discussions on Jonathan Edwards, Dabney is extensive in his interaction with Charles Hodge—in both his *Systematic Theology* and *Discussions*. Because Dabney and Hodge say so much that agrees, it would be easy to pass over Dabney's concerns and attribute his disputes to the crusty character of the late nineteenth century Southern Presbyterian. Given the fact that so little attention has been paid to Dabney's doctrine of imputation this may well be the reason. However, it is the estimation of this writer that Dabney, America's finest teacher of theology of the nineteenth century, has much to contribute to the church's understanding and application of this crucial doctrine. Therefore, his interaction with Hodge, arguably the darling of American Presbyterianism, cannot be neglected.

In final analysis, perhaps it would be helpful to mention several points of commonality that exist between Dabney and Hodge. Hodge and Dabney agree as to the seat of original sin. In fact, while never using the term "monad" to describe the human soul, Hodge does refer to the faculties of the soul as a unit. He attributes the seat of original sin to the "whole soul." These two also agree that it is not the *essentia* that is corrupted, but the *accidens* of the soul. Thus, Hodge can say the "natural disposition" of man is corrupted. This relates similarly to Dabney's doctrine of the *habitus* of man.

Perhaps more surprising to some is the agreement the two have in defining the nature of imputation. It is not Adam's sin but the guilt of his first sin which is imputed to Adam's posterity. Guilt, as well, is defined by both as obligation to punishment rather than criminality. Finally, Dabney sounds like Hodge rather than Landis (with whom he shares the label "agnostic") when he explains the grounds for our legal union with Adam as both natural and federal.

With all of this common ground, is it justifiable for Dabney to raise such stringent objections to Hodge's position? Dabney was convinced of it. As has been seen in our discussion of Hodge, Dabney is always concerned for the logical consequences of any position. He is also adamantly opposed to "over-refinements" and blind allegiance. In Hodge, Dabney finds blind allegiance to Turretin's "over-refinements" of this doctrine.[81]

The root of Dabney's dispute with Hodge is that Hodge is not satisfied with maintaining the *natural* and *federal* union of Adam with his natural descendants. Hodge has to develop a system of priority in the imputation of guilt and corruption. In so doing Dabney finds Hodge providing more problems than answers. For instance, we have seen the problem of immediate imputation relating to the immediate creation of the soul. In general, Dabney prefers leaving mode of transmission and so the question of "precedaneous" out of the discussion. He prefers to allow the "insoluble mystery" to remain.

What about Dabney's charge that Hodge tries to maintain an exact parallelism between imputation of Adam's sin and Christ's righteousness? Is this legitimate or a case of quibbling? Hodge attempts to soften his treatment of Scripture (especially Romans 5) by saying the cases are analogous and have some differences. Dabney appreciates the capitulation but is not satisfied any more than he was satisfied with Edwards' use of the term imputation to describe his doctrine. It would not matter how many differences Hodge admitted. Dabney is convinced that Hodge's doctrine undermines the doctrine of justification. If the parallel holds, just as Adam's guilt is imputed and from this corruption follows, then Christ's righteousness must be imputed. Then "as part of the consequent reward of that imputed merit, has regeneration wrought, infusing the sanctified nature of His redeeming Head into his soul."[82] From this

79. Samuel J. Baird, *A History of the New School*, (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen and Haffelfinger, 1868), pp. 167–183.

80. This is evidenced by Dabney's insightful discussion of Edwards' aesthetic philosophy in his chapter entitled "Moral Feelings," in *A Practical Philosophy* (1897; repr. Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1984).

81. In a forthcoming publication, the author argues that Hodge did not follow Turretin as closely as Dabney surmises and as some might wish. See C. N. Willborn, "Charles Hodge, the Sin Problem, and History," in *Charles Hodge: American Reformed Orthodox Theologian,* ed. Ryan McGraw (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023).

82. Dabney, ST, p. 345.

it is seen that Dabney considers this critical in order to preserve the Reformed *ordo salutis*. If Dabney was correct, his concerns are more than a mere quibbling.

Finally, Dabney is convinced that Hodge did not answer the objection that an imputation without our participation in it is unjust. He is convinced that the immediate view cannot answer the objection for it neglects the true nature of the natural union. In essence, according to Dabney, Hodge would have us answer the objection at the expense of God's justice. By that it is meant to say that the fact of God's way being just, justifies the means. Well, of course, he is right. But since there is a question as to whether Hodge is attributing the proper activity to God, there remains the question as to whether God could do it. Dabney says Hodge's immediate imputation is "intrinsically" wrong and so to represent God as having dealt with man accordingly is wrong.

Involved in this question of justice, is the relationship of participation. Dabney contends that man is worthy of guilt because he "participated" in Adam's sin as is evidenced by man's propensity toward and participation in personal sin. This has been seen in discussion of Calvin's exposition of Romans 5. Hodge, on the other hand, denies this, insisting that it should never be insisted that mankind is in anyway other than federally involved in sin.

Dabney comes very near to sounding like the Realist school as he argues this point. The distinction, a distinction which Dabney would maintain vehemently, is that he does not see this as an actual or real participation, but one owing to the natural union with Adam. In doing this, he seeks to take the argument away from the judicial category of the Pelagians and rationalists and place it in its own category. Basically, by placing it in an unparalleled category, men will have no grounds for claiming injustice even if they reject the doctrine. The unparalleled category to which we refer is the supernatural realm of mystery. Hodge provides grounds for the claim because he insisted on pursuing the issue with his logic. Dabney preferred leaving the discussion in the realm of revelation, supernatural and divine mystery. One may not agree with the revelation, but that does not grant one grounds for crying "unfair." At this point he is following closely Robert W. Landis.[83]

Dabney insisted that Hodge does not answer the objection. Certainly no one would argue with his ultimate insistence that the doctrine of imputation is wrapped in mystery. The issue of mode of transmission is open. It is true that guilt and corruption are "one coëtaneous complex." Sinners must deal with their condition knowing God is justified in condemning them as sinful and sinner.

The lessons from Dabney are numerous. Perhaps none are more important to the scholar and pastor than this—avoid the temptation to over-refine doctrines to which Scripture speaks generally. Another lesson of significance is to live and work alert to the effect that any one position has upon other aspects of theology. No doctrine stands in isolation. Finally, we live in an age of hero-worship. Dabney's freedom to disagree and critique his fathers and brothers, with such a marked civility, should encourage us all to be more like the Bereans.▪

83. We agree with Hutchinson when he says that Dabney is never a slavish disciple of Dr. Landis. However, the affinities are too strong to deny or ignore.

Robert Lewis Dabney's War on Sensualism

By Frank J. Smith

The scars of a literal war were still evident in 1875. The Southland had been ravaged by hordes of Yankees. The results of the devastation were felt for decades, with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the affected states not attaining their antebellum levels until the 1950s. But the war brought more than mere economic hardship. The concept of private property had been assaulted by fellow travelers, including devoted followers of Karl Marx. There was the loss of Southern leadership—both literally (with the death and maiming of countless men, including the next generation of leaders) and in terms of prestige. Racial tensions increased and spilled over into violence. Corruption characterized state governments, and at the national level, political persecution proceeded apace. Radical ideological notions and educational philosophies were foisted upon Dixie. Society as a whole had turned upside down.

It was at that moment—just prior to the formal end of the Reconstruction era—that one of the most prominent Southern Presbyterian theologians, Robert Lewis Dabney, penned one of his greatest works, *The Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century Considered*. His target was Sensualism. The war that he was fighting had multiple fronts: philosophy, religion, ethics, apologetics, politics, science, and even worship. Underlying the outer skirmishes was something much deeper and ideological. The conflict focused on the way by which truth can be known—an issue which, by definition, touches on everything.

The Issue Stated

Dabney begins his work by noting that "sensualist" is often used "to describe one in whom the animal appetites are predominant." Though "it is a just charge against the Sensualistic philosophy" that it not infrequently "inclines its advocates to this dominion of beastly lusts," the issue of Sensualism is much deeper.

> The Sensualistic philosophy is that theory, which resolves all the powers of the human spirit into the functions of the five senses, and the modifications thereof. It is the philosophy, which finds all its rudiments in sensation. It not only denies to the spirit of man all innate ideas, but all innate powers of originating ideas, save those given us from our senses. It consequently attempts to account for every general and every abstract judgment, as an empirical result of our sensations, and consistently denies the validity of any *à priori* ideas. Such was the philosophy which was dominant in France at the close of the eighteenth century; and which, untaught by the frightful results it produced there, is now striving again to establish its dominion among us towards the close of the nineteenth age.[1]

Those who opposed Sensualism were called "spiritualists"—a name which Dabney would have welcomed to take for his own, except for the fact that that term could be confused with a defiled word, "spiritualism." The Virginian staked out his position: "Let it then be understood that the philosophy which I maintain against the Sensualistic, or exclusively empirical, … shall be called the Rational. It holds that the human intelligence is not a bundle of organs, but a pure spirit; it asserts for man a Reason, and not merely senses and their modifications" (11–12). Though Sensualism can appear in many forms,

> it always has its characteristic traits and carries its own dangers to truth, virtue, and happiness…. [I]t always

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1. Robert Lewis Dabney, *The Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century Considered* (1875; repr., Dallas, Tex.: Naphtali Press, 2003), p. 11.

> involves tendencies to erroneous logic, vitiating even the physical sciences, which it is wont to claim as its peculiar clients; to universal skepticism; to idealism; to nihilism; to the obliterating of moral distinctions, and the destruction of moral responsibility; to materialism; to a denial of the supernatural; and thus, to atheism…. [W]e do not charge that every Sensualistic philosopher holds to all these results, or approves them; we charge that they are all latent in the system, and that one or another of them is continually making itself patent in the outgrowth of this philosophy (12).

Dabney protests against the Sensualistic assumption of denying the validity of any metaphysic. He demonstrates the inconsistency of that position, by noting that Sensualists, who have been "tinctured with 'Positivist' errors," assume their own *à priori* principle, thus adopting a metaphysic (12–13).

The Progenitors of the Sensualistic Philosophy

Chapter 2, "The Sensualistic Philosophy of the 18TH Century," considers the views of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, Claude-Adrien Helvetius, and Jean François de Saint-Lambert. In accordance with Hobbes' views as expressed in *Leviathan*, there is no possibility of free-agency in his system.

> But how can that creature be entitled to civil liberty for whom spiritual freedom is impossible? After denying the very existence of the moral faculty, which defines rights and regulates personal freedom, Hobbes can do nothing less than deny liberty to man in society. Again, if man's only faculty of cognition is sense-perception, and he has absolutely no ideas save those given from the bodies which he smells, or tastes, or feels, or hears, or sees, it is very clear that there can be no abstract idea, *à priori*, of space, of time, of power, of the infinite, of the moral right, or spirit, or of God. For none of these are properties of bodies; none of them are cognizable by the senses (20).

After pointing out the inconsistencies of Locke's Sensualism, Dabney declared: "The havoc which the Sensualistic philosophy makes in the foundation of ethics, presents one of the most crushing refutations. It is my purpose to employ this line of opposition to the full; and hence this attempt to familiarize the reader's mind to it" (27).

Dabney observed:

> The philosophy of the infidels and sensualists of France was the storm cloud from which fell the most ghastly ruin witnessed in modern times. The reign of terror was the offspring of this philosophy. It was under its express guidance that the legislation decreed God a non-entity, and death an eternal sleep; that divine worship was formally abolished, and a courtesan enthroned as the Goddess of Reason; that the *guillotine* stood "*en permanence*," pouring its stream of innocent blood down the street daily; that the prisons were crowded with the noblest and best of the land, and emptied by indiscriminate massacre; that marriage was superseded, and twenty thousand bastards were born to Paris in one year; that the skins of human victims were actually tanned in the tanneries, and employed for common leather. It scarcely needed the atrocities and frenzy of the Paris Commune in our own days to give every reasonable man assurance that the same tree will ever bear the same fruit. To sum up the whole in one word, the theory which begins by denying to man his spiritual attributes, naturally ends in making him an animal (45–46).

Chapter 3, "Analysis Of The Human Mind, By James Mill," focuses on the father of John Stuart Mill. Dabney argues that the elder Mill's approach actually leads to idealism (that is, the denial of physical reality), as well as Nihilism (64). Furthermore, what distinguishes man from beasts is that the latter do not have powers of reason, which fact is why brutes do not have an actual language (69).

Chapter 4, "Sensualistic Ethics In Great Britain," advances the idea that "moral distinction [that is, distinguishing between right and wrong] is not sensuous." But if Sensualism is true, then "our souls can have no such original rational function as conscience" (70).

Positivism

Chapter 5, "Positivism," considers the chief proponent of this approach, viz., Auguste Comte. "All the principles of society founded on psychology and theology are, according to him, worthless; and nothing can be established, to any purpose, until sociology is studied solely as a science of physical facts, and regular physical laws, without concerning ourselves with the vain dreams of laws of mind, free agency and divine providence." Positivism denies "every supernatural fact" and therefore it must "deny creation as a fact of which the human intelligence cannot possibly have evidence"; the necessary conclusion is that the universe did not have a beginning and so "it must, of course, be from eternity, and therefore, self-existent." Accordingly, "matter is clothed with the attributes of God" (80–81). Comte's views on sociology led him to propose that the West

(Europe and America) "be broken up into little States of a few million people each," which would

> be governed by an oligarchy of three wealthy bankers, who were to appoint their successors by their own fiat, and govern absolutely without parliaments, elections, or any restrictions. The fashionable French doctrines of liberty, fraternity, and equality, he utterly flouted. All the wealth of the State was to be centered in a few hereditary hands; and all the rest of the people were to be operatives for these capitalists. Such was to be the social structure, all sustained and operated symmetrically by the potent but gentle influence of the positive philosophy. But alongside of this secular oligarchy, there was to be a "spiritual order," composed of the positive philosophers and educators.

Ruling over the whole world would be a "Pontiff of Humanity": "From his scientific dicta there would be no appeal whatever; and after his dominion was erected, there was to be no liberty of dissent whatever for anyone, learned or unlearned. Positivism … was thenceforward to reign unquestioned, with all the majestic sway of infallibility, and liberty of thought would be a crime" (82–83).

Dabney posits that Positivism had "become the prevalent type of the Sensualistic philosophy in our day," and that Comte should therefore be the chief target of those who opposed Sensualism (85).

Evolution

Chapter 6, "Evolution Theory," lays out various evolutionary schemes, with focus on the views of Charles Darwin. But Dabney also considers the views of Thomas Huxley and John Tyndal, of whom he writes that they

> resort to a sort of spiritualizing of matter. That is, they leap from a stark materialism, to a species of idealism. Instead of identifying mind with matter, they would have us identify matter with mind. There is but one kind of power in the universe, and that is *force;* and one kind of effect, which is motion. Mechanical action is motion of masses; and mental action is motion of molecules. Mind-power will some day be literally correlated to material forces, as caloric in water has been to elasticity in steam. We must not, then, think of matter as a something dull, gross, passive, simply ponderable, opaque, and inert; but as the refined *habitat* of force, the invisible extravagance of materialism driving its advocates into the dreams of idealism (93).

Materialism and the Mind

Chapter 7, "Physiological Materialism," is followed by Chapter 8, "Spirituality of the Mind." Dabney writes that Sensualism in the eighteenth century produced "its legitimate conclusion, a nineteenth century 'Reign of Terror.' International Communism has, indeed, already given a prelibation from the pit, in its short-lived reign in Paris; and this society is the avowed patron of this animal philosophy." The faithful critic of Sensualism is "rendering a priceless service to humanity, to just legislation, to sound morals, and to Christian theology" (107).

In dealing with the topic of this chapter, Dabney presents how philosophy should relate to Revelation: "It is obviously that of an obedient and grateful handmaid. We are not to bend God's testimonies to our reasonings, but to bend them to His testimony" (108).

He also posits that the mind must be non-material given its singleness and simplicity: "every act and affection of the mind is known in consciousness as having complete unity, and it is impossible to refer any attribute of extension to them even in conception. Endeavor to imagine a concept as found, or ponderous, or colored (as it is a mental act); or an affection triangular, as distinguished from another that is circular; or the top and bottom sides of a judgment; or a volition divided by some tool into halves and quarters; and you feel, inevitably, that the thought is impossible. All the attributes of matter are absolutely irrelevant to spirit and to all its modifications" (111f).

Another key distinction is that of "two different (and often rival) classes of effects; those of material forces being one class, those of free choice the other. Force is blind, unintelligent, and necessitated. Choice is intelligent and free" (114f). Further, "while material force is not transformable into volition, volition is an original spring of material force; and … the only original spring of it." While the "essential attribute of matter" is passivity—a point demonstrated by the laws of inertia and of motion, the origin of force is "always in the volition of a living thing" (117; cf. 129).

Evolution as Materialism

Chapter 9, "Evolution Theory Materialistic, And Therefore False," argues that "Atheism and Materialism are twin sisters. This evolution doctrine also leads, like all other atheistic schemes, to the denial of a soul to man." The end result of this view is that it instructs evolutionism's devotees "that they are generically brutes. They will act as brutes; in this way they will understand their teachers" (127).

Dabney argues against Professor Tyndal's rejuvenation of the Atomism of antiquity, as well as Dr. Huxley's attempt to appeal to "protoplasm" (127ff). There is a profound difference between physical force (which is "unintelligent, involuntary, measured by weight, velocity, and quantity of matter affected, producing motion or equilibrium, mechanical or molecular") and vital causation (which "has the unique attribute of free-agency, … self-active and self-directing"). Moreover, there is no example of man having "ever communicated life to dead, compound matter. Let the infidel chemist make a living animal in his laboratory, without a living germ; then only will his hypothesis begin to rise out of the region of dreams" (129).

With respect to Darwin himself, Dabney points out that the term "natural selection" is self-contradictory, since selection implies free-agency and intelligent choice, while "Nature" as conceived by the evolutionist is unintelligent and hap-hazard. Even "survival of the fittest" entails the same absurdity, since "fitness" implies design (131).

Another insurmountable problem with Darwinism is that there are no fossils of intermediate or failed forms: "fossil natural history should present us with both sides of the history of the blind process of this natural selection, with the fossils of the degraded, the unfit, as well as with those of the developed species" (132; cf. also 147f, 149).

And yet another difficulty is that the natural tendency of more developed species is toward degradation back toward the common species. More than that, hybrids, which invariably are infertile, cannot perpetuate themselves. Accordingly, there is a divinely-given barrier to "that disastrous intermingling of types of organization, shading off in every direction into interminable confusions which must have resulted in the fatal degradation of all the *genera*" (133–134).

Dabney attacks Darwin's view as being totally unverified. All that he can allege is "the possibility that species *may have* begun" in an evolutionary way. "But according to the rules of logic, as admitted by all, that 'may be' can never rise to the position of a scientific truth, until it is verified by actual observation."

> In fact, verification is not only lacking, but impossible; because, the supposition puts this whole work of natural selection, as to any distinctive results, so far back in the past, that human history has not, and can never have, any record of a single one of its decisive facts. This simple view should leave the whole scheme then, were men imbued with the true spirit of science, among the mere fancies with which poets amuse their idleness. It is related to science, just as Gulliver's voyage to Lilliput is to geography (134–135).

And what about man's mind? If man has evolved, then his mind is merely "animated matter." This notion would lead to monstrous conclusions.

> The holy courage of the martyr, who braves the fire rather than violate the abstract claims of a divine truth, is but the outgrowth of the brutal tenacity of the mastiff, when he endures blows and torments rather than unlock his fangs from the bloody flesh of his prey. The heroic fidelity of the patriot, in the face of the grimmest death, is but the quality of the dog which will fetch and carry at his master's bidding. The disinterested love of Christian mothers, the heavenly charity which delights to bless an enemy, the lofty aspirations of faith for the invisible and eternal purity of the skies, the redeeming love of Jesus, all that has ever thrilled a right soul with deathless rapture of admiration, and elevated man towards his Divine Father, are destined to have neither future nor a reward, any more than the fragrance of rose, or the radiance of the plumage of the bird, or the serpent's scales (137).

Then, various rational objections were presented, "which entirely break the force of any plausible appearances, and place the evolution theory out of the pale of science. The most that can be claimed for it is, that it is an ingenious fancy" (141).

In this regard, Dabney speaks of two types of evidence as given in a courtroom, viz., circumstantial evidence and live witnesses.

> Judicial science, charged with the solemn responsibilities of the life and death of the citizens, has exactly ascertained the relations and rights of these two kinds of evidence…. [C]ircumstantial evidence, in order to destroy the testimony of a competent witness, must be an exclusive demonstration. It must not only satisfy the reasons that the criminal act may have been committed by the accused in the supposed way, but that it could not have been committed by another…. If any other hypothesis can be invented, even, that is pretty imaginary and unsupported by a single positive fact, to which all the circumstances given by the prosecutor can be reconciled, that is proof of the incompleteness of the accusing hypothesis; the accused cannot be condemned.

Moreover, circumstantial evidence, which might show a

person might have committed the crime, is overturned by the testimony of an honest man which contradicts the prosecution's hypothesis (142f).

The application to evolution's case is clear, viz., that the testimony of God trumps human theories. While evolutionists want to set forth that theory as "the only hypothesis," in point of fact, the existence of God is another hypothesis. Furthermore, the absence of creative power must be proven in order for evolution to be true (143–144).

Dabney notes the despair that follows from materialism and atheism. If materialism is true, then there is "no God omnipotent to cleanse and deliver"; "no Redeemer, in whom dwell the divine wisdom, power, love, and truth, for man's rescue"; no Providence and Grace, as they are "banished out of the existence of helpless, suffering man"; "no object to whom we can address prayer in our extremity"; "no supreme, rational, or righteous government over man." Instead of God, "our only master is an irresistible, blind machine, revolving forever by the law of a mechanical necessity; and the corn between its upper and nether millstones is this multitude of living, palpitating, human hearts, instinct with their priceless hopes, and fears, and affections, and pangs, writhing and bleeding forever under the remorseless grind" (153–154).

Dabney concludes this chapter this way:

> There is an argument, ad hominem, by which this discussion might, with strict justice, be closed. If materialism is true, then the pretended philosopher who teaches it is a beast, and we are all beasts. Brutes are not amenable to moral law; and if they were, it is no murder to kill a beast. But brutes act very consistently upon certain instincts of self-preservation. Even: they learn something by experience. But this teaches us that the propagator of these atheistic ideas is preparing intolerable mischief; for, just so far as they have prevailed, they have let loose a flood of misery upon mankind. Now, then, these teachers are venomous. The consistent thing for the rest of us animals, who are not serpents or beasts of prey, is to kill them as soon as they show their head; just as whenever the stags see a rattlesnake, they cut him to pieces with the lightning thrusts of their keen hoofs. Why is not this conclusion perfectly just? The only logic which restrains it is, that Christianity, which says that we shall not shed man's blood, "because in the image of God made He man;" but which men flout. The only reason we do not justly treat atheists thus is, that we are not, like them, atheists (155).

À-Priori Ideas

Chapter 10, "Validity Of À-Priori Notions," addresses the issue of certain knowledge. Dabney challenges the notion "that our knowledge is all *only a relation.*" If that were true, then "the mind can have no guarantee of the validity of any cognition-in-itself, inasmuch as it is impossible for our subjective consciousness to test the validity of its own modes by any judgment."

> This doctrine of the mere relativity of knowledge is but another way of stating the doctrine of the pure idealist. Bishop Berkeley was but making a partial application of it, when he reasoned that sensation really gives no certainty of the existence of an external world. Kant was but making a partial application of it, when he concluded that the judgments of the pure reason, though unavoidable, are invalid. J. S. Mill is but doing the same when he concludes the only knowledge we have of matter is of a "permanent possibility of sensations to us." And Hamilton is also traveling the same path of idealism, or, in other words, of (partial) skepticism, when he concludes that our knowledge of the secondary properties of bodies is only relative; while he also holds that our knowledge of substance and of primary qualities is immediate…. If the process with which they all set out were solid, it would prove the mere relativity of all knowledge, as well as of a part. And here is my practical ground for concluding that the process is a cheat. For how can I be required to adopt the self-contradiction: that I certainly know, I certainly do not know, that which I do know? That is consistent skepticism! (157–159)

Dabney posits that idiocy would result from a consistent skepticism.

> It results, then, that we are intuitively certain, that while our cognitions are by means of the relation of the object and subject, they are something more than that relation. All that we need be careful about is, that we separate faithfully between veritable intuitions and correct deductions on the one hand and imaginary intuitions and illogical deductions on the other. The mind is possessed of logical *criteria* for making that separation, if we will use them honestly. If our possession of such *criteria* is denied, *then how has the skeptic or idealist ascertained the invalidity of any, or all, of cognitions?* With that *reductio ad absurdissimum*, I leave him (160–161).

Among the *à priori* notions are space and time. These concepts belong necessarily to the rational, not the senses. In arguing this point, Dabney notes:

> The finite mind would need to become infinite, in order to contain a complete and exhaustive conception of any infinite being. But we do not claim such a conception. The finite mind may remain finite, and yet contain an incomplete, yet valid, apprehension of infinite being. The dew-drop is but a tiny sphere, yet it can reflect in miniature the glories of the celestial sphere above it. That the finite mind thus thinks the infinite, is what we hold (166f).

In attacking the Hamiltonian position, Dabney is clear: Hamilton's approach "makes a saving knowledge of God impossible. If we cannot think the unconditioned, and God is unconditioned, then how can we know God?" Moreover, the result would be "that the sincere love and worship of God become impossible."

> Paul being witness, "the Unknown God" can be only ignorantly and superstitiously worshipped. If I cannot know what I mean, when I call the Father in heaven "merciful," "benevolent," "true," "holy," then I cannot sincerely say that I honor or love Him as such. My religion is reduced to a species of hypocrisy, or else to the mercenary truckling of the courtier, cowering before brute force…. These great truths, that God is really (though not completely) known to them that seek Him, are the practical foundation of all the holiness and all the homage of earth and heaven (171, 173f).

Dabney concludes this chapter by setting forth the idea that faith is reasonable. "Faith is our conviction of a truth from the testimony of another whom we trust. Is it, therefore, unreasoning or contra-rational? By no means. In order that the testimony shall cause belief, it must be credible." But credibility is ascertained "[r]ationally, and in that mode alone." Therefore, "although belief has the peculiarity of grounding conviction upon the testimony of another, yet this circumstance does not at all make belief a less rational conviction than any other legitimate cognition. There is no strife between sound belief and reason. When the witness is credible, then, to believe is supremely reasonable, and is the very dictate of reason herself" (181).

Chapter 11, "Origin Of À-Priori Notions," begins with Dabney setting forth "the center of the battleground between the Sensualistic and the Rational philosophy," which is the derivation of *à priori* notions. The former asserts that they "come from without by the power of the objects of sensation," whereas the latter maintains they are "determined from within by the constitution of the mind" (182). Dabney argues that

> the attempt to construct a system of cognitions, on any plan whatsoever, without *à priori* notions and judgments, is, in every instance, a self-contradiction. The mind derives all its ideas from sensation, exclaims the Sensualistic philosopher. No; for here is one judgment with which it must begin. Namely, that sense-perceptions are valid! Here is one axiomatic truth which they assume. This, surely, is not a derived truth. From what can it be derived, without traveling in a vicious circle? Again: the Positivist exclaims, "The fundamental character of the positive philosophy is, that it regards all *phenomena* as subjected to invariable natural laws." Must not the principle which is "fundamental" to a philosophy be a primitive judgment? The foundation is that which is at the bottom, with no other part of the building beneath it. Again: How can this principle be learned empirically concerning *"all phenomena?"* Has any positive philosopher observed them all? Then he would be omniscient and ubiquitous. But a mere inference from partial observations can never give us universal, and much less, necessary truth! If this fundamental law of Positivism is known at all, it is only known as a necessary and primitive judgment (185–186).

Dabney sets forth three accepted tests of a primitive intuition: "That it shall be a first truth: i.e. not learned from any prior premises; That it shall be necessary, i.e. immediately seen to be such, that it not only is true, but must be true. And that it shall be universal, true of every particular case everywhere and always. Hence, these first truths are inevitably believed by all sane men, whenever their attention is called to them in terms which they understand." Sensualism denies these truths—but its said denial is in vain, for "our intuitive convictions cannot be from experiment." Indeed, the Sensualist is totally inconsistent "in attempting to derive first truths from sensational experience, and ignoring the primitive judgments of the reason." For, only by "a primitive judgment of the reason" can he know that "sensational experience is itself true" (191–193). The same inconsistency can be demonstrated with respect to cause and effect.

> The correct doctrine here is, that when we see an effect, we intuitively refer it to a cause, as that which produces its occurrence. And this cause is necessarily conceived as having a power to produce it under the circumstances. For it is impossible for the reason to think that nothing can evolve something. Nothing results only in nothing. But the effect could not have produced its own occurrence, for this would imply that it acted before it existed (201).

In Dabney's view, the principle that "like causes must produce like effects" is "the most important of our primitive notions, essential at once to all human science and to natural theology. It is the very key to the study of nature. It is … the cornerstone to all the sciences of material nature" as well as "the foundation of that argument for the being of a God, drawn from his works" (206–207).

In concluding this chapter, the churchman notes that an end, or a final cause, is implied by the notion of law. Law, then, "in its proper sense, *is the expression of intelligent will;* and it implies intelligence and volition in its subjects."

> Deny a Providence working to its own (secret) final causes, and the necessary intuition of the reason would be found illegitimate. The logic of the atheistic physicist is uprooted by its own hand, from its very foundation; and here we have the explanation of that chaos of hypothetic license into which physical research in their hands is falling (209–210).

Sensualism's Effect on Ethics

In Chapter 12, "Refutation Of Sensualistic Ethics," Dabney begins by noting that Sensualism destroys man's free-agency when it maintains that human volitions have external causes. Dabney refutes that view. For instance, in the case of the drunkard, it is his inclination to alcohol that is the motive for his actions. "It is the soul, which is moving toward the liquid, to make it the helpless instrument of its volition, not the liquid which moves the soul. The material is only victim: it is the soul which is agent" (212). Moreover, the soul in its spontaneity "acts *according to law*"; and volitions thus "are not uncaused: but follow the soul's own view and desire of the preferable; which constitute the true or subjective motive" (216). At the same time, there is a great inner conflict in man: "Our nature is manifestly dislocated. It has obviously been the subject of a catastrophe" (223). Dabney proceeds to deal with various utilitarian schemes of ethics, all of which, he pronounces, are essentially selfish. In point of fact, when Comte sets forth the view that "aggregate humanity is the Great Being," the end result is that "each man is his own properest supreme End—his own God! What more intense expression could be given to the most utter selfishness?" (229).

The Sensualistic approach does not correctly apprehend the nature of consciousness. "Especially is it impossible, on these [Sensualistic] principles, to explain that highest of all obligations, to be grateful to God, to worship Him, and to honor Him with our offerings" (230). Moreover, Utilitarianism would, if it were true, make it in some cases "utterly impossible to convince a man that it is immoral to 'do evil that good may come'" (231). Dabney also attacks the Utilitarian view of punishment, and concludes that since its notion of punishment is false, therefore Utilitarianism itself must be false (231ff).

Dabney argues from the nature of God with regard to the notions of right and wrong. "To do His will, then, is not obligatory merely because God has commanded it; but He has commanded it because it is obligatory. The distinction of right and wrong is intrinsic." Further, "the morality of the act commanded is *à priori* to the obligation on us: that the act is not right merely because it is commanded by God, but was commanded by Him because it is right" (237).

Dabney states: "In the simple and fundamental ideas of morals, all men agreed. Savages of all continents, for instance, think as we Christians do, on the simple questions, whether gratitude be criminal, whether virtuous acts deserve penalty, whether beneficence is meritorious" (244). He concludes:

> The cornerstone of the Sensualistic philosophy is upturned by the establishment of the doctrine, that man's soul does possess primitive rational judgments of right and wrong. For here is one instance, one whole class of mental functions, existing in the teeth of the fundamental assertion of the Sensualist, that sense furnishes all our mental stores; and the instance is of transcendent importance. The Sensualist, losing his battle at this point, has lost it totally; for the moral functions of the soul are regulative of all the others. Second: The decision of this question is virtually decisive against all the worse consequences of the Sensualistic scheme — evolutionism, materialism, and atheism. Let any man apprehend the solemn and unique fact of his own rational, responsible spontaneity…; let him look it in the face until he perceives its true significance, and he will relinquish these errors as self-evident absurdities. No matter, no organism of molecules, no mere organ of animal sensibility, can be the seat of this glorious and awful faculty. It stands above and apart from all these lower forms of being. That substance which is qualified by this power must be as unique as its peculiar endowment. And to assert its evolution by the operation of unintelligent law, out of lower forms of animal or inanimate matter, is as wild as to assert the rise of a universe out of nothing without a First Cause. Soul and God are revealed together in this

> otherwise inexplicable fact of responsible, intelligent free-agency (245).

The Supernatural Dimension

In Chapter 13, "Philosophy And The Supernatural," Dabney points out the hypocrisy of infidels with respect to professed dispassionate neutrality.

> With these men, this license of thought is a holy thing (possibly their only one). And when they imagine it assailed, or in the least restrained, do they entertain the question with that dispassionate calmness? Not at all; they are full of an ardent zeal; and they believe that they "do well to be angry." They can argue the cause of charity most uncharitably, and can be most intolerant in their advocacy of toleration. Why? Because the encroachment is unrighteous. Aha! Then we have the sanction of the nonchalant gentlemen for the truth, that righteousness ought to be not only professed, but loved; that moral truth and right are the proper object, not only of judgment, but of moral emotion. They have found out that it is good to be "zealously affected" in a good cause! This is precisely my doctrine, provided only one is entitled to be sure that the cause is good. My second answer is: That this species of indifferentism is unnatural and impossible. Man's soul is formed by its Maker not only to see moral truth, but to love it upon seeing it. It is an unnatural soul, a psychological monstrosity, which does not. But love for that which is reasonably valued must have its counterpart emotion toward the opposite. One might as well demand to have a material mass with a top, but no underside; or a magnet with a North pole to it, but no South, as a reasonable soul which loved the right (as it ought) and yet did not hate the wrong. Last: I argue, that such a state of soul would be criminal, if it were possible. Such moral neutrality would be intrinsic vice. In order to be capable of it, man must be recreant to the positive claims of virtue. If I find a man who is really able to hear the question debated, whether Jesus Christ was an impostor, with the same calmness, the same utter absence of emotion with which he would properly debate the species in botany to which a certain weed should be referred, I shall be very loath to trust my neck or my purse with that man in the dark. The demand for this actual indifferentism as essential to true liberty of thought and philosophic temper, is absurd; it is impossible it should exist. The speculative world needs to be reminded again of that doctrine of liberty of thought which Bible Protestantism enounced when she bestowed that boon on mankind (for it was nobody's gift but hers.) That men are responsible for opinions, but responsible not to society, but to God: that charity for evil and error is a universal duty; but, the object toward which we are to exercise it is the *person* and *not the error* of the misleading fellow-creature. Charity had its incarnation in Him, who shed His tears and His blood for the *persons* of the Scribes, while He denounced their principles with inexorable severity (248–249).

Dabney argues that the

> most patent signature of error upon the recent godless philosophy is … that it is arrayed against the rudimental instincts of man so manifested in all ages. That the mind has innate principles of thought, regulative of its own intelligence; that all necessary truth is not inaccessible to it; that a universe does imply a Creator, and that Nature implies the supernatural; that man has consciously a personal will, and that there is a personal will over man's governing him from above: these are truths which all ages have accepted.

There is a guaranteed way to test "pretended conclusions," viz., by asking if they "contravene the necessary dictates of the common sense of mankind. If they do, we set them down as false philosophy, whether we can analyze the sophisms and expose them, as we have done with this system, or not." Accordingly, "when the Sensualistic philosophy proposes to omit the supernatural, it is, fortunately, attempting an impossibility." The fact that man is a religious being is as certainly known as is the law of gravitation, and obtained by applying "that experimental method in which they boast, by a fair induction from the facts of human nature and history" (250–251).

Furthermore, true science and religion often go hand-in-hand—a fact demonstrated by various noteworthy scientists (such as Bacon, Kepler, Newton, Leibnitz, et al.) who

> did not become less devout believers by reason of their splendid additions to the domain of science…. The Christian awakening in France, which followed the tragical atheism of the first revolution, and which Sensualism is now striving to quench in the blood of another Reign of Terror, did not signalize a regression of the exact sciences. Human progress is a chequered scene, in which many causes commingle, working across and with each other, incomplete and confused results. Sometimes there is a partial recession of the truth. The tides of thought ebb and flow, swelling from the secret

> fountains which none but Omniscience can fully measure. But amid all the obscurities, we clearly perceive this general result, that the most devout belief in supernatural verities is, the main, coincident with healthy intellectual progress (251–252).

Not only is it true that "the supernatural underlies the natural," but that "nature necessarily implies the supernatural…. Nature tells us that her causes are second causes; they suggest their origin in a First Cause" (254–255).

At the same time, man would pridefully maintain the notion that "universal observation shows us natural law working always and everywhere uniformly…. I remind the unbeliever, that there is an existing testimony to frequent unusual effects above nature, in the past experience of man," including Joshua's crossing of the Jordan River and the resurrection of Christ. Therefore,

> all that experience authorizes us to assert is, that nature acts uniformly according to the laws of second causes, in the present age of the world, and within the limited compass of our competent observation…. Let not the physicist now mislead himself by telling us of his telescope, which has made him acquainted with the laws of the planetary and sideral heavens. About the stars he has found out a few things, while myriads of things which may be going on within or upon them, are totally unknown. He thinks he knows very certainly that the planet Jupiter and his moons regularly obey the same law of orbitual motion with the earth. Well. But was the astronomer on that planet able to detect any sign, by his telescope, upon the face of our little planet, on that morning when Christ burst the bands of death in the garden near Jerusalem? Of the vastly larger part of the events now occurring in this universe we know nothing, and we are therefore not entitled by our experience to say whether they are all arising naturally, or some supernaturally. The imagination is overweening (256–257).

Dabney argues that a miraculous event is not violative of or a reversal of or a suspending of natural laws, but "is simply *a new effect wholly above the power of natural second causes*" and "a part of the consistent, all-wise plan of Him who made, and is now steadily ruling, His universe according to His eternal purpose" (257).

In the chapter's final paragraph, Dabney writes: "If we obey the spirit of true science, it will manifest itself to us the great truth that man was never designed by God for mental independence of Him; that man needs, in these transcendent questions, the guidance of the infinite understanding; that while a 'positive philosophy' may measure and compare his material possessions, the only 'exact science' of the spirit is that revealed to us by the 'Father of Spirits'" (268).

Evolution Cannot Account for Man's Soul

Chapter 14 is entitled "The Evolution Of Human Souls From The Instincts And Sensibilities Of Brutes Discussed." Two sets of arguments are presented, viz., the historical and the psychological. With regard to the historical, there is not "a grain of proof that any intermediate creation has existed." Evolutionists "have but the known capacity of elephants and apes from which to set out; and the next step must lead to human faculty. How much right have they to assume this as probable, when they themselves confess that it is the nature of these steps to be almost infinitesimal? They think they can get across the chasm by ten thousand leaps. But they must cross it at one or not at all" (271). There is also the problem that there is no evidence for humanity's existence "for more than a few thousand years." Moreover, history demonstrates that

> no high civilization has been evolved in known ages, from the bosom of savage societies, by the influence of mere physical agencies. All the advancements made have been under the operation of moral causes: and these have always come by conquest, colonization, or in some other way, from higher race without. The condition of all insulated savage tribes in historical times has been stationary or decadent. But had there been at first no men save those evolved from brutes, and existing in a state but little above the bestial, the whole race would have been, in the sense of this argument, insulated, and its modern improvement against every analogy of known facts.

Indeed,

> evolution has not a single fact within the whole range of history to verify the ascent of the human faculty out of brute instincts; the reasonableness and likelihood of the Scripture account of the degradation of the savage tribes by sin, is substantiated by actual cases in the observation of every age, and of every observer, actually beholding the imbruiting [*sic*] of persons and families by vice, and the constant and causal connection of the crimes of savage tribes with their squalor and misery. In other words, the exact parallel of the Scriptural account of the matter, that "righteousness exalteth a people, but sin is a reproach to any nation," is enacted before our

> eyes in every generation, while no parallel to the evolutionist hypothesis has been seen by anybody in historical times (272–273).

The Virginian then defends the "intellectual powers of savages."

> These rude and wretched creatures know nothing of our boasted mental activities, and so appear stupid to us. This is true, but they cultivate and use keen intellectual activities on the objects and pursuits which concern their modes of life; in these they surpass us as immeasurably as we surpass them in literature and civilized arts; the European university man thrown among them, when he attempts their savage arts, seems to them as stupid and contemptible as they do to us. We observe also that the ingenious and astute mental operations, by which they carry on their astonishing "woodcrafts," follow the very same laws of thought, of observation, of induction, and of inference, which regulate our scientific researches.
>
> All the human faculties are there: the only difference is, that circumstances have determined for them a different development. If we go back to the earliest ages, we find man there exercising the noblest faculties in their largest native vigor. The oldest architect in the world was the most wonderful, the unknown building of the great pyramid. The finest poems are those of Job, Moses, and Homer. The greatest of legislators was the earliest Moses. Now, if the doctrine of evolution were true, the same influences which evolved the savage's faculties out of the brute's, should also have carried human faculties onward to different and higher power still, in all these thousands of years of intense activity (274).

The final point of the historical argument has to do with animals.

> The animal races all continue as they were from the beginning as to their actual and relative places in the scale of native endowment. No lower race or individual in it has essentially advanced on a higher. The highest have not advanced on man. The occasional accomplishment of "dancing dogs" and "learned pigs" have been very amusing, or perhaps mysterious; but similar exploits were just as remarkable three thousand years ago as now. Meantime, dog, pig, and elephant natures have remained, as to the general masses, precisely what they were in the days of Porus and the ancient Indian jugglers…. Now, like causes should produce like effects. Of all systems the evolutionist should claim this result most invariably; for it professes to give account of immanent, eternal, physical forces, acting as necessarily, as blindly, unmodified by any contingencies of a rational and personal will over nature…. Those inherent forces of "variation," "heredity," and "environment," which are said to have evolved the mind of cave-dwelling men, out of previous ape-mind, ought to be working some similar exploits within historic periods…. If the primeval foxes evolved so much talent out of some prior state of mollusk-like stupidity, by exercising their gifts in hunting poultry, the nineteenth century fox ought to have become quite an accomplished scholar by being so long hunted by intelligent gentlemen (274–275).

With regard to the psychological set of arguments, it is impossible linguistically and psychologically for brutes to evolve. Indeed, the mind is a spiritual monad (i.e., a simple and indivisible unit), not an organism. In addition, all efforts to "generate the ethical functions of the human soul from the animal sensibilities of the brutes" have totally failed. More than that, the evolutionist "can give no account of our judgment of obligation; a judgment of intuitive necessity attending every perception of duty and virtue. For to whom can the evolutionist's judgment of obligation bind us?" (275–281).

This inability to distinguish humans from animal impulses has horrible consequences.

> Why was the pleasure which a Washington felt in giving peace and liberty to an ungrateful country generically different from that which a setter dog feels in seizing the wounded partridge, or the epicurean swine on basking in the sun? Evolutionism has no consistent or tenable answer.

The evolutionary theory not only would

> make the serviceable beasts as truly virtuous and meritorious as the beneficent patriot, but, on the other hand, the virtuous human is bound to regard the brutes as just as truly objects of his moral regards and efforts and of the same generic obligations as his fellow-men. The obligation to gratify the pig is just as direct as the obligation to provide for the child: and is an obligation of the same kind. On this species of philosophy how can the morality of eating animal food be granted, and yet the immorality of cannibalism be denied? The pig and the human child are equally mortal beings; and it has been the actual destiny of many a pig to get more animal

> enjoyment out of his existence than many a child has derived from his. If then the maximum of enjoyment is the rational end of all conduct, why may not it have been more virtuous to spare the pig and eat the child? (282)

But "the most fatal point in our refutation of this evolution of the moral feelings" is that the notion is "founded on the preposterous plan … of making a series of effects determine their own determining causes."

> If the given disposition had not been deposited by nature in the given creature's essentia, the object presented in its environment must have been inoperative upon it. Hence no environment can evolve any non-existent disposition, since the effect cannot determine its own cause (282–283).

Dabney summarizes his criticism by stating that

> this evolution of man's ethical powers overlooks entirely the distinction between instinctive and rational motive, as between natural and moral good; thus making true free agency, virtue, moral responsibility, merit, and moral affections impossible. It supposes that as the sense-perceptions and instincts of the beasts have evolved by association and environment the intellect of the sage, so the fear and habit of the brute cowering under its master's lash, or licking the hand that feeds and fondles it, are the sole source of the pure and rational dictates of conscience and virtue. The holy courage of the "noble army of martyrs," who braved the fire rather than slight the abstract claims of a divine truth, is but the outgrowth of the brutal tenacity of the mastiff, which endures blows and torments rather than unlock its fangs from the bleeding prey. The heroic of the patriot in the stern presence of death, is but the same quality with that of the dog which fetch and carry at its master's word. The spiritual love of Christian mothers, the heavenly charity which delights to bless an enemy, the aspirations of faith for the lofty sanctity of the skies, and even the redeeming love and divine holiness of Jesus of Nazareth are generically but enlargements of animal appetites in apes! (284)

Final Causes

The final chapter, Chapter 15, is "Final Causes." Dabney points to the celebrated Francis Lord Bacon, who divided true science into physical and metaphysical. The latter has two parts: The Doctrine of Forms and the Doctrine of Final Causes (288).

Dabney writes: "Each physical cause, as such, is only efficient of the immediate, blind result next to it." Gravity is an example of a force acting indiscriminately and universally. But in the case of batteries of cannon designed to destroy an enemy's wall,

> it is a mere mockery to say that, given the cannon and the balls, the explosive force of gunpowder, and gravity, the fall of these shots is accounted for. These physical causes would account for their random fall, anywhere, or as probably upon the heads of the gunners' friends. The thing to be accounted for is their regular convergence. This is an additional fact: the blind physical causes do not and cannot account for it, — it discloses design (291).

The author then argues that the eye could not have evolved, given its intricate nature. But it is also true that the development of organs such as the eye and the ear could not take place apart from final cause.

> The nature of the end proposed has determined the nature of the physical means selected, and the combination thereof. Thus: as the ship is evidently designed and purposed for sailing, so is the ear for hearing, and the eye for seeing. The function of sailing has determined the materials and structure of the ship: the function of hearing those of the ear: the function of seeing those of the eye. But the shipbuilding must be before the sailing: the ear and eye must exist before the hearing and seeing. The facts which we have, then, are these: Here are ends, coming after their means, which yet have acted causatively on their own precedent means! But every physical cause precedes its own effect. No physical cause can act until it exists. Here, however, are ends, which exercise the influence of causes, and yet, against all physical nature, are causes before they have existence, and act backwards up the stream of time! (291–292)

In the final paragraph, Dabney observes:

> Nature is uniform, neither chaotic nor fatalistic, because she is directed by a Mind, because intelligence directs her unintelligent physical causes to preconceived, rational purposes. Her uniformities are but the expressions of these purposes, which are stable, because they are the volitions of an infinite, immutable Mind "whose purposes shall stand, and who doeth all His good pleasure," because all His volitions are guided, from the first, by absolute knowledge and wisdom, perfect rectitude, and full benevolence. Nature is stable, only because

> the counsels of the God, who uses her for His ends, are stable (299).

Philosophically Speaking

In evaluating this deep and complex work, one task of the historian is to put it into context, philosophically speaking.

Common Sense

Scottish Common Sense Realism was a powerful philosophical approach in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (and even into the twenty-first century, it has significant adherents), and it permeated Christian and particularly Presbyterian thinking. At first blush, one might think that anti-Sensualism would not comport with something called Common Sense Realism. However, in actuality, the two philosophies—Sensualism and Common Sense Realism—were in opposition. The Scottish school was designed to do battle against the skepticism of David Hume and the Idealism of William Berkeley. It was an inductivist approach, embracing Francis Lord Bacon while celebrating natural science. It was an empiricism which trusted the senses and affirmed the reality of the external world.[2]

At the same time, in contrast to Sensualism, there was "'the assertion of principles in the mind, which though reached by observation, are yet prior to and independent of experience.'" Indeed, the

> genuine adherents of the Scottish school may use a variety of terms: "principles of common sense," or "fundamental laws of human belief," or "simple and original intuitions," or "*a priori* forms and conditions." But they all are unified in their view "that there are laws, principles, or powers in the mind anterior to any reflex observation; and that these laws or principles are necessities of the intelligence and the indispensable conditions for organising the facts of observation and experience into systems of philosophy and science."[3]

Dabney was committed to this common-sense approach, proof of which can be found sprinkled throughout his book on Sensualism. At the end of the chapter on "Evolution Theory," Dabney writes:

> Let Mr. [Herbert] Spencer tell the world as much as he pleases, that his materialism levels upward, and not downward; that instead of debasing spirit he would have us refine matter into the universal "Force;" still with all sinners of the common grade, his doctrine will have the simple result of imbruting those who adopt it. For their common sense will persist in believing that force is a mechanical power contrasted with the spiritual; they will not believe the contradiction which would persuade them that the same species of power which obeys the mechanical law in the machine, and the chemical law in the laboratory, is also subjected to the spiritual law of conscience in the man. Mr. Spencer may persuade himself of this "symbolic concept;" the common sense of his pupils will not (102).

Dealing with the "Spirituality Of The Mind," he writes: "In proceeding to test the nature of the something in us which thinks and wills, by the verdict of consciousness, I shall assume only what is granted on all hands" (109). In writing on "Evolution Theory Materialistic, And Therefore False," he appeals to "that common sense of mankind which is … the most solid inductive and empirical logic" (139). Later in that chapter, he writes that "when we eliminate the powers of a combined and adjusted *system of natural causes*, which contains the very point in debate, each blind cause is found to produce results without order, as common sense had always believed." Indeed, "the common sense of civilized mankind has not been thus mistaken in believing that where design is obvious, there must be a Designer" (151–152). In considering the "Validity of À-Priori Notions," he avers: "All men of common sense will join me in saying: that, if we hold the principles only by faith, then we hold the conclusions therefrom only by faith also. But if we know conclusions, we must also know the premises" (180). In "Refutation Of Sensualistic Ethics," we read: "The very conception which every man's common sense gives him of his own rational choice is, he choosing according to his own motive, or acting because he had a reason for so acting" (216). In dealing with "Philosophy and The Supernatural," Dabney writes: "Now let us be content here, again, with the philosophy of common sense, which regards dependent beings as possessing a true being and permanency" (260). With respect to "The Evolution of Human Souls," "When the doctrine that men are but refined beasts is preached to the

2. Theodore D. Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum Religious Thought* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), pp. 22, 60; cited in Frank J. Smith, "The Philosophy of Science in Late Nineteenth Century Southern Presbyterianism" (doctoral dissertation, City University of New York, 1992), p. 38.

3. "Critical Notices," review of James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy, Biographical, Expository, and Critical, from Hutcheson to Hamilton*, *Southern Presbyterian Review*, Vol. XXVII, n. 1 (January 1876), 167–169, cited in Smith, "The Philosophy of Science," pp. 38–39.

ordinary person what will be the inference his common sense will draw from it but that he is free to act as the brutes act?" (285). And in terms of the evaluation of "Final Causes,"

> Our conclusion has in its favor the decided assent of the common sense of nearly all mankind, and of nearly all schools of philosophy. All common men of good sense have believed they saw in the adjustments of the parts of nature to intended functions, final causes and the presence of a supernatural mind. The only exceptions have been savages like the African Bushmen, so degraded as to have attained to few processes of inferential thought on any subject. All speculative philosophers have been fully convinced of the same conclusion, from Job to Hamilton and Janet, except those who have displayed eccentricity in their philosophy, either by materialism, ultraidealism, or pantheism. This consensus of both the unlearned and the learned will weigh much with the healthy and modest reason (298).

Idealism

The notion of Idealism is, in many ways, the opposite of Sensualism. And one could argue that the rise of Idealism was a greater challenge to Scottish Common Sense Realism than is Sensualism. For instance, Perry Miller wrote of the views of Kant and Hegel as constituting a German invasion which triumphed over Scottish Realism in the mid-nineteenth century.[4]

Dabney does deal with thinkers who are Idealists or at least inclined to that philosophy. But he regards the primary enemy as that of materialism, and he traces its roots back into the eighteenth century, much before the influence of Idealism.

Apologetics

Traditionally, Scottish Common Sense Realism has been associated with Evidentialist apologetics. And certainly Dabney employed evidences in his argumentation for the existence of God. At the same time, however, he also could be regarded as a progenitor of Presuppositionalism. Scholars have maintained that he anticipated the views of men like Cornelius Van Til.[5] Dabney's entire book is an example of answering the fool according to his folly—that is, of pressing the pagan perspective of sensualists to its logical conclusion and thereby demonstrating its total inconsistency. More than that, the very last sentence of *The Sensualistic Philosophy* declares: "None but theists can consistently use induction" (299). On the other hand, it has been argued that "unlike Van Til, who sometimes made disparaging remarks about propositional truth, these [Southern Presbyterians such as Dabney] were dedicated to the notion of reason—not in a rationalistic way, and certainly not in such a way as would contradict God's revelation. Nevertheless, their commitment to propositional truth would have put them, in some respects, in the camp of the Gordon H. Clark, another twentieth century conservative Presbyterian theologian and philosopher, who, while sharing much in common with Van Til, despised his irrationality."[6]

Epistemology

And speaking of Clark, Dabney argues in a Clarkian manner with respect to the nature of knowledge.

> But why should our knowledge of an infinite spiritual being be suspected as untrustworthy because it is attained according to the legitimate forms of human thought? It can only be because it is suspected that the notions of the divine object of thought are transformed, in becoming ours. But, now, let it be supposed that this great first Cause created our spirits "in His likeness, after His image," and the ground of suspicion is removed. If our reason is fashioned after God's, then in thinking "anthropopathically," we are thinking like God. Our conceptions of the Divine Being will then be only limited, and not transformed, in passing into our kindred, but finite, minds: they remain valid as far as they reach…. [T]he principles of our reason compel us to hold that truth is intrinsic and immutable. If a proposition is true, then it is true everywhere, and to all grades of minds. When once we are certain that the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal, then we are obliged to believe that they are equal in any other planet, and in all the heavens, as in earth; true to the angelic mind that knows an isosceles triangle, as to the human; and as true to the divine mind as to the creature. But if truth is true to all minds, then the cognition, by which truth is reached, must have something essential in common for all minds. The first necessarily implies the second. This, then, is the noble prerogative of the Reason, that its very nature, as an agent for the apprehension of Truth, establishes its kinship to all the realms of mind in heaven and earth. In the attainment

4. Perry Miller, ed., *American Thought: Cold War to World War* I (New York: Hole, Rinehart and Winston, 1954), pp. xi–xvi.

5. In his introduction to the 2003 reprint of *The Sensualistic Philosophy*, C. N. Willborn writes that Douglas Kelly "likened Dabney to Cornelius Van Til in the way he consistently showed how non-theists 'reasoned on the basis of unproven, faith assumptions'" (8).

6. Smith, "The Philosophy of Science," pp. 296–297.

> of Truth, whose original dwelling-place must be in the eternal bosom of God, the reason sees its heirship and recognizes itself as the offspring of God. Do we, can we, attain unto any assured truth? Then, to that extent, we know that we have been fashioned to think after the pattern of Eternal Truth. It is manifest, then, that the dogma, "God is absolutely unknowable," leads us back to the gulf of absolute skepticism. If we can know nothing of Him, then we can know nothing of anything beneath Him, because we cannot know the validity of a single law of thought according to which cognition seems to take place, for the obvious reason that we cannot know whence those laws are…. Assume that Truth is one and eternal, and that, therefore, thought is thought in earth and heaven, and is the same so far as it is truthful, and we see that the coherency of all subsequent conclusions with each other, and with experience, both as to nature, God, and providence, rises continually with a cumulative evidence that we have begun with the right principles (177–178).

In the same context, Dabney also skewers those who assert that faith is unreasonable.

> [E]very conviction of mind, worthy of the honorable name of "belief," takes into its account the credibility of the testimony believed. But how can this quality of credibility be ascertained? Rationally, and in that model alone. By this simple view, we learn that, although belief has the peculiarity of grounding conviction upon the testimony of another, yet this circumstance does not at all make belief a less rational conviction than any other legitimate cognition. There is no strife between sound belief and reason. When the witness is credible, then, to believe is supremely reasonable, and is the very dictate of reason herself (181).

Towards the very end of the book, Dabney writes that

> the difference between the normal acting of a finite mind, and of an infinite one, can only be a difference of degree, not of essence; that the thinking of the finite when done according to its laws of thought, must be good as far as it goes; only, the divine thinking, while just like it within the narrow limits, goes greatly farther. Sir Isaac Newton knew vastly more mathematics than the schoolchild; yet, when the schoolchild did its little "sum" in simple addition "according to rule," Newtown would have pronounced it right; nor would he have done that "sum" in any other than the child's method! Once more; the unreasonableness of the demand, that we shall reject any conception of the divine working, though reached by normal (human) inference, merely because it may be anthropomorphic, appears thus. It would equally forbid us to think or learn at all, either concerning God, or any other Being or concept different from man: for, if we are not allowed to think in the forms of thought natural and normal for us, we are forbidden to think at all. All man's cognition must be anthropomorphic, or nothing (295).

Systematic Theology

Another magnum opus by Dabney that appeared three years after *The Sensualistic Philosophy* was his *Lectures in Systematic Theology*.[7] Throughout this volume, the author employs his anti-Sensualistic insights.

For instance, in Lecture I, dealing with the existence of God, Dabney expresses disagreement with Charles Hodge on the issue of innate knowledge. Hodge had maintained that the knowledge of God was innate. But his Southern counterpart distinguishes the power of intuition and the knowledge that comes through intuiting a matter. In making this distinction, Dabney is also reinforcing the notion of *à priori* principles, which is a denial of the essence of Sensualism (7ff).

Lecture II presents several proofs for the existence of God. In refuting the views of David Hume, Dabney writes: "It is not experience which teaches us that every effect has its cause, but the *a priori* reason" (18).

Lecture III, "The Evolution Theory," reflects much of the argumentation in Dabney's book on Sensualism. Among the points made are that the evolutionary scheme tends toward atheism; that the notion of natural selection implies intelligent choice; that selection does not lead to improvement except under a rational providence; that the strongest do not naturally survive; that hybrids do not produce their own kind; that evolution cannot account for the existence of mind; that the theory is dangerous to morals; that circumstantial evidence is trumped by testimony; and that chance cannot evolve design.

Lecture IV, "Divine Attributes," employs the notion of First Cause to point not only to God's eternality but also the unity of the Godhead (in contrast to polytheism) (39–41).

Lecture VI, "Materialism," explores similar themes as found in *The Sensualistic Philosophy*, including the heterogeneity between physical force and vital causation:

7. Robert Lewis Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (1878; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980).

> The former, in all its phases, is unintelligent, involuntary, measurable by weight and velocity, and quantity of matter affected, producing motion, mechanical or molecular, and tending to *equilibrium*. All animal life has some species of spontaneity. Spirit, as a cause, has the unique attribute of free-agency, the opposite of *inertia*, self-active, directive. Mind and its modifications cannot be measured in any physical terms or quantities; and *hence they cannot be correlated*. Volition controls or directs force; is not transmuted into it. If we descend to the lowest forms of animal vitality, we still find a gulf between it and dead matter, which science never has passed over. No man has ever educed life, without the use of a germinal vital cause. This vital cause, again, resists the material forces. When it departs, caloric and chemical affinities resume their sway over the matter of the body lately living, as over any similar matter; but as long as the vital cause is present, it is distinctly antagonistic to them (57–58).

Lecture VII, "Immortality of the Soul, and Defects of Natural Religion," in refuting materialism, distinguishes between matter and spirit.

> The simplest material substance is constituted by an aggregation of parts, and may be perceived as divided…. But our consciousness tells us intuitively, that the thing in us which thinks, feels, wills, is absolutely simple. Not only does this intuition refer all our mental states and acts to one and the same thinking subject, notwithstanding their wide diversity. But *we know* that they coexist in that subject, without plurality or partition. We are conscious that the agent which conceives, is the same agent, notwithstanding the diversity of these states. Moreover, every affection and act of a mind has an absolute unity (66).

Materialism is refuted by the reality of free agency and responsibility. Further, though the brain is the "*instrument by which* I think," it is "the *Ego* [*spirit*] who thinks" (69).

Lectures VIII and IX, both dealing with "The Sources of Our Thinking," reflect much of the material in Dabney's book on Sensualism, particularly with regard to the necessity of the mind's innate powers. Intuitive or primary truths must be primary (i.e., not derived from any other truth); necessary (i.e., they must be true); and universal (i.e., "the mind is obliged to believe them as much true in every relevant case, as in the first; and all people that are sane, when the terms of their enunciation are comprehended with entire fairness, and dispassionately considered, are absolutely certain, the world over, to accept them as true") (83). Among the intuitions is the notion of cause and effect, as well as Final Cause.

Lectures IX and X consider various ethical theories propounded by Sensualists and others, and finds them wanting.

Lecture XI, "Free Agency and the Will," attacks the notion of necessity promulgated by Sensualistic psychology. "If volition is efficiently caused by desire, and if desire is but the passive reflex of objective perception, then, indeed, is man a mere machine…. But inducement is not motive; desire is an activity, and not a passivity of our souls. Our own subjective judgments and appetencies cause our volitions" (128).

The Practical Philosophy

One of Dabney's other major works was published in 1897, several months before he died.[8] *The Practical Philosophy* was regarded by him as the most significant of his books. He begins by noting that his use of the "Practical" must be taken "in the original and classical sense, as the πρακτικόν [practices] of historical philosophy." Dabney acknowledged that in common parlance, "the word carries a wholly different meaning, and the practical man … is supposed to be one who applies his experience in opposition to all theorists and psychologists with all the speculative processes of thought." However, that "derivative meaning must be wholly discarded here. The Practical Philosophy is that which treats of the executive or conative, and the moral powers of the human spirit." Dabney distinguishes his view from that of the progenitors of Scottish Common Sense Realism, as the Virginian rejects the "shallow and one-sided theory of the mind which describes it as originally a *tabula rasa*, endowed only with the passive powers of receptivity and reflection," which naturally led to regard "all the processes of intellect as passive." There was the need of "another word to describe that characteristic and all-important class of functions, feelings and volitions which stand in conscious contrast over against our functions of cognition, and which are the special objects of the judgments and the sentiments of conscience. To express just this great class the word *practical* was, for centuries, appropriated by Philosophy." He adds: "I wish to render to Philosophy the service of restoring this needed and time-honored term in its proper sense" (xiii–xiv).

8. Robert Lewis Dabney, *The Practical Philosophy: Being the Philosophy of the Feelings, of the Will, and of the Conscience, with the Ascertainment of Particular Rights and Duties* (1897; repr., Harrisonburg, Va.: Sprinkle Publications, 1984).

The volume follows a "natural and logical progression which leads … from the psychology of the feelings to the theory of volitions, then to the settlement of ethical theory, and then to applied ethics" (xv).

In the second section of the work, "The Will," Dabney attacks the Sensualistic perspective. "The sensualistic psychologists, as Hobbes, Condillac and James Mill, virtually obliterate the will as a distinct faculty of the spirit by teaching that volition is nothing more than desire predominant." The "real knot of the problem," which the sensualists leave "untouched," is this: "Why and how does one species of desire come to predominate in a given man's spirit rather than another?" Dabney observes: "If objective causes have determined the dominancy of one desire rather than another, then free-agency has perished. If subjective causes, then what are they?" (142–143).

In the beginning of the third section of the work, "Theories of the Ethical Sentiments," Dabney raises the notion of *à priori* character of the intuition of right and wrong, and in that context, addresses Sensualism, calling it "a mischievous obstruction and misleader" (196). What follows is a critique of various theories of morals, including the selfish system; the utilitarian, the hedonistic, the benevolent; sentimental; and rationalistic theories.

What we see in *The Practical Philosophy* is a broader and more positive emphasis than the one found in *The Sensualistic Philosophy*. Though Sensualism is still dealt with in the 1897 work, the treatment is not as extensive. Nevertheless, Sensualism remains a key focus, not only with regard to philosophical concerns but because of the implications for ethics.

Other Philosophical Writings

In the third volume of Dabney's collected writings, there are several chapters that either mirror what he wrote in *The Sensualistic Philosophy* or reflect similar sentiments. Among those chapters are "Positivism in England," "Geology and the Bible," "A Caution Against Anti-Christian Science," "The Philosophy of Volition," "The Emotions," "Nature of Physical Causes," "Applications of Induction and Analogy," "Monism," and "The Immortality of the Soul."[9] In responding to Prof. James Woodrow's criticism of his article against Anti-Christian Science, Dabney explains that what he was opposing was "that which affects 'positivism;' which attempts to construct a 'sensualistic' psychology; which refers everything, as effects, to the laws of material nature and of animal life." The major motif of these Sensualistic schools of philosophers is to "ascribe to the human mind no original functions save those of sensibility and sense-perception. They deny all *à priori* powers to the reason, and disbelieve the existence, in our thinking, of any really primitive judgments of reason. They teach that all logical principles are empirical" (141–142).

Abolitionism

One of the ways by which Dabney applied his anti-Sensualism had to do with regard to the matter of abolitionism. In his *A Defense of Virginia (and the South)* in 1867, the Virginian argued against the position that slavery violated natural liberty, saying that that "ground of opposition to slavery rests upon a radical and disorganizing scheme of human rights, is but Jacobinism in disguise, and involves a denial of all authority whatsoever." This conception of "man's natural rights, of the origin of governments, and of the moral obligation of allegiance, is that which traces them to a social contract." The origin of this idea is found in Hobbes; it was nourished by John Locke; and enthusiastically embraced by "the infidel democrats of the first French revolution."[10]

Dabney objected to this scheme in that it is "atheistic, utterly ignoring the existing of a Creator, and his relations to, and proprietorship in, man. It affects to treat men as though their existence were underived, and independent of any Supreme Being. It boldly discards God's right to determine under what obligations man shall live, and quietly contemns the great Scriptural fact that He has determined man shall live under social law" (245).

Dabney summed up his critique by the statement, "Abolitionism is Jacobinism." The true abolitionist is "a Red-Republican, a Jacobin. Is not this strikingly illustrated by the fact, that the first wholesale abolition in the world was enacted for the French colonies by the frantic democrats of the 'reign of Terror?' And this hint may serve to explain to the aristocracy of Great Britain the popularity of the authoress of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' and her slanderous book, among the masses there." The laboring masses were taken by this novel "because the Jacobinism of the abolitionist theory awakened an echo in the hearts of the lower classes, still seething with the

9. Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions by Robert L. Dabney, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Texas, and for Many Years Professor of Theology in Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, Volume III: Philosophical*, edited by C. R. Vaughan (1892; repr., Harrisonburg, Va.: Sprinkle Publications, 1980).

10. Robert L. Dabney, *A Defense of Virginia, [And Through Her, of the South,] in Recent and Pending Contests Against the Sectional Party* (1867; repr., Harrisonburg, Va.: Sprinkle Publications, 1977), pp. 241–243.

recent upheaval of 1848…. The noble Lords and Ladies, who patronized the authoress and her book, were industriously fanning the very fires which are destined to consume their vested interests" (262–263).

Indeed, the entire social fabric was threatened should this egalitarianism prevail. Not only would the relationships of husband-wife and parent-child be overturned, but there could be no just objection to female suffrage and even voting by children (265ff).

And, as has been established above, these dire consequences were in Dabney's mind when he attacked Sensualism not only because of its unphilosophical nature and its inevitable tendency toward atheism and materialism, but also because of the inevitable societal results that would arise from this approach.

In the words of a Dabney biographer, "Dabney was convinced that if the sensualistic philosophy won the day, civilization in America would be completely destroyed." Indeed, "Dabney called on Southern Presbyterians to reject the modernistic rationalism driving the egalitarian political doctrines and to stand firm for Bible Republicanism."[11]

Worship[12]

In 1888, John Lafayette Girardeau, venerable churchman from Charleston, South Carolina, championed the traditional Reformed Protestant view regarding musical instrumentation in public worship. The bulk of his classic book on this topic deals with Scriptural and confessional considerations, but Girardeau also made the point that the reason why the Presbyterian Church was defecting from her ancient position was because she was conforming to "the demands of worldly taste."[13]

Girardeau made a similar point in an article on miracles. Speaking of the great success of the Church in spreading throughout the Roman world as an evident sign of Providential care, Girardeau noted the "antecedent improbability of success arising from the nature of the religion to be propagated":

> Its great law was self-denial: the cross was marked into the heart of its adherents. Its promise for this world was tribulation: its rewards were postponed to a future state. Faith, not sense nor carnal reason, was its principle of action, its motive to exertion. It was characterized by utter simplicity: it had no outward pomp, no magnificent temples, no gorgeous ritual, no smoking altars, and no vested priests.[14]

It was this sensualism that was the particular concern of Robert Lewis Dabney in this matter. In 1881, he lamented the rise of musical instrumentation as being a sure sign of spiritual decline, leading inevitably, systematically, to ritualism and Romanism.[15] In a lengthy review of Girardeau's book, Dabney asserted both "the prudential and the doctrino-psychological arguments against the present organ worship." Regarding the latter, he wrote:

> … all true worship is rational. The truth intelligently known and intelligibly uttered is the only instrument and language of true worship. Hence all social public worship *must be didactic*….
>
> Once more: man's animal nature is sensitive, through the ear, to certain sensuous, aesthetic impressions from melody, harmony and rhythm. There is, on the one hand, a certain analogy between the sensuous excitements of the acoustic nerves and sensorium and the rational sensibilities of the soul. (It is precisely this psychologic fact which grounds the whole power and pleasure of lyrical compositions.) Now, the critical points are these: That, while these sensuous excitements are purely animal and are no more essentially promotive of faith, holiness, or light in the conscience than the quiver of the fox-hunting horses' ears at the sound of the bugle or the howl of the houndwhelp at the sound of his master's piano, sinful men, fallen and blinded, are ever ready to abuse this faint analogy by mistaking the sensuous impressions for, and confounding them with, spiritual affections. Blinded men are ever prone to imagine that they have religious feelings, because they have sensuous, animal feelings, in accidental juxtaposition with religious places, words, or sights. This is the pernicious mistake which has sealed up millions of self-deceived souls for hell.

11. Sean Michael Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2003), pp. 178, 182.

12. The material in this section is taken essentially verbatim from Smith, "The Philosophy of Science," pp. 430–433.

13. John L. Girardeau, *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1888; repr., Havertown, Pa.: New Covenant Publication Society, 1983), p. 205.

14. John L. Girardeau, "The Miracle, The Principle of Unity in the Evidences of a Divine Revelation," *Presbyterian Quarterly*, Vol. II (1888), pp. 375–376. He also wrote of the evidence of the numerous Biblical writers who "maintain[ed] harmony with each other in regard to a regulative principle" (379).

15. Robert L. Dabney, writing in the *Central Presbyterian* (May 18, 1881), cited in E. T. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, Volume Three: 1890–1972 (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1973), pp. 429–430.

After excoriating Roman Catholicism for constantly encouraging this delusion, Dabney attacked innovating Protestants:

> But these organ-grinding Protestant churches are aiding and encouraging tens of thousands of their members to adopt this pagan mistake. Like the besotted Papist, they are deluded into the fancy that their hearts are better because certain sensuous, animal emotions are aroused by a mechanical machine, in a place called a church, and in a proceeding called worship.

Dabney warned: "Time will prove, we fear by a second corruption of evangelical religion and by the ruin of myriads more of nominally Christian souls, how much wiser is the psychology of the Bible than that of Mrs. Grundy."[16]

Dabney's concern in this matter was, of course, grounded in his pursuit of the truth. But a European trip in 1880 undoubtedly made a deep impression on his mind, as he witnessed first-hand the superstition of the papists. Describing his visit to Locarno, Italy, he wrote of the old women who thought they had secured salvation by kissing "the holy wax toe" of a replica of the Virgin who had purportedly made an appearance there.[17]

Thus the church's premier theologian utilized the same motifs—opposition to Sensualism and advocacy of a Biblical psychology—that he had in his writings on science in order to oppose the imposition of organs on the church's worship.

Conclusion

Robert Lewis Dabney was a brilliant thinker, theologian, and philosopher. His earliest biographer wrote,

> [Dabney's] "Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century Considered" is one of the greatest philosophic philippics ever penned. He holds up this philosophy, sensational philosophy as set forth by Hobbes, the "hard-mouthed," by Condilac, by Helevetius, by St. Lambert, by James Mill, by the school of positivism, by the physiological materialists, and by others, notably the great but wabbling Locke, to contempt. He teaches them with Des Cartes and Leibnitz and Wolf, Bishop Butler and Emmanuel Kant, and Richard Price and T. J. Reid, that there is something in the mind itself with its power to know that class of truths known as *primary cognitions, innate ideas, first truths;* and in his chapter, in this work, on *the validity of a priori notions*, and in that on the *origin of the a priori notions*, he comes close to showing his as the master mind of the Scotch School.[18]

And the scintillating nature of his intellect was seen in his ability to perceive the relationship of various matters, and the unity of knowledge. In attacking government-run educational institutions, he wrote:

> The human spirit is a *monad*, a single, unit, spiritual substance, having facilities and susceptibilities for different modifications, but no parts. Hence, when it is educated, it is educated as a unit. The moral judgments and acts of the soul all involve an exercise of reason; so that it is impossible to separate the ethical and intellectual functions.

There are implications of the unity and simplicity of the soul (or mind) not only for knowledge as a whole (and hence for education), but also for the application of that knowledge to ethics.

> The conscience is the supreme, directive faculty of the soul; so that knowledge bears to moral action the relation of means to end. Man fulfills the ends of his existence, not by right cognitions, but by right moral actions. Hence we are obviously correct in holding that the fundamental value of right cognitions is simply as they are the means of right moral acts—that is, the knowledge is really valuable only as it is in order to right actions. Again: The nature of responsibility is such that there can be no neutrality, or *tertium quid*, between duty and sin.[19]

This Virginian was very prescient in confronting Sensualism and also in sensing its ramifications. He would have been shocked by various pagan expressions in the twenty-first century derived from a materialistic worldview—shocked, but not surprised. Transgenderism may not have been a particular issue in the nineteenth century—though Dabney does hilariously refer to early promoters of female suffrage as "a few old women of

16. R.L. Dabney, *Dr. Girardeau's "Instrumental Music in Public Worship": A Review* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1889), pp. 6–9. "Mrs. Grundy" was a reference to a narrow-minded individual who watches over others' propriety—sort of a busy-body.

17. Thomas Cary Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1903; rpt. London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), p. 427.

18. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 559.

19. "The State Free School System Imposed upon Virginia by the Underwood Constitution," in Dabney, *Discussions, Volume IV: Secular*, pp. 220–221. For a brief encapsulation of the idea of false philosophies impacting morals, see "The Influence of False Philosophies Upon Character and Conduct," in ibid., pp. 470–476.

both sexes" and also mentions the feminist goal to "disregard the natural distinctions of the sexes" as well as to attain the "assimilation of the garments of the two sexes."[20] Transhumanism per se was not on the horizon in Dabney's day, but it is an example of the views of Comte in which man becomes his own God. The materialistic future as envisioned in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* with its baby factories and the cremation of bodies to produce phosphorus for fertilizer is but a few steps from the materialistic worldview of his grandfather, Thomas Huxley. And the tones of a church organ have been replaced by raucous rock music (plus strobe lights, smoke, and videos) as yet another expression of emotion-laden worship that appeals to the senses rather than to the mind. But in these and other instances, Professor Dabney would have understood that the latest fads were simply a logical progression from Sensualistic assumptions.

Major Dabney (C.S.A.), when he served under Stonewall Jackson, certainly experienced through his five senses a flesh-and-blood battlefield—the flash from a muzzle, the sound of explosions, the smell of gunpowder, the feel of hardtack, and the taste of chicory coffee. As manifest in his treatise on Sensualistic philosophy, Dabney also engaged in another war. It was, we might say, total war—not a physical one, fought with cannon and bullets and burning of crops, entailing literal maiming and killing as well as severe deprivations of the civilian populace, but rather an ideological and spiritual war, in which he met the opponents' "storm of words."[21] And in this masterful volume from 1875, he totally reduced all the fortifications of the enemy, and demonstrated the importance of fighting this religio-cultural war for the sake of theology, philosophy, apologetics, science, ethics, morals, education, freedom, government, and worship.▪

20. "Women's Rights Women," in ibid., p. 489.

21. *The Sensualistic Philosophy*, p. 152. Monte Harrell Hampton employs this term in the title of his book on Southern Presbyterians, *Storm of Words: Science, Religion, and Evolution in the Civil War Era* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2014).

***In Brief:* Robert L. Dabney: The Organ (1849).[1]**

In the issue for December 8, 1848 of *The Watchman and Observer*,[1] a communication or opinion piece by a reader under the pseudonym of Simplex, was published on the subject of the introduction of the pipe organ into churches of the Presbyterian Church, USA. Since the Reformation, Presbyterian, puritan, and other nonconformist churches generally used no musical instruments in their worship services. However, in the nineteen century the organ became affordable for affluent churches, when before then it was the exclusive purview of the cathedral. Other instrumentation such as the lowly piano, was seen as low class and for saloons and haunts of the undesirable, but the organ with its pipes and imposing appearance and overwhelming range of sounds became the rage and latest innovation to attract and retain congregants. Mr. Simplex was quite opposed to the innovation. He wrote:

> There are few organs in the Presbyterian Churches of the United States. And the number cannot be increased without a contest. Many of the more thoughtful and prayerful members in every congregation will oppose their introduction with firmness, or submit to with regret. And their introduction will be retarded by every improper use of them in churches that are furnished. The commonplace argument in favor of organs, is that they are an elegant accompaniment, and an aid in singing the praises of God in the great congregation. But when serious Christians observe that the praise of God is delayed, by the preludes and interludes fully as long a time as the praises themselves occupy, they will suspect that the instrument was introduced for other purposes than to aid devotion. And especially when they hear a tune (stolen from the opera, perhaps) played on the organ after the benediction is pronounced, on the Sabbath, amidst the under-talk and confusion of a retiring congregation, and without vocal music or any accompanying praises, they will begin to fear that the organ was not intended and is not adapted to aid devotion. They will gradually come to the conclusion that the organ is, like the dance, not sinful in itself, but so prone to evil that those who desire not to be lead into temptation ought to shun it as they do all dangerous companions. And serious Christians have a right to ask what is a breach of the Sabbath, if this disorderly farewell, after divine service, is not?

1. The letters making up the debate described here were republished in full in "Organ Grinding Circa 1849, *The Blue Banner, A Publication of First Presbyterian Church, Rowlett, Texas,* Vol. 3, #1–2 (January-February 1994), pp. 4–7 (https://thebluebanner.com/).

This communication sparked controversy and debate of a sort involving a handful of writers, all with one exception writing under their chosen nom de plumes. Unlike modern social media debates, these were letters written for publication in the gentlemanly style of the day and published over the subsequent months of January, February and March, 1849, with the writers engaging Mr. Simplex initially and each other as the debate for and against the innovation unfolded in the paper's pages. The first respondent, "H," wrote in arguing against Simplex and for the use of the pipe organ (*Watchman and Observer*, Richmond VA, January 18, 1849, Volume IV, No. 23). The next correspondent, Inquiere, wrote in response to H, raising objections to the organ to which if he received answers, he would gladly accept the innovation (February 1, 1849, Volume IV, No. 25). Next appeared a brief letter from Moses D. Hoge, who wished to make it clear that he was not "H," because he had learned what H had written had been assumed to be by his hand (February 22, 1849, Volume IV, No. 28.). In the same issue appeared one of the lengthiest contributions against the innovation, under the name Chorepiscopus. This was Robert L. Dabney, writing under a name that would append several pieces by him that appear in his *Discussions*. Next appeared a contribution under the name Rusticus, who argued against the expediency of the innovation (March 1, 1849, Volume IV, No. 29.). The debate ends with a lengthy reply by H to what Dabney had written (March 15, 1849, Volume IV, No. 31). In the same issue the paper ran an article on Ancient Church Music noting, "The question in dispute between our correspondents as to the propriety or impropriety of using the organ in the worship of the sanctuary, we shall leave with them — contenting ourselves merely with such historical notices of its introduction and use as are not ordinarily accessible. From the writings of Aquinas, who was born in 1221, it would appear that in this time no kind of instrumental music was used in the Western churches", before going on to trace more of the known history. Below is the text of what Dabney wrote in 1849 against the introduction of the pipe organ into the public worship of God.

Mr. Editor.—I have been pleased to see in your paper, some discussion on the use of organs in church-music. This subject cannot be regarded as one, affecting the fundamentals of religious truth; but it has its importance, especially as a *symptom* of the spiritual state and opinions of our churches. And it is well that the views of Presbyterians should be digested and settled on some rational principles, before the silent tide of Fashion has swept them all into an imitation of a thing alien to their institutions.

It has always been common among the advocates of this Popish mode of worship, to meet the objections of simple minded Protestants to the organ, with the retort that their scruples were the relics of fanatical prejudice, and rustic ignorance. Such objections have been treated almost with levity and ridicule, as if they were contrary to taste, refinement and light, although the reading world knows, that they decided the minds of the wisest and most learned Reformers; the fathers of Protestantism. The sensible and just remarks of "*Inquirer*," in a late number of your paper, under the modest form of doubts, have presented objections to the organ, too solid, too rational, and pious to be thus lightly treated.[2] They cannot fail of having some effect on every evangelical mind. It is not my purpose to attempt to do again, what *Inquirer* has done so well, by stating the scriptural and historical objections to the use of this instruments, in Protestant worship. But my object is to vindicate the great body of the Protestant church, and the Fathers of Protestantism, from the charge of ill taste, rudeness and blind prejudice, in their opposition. It is not strange that men, such as the present advocates of the organ in Presbyterian churches in America, should bring such a charge against such men; many of them educated amidst the richest specimens of the fine arts in the old world, their youth imbued with the spirit of a gorgeous and poetic age? Is it not rather queer, that the ephemeral aristocracy of our trading towns, whose high life took its rise between the stilts of the plough, or behind the tradesman's counter, only a generation or two back, who perhaps, never saw or heard an instrument that deserved to be called *an organ*, and whose taste would not suffice to distinguish a painting of the greatest masters, from the efforts of our peripatetic portrait-takers in these backwoods, or to discern between the eccentric

2. Inquirer first lamented the insulting way opponents of the organ in worship were treated, that it is "often to be taken for granted, that such objections are sufficiently answered, by a complacent smile at old-fashioned bigotry; an equivocal joke about psalm-singing that grates horrible discord to ears polite; and a clinching allusion to log churches, with earthen floors and clap-board benches, as the *reductio ad absurdum*, of the objection to organs." He noted the confusion of elements and circumstances of worship and scrupled the lack of a command, noting that Christian worship is patterned after the OT synagogue which had no musical instruments. The history of their introduction he found problematic, as well as their tendency to prevent congregational singing, not to mention "their expense, which is an item worth remembering when a world is dying for want of the means of grace and suggests the query whether that can be an authorized part of God's worship, which only the rich can enjoy…."

voluntaries of one of our boarding-school misses, elevated into a temporary organist, and a symphony of Handel, should be charging *rusticity* on such men as the Reformers and founders of Protestant churches. Men educated amidst the splendors of the fine arts, in the Augustan age of Popery, and accomplished with all the polite learning of their age? My purpose is to retort the charge of bad taste on the advocates of organs, and to show that their introduction into Protestant worship is incongruous with its spirit, and contrary to the true principles of musical science, and musical taste.

The music of an organ may be appropriate to Popish worship, and may be in good taste in a Popish cathedral; and yet may be in wretchedly ill taste, when applied to Protestant worship. — All will admit, that to imitate *blindly*, the fashions of the higher classes, without regard to those considerations of fitness, which render them appropriate and tasteful in those whom we follow, is the plainest mark of false taste and vulgarity. For example; we may be informed that Queen Victoria wears, with her evening dress, the thinnest slippers of white Satin. The young miss who should therefore conclude, that *her feet* would be appropriately arrayed in similar shoes, for a ride on horseback, through our country mud, to one of our country churches, would display a ludicrous instance of false taste. We may be told that Prince Albert sports no boots but those radiant with patent varnish, in St. James' Park. To adopt a similar article for hunting or walking boots, to traverse the mud of Virginia, would be a piece of vulgar imitation, unworthy of any one, above the sable *beaux*, who, in the streets of Richmond, so successfully ape, and even out-do, the distinguishing characteristics of the "*Distingues*."

Now these are just illustrations of the false taste shown by the Protestant church, when she apes Popery, in the use of the organ. The instrument is appropriate to the spirit of papal worship; but there is an essential difference between that worship and ours, which makes our blind use of their favorite instrument, a most unfortunate instance of vulgar imitation. Popish worship is addressed to the senses, and the imagination through the senses. According to the Papists' own theory of his worship, the mass is a grand Action. It is all in an unknown tongue; but this matters not: he asserts that even though there were not an articulate word pronounced in any language, the solemn drama would convey its instructions to the heart, through the genuflections, the pantomime, the adoration of the priests, and the varying harmonies of the music. Their theory of church music is just the same. The hymns are in an unknown language: if the worshipper heard every syllable articulated, he would not understand the ideas that are sung, nor does it matter that he should. The sentiment of devotion is conveyed sufficiently, by the character of the music.

But the theory of Protestant religious music is, or ought to be, essentially different. We appeal to the understanding and to those intelligent emotions, which are produced by the understanding on the heart. We sing articulate, intelligent words, in a familiar language, conveying to every hearer, instructive ideas and elevating sentiments. The *articulation* of words sung, is the very essence and soul of our musical worship. We recognize the music only as an accessory, to aid in impressing the ideas it accompanies; for we do not believe there is any more religion in the sensations of melody and harmony, separately considered, than in the posture of the declaimer. We conceive that it is only by accompanying intelligent religious ideas, that they can produce any religious effect. The scripture represents religious music as the vehicle of religious instruction, and imply the necessity of distinct articulation. "I will sing with the spirit, and I will *sing with the understanding* also, else when thou shall bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen at the giving of thanks — seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest:" 1st Corinthians 14; 15 and 16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, *teaching and admonishing* one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs" — Col. 3:16. These passages fully sustain the assertion that religious music, to be scriptural, *must contain intelligible articulate words*, conveying some pious instruction or emotion.

Now then, we assert that this essential difference between the theory and spirit of Popish church music and Protestant, makes the organ an unfit and ill-judged accompaniment for our vocal religious songs: although it is appropriate and well chosen for the purpose of Papists. — Those who advocate the use of the organ must submit to the charge of blind, unscientific imitation; or they must adopt the kind of music which Rome uses, appealing only to the ear, inarticulate, and uninstructive, and utterly foreign to the intention of the scriptures. The latter thing is, indeed, partly done, in practice, in all Protestant churches, where this instrument is used.

To evince the justice of the charge of false taste, just made, it remains to point out, in what respects, the organ is inconsistent with the spirit and character of scriptural church music. And first; none who are familiar with the use of the organ, can be so hardy as to deny, that it is *unfavorable to distinct articulation*, which is the very essential of religious music. It is the most overpowering of all accompaniments to vocal music, and

most effectually obliterates the distinctions of articulate sound. For himself the writer would affirm that he never, in a single instance, heard an organ used, when he could catch a single connected sentiment of what was sung, except so far as reading of the hymn before the singing, assisted his memory. And it may be fearlessly asserted, that the use of an organ utterly disappoints that, which is the grand purpose of religious music, the comprehension of the sentences sung, with the majority of hearers. Is not this a fatal objection to its use, with any man who values sense more than sound, the kernel more than the shell?

Second: The organ is *incapable of accentuation*. The alternate notes played upon it cannot receive any variety of *ictus* or force, as should be the case in all music. The rhythm of English poetry depends entirely on the occurrence of accented and unaccented syllables, in a certain order. In reading it, the emphasis, or ictus of the voice must fall on the alternate syllables, intended to receive it. To neglect this rule, and to pronounce the syllables indiscriminately with equal force, would convert the most spirited lines of Scott or Burns, into an intolerable drawl. Now, this rhythm is equally essential in poetry, when sung. The alternate *notes*, corresponding with the accented syllables of the metre, must receive a heavier or stronger tone. To neglect this, in singing, is as insufferable to a cultivated musical ear, as the neglect of the accentuation in reading poetry, would be to the elocutionists. These are assertions which no man can dare to dispute, without condemning himself, as the crudest of sciolists in musical knowledge. And it is equally undeniable, that the organ is utterly incapable of giving any expression to this *ictus* or accent; for the plain reason, that the force of the tone depends on the operations of the bellows-blower, or the character of the *stop* used, and not on the force of the performer's touch upon the key. Hence the music of an organ, although it may have a certain kind of solemnity, can never be spirited. It is only rescued from the character of drawling, by the power and fullness of its tones. To use it as an accompaniment to vocal music, is *death* to the spirit and expression of the poetry which is sung.

Third: The organ, like all other instruments with fixed stops to mark off the tones of the scale, gives those tones inaccurately; and when used along with that perfect instrument of God's own make, the human voice, must fail in producing a perfect accord, and perfect harmonies. This will be confirmed by any scientific organist.

The long drawn peals of harmony which proceed from this instrument echoing through lofty arches, and the fullness and volume of its sound, may render it suitable to the purpose of Popish ecclesiastical theatricals. But we assert, for the reasons above, that it is utterly unsuited, ill judged, and in ill taste, as an accompaniment for vocal music, intended to be articulate, and expressive of intelligible ideas. We assert it purely on principles of musical taste, apart from historical or theological objections. We retort the charge of rusticity on the advocates of organs in Protestant worship, and assert that this application of this accompaniment, regardless of the difference of circumstances, and the natural incongruities of the things, is the true breach of enlightened taste, and the true exhibition of prejudice.

There is a fact in the musical world, to which we can appeal for practical confirmation of the principles of taste laid down. The modern Opera is more of an Action and a Pantomime, than the religious music of Protestants was intended to be; though less so than the Mass. — The plot of the play is exhibited, partly by scenery and pantomimes, and partly by words set to music and sung articulately. Its nature is, therefore, not so totally foreign to that of the organ, as the nature of Protestant sacred music which depends wholly on articulation to convey its sentiments. And yet, although I would not claim as much familiarity with the theatricals as some of the admirers of organs in churches, I feel authorized to assert, that such a thing as an organ in the orchestra of an Opera, is never heard of; and that its introduction would be regarded by the whole musical world, as a ludicrous anomaly. All men of taste would feel, that the character of the instrument is unsuitable to the expression, emphasis, and flexibility of articulate, vocal music. The same principles of taste should expel it from our churches.

The manner in which this instrument is almost universally used in our Protestant churches, makes it doubly grievous to devotional feeling, and offensive to good taste. The organs obtained are frequently of inferior construction; and are out of tune, and ill-played. The volume of sound is often utterly disproportioned to the number of voices. Sometimes we see a little, feeble, starveling choir, to which the "accompaniment" has proved almost a fatal incubus, with a dozen voices, and an organ pouring forth tones strong enough to guide a thousand singers. In this connection, it may be remarked, that the use of organs in the Protestant churches of Holland, and in other places in Europe, where the congregational singing is noted as very fine, is no precedent whatever for the manner in which they are used in this country. There, the spirit of the people is generally imbued with a taste for music. All sing; and where a thousand voices are united in a song of praise,

the peculiar faults of the instrument are hidden in the vast volume of sound; and its leading chords subserve some slightly useful purpose, in keeping the air up to the proper pitch. But in a church where the vocal music is confined to thirty or forty voices, the organ is dominant, and all its vices becomes glaring.

The testimony of all concurs in proving, that the use of organs in this country is unfavorable to congregational singing. Unless their introduction can be guarded from this ill effect, more effectually than it has hitherto, let them be kept out forever. Another effect equally general, is to render the choir weak and remiss. Not only do we never see spirited congregational singing in this part of the country in churches where there are organs, we do not often find, in such churches, good choir singing. And surely, it is no slight objection, that an inexperienced private individual must be employed as organist, or some teacher of music, or theatrical musician must be hired. And thus one of the most solemn parts of the worship of a spiritual God, is committed chiefly to the guidance of a professional hireling, commonly a wicked man!

One of the most outrageous sins against good taste and devotional feeling committed by these windy machines, consists of the preludes and symphonies, with which they usually introduce and intersperse the praise of God. These seem to be thrown in, by some arithmetical or mechanical rule, between every two verses, in utter disregard of taste and sense. The nature of scriptural singing should teach us, that there should be nothing of the sort. The only use of the musical sounds, is to accompany and enforce the words expressing pious sentiments. What religious use or sense is there then, in that part of the music which is accompanied by no words? None. It has no business in the church. Just as reasonably might the preacher preface each impressive paragraph with a minute or two of pantomimic gesture. And then, the symphonies are thrown in blindly, after every verse, whether the sentiment of the poetry justifies any pause or not. It may be, that the burning thoughts of the hymn would hurry the devout soul along, without pause, from verse to verse. It may be that the end of a verse leaves a sentence unfinished, the nominative in the former verse waiting for its verb in the latter. Good taste and good sense would dictate, that an unbroken tide of song should bear the wrapt soul along to the climax of the sentiment, before it is required to pause. But no: the glowing thought must hang in it mid flight, or the widowed subject must stand bereaved of its predicate, until the "Performer" has had time to distinguish himself to his hearts' content in a "voluntary." But the most nauseating thing about the whole exhibition, is to see performers presuming to detain a whole congregation, with their "extemporized voluntaries," when their inventive talent does not extend far enough to justify them in undertaking an original nursery song, and their operative skill does not suffice to perform the air of a common hymn, with sufficient fluency and spirit.—The manner in which these wondrous performances are thrown off, would seem to indicate, sometimes, that they are intended to realize the description of the great English poet of

> *Notes with many a winding bout*
> *Of linked sweetness, long drawn out,*
> *With wanton heed and giddy cunning,*
> *The melting voice through mazes running,*
> *Untwisting all the chains that tie*
> *The hidden soul of harmony.*[3]

But their afflicted hearers doubtless found about as much resemblance between their effusions and the conceptions of a true master, as you, Mr. Editor, would discover between the eccentric bombast of an Arkansas stump orator, and the speeches of Demosthenes. Long may it be, ere I am again subjected to such inflictions. Give me rather, for ever more, the hearty singing of the whole congregation, uniting their voices in some of those solemn strains, sung by sainted parents over our cradles, and linked with all the sweet and solemn recollections of the dreamy past! When all together rise up, "making melody in their hearts unto God," and mingling their voices in one tide of expressive, living, gushing melody, how does the delicious horror send the blood thrilling through the heart? How does the billowy harmony bear the enraptured soul towards heaven? Such were the strains with which the Presbyterian church in our land honored God in earlier days. Such was the songs that swept on the wailing winds, over the moors of Scotland, when the purest of God's people there, braved death to worship him. Such were the strains with which the Republicans of England shook the hearts of their foes, when they drew nigh to the battle, with "the high praises of God in their mouths, and a two edged sword in their hands," to execute vengeance upon the heath and judgments upon the people." Such we believe were the songs of praise sent up to God from that upper chamber, where the primitive church met to

3. Dabney is citing John Milton pastoral poem, "L'Allegro," first published in *Poems of John Milton, both English and Latin, Compos'd at several times* (London: Printed by Ruth Raworth for Humphrey Moseley, 1645).



The Tinkling Spring Presbyterian Church was designed by Robert L. Dabney, who was pastor there from 1847 to 1853. This photograph is copyright © Philip N. Wheeler, and used under the CC BY-SA 3.0 license, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/. The picture was orginally in color and has been lightened and cropped. The churches Dabney designed did not include pipe organs, which he famously was opposed to their introduction and use in public worship, as did fellow Presbyterians such as John L. Girardeau. A pipe organ was installed in 1917 (*Christian Observer*, v. 105, no. 7 (Feb. 14, 1917): (157) 13.

worship. — And wherever they shall be heard, they will elevate the devout, convince the sinful, and make the careless solemn, more effectually than any of the borrowed artifices of a worldly church.

There is one fact connected with the introduction of organs into those of our churches which have adopted them, which is exceedingly distressful. It is *the reason* which we always hear assigned, among other reasons, for their introduction, and which we believe has been in every case the most operative one. It is always urged: "*we must have an organ to keep pace with other churches in attracting a congregation, and in retaining the young and thoughtless.*" Has it come then to this, that the chaste spouse of Christ is reduced to borrow the meretricious adornment of the "scarlet whore," in order to catch the unholy admiration of the ungodly? Not thus did the Apostles devise to bring sinners to the church. They were taught to go after them, into the highways and hedges, with the wooings of mercy and love; to allure them by the beauty of holiness; to urge them by the terrors of the law. If we are authorized to add to God's worship, forms purely of human device, in order to make it more palatable to sinners, to what corruptions shall we not give entrance? The Popish church of South America attracts multitudes of worshippers, by gross theatrical representations. According to this mode of operations, which has introduced organs into our churches, a Presbyterian Church in South American might find it necessary to imitate idolatrous Papists, and convert God's house into a play-house. An excuse which will justify such an enormity as this under different circumstances, is surely no valid excuse for any thing. We believe that all such artifices, of human device, to catch popularity, are inconsistent with the genius of the Presbyterian Church, derogatory of her honor, and blasting to her interests. It was her glory and her strength, that she aimed to commend herself by her firm devotion to truth, by the purity of her discipline, the pre-eminence of her ministry, and the justice of her polity. If she will cleave to these traits and rest upon them in humble faith in her divine Head, she will prosper. But when once she descends from the high vantage ground of intellectual, theological, and moral superiority, to chaffer [barter] for popularity by human devices, and doubtful arts, her *prestige* will be gone. Other churches are better adapted to win in *that* race, and will surely outrun her.

Chorepiscopus. [Robert L. Dabney]▪

"The Studies and Enjoyments of Heaven":
R.L. Dabney as Churchman and Ecclesial Historian

By Sean G. Morris

Introduction

A Southern Presbyterian pastor, professor, philosopher, chaplain, church leader, author, and biographer of Stonewall Jackson, Robert Lewis Dabney (1820–1898) has been heralded as an eminent theologian and leading figure of not only Southern but American Presbyterianism in the nineteenth century. Reference is often made to the high esteem in which Dabney was held by his colleagues at Princeton Theological Seminary in those days.[1] A. A. Hodge (1823–1886; son of the great Charles Hodge) is reputed to have said that "he [A. A. Hodge] regarded Dr. Dabney as the best teacher of theology in the United States, if not the world."[2]

Dabney's life and writings have been considered from a variety of perspectives over the years. His thoughts on homiletics and sacred rhetoric continue to enjoy widespread popularity.[3] His writings on church architecture,[4] church music,[5] and public worship[6] continue to inform thoughtful discussion among many conservative Reformed and Presbyterian disciples. Of late, there has been something of a renewed interest in Dabney's thought on education, parenting, feminism, and the role of government.[7] For some time there has been an interest in Dabney's varied theological work thanks, in large part, to the doctoral work of the late Dr. Morton H. Smith (1923–2017) in the 1960s and the re-publication of his doctoral dissertation, *Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology*, in the 1980s.[8] Also of late, Dabney's lamentable views on race and slavery[9] have been subject to renewed scrutiny and his oft-unpopular views on postbellum Southern culture and Reconstruction have been likewise examined.[10] Though never deliberately published in a written volume as a printed work of systematic theology *per se*, nevertheless, Dabney's lectures in systematic theology have been transcribed and subsequently published as his *Systematic Theology*,[11] a work which enjoys continued appreciation in the wider Reformed church.

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1. Iain Murray, "Reintroducing 'The Best Teacher of Theology in the United States,'" *Banner of Truth Magazine*, no. 46 (January/February 1967): 17.

2. Thomas Cary Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1903), p. 534.

3. See Robert Lewis Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric: Or, A Course of Lectures on Preaching* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1870). Alternatively, this same work is published by the Banner of Truth under the title *Evangelical Eloquence* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1999).

4. Robert Lewis Dabney, "Principles of Christian Economy" in *Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney*, Vol 1. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1982), pp. 20–21.

5. Robert Lewis Dabney, "The Attractions of Popery," *Discussions*, 4.540–567.

6. Robert Lewis Dabney, "Simplicity of Pulpit Style," *Discussions*, 3.80–90.

7. Robert Lewis Dabney, *Dabney On Fire: A Theology of Parenting, Education, Feminism, and Government*, ed. Zachary Garris (USA: Independently published, 2019). As noted on the copyright page, the four essays of Dabney's which comprise this work were first published in 1890, 1891, 1892, and 1897 under the titles *Discussions: Theological and Evangelical*, *Discussions: Evangelical*, *Discussions: Philosophical*, and *Discussions: Secular*.

8. Morton H. Smith, *Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1987).

9. Robert Lewis Dabney, *A Defense of Virginia and the South, Annotated.*, ed. Gary Lee Roper (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).

10. Sean Michael Lucas, "'Old Times There Are Not Forgotten': Robert Lewis Dabney's Public Theology for a Reconstructed South," *The Journal of Presbyterian History* (1997–) 81, no. 3 (2003): 163–77.

11. Robert Lewis Dabney, *Systematic Theology*, Second Edition (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1985).

Presuming an audience comprised of numerous Presbyterians, Dabney (intellectual prowess, virtues, warts, and all) is a part of our theological heritage. He is a figure worthy of study, consideration, and in some cases, forceful refutation. But the aim of this present article is to consider Dabney's views from a different vantage point, one that has not always been given the most prominent of consideration. As hinted above, Dabney's works as pertaining to the Christian Sabbath,[12] moral philosophy,[13] political theology,[14] education,[15] pastoral theology,[16] etc. have been given a fair amount of recent consideration already. But Dabney was also a churchman and historian prior to his being, in a formal academic capacity, a theologian. In 1859, while laboring at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, Dabney began serving in the theology department. But prior to that, from 1853 to 1859, he had been serving as a professor of ecclesiastical history and polity. It strikes this author that this is an area in Dabney studies that, perhaps, could be given more examination. Indeed, even in looking at the table of contents in Smith's *Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology*, one notes that consideration is given to Dabney as a Christian, Preacher, Teacher, Philosopher, and Theologian, but not as an historian or a churchman, specifically. In the immediate subsequent chapter on Benjamin Morgan Palmer (1818–1902), consideration is given to Palmer as "Presbyter" (churchman). One wonders if the same consideration ought to be given to Dabney?

The aim of this article, therefore, is to give some consideration to Dabney's work *specifically as an ecclesiastical historian and a churchman* and thus to offer a further contribution to Dabney studies and American Church History in this regard.

Methodology

First, this article will set Dabney in historical context by offering a brief biographical sketch of his early life and pastoral ministry, particularly as it led to his assuming his professorship at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. Brief mention will be made of his work in the Confederate Army under General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson (1824–1863), and then attention will be given to the differing positions in which he served at the Seminary: first as instructor in church history and polity, and later his labor in the department of systematic/dogmatic theology. While Dabney's contributions as a dogmatic theologian are typically the works for which he is more widely known, it is his contributions to the areas of ecclesial history and Presbyterian church polity that will the focus of this article.

Then, having situated the subject biographically, attention will first be given to Dabney's writings on ecclesiastical history, and then secondly on church polity. Since the author lacks access to the Dabney manuscript archives which are presently housed at the Presbyterian Heritage Center in Montreat, North Carolina, analysis will be given to two major primary source works from Dabney's own hand that are relevant to these subjects: "Uses and Results of Church History"[17] and "Theories of the Eldership."[18] While some other relevant primary and secondary sources will be consulted from time to time to offer further context or elucidation, the bulk of this article will essentially be an abbreviated commentary on these two works, noting the various salient points Dabney makes (sometimes peculiarly salient points) as they contribute to the fields of church history and church government. Some analysis will be offered along the way and will give thought as to how his insights might bear on present-day issues. Finally, some brief analysis will be offered at the article's conclusion.

Early Life and Ministry

Born in Louisa County, Virginia on March 5, 1820,

12. Chris Coldwell, ed., "Southern Presbyterian Sabbatarianism: Extracts from the Writings of James Henley Thornwell, Edward Martin, Robert L. Dabney, Benjamin Morgan Palmer, John Lafayette Girardeau, Kenneth Murchison McIntyre and William Swain Plumer.," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 12 (2016): 27–39.

13. Douglas F Ottati, "Theology and Ethics Then, Now, and in-between at Union Seminary and Elsewhere," *Interpretation* 66, no. 4 (October 2012): 383–95, https://doi.org/10.1177/0020964312451562; As well, the semi-recent reprinted editions of Dabney's *The Sensualistic Philosophy* have surely brought renewed attention to his thought in this field. See Robert Lewis Dabney, *The Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century* (Dallas, TX: Naphtali Press, 2003).

14. Mark J Larson, "Dabney's Political Thought: Calvinian in an American Way," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 6, no. 1 (January 2014): 234–53; Sean Michael Lucas, ""Old Times There Are Not Forgotten": Robert Lewis Dabney's Public Theology for a Reconstructed South," *The Journal of Presbyterian History (1997–)* 81, no. 3 (2003): 163–77; Sean Michael Lucas, "Southern-Fried Kuyper?: Robert Lewis Dabney, Abraham Kuyper, and the Limitations of Public Theology," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 66, no. 1 (2004): 179–201.

15. The semi-recent reprinting by Canon Press of Dabney's "On Secular Education" essay will surely draw renewed attention to his thought on this subject. See Robert Lewis Dabney, *On Secular Education*, ed. Douglas Wilson, (Moscow, ID: CanonPress, 2008).

16. C. N. Willborn, "Nineteenth Century Southern Presbyterians: Some Theological and Pastoral Distinctives," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 15 (2019): 69–80.

17. Robert Lewis Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," in *Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney*, Vol. 2 (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1982), pp. 5–25.

18. Robert Lewis Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," in *Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney*, Vol. 2 (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1982), pp. 119–157.

Dabney was born into a family of landed wealth and elite social standing. Accordingly, he followed what was in those days a typical educational itinerary for a privileged son of Virginia. He attended Hampden-Sydney College near Farmville, Virginia for his undergraduate studies and when on to earn his master of arts degree from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Near the end of his time at the University, Dabney discerned a sense of call to ministry. Thus, he went on to study at his denomination's regional seminary, Union Theological Seminary, a relatively young institution at the time, still housed opposite the Hampden-Sydney campus. In 1846, he graduated from Union and briefly went on to serve as a missionary in Louisa County, the county of his boyhood home. But soon after that missionary stint, Dabney was called to serve as the pastor of Tinkling Spring Presbyterian Church in Fishersville, Virginia, where he labored for some seven years. In 1853, Dabney was called from that pastorate back to Union Seminary to serve as Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Polity, a position which he held until 1859 when he transferred to the theology department.[19]

In the midst of the American Civil War, Dabney briefly stepped away from his professorial-ministerial role for five months in 1862 when he served as Stonewall Jackson's chief of staff. During this time, he participated in both the Valley and Richmond campaigns.[20] Dabney's health forced him to serve a short tenure in the Confederate Army and resign his commission. Jackson eventually, reluctantly, accepted Dabney's resignation in September of 1862. Dabney resumed his professorial role back at Union Seminary in the theology department, after some further health-induced delays and some time devoted to writing. Dabney used his role at Union as the most prominent theological voice to train the next generation of Presbyterian ministers as well as proffer various thoughts on cultural and political matters, particularly as related to the War, the ideology that lay behind the Confederacy, and the worsening theological fractures that he continued to note between the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches.[21]

During the second portion of Dabney's tenure at Union he served in the theology department, but the interest of this article lies with Dabney's thoughts and labors prior to his time as Jackson's chief of staff and prior to his department transfer in 1859. Our focus is on Dabney the churchman and the ecclesiastical historian: a more pointed examination of Dabney's emphases when he was serving as professor of ecclesiastical history and church polity, a role in which he served from August of 1853 to May of 1859.

Arrival at the Seminary: Worrisome Days

Dabney arrived at the Seminary during a time of downgrade and discouragement. Having labored at the Tinkling Spring congregation from July of 1847 to August of 1853, he left that beloved congregation and arrived alone at the Seminary in August with the rest of his family joining him a few months later, in October of 1853. Some were tempted to look askance at his acceptance of the position. Though the general attitude toward this new calling was to view it as something of a promotion or honor to be called from a local pastorate to serve the wider church as a professor in one of her institutions,[22] in this instance it seemed as if Dabney was leaving a better and more eminent position for a lesser one.

The situation at Union in those days was precarious. After the death of the Rev. Samuel L. Graham (1794–1851; former professor of Ecclesiastical History and Polity, whose position Dabney would fill), there were but two remaining professors—both gifted instructors in their own right, but one young and one very aged. The Seminary's remaining endowment was small and a professor's salary at the time was not overly lavish: $1200 (approximately $46,000 in 2022 dollars) and a house. The present enrollment of students was a mere eleven. Conventional wisdom in those days suggested that the institution's outlook was poor and, thus, students from the Seminary's regional and controlling Synods (Virginia and North Carolina) who would ordinarily pursue studies at Union were instead inclined to attend Princeton or Columbia.[23]

Consequently, Dabney's labors in church history and polity constituted only a part of his work for the Seminary during these years. He would devote several summers to fundraising and student recruitment—at his own expense!—throughout Virginia and North Carolina on behalf of the Seminary:

> I studied and taught my department with great vigor; made laborious tours every vacation, at my own expense, one year (1855) as a collector for the additional endowment, raising just $3000, the other years visiting

19. Lucas, "Old Times," pp. 163–164.

20. Sean Michael Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life*, 1st edition (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), pp. 115–116.

21. Lucas, "Old Times," p. 164.

22. "…the recent period of your elevation to a public post in the church…" his friend C.R. Vaughan teased him in a letter. T. C. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (hereafter *LLD*). (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1903), p. 136.

23. Johnson, *LLD*, p. 130.

> churches, colleges, and universities, preaching, making our seminary known and canvassing for the right sort of students…. It is no boast to say that the revival of the seminary's influence under these circumstances was chiefly my work.[24]

The Seminary's fortune steadily improved from 1853–1858, as evidenced by the hiring of additional faculty members and even the construction of additional faculty housing.[25] By the beginning of the 1859–1860 academic term, total enrollment had increased from eleven to thirty-eight.[26] Morale was high. And with that new, improved ethos, there also had been a reorganization of the curriculum and a general restructuring of the institution. Dabney himself was instrumental in chartering this "greatly improved … plan"[27] in the reform of the course of studies. This plan was formally adopted by the Seminary's Board of Trustees in 1856.

His charge was straightforward enough:

> "The third department is that of *History and Church Government*. (Dr. R. L. Dabney.) This embraces the history of the Christian Church from the Christian era to the present century, the history of doctrine and theology, and the nature, planting and government of the church. The history of doctrine unfolds the rise of the successive forms of theology and philosophy which have prevailed in Christendom, and embraces the polemical discussion of errors, thus presenting the course of polemic theology, so far that it is not necessarily introduced into systematic divinity. This part of the course is, in short, a discussion of theology historically presented. As an introduction to the history and government of the church, the important parts of the Acts of the Apostles are expounded in this department. Sacred rhetoric is also temporarily committed to it."[28]

Dabney as Ecclesial Historian

Dabney embraced a fundamental conviction that the Seminary was an institution built centrally around the Scripture, the Bible, the Word of God—a conviction he shared with the institution's founder, John Holt Rice (1777–1831): "This institution was intended by its great founder, Dr. John H. Rice, to be a school of *Biblical Theology*…. According to that conception, the *Bible*, THE BIBLE, is the text-book of the theologue, and the grand concern of his training is to fit him for understanding its contents…. Far better that the great biblical department be made complete, whatever else is left incomplete; for it is there that the essential work of learning Bible truth must be done."[29]

In this regard, the Seminary was an institution of biblical theology or a Bible school in the best sense. Dabney espoused a balanced and logical view of the curriculum or flow of studies in such a school of divinity: fundamentally built upon the science of the Scripture, the student would begin his studies with matters of biblical introduction (biblical history, archaeology, geography, etc.), and then proceed to learn the biblical languages (including matters of exposition). The Biblical Studies department was of such fundamental import that the Seminary felt obliged to commit an entire one-half of their faculty (two out of four men!) to matters of Greek, Hebrew, hermeneutics, exegetical studies, biblical criticism, and the like. From this stage, the student would proceed to studies in systematic theology and then pastoral theology, handled by another faculty member. And then, finally, the student would proceed to the fourth faculty member who oversaw studies in church history and church government: "[As the student] is also to be an officer in the visible kingdom of Christ, he must study both scripturally and historically the nature, functions and organization of that kingdom. This finally equips him for the actual use of his knowledge as 'a scribe instructed into the kingdom of heaven.'" In Dabney's conception, then, studies in church history and polity were viewed as capstone courses, a fitting finale for one's studies in divinity, rather than electives or side-dish courses to be added à la carte wherever the student fancied.[30]

We see that Dabney's approach to church history was a standard Presbyterian approach to the subject.[31] Given his covenantal understanding of the church/people of God spanning from the Old Testament to the New Testament, logically, he began the story of the church/people of God in the days of the Old Testament and brought that narrative forward into the modern era. He employed the Bible as a main textbook in his classes,

24. Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney*, 69; Johnson, *LLD*, pp. 143–144.

25. Johnson effusively describes the mood on campus: "The material side of the institution had advanced greatly. The endowment had been very much increased, a fourth professorship had been established, and a new and commodious residence for a professor had been built; and it is merely bare justice to Dr. Dabney to say that all this advance was largely the result of his influence." *LLD*, p. 154.

26. Johnson, *LLD*, p. 149.

27. Johnson, *LLD*, p. 150.

28. Johnson, *LLD*, p. 150.

29. Johnson, *LLD*, p. 152.

30. Johnson, *LLD*, pp. 151–152.

31. Dabney, "Lectures on Church History and Government," MS, Robert Lewis Dabney Collection, Presbyterian Heritage Center, Montreat, N.C. (hereafter "Montreat") as per Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney*, page 70.

further underscoring this commitment noted above regarding the Holy Scripture as the central building block in the Seminary's curriculum and self-conception. Thus, Dabney used the Old and New Testaments as some of his assigned textbooks, along with Johann Mosheim's (1693–1755) Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, Humphrey Prideaux's (1648–1724) The Old *and New Testament Connected* and Archibald Alexander's (1772–1851) *A History of the Israeliteish Nation*. Mosheim's work was the main textbook for Dabney's ecclesiastical history courses, though the whole Old Testament was his basic resource in teaching old covenant church history, and the Book of Acts, likewise, for new covenant church history.[32]

Dabney's work in this academic subject was not exactly original—a fact he himself would readily admit. Some have suggested that it is a work of tracing the development of doctrine through the ages more than anything else. Yet, while he believed that his labors in this field exposed his own weaknesses and inadequacies,[33] friends and colleagues believed that his work in this academic arena was eminently useful and noteworthy. C. R. Vaughan (1827–1911) urged him to "never listen to any proposition to change your present position, either for a church or another chair. Write a Church history. This, in my judgment, is your work."[34]

What is, perhaps, Dabney's more particular or original contribution to the field of church history, if not content or presentation, is methodology. Dabney had strong methodological convictions as to how the subject of church history might best be taught and how seminarians might best go about studying the subject. Dabney's inaugural lecture before the Seminary in 1854, entitled "Uses and Results of Church History,"[35] is especially useful in providing a window into Dabney's thoughts on the matter, especially as he makes the case in that lecture for his methodological approach. Fascinatingly, though Dabney is perhaps most well-known and most regarded for his work as a *theologian*, he believed that the history of theology and polity were best taught by the *historian* because of the historian's knack for giving attention to the development of theology and polity in relation to historical context.[36]

Given that this author does not presently have access to the R.L. Dabney Collection of Manuscripts (housed at the Presbyterian Heritage Center in Montreat, N.C.) in order to peruse notes and syllabi relevant to Dabney's Ecclesiastical History courses, it is useful to turn our attention to his inaugural lecture, "Uses and Results of Church History," in order to consider Dabney's particular emphases in this academic field and to better ascertain his work as an ecclesiastical historian.

Dabney believed that the student of church history must be sufficiently familiar with the outlines of not only secular history but also geography, chronology, and political institutions because knowing the parameters of these disciplines is a necessary prerequisite to better understanding ecclesiastical history. In order to master the "science of history," one must not merely be able to recite names, dates and events rotely. While history is indeed concerned with a multitude of facts, it is also concerned with these facts' causes and relations. For Dabney, verifying historical data as factual and accurate is a skill set which must be employed by the able historian, but it is only *one* skill among several "faculties" that must be brought to bear in order to truly master this science. One must also combine "patience, impartiality, sound judgment, subtlety, and perpetual watchfulness against the blinding influences of prescription, habits, great names and prejudices."[37]

Dabney argues that in order to best understand the development of church history, one must familiarize himself with human philosophies of ancient origin because, while secular, such philosophies and schools of thought have ever had an "intimate connection with doctrine, and a potent influence upon it for good or

32. Says Dabney in a letter to G.B. Stricker, who later succeeded him as the chair of Ecclesiastical History at Union Seminary, "The plan of our Seminary, as a *biblical* seminary, makes the Bible itself a text-book for every professor. The Old Testament was my text-book for the history of the church of the old dispensation; my human helps, Prideaux's *Connexions* and Alexander's *History of the Israelitish Nation*. The Book of Acts was my text-book for the apostolic age of the new dispensation, with old Mosheim for the rest (with Murdock's notes). The extent of the Old Testament history was so large, and the time so short in which I had to dispatch it, that I made a sort of syllabus of the narrative in the form of questions, referring to the Old Testament by book, chapter and verse, or to Prideaux, to give the answers. Some interesting topics, as the Usherian chronology (as against the Septuagint), etc., I made the subject of special lectures. This series of questions, I think I have still at Red Hill. I lent them once to Dr. Addison Alexander, in Princeton, and then to Dr. Peck." Johnson, *LLD*, p. 141.

33. "But none can feel more strongly than myself that, in enforcing the high qualifications which church history requires for its study, I have been only illustrating my own deficiencies." Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.7.

34. Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney*, 70; C. R. Vaughan to Dabney, 10 March 1856, in *LLD*, p. 143.

35. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.5–25.

36. James H. Smylie, "The Burden of Southern Church Historians: World Mission, Regional Captivity, Reconciliation," *Journal of Presbyterian History (1962–1985)* 46, no. 4 (1968): 274–307.

37. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.6.

evil." Realizing that, for example, the ancient Greek thought of Plato and Aristotle have been interjected within Christian doctrine at various points through the ages—whether for good or ill—it is evident, then, that Christian doctrine has been shaped and influenced by these worldly dogmas. Thus, in order for the ecclesiastical historian to rightly apprehend, describe, and in some cases refute and extract certain developments from Christian doctrine, that historian must have a familiarity with these non-Christian dogmas in order to better master and then teach rightly the Christian doctrine, counterintuitive as it might seem. Moreover, Dabney reasons that in order to understand the "daughters" one must first understand the "parents." According to Dabney, Greek philosophies are but the thought-progeny of more ancient Near Eastern schools of thought. Thus, the ecclesiastical historian must also understand the "parent" speculations originating from ancient Persia and Egypt: "we are at once compelled to journey backward to meet the very earliest dawn of human science in that orient realm from which the human race first spread," because, whether realized or not, these secular philosophies have "infused elements into Christian theology [and] have affected every age, and are felt to this day in our modes of thought and the errors which beset us."[38]

For Dabney, while so much "back study" is a necessary prerequisite to rightly ascertaining and understanding the facts of history, this is not his chief concern for the ecclesiastical historian. Dabney's peculiar contribution to this academic discipline—at least as is conveyed in this inaugural lecture—is that of the church historian's methodology: the church historian must not be content with merely the regurgitation of accurate data, but with deduction and with the analysis of the passions and motives which drive the human actors to do what they have done. "History is the record of the doings of the human race," he acknowledges, but "human affairs, passions, purposes, impulses, are acts, and secret motives are their causes." It is here that Dabney acknowledges the inherent limitations of the field: while the historian desires to deduce what drives the actions of the actors of history, exhaustive knowledge of this data is necessary for a *complete* deduction, and finite mortals will never have such exhaustive knowledge. While the church historian might wish that he could construct a complete deduction regarding human events, "our analysis cannot be complete, unless the annalist of the events could exercise the attribute of the Searcher of hearts."[39]

Dabney goes on to catalogue further impediments and frustrations that the historian will encounter in the pursuit of excellence in his field. There are a "thousand influences" which are "infinitely diverse" and because of this the finite, mortal-minded scholar ever runs the risk of overlooking or confusing some of the historical data points he wishes to analyze. There is the fact that not all ancient sources of antiquity are entirely reliable or trustworthy. The Christian knows full well the sinful perversions of the human heart and that will most certainly affect historical records as well: claims may be dubious, historical facts may be deceptive, willfully misleading, or inaccurate. Dabney readily admits that the historian cannot approach his field of study expecting some sort of clinically pristine laboratory of observation. No historian studies or records history *tabula rasa*, but rather, Dabney admits, "we only know that we see [historical events] as they appeared to the annalist through the medium of his own mind and heart. And at every stage in the stream of tradition we must expect to find additional misconceptions and errors infused."[40] Moreover, Dabney laments, so much of history is—inevitably—at the mercy of the annalist who is (more often than not) predisposed to recording the grand highlights and events of an era that many people deem noteworthy or that strike his personal interest. Items such as battles, royal coronations, treaties or church councils, and requisite controversies—these are catalogued with great attention, but often (and here, again, we see Dabney's penchant for motive and methodology as it lies behind actions) the more mundane aspects of a culture are given scant attention, if any at all. Factors such as "the food which nations ate, the clothing they wore, their domestic life, the state of domestic discipline, their arts, agriculture and amusements, the method of their devotions, their superstitions … the books they read … these every-day and homely influences" which may well offer insight into what drove historical actors and actions, ingredients which may well have shaped national and cultural character, are given nary any scholarly attention.[41]

And yet, for all the impediments which Dabney lists (only a fraction of which we have cited here), he nevertheless asserts that no branch of historical study is, in the end, a fruitless endeavor. While historical study may be unavoidably incomplete, imperfect, and an inevitably biased enterprise, it is never ultimately without

38. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.6.
39. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.9.
40. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.9–10.
41. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.10.

profit: "[I]f I shall succeed in imparting to my pupils only those old and known lessons which church history has taught all along, I shall consider the course by no means useless."[42]

One of the sundry values of historical studies that Dabney highlights is that of exposing and better understanding the origins of certain movements. To his mind, oftentimes phenomena and doctrinal innovations arise which are injurious to the church and at odds with Scripture, and in many instances these developments can be fatally exposed simply by the historian doing his homework in demonstrating the origins of a movement, and not even entering into debate as to the movement's merits (or lack thereof):

> [T]here is no readier, and, we assert, no juster, mode to silence that shallow and arrogant theology … than simply to expose, without debate as to its merits, its detested origin, as it may be found, even in its minutest lineaments, in the fragments of *Pelagius*, preserved among the works of Jerome and Augustine. Affix to it, as it may be justly done, this name, which has met the execrations of Christendom for thirteen hundred years, and it dies in merited shame and contempt.[43]

Certainly, for Dabney, there was always room for argument and debate and the craft of polemical theology. But, in engaging against erroneous teaching, the able historian is well-equipped to begin debasing a false doctrine *prima facie* simply by cataloguing the facts of history and tracing out the developments accompanying such a doctrine and noting its fiendish origins. He observes how many of the supposed "death blows" of theological argument leveled against Luther were quickly undone when Luther simply informed an "ignorant world" as to the origins of papal doctrine. Likewise, Dabney notes, with established English clerical arguments against the efforts of the English Reformation, and even in the post-17th Century rise of Arminianism: a fatal stab could be dealt to this ideology in the minds of would-be sympathizers if the capable church historian would but demonstrate how the seed of Arminianism is nothing but "the semi-Pelagianism of the Jesuit Molina, which even Rome, with all her instinctive hatred of God's grace and truth has never had the hardihood to adopt…."[44]

In perhaps one of the most salient points of his lecture, Dabney states, "The union of historical studies with systems makes the true scholar."[45] For him, to be a mere theologian will get one an accurate apprehension of the truths of the faith and the needs of the church, but the ability as an historian offers a fuller complement to the theologian's skillset. Dabney likens it to the difference of a natural scientist who studies and attains knowledge of nature only in the lab ("in cabinets of dried specimens") versus he who studies nature by actually going out in the fields and woods. As in nature, so also in the realm of theological studies: "The union of historical studies with systems makes the true scholar."[46] For Dabney, systematic theology is good and necessary, but it serves a more clinical and diagnostic purpose. To study church history is to study *theology applied.* Systematics affords a certain knowledge, but an imperfect one. Historical theology adds to the man a more familiar acquaintance with the subject. Again we see Dabney's continued emphasis on methodology and motive. While systematic theology enables a man to define and classify the church's dogma, to study church history enables one to examine how these doctrines were expressed and gave shape to the church through the ages. Ecclesiastical history enables one to see how these doctrines were understood by some of the great thinkers and theologians, to observe relations and results of a dogma—who composed a creed, from what city did it arise, what were the controversies in that day that gave occasion to the formulation of this theological pronouncement? To understand these inter-relational and *causal* aspects of theological doctrine, more than merely the dogmatic definitions—however comprehensive and erudite—helps one see far more of the theological landscape than dogmatic theology alone and renders one stronger in the much-needed skill of analysis. In Dabney's words, "[t]he history of theology, therefore, is a complete arsenal, which furnishes us with all the weapons of discussion."[47]

Dabney continues on in the latter third or so of this essay, providing several illustrations and historical evidences which serve to reinforce the overall theme he continually reiterates: "Whether in church or state, man's true political wisdom is only learned from experience; in

42. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.11.
43. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.14.
44. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.14.
45. Again, remarkably high praise for the field of historical theology since Dabney is more well-known for his contributions as a dogmatician or theologian. But, as we can deduce from this lecture, his time as an ecclesiastical historian was eminently useful and his acumen as an historian was, in his estimation, inestimably valuable in strengthening his theological prowess and making him a better, fuller, and more useful churchman. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.15.
46. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.15.
47. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.14.

other words, from history."[48] Elsewhere, "[Study solely of dogmatics] only produces a pedant. The union of historical studies with systems makes the true scholar. The former prepares for the forensic defence of our faith the mere disputant, the chopper of logic; the latter equips the controversialist with practical, flexible, moderate wisdom."[49] And again, "[H]istory … teaches us to distrust the temporary and specious prosperity or gain which attends immorality and error."[50] Dabney makes particular application here regarding the great need for historical education due to the dreadful lack of historical sensibilities and the woeful lack of broad reading, not only in the general public but especially for statesmen and leaders in public affairs. In Dabney's estimation, if men took the time to be historically informed, they would realize that "from the sixteenth century forth to the great millennial consummation … [the great struggle of history] is the one between the Bible and Rome."[51] For Dabney, if public leaders would know history and know the enmity that the Church of Rome has to the advance of the true gospel of Christ, then they would be far less eager to court the votes or garner the favor of "popish votes" and feel compelled to lock arms with agents of antichrist and give tacit aid to their cause.

Finally, for Dabney, it is the historian, and the Christian historian alone, who has the blessing of greater perspective. Related to his observations about the unfortunate countenance that public leaders give to enemies of the church, he also argues that the "history of the church and of the world, regarded as a whole, is but the evolution of the eternal purpose of that God who 'worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.'"[52] Here we see something of Dabney's postmillennial commitments coming to bear as he evaluates the advantageous position that a church historian has and the advantageous posture that such a historian has as he takes inventory of world affairs and analyzes all events in light of their subordinate function—that is, coalescing around and serving to amplify the kingly reign of Christ. As Dabney says, "We can even now understand why Wolfe conquered before Quebec, and the fair domain of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi was transferred from France to England. This event substantially transferred the continent from Rome to Protestantism…. Thus, then, did God probably decide that America should be independent and republican, and that the mighty East should fall under the control of a Protestant instead of a popish power. In all these instances we see that the means are gradually prepared to install Messiah as King of kings."[53] For Dabney, the historical theologian's vantage point and skillset are much to be preferred than the dogmatic theologian's skills *alone*, for the ecclesial historian is able to survey the developments of history, note patterns and repetitions, predict trajectories, and scrutinize all developments in light of their inevitable movement toward Christ's millennial reign. The skillset of the historian—more than mere clinical, logical, bare pronouncements—is that he is able to take that theological precision and apply it wisely, judiciously, and with a sage, in-the-moment practicality because of his knowledge of vast fields of learning and of the trends of history which he has studied fastidiously. With such a skill set, the ecclesial historian is in a prime position to impart wisdom, discretion, and pastoral guidance to the church in his own day, and particularly to the church's future under-shepherds whom he is in the business of training. For Dabney, "the history of the church is one of the studies and enjoyments of heaven" [54] and is among the loveliest and most useful of callings.

Dabney as Churchman

For his courses on church polity, Dabney developed a great deal of his own material, supplemented by Francis Turretin's (1623–1687) *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* and John M. Mason's (1770–1829) *Essays on the Church of God.* In perusing the outline of Dabney's course lectures, the first half of the course was devoted to church history, tracing the development of the church and its doctrine through the ages, while the second half focused on church polity issues. There was a fair bit of overlap in his polity courses with his ecclesiastical history courses. As has been noted above, this church history courses could just as easily be described as a course in the history or development of church doctrine as it could be called "ecclesiastical history." Similarly, in his polity course, while certainly laying out the biblical principles from which Presbyterianism is derived, this course could just as easily be described as a soft polemic and vindication of Presbyterian polity against Independent and, especially, Episcopalian forms of church government.[55] As Lucas notes, even though Dabney's lectures were neither creative nor innovative, they were well received nonetheless. His friend, William H. Foote (1794–1869; fellow Presbyterian minister who served on Hampden-Sydney's Board

48. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.19.
49. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.15.
50. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.17.
51. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.22–23.
52. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.23.
53. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.24.
54. Dabney, "Uses and Results of Church History," *Discussions*, 2.25.
55. Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 70.

of Trustees from 1851 to 1870, and Board President from 1864 to 1866), reported, "I understand that your labors are very acceptable; that your lectures are listened to with deep interest, and that your example of study and investigation is impressing the students favorably, both as to yourself and as to their personal duties."[56]

Perhaps the most-ample insight into Dabney's views on polity and the eldership is to be found in his essay "Theories on the Eldership,"[57] which first appeared as an article in the *North Carolina Presbyterian* in September of 1860. He begins by reflecting on the fact that so many in the present generation find it unnecessary—perhaps distracting, if not an outright nuisance—that even 150 years since the establishing of American Presbyterianism, the church continues to debate matters of "first principles."[58]

In tandem with his work in the field of church polity, one of Dabney's most notable emphases was his insistence on Presbyterian church government being a matter not of mere preference or even that of prudence, but rather that it was a matter of *jus divinum*. The limits of this essay restrict how much can be said as regards his overall contributions to the subject of *jure divino* Presbyterianism,[59] but for now we simply observe that his arguments and understanding of the eldership here in this essay are predicated on Presbyterian church government (and thus the eldership) being one of *jure divino* eldership.

Dabney's essay gets at the divergence between Northern and Southern Presbyterianism in the United States and he does this first by noting some of the recent works that had been printed in periodicals representative of the two Presbyterian camps. The variously-named *Repertory* (*Biblical Repertory*, *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, etc.) to which he refers was the publishing organ of the northern Princeton Theological Seminary and the *Southern Presbyterian Review* was the publishing organ of Southern Presbyterianism, published in Columbia, S.C., but a venture shared among representatives of several southern seminaries. Near the beginning of his essay, Dabney notes that there is a discrepancy in understanding the definition of *jure divino* Presbyterianism as articulated by Charles Hodge (1797–1878) in the *Repertory* vis-à-vis the understanding as it had been articulated in the *Southern Presbyterian Review:*

> "Some, with the *Repertory*, say that Christ's legislation only fixes the general outlines, and leaves all the rest to be determined, or from time to time changed, by the church herself, in a prudent regard to policy and convenience. These persons charge upon the class represented by the Southern Presbyterian Review, that they, on the contrary, hold that Christ has fixed *jure divino* the whole form of the church in all its details, so that nothing can be instituted in the church unless a New Testament warrant can be found explicitly for it."[60]

Dabney asserts that Hodge would have these general outlines be a sufficient authority for the life of the church and that such general outlines provide for the church to have a ministry and that that is enough, for the Scriptures do not mandate further precision than this: that authority in decisions and voting matters resides ultimately in the people (not a bishop), that rule is to be exercised representatively through the eldership; secondly, that there is to be a parity of the clergy; and thirdly, that there ought to be a unity of the church, not autonomous congregational independency.[61] For Dabney and his Southern Presbyterian compatriots, *jure divino* Presbyterianism provided more specificity than Hodge would grant. While certainly not claiming that the Scripture prescribed such an elaborate Presbyterianism so as to foresee every conceivable scenario or eventuality,[62] nevertheless, Dabney believes that Scripture provides a more *definite* and less *general* outline for structuring the life of the church than advocates in the *Repertory* would admit.

Dabney agrees with Hodge's three-fold contour (authority, rule, unity), but goes further to add that while authority does reside ultimately in the people, exercised representatively, "[p]recisely three classes of official functions are assigned for reaching the great end of the church, viz., preaching, inspection and deaconship, of which the two first may be in the same hands, so that there are three names of office, and no more, viz., the preaching-elder, the ruling elder, and the deacon."[63] Likewise, Dabney agrees that the church is one, such that smaller portions of the church (congregations) are

56. Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 70; William H. Foote to Dabney, 11 January 1854, in *LLD*, p. 143.

57. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.119–157.

58. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.119.

59. Surely a subject for subsequent and more specific reflection, possibly as a sequel to this present article.

60. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.121.

61. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.122.

62. "Now, we do not pretend to find an explicit divine warrant for many details under this plan, such, for instance, as these: that preachers, and not elders, shall usually moderate all presbyterial courts; that the number of courts shall be four, the parochial, district, provincial and national presbyteries, instead of three or five; that some of them shall meet semi-annually and some annually; that some things they shall do in open court and some other things by committee, etc., etc." Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.123.

63. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.122–123.

subject to a larger portion (presbytery), and these larger regions subject to the whole church (synods or national assemblies/presbyteries). Finally, the Bible alone is the authoritative "statute-book of this government." This, Dabney contends, is an accurate, if imperfect, description of the divine plan of church government, and that plan is known namely as "Presbyterianism."[64]

Dabney begins to consider how the nature of government is the manner in which Christ is pleased to execute rule in his church and that this has direct bearing on the present question of *boards*, that is, delegated committees appointed by the General Assembly whereupon the Assembly devolves certain responsibilities to said board. The question in Dabney's era was whether or not such a devolution of responsibility was legitimate. Does biblical Presbyterianism demand that a council of elders execute the responsibilities themselves, or is it appropriate that they should delegate certain responsibilities to a smaller panel of overseers? Dabney asks rhetorically, "[I]s a board an unscriptural *tertium quid*…?" And in utilizing boards, is the church "departing from the spirit of Christ's plan, in that she betrays a lack of faith in the universal adaptation of that simple, yet infinitely wise, organism which Christ has given his church"?[65]

For Dabney, the above matter is one in which honest Presbyterians may differ. But in order to better understand the disagreement and offer a possible solution, Dabney first goes to lengths to establish what we might call "the regulative principle of church government," or the notion that, when it comes ordering the church of Jesus Christ and executing her proper functions and mission, Christians have no right to be innovative in church government, excepts as pertains to circumstances wherein the principles of church government are applied (e.g. should there be five regional presbyteries or fifty?). As Dabney puts it, "So that the absence of Scripture warrant for such additions is equivalent to a prohibition … the powers proper to the government must be learned on this simple, common-sense rule, that the government is to contain *only what is granted*.[66] Furthermore, while granting the reality of progressive revelation (that is, that not all of the nature of church government was revealed in one instant in the early pages of the New Testament, but rather was a gradual unveiling of cohesive organizational principles), because we live in an era now devoid of apostles and men inspired by the Holy Spirit, is up to us to simply imitate the churchly blueprints that Christ has instituted and not seek to develop novel ecclesiastical offices, structures, or the like: "[Christ] caused that organization to be left on record in the New Testament, partly in the shape of precepts and partly of precedents for all ages to imitate."[67] Dabney says this in order to get at the first issue which demands his attention: that recent editions of Princeton's *Repertory* have made the case that ruling elders in their office (which they grant is an office warranted by Scripture) are not rightly described as πρεσβύτερος and ἐπίσκοπος, but that only the preacher in his office is given such descriptors in the Scripture.[68] Thus the arguments in the *Repertory* go: church powers may be legitimately exercised without ruling elders, though the church may appoint ruling elders if it is agreeable and expedient to do so. Nevertheless, these ruling elders are, at the end of the day, still laymen, given only *appointment* and not *ordination*.

Dabney proceeds to rebut these assertions—alarmed as he is that such outlandish claims would appear in the *Repertory*, under the imprimatur of Princeton Seminary, where the venerable Dr. Samuel Miller (1769–1850) would never have countenanced such a view of the ruling eldership—by offering a six-fold argument demonstrating, in keeping with the views of Dr. Miller, that ruling elders, as well as preachers, are rightly understood as πρεσβύτεροι and ἐπίσκοποι as set forth in Scripture.

Dabney's six-fold argument is lengthy, and so a thorough summary here would be tedious and press beyond the permitted length of this article. However, we shall be content to highlight a few of his salient points here.

He begins by observing the usage of the Hebrew word for "elder" and tracing it through its Old Testament usage and observing how it was applied both in the synagogue and later in the New Testament church: "called in Hebrew, זְקֵנִים and in Greek, πρεσβύτεροι, or among the Jews of the dispersion, ἐπίσκοποι."[69] Ultimately, he shows that the Christian ruling elder is understood in the same sense as the Hebrew presbyter and thus he is a full-fledged elder and overseer in the fullest sense of the New Testament category, right alongside the preacher.[70]

He goes further to refute what is suggested in the *Repertory,* that the preachers were known primarily by their attribute of *preaching* and not by their attribute of *governing* or *ruling* as an elder in the congregation. Rather,

64. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.123.
65. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.124.
66. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.124–125.
67. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.125–126.
68. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.126–127.
69. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.128.
70. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.130–131.

as Dabney demonstrates, it is that the pastor-teacher of Ephesians 4:11 is drawn from among the already-extant class of his fellows, namely the *presbyters* or the *ruling elders*. Not unlike a cadre of soldiers: one may be a private and the other may be a general, but they are both described by the general denominator of "soldiers," so it is with the elders and the further distinction of the preacher-elder. While some invoke 1 Timothy 5:17 in order to support this hard distinction, Dabney views it as only a further reinforcement of his soldier analogy— that there is one "class" of presbyters embracing two "orders," the preaching elder and the ruling elder. While the writer in the *Repertory* objects to James Henley Thornwell's (1812–1862) statement regarding one *order* of presbyters embracing two *classes*, Dabney regards this as mere quibbling and hardly a serious argument.[71]

Dabney goes on to demonstrate that, contra the *Repertory*, the New Testament is clear that there was a plurality of elders established to govern in each individual congregation. Titus 1:5 reads "ordain elders in every city" and Acts 14:23 says that Paul and Barnabas "ordained elders in every church." Moreover, these elders were settled and permanent fixtures within their local congregation, within their own residential village. They were not some "college of elders" dispersed throughout a wide province or region, but they were local officers with a local charge—overseeing a singular flock, not "flocks."[72]

Moreover, it is untenable that all these elders, argues Dabney, should be about the work of preaching. Common sense would dictate that given the size of any average congregation, how could it be that there would be enough work of pastoral visitation to occupy five or six elders total, and only enough public preaching opportunities to occupy one or two, yet all five or six total elders will still continue to preach? Of course this would not be the case.[73] Rather, Dabney alleges that Christ intended *two species* of elders and that he appointed two such species and that they had different tasks assigned to them. 1 Timothy 5:17 itself even makes this distinction, that there is a pool of elders who all rule together, but there are those from among the pool that *especially* labor in word and doctrine. Meaning that not all *especially* labor in preaching and teaching, but *some* especially labor in this capacity as they all serve together in the eldership.[74]

There are some, including the author in the *Repertory*, who want to make the argument that the ruling elder is not of the same class as the "presbyter," but it is more of an honorific title and not one that is of *technical* office and power, but merely a title of general seniority and honorary recognition.[75] Briefly expositing from 1 Timothy 5:17 again as well as the opening salutation to the Philippians, Dabney demonstrates that the ruling elder is called "presbyter" in the same sentence with the preaching elder, noting that these are both rightly understood as presbyters (only differing slightly in their functional exercise of the office). Dabney reasons that it would be nonsensical for one to be a fully ordained presbyter, and then half a sentence later that another elder (also referred to as "presbyter") would have the word apply to him in only a partial sense. In the introduction to the letter to the Philippians, Paul mentions only bishops (επισκόποις) and deacons and makes no mention of the ruling elders. This is because, according to Dabney, the apostle's intention is that the ruling elder and the preacher are both subsumed under the title of επισκόποις, and therefore the ruling elder is a presbyter.[76]

In his fifth rebuttal, he observes that the *Repertory* does not grant that the office of ruling elder (as a regularly ordained office) has sufficient warrant from Scripture. And yet at the same time, the author does regard it as a scriptural office and finds a warrant for it in the term "governments" as found in 1 Corinthians 12:28.[77] Dabney again notes that, under our aforementioned "regulative principal of church government," we have no right to introduce whole new branches of officers without scriptural warrant. But moreover, there *is* scriptural warrant for the office of ruling elders, and that they have been understood as official ordained presbyters, not only in Scripture, but even from the earliest days of the church. Even the primitive church recognized this, and (even though the nomenclature has since changed and definitions have been unfortunately warped) the early titles of *bishops, presbyters,* and *deacons* have always been known in the church. And these titles, *bishops*—or preachers—and *presbyters,* are descriptive of their function and denote the same office.[78]

Finally, in his sixth point, Dabney seeks to offer a rebuttal to the *Repertory*'s supposition that if ruling elders are proper presbyters, that there can be no distinction between them and ministers, and they must all be preachers because all alike must be "apt to teach," per 1 Timothy 3. Dabney is happy to grant that all elders must be apt to teach, but this does not limit a man to exercising his gifts of eldership *only* in the pulpit. They were plenty of

71. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.131–133.
72. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.135–137.
73. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.137.
74. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.138.
75. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.140.
76. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.141.
77. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.142.
78. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.142–144.

occasions for the ruling elder to exercise doctrine, such as in home visitation, and that the spiritual power of Christ is wielded through teaching. Therefore, the ruling elder rules through teaching the doctrine of Scripture. And though he may not be the primary teacher in the pulpit, he nevertheless is often teaching in his ruling and therefore must be "apt to teach."[79]

Dabney concludes his essay offering rebuttals to the suggestion that in the history of Reformed churches the ruling elder was never considered properly a presbyter and that he was never ordained by the laying on of hands.[80] Some would cite the practices of John Calvin (1509–1564) and some of the other Reformed divines as positive evidence for their case, to which Dabney responds that even if the *Repertory* were correct in this allegation, the precedents of most of the early Reformers do not bolster the argument of the *Repertory*. For example, consider the fact that ruling elders in the Scottish churches were sometimes appointed by the minister or a local magistrate, or that the ruling elders in some French and Dutch churches were appointed to serve only for a limited period of time. Surely these are not consistently scriptural practices, though they be the practices performed by certain Reformed churches in history. Indeed, Dabney says that the precedents are wrong and therefore they cannot prove that our current practice is wrong, but that appeal must ultimately come from Scripture itself, once again invoking passages such as 1 Timothy 5:17 among others.[81]

Dabney goes on to conclude persuasively that, as reflected even in the language of the *Book of Government* (the *Book of Church Order* in his day), the ruling elder is referred to as a *ruling presbyter* and that he serves as a representative of the people in the courts of the church. The ruling elder therefore is not a simple layman but is entitled to full and proper ordination including the laying on of hands. And unlike the reasoning in the *Repertory* which would potentially have the laypeople be entirely unrepresented in the courts of the church—since they regard the courts of the church to be rightly constituted even if only pastor-teachers are in attendance—Dabney argues that ruling elders are rightly presbyters and rightly representative of the people because they derive their power to rule from the consent of the people whom they are governing.[82] Contrary to the claims of the *Repertory*, the convictions and practice which Dabney is advocating here is the same as that of Dr. Miller and the authors in the *Repertory* have misrepresented Dr. Miller's opinions.[83] Both Miller and Dabney are convinced that the ruling elder is properly a presbyter and his presence and participation are essential to proper biblical church government.

In Dabney's estimation there was a fair to strong preaching ministry throughout the Presbyterian Church in his day, but where the church is lacking is in her *spiritual inspection*. This is precisely the area where the ruling elder is needed. Furthermore, many of the parachurch ministry endeavors taking place contemporaneously, such as temperance movements and other Christian associations, would be well served by the ministry of ruling elders and would not need to be outsourced to agencies beyond the church—however noble the aims and sympathetic he was to their efforts. Just as one field officer can command many more men than he can possibly drill, likewise one man can preach efficiently to a great many more people that he can inspect. Therefore, the church needs a greater ratio of inspectors to preachers, and in His divine wisdom, Christ has ordained that the church should have men invested with just this kind of sacred authority to serve the church with this kind of shepherding ("spiritual inspection"), to govern the church and to aid the ministry of the Word. This ministry of the ruling elders is essential to biblical Christianity and is, in a word, Presbyterianism.[84]

Dabney: Two or Three Office?

Fascinatingly, while many advocates of the classic Southern Presbyterian two-office view will look to Dabney as a wellspring from which to draw support for their cause, other scholars are not persuaded that Dabney can be so easily pigeonholed as an advocate of the two-office position. Some argue that, despite his "southern" vocabulary in describing the offices, Dabney's view really is more of a "classic" Reformed three-office view.

Mark R. Brown is one such scholar who makes this argument. In his helpful annotated bibliography at the back of *Order in the Offices*,[85] he notes that Dabney is a man that is claimed by two office advocates, "but in reality his view is much closer to a classic three-office position."[86] Brown notes the divide in opinion amongst some in the Reformed camp as to whether there should be ruling elders, or if there should just strictly be two offices

Continued on Page 275.

79. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.145–146.
80. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.148–149.
81. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.149–150.
82. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.150–152.
83. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.153–154.
84. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.155–157.
85. Mark R. Brown, *Order in the Offices: Essays Defining the Roles of Church Officers*, 1st U.S. ed edition (Duncansville, PA: Classic Presbyterian Government Resources, 1993).
86. Brown, *Order in the Offices*, p. 285.

Neither Mysticism Nor Activism:
Robert L. Dabney's "Meditation a Means of Grace"

By Peter Sanlon

Introduction

Neither our culture nor our churches tend to encourage meditation. We favor the rapid acquisition of information and the efficient discharge of business. Those of a more contemplative disposition might, one could be forgiven for assuming, find their outlook more readily provided for in Roman Catholic or High Anglican contexts.

Yet there are Bible verses that suggest we who revere Scripture as our ultimate authority should have a theology and practice of meditation. The psalmist wrote of the true believer in Psalm 1:2: "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."[1] Robert Lewis Dabney's article *'Meditation a Means of Grace'* makes a strong argument for the necessity of meditation in Reformed believers' lives. He enters into the reasons his culture tended to fear or deprecate meditation and analyzes the nature of meditation with both exegetical and systematic theological reasoning.

Dabney's short article repays analysis. Not only is the topic a needful one today—Dabney's warnings about the dangers of an activist church are still relevant—but the article also demonstrates a manner of reasoning and exploring objections and misunderstandings from which we can learn. Our study exposes the structure of Dabney's analyses and shows us how he used Scripture and rationality to commend the vital practice of Christian meditation. If this article seeks to model how to read a theological contribution from a previous era, it must be acknowledged that some would argue we should not study or commend the writings of Dabney at all due to his well-reported views on the slavery and race issue—an issue of grave moral importance which he spoke about in his lifetime. Many theologians we benefit from today, who lived in earlier centuries, expressed views about race and slavery—indeed acted on them—we reject as unscriptural and sinful. No less men than George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and Martin Luther can credibly be shown to have fallen short of scriptural teaching on these matters. We should not refuse to learn anything from men who have greatly erred. Instead, we ought to be discerning in evaluating what they wrote. To be sure, Dabney's words about slavery and race ought to be rejected—as indeed his sub-scriptural presentation of the nature of the image of God in humanity. That said, this article seeks to help us read a theologian from a past era in a discerning way. On the topic of meditation, he has much of value to teach us. So, we seek to read with discernment and grace, recognizing that in centuries to come, our own views on significant areas of life and theology may become repugnant to our progeny. We, too, are men of our times and cannot be sure we have escaped and refuted all errors present in our generation.

Systematic Location

Systematic theology involves appreciating the integrated order of doctrines. God's revelation of Himself is neither self-contradictory nor disproportioned. It is His Word and, as such, reflects His nature as being perfectly truthful, ordered, and rational. Given this, we understand and are better able to preach and defend any given doctrine when we see its dependencies upon, and connections to, other doctrines. The unified, interconnected nature of doctrines is a presupposition of systematic theology, arising from the nature of God and Scripture. It is the

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1. Cited in R. L. Dabney, "Meditation a Means of Grace" in *Discussions*, Vol. 1 (Banner of Truth, 1982), 643–653. Henceforth, "Meditation."

reason B. B. Warfield could proffer a "key to the 'broad' use of"[2] a range of New Testament terms used to describe redemption. It is the reason Bavinck urged that the articles of faith be "drawn from the entire organism of Scripture."[3] John Webster reminds us that the systematic nature of theology arises not just from the nature of Scripture but also from God Himself:

> Systematic apprehension of the Christian gospel is necessary. Theological system is rendered necessary by the comprehensiveness and singularity of the object of Christian confession and praise. God is one; all other things are held together and have their several natures in relation to God and are known in that relation.[4]

Error and truth in theology are discerned in large part by examining the connections between doctrines. Definitions of doctrines and their usefulness for the church depend upon the relationships between doctrines as well as the content of any given article. Getting one part of the system out of proportion will inevitably have consequences for other doctrines. The importance of meditation and its embeddedness in the organic canopy of Christian doctrine is seen by the claim that misunderstanding meditation "implies errors fatal to almost every doctrine of revealed Christianity."[5]

Dabney's sensitivity to this vital aspect of systematic theology and desire to utilize it in his argument is evidenced by his claim that wrong views of meditation impact no less than ten areas of doctrine. These include:

1. Hypostatic Union of Christ
2. Vicarious Atonement
3. Covenantal headship of Adam
4. The Fall
5. The Soul
6. Sin
7. Regeneration
8. Sanctification
9. Resurrection
10. Glorification[6]

Sadly, only a few of the ways wrong views of meditation —or lack of appreciation for it—impact these doctrines are developed in the article. A short article cannot say everything. Nevertheless, some of the lines of argument Dabney would have had in mind can be gleaned from elsewhere. For example, he discusses relevant aspects of the soul in his review of Hodge's *Systematic Theology*.[7] The relationship between meditation and sin, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification are all touched upon—the most significant space being given to sanctification and glorification. Even the fullest systematic theology cannot explore all connections between doctrines. The list, in this case, serves not to suggest the outlines of a full theology but rather to underline that the author was very aware that treatment of any doctrine required sensitivity to other connected loci. The lesson needs to be relearned by today's church—many errors in thinking and practice flow not from flagrant denial of a doctrine but an undue isolating and miscasting of a doctrine. There is an ecology of doctrine to which we must be sensitive, even as we study or proclaim any one part of revealed truth.

Analysis of Error

Theological analysis inevitably requires the examination and explication of error. Whether in the reformed scholastic method typified by Turretin, or the polemical writings of Luther, exposing error is a vital aspect of faithful theology. Jesus himself stated alongside the positive claim of John 14:6 ("I am the way, the truth and the life") a negative clarification: "No one comes to the Father except through me." The negative clarification gives meaning, power, and vitality to the positive claim.

Dabney's article not only explains and warns against errors that are presented using a particular rhetorical method. Two potential errors are explained as lying on either side of the reader. A precipice on both sides of the path: to fall into either is fatal. We are facing "the mistake of the two extremes."[8] The value of this rhetorical approach is that the student becomes aware that his efforts will be futile if all that is done is guarding against one error. To avoid the error on one side only to unwittingly plunge into the other is still fatal.

The two extremes that must be guarded against are "mysticism" and "activism." Both are analyzed and reflected upon, though more attention is given to the nature of mysticism. This does not suggest mysticism is the greater danger. The details of the argument show that activism is more readily understood, and there are (positive as well as negative) nuances to mysticism that require elucidation.

2. B. B. Warfield, "The New Testament Terminology of Redemption" in *The Person and Work of Christ* (Philadelphia: P&R, 1970), pp. 474–475.

3. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 1, Part 1, Ch. 1, par. 22.

4. John Webster, "Principles of Systematic Theology" in *The Domain of the Word* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2013), p. 144.

5. "Meditation," p. 644.

6. These loci are listed without numbering and at some points with differing terminology in "Meditation," p. 644.

7. R. L. Dabney, "Hodge's Systematic Theology" in *Discussions*, Vol. 1, pp. 229–281.

8. "Meditation," p. 646.

We shall now consider the twin dangers of mysticism and activism separately before observing how the twin errors combine to encourage many to misunderstand and dismiss the nature of genuine Christian meditation inappropriately.

Neither Mysticism …

Within his article, Dabney uses three terms interchangeably: Mysticism, quietism, and reverie. The latter was a term of which Locke (quoted a number of times in Dabney's broader works) said, "When ideas float in our mind, without any reflection or regard of the understanding, it is that which the French call revery."[9] At the time Dabney was writing, there was a widespread fear that young people might waste their gifts and be corrupted by daydreaming and laziness. Such tendencies we read were warned against in "current treatises upon education and morals."[10] We are not given any details of such books. Still, the observation of widespread fear of idle daydreaming clearly was present as it is not difficult to find examples from the period. So, for example, the *Educational Journal of Virginia* (1891) warns teachers, "Any tendencies to idleness must be instantly checked, the pupil being made to feel that there is just time enough, and no more, to learn the lesson assigned."[11]

Dabney questions and challenges the widespread assumptions of his culture that spending time contemplating and meditating is merely a waste of time or corrupting. He ponders, "was there ever a soul"[12] that went on to do great deeds that had not spent some time caught up in rapturous delight about the matters that concern him? Unwilling to simply and without analysis dismiss a mystical or contemplative approach to life, Dabney does proceed to argue that the way mysticism in the past became a strand of Christian practice was, in fact, deeply injurious to the true religion. He describes and criticizes the "ancient Mystic"[13] who felt that primarily "intellect, [was] the true personality of man."[14] The goal of life for such became "disengagement from matter … by … quietism and meditation upon God, assisted by solitude and those austerities which macerate the flesh."[15] Such would imagine that they are doing all this to be genuinely Christian:

> To become Christ-like [would be to] suspend the life of sense, and exist only in spiritual reverie. The obtrusive glamor of the world must be shut out by the door of the hermit's cell. Animal joys must be forbidden to tempt the eye, the ear, the palate. The body must be subjugated by asceticism.[16]

Given the noted cultural fear of a contemplative posture to life at the time he was writing, doubtless, many readers could happily endorse the stinging critiques of meditation that open Dabney's article. He notes that there is something of universal appeal to contemplation, for it is practiced by all religions and has "tinctured the Christian Church in all ages" with a "sincere type of perverted piety." By means of examples, Dabney lists by name Thomas á Kempis, Gerson, Molinos, Madam Guyon, and Fenelon.[17]

No details of these authors are given, and today perhaps the only one whose writing is well known is Thomas á Kempis. John Gerson, by way of example of one of the less well-known writers, was born in 1363 and was a canon in the Parisian church. He died in a monastery in Lyons in 1429. His short book, *A Practical Guide to Spiritual Prayer,* was typical of medieval glorification of mystical spirituality. Via contemplation and retreat from the activity to life, readers were urged to seek higher spiritual encounters with God. "Let no one excuse himself from aiming at contemplation, kept back by negligence and a sluggish heart. The consideration telling us to tend to perfection should shame such. And let no one give up on the journey to perfection because he finds snares and temptations laid in the pathways."[18]

It has been the case, as Dabney argues, that a passion for contemplative spirituality has in every age of the church distorted people's grasp of doctrines such as sin, sanctification, and glorification. The mystical approach to religion imagines that sin resides primarily in the mind's valuing of creation—the practical matters of life which are good become viewed as sinful. Marriage, the body, food, sport—these and almost any other good gift from God can be railed against in favor of a contemplative retreat from daily life. Such an outlook can manifest in contemporary Reformed churches in a single-minded, exclusive concern for intellectual understanding. All that matters is understanding the truth of doctrine gleaned from a sermon or books. The wider realities of life and the worship service are disdained as

9. Locke, *Human Understanding*, II, xix (1695), cited in Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. XII, 821, entry for "Reverie." Spelling original.
10. "Meditation," p. 643.
11. *The Educational Journal of Virginia* 22 (1891): 56.
12. "Meditation," p. 643.
13. "Meditation," p. 643.
14. "Meditation," p. 644.
15. "Meditation," p. 644.
16. "Meditation," p. 644.
17. "Meditation," p. 645.
18. John Gerson, *A Practical Guide to Spiritual Prayer* (T. Richardson: London, 1884), p. 33.

unspiritual. Given that the mystical contemplative approach to religions is an ever-present danger for Christians, it is necessary that it be forensically dissected and held up to be seen as a fatal error. Dabney does this with vigor, but he clearly shows that the opposite approach to life—that of the activist—is an opposite but equally fatal error.

… Nor Activism

Our culture today is very much one that favors activism. Many ministers think the key to church growth and faithfulness will be found in a technique, program, or methodology. Books on leadership vastly outsell books on doctrine, and for many, pragmatism is the guiding light.

That ethos is far from recent. Writing in the late 19th century, Dabney said, "Both the philosophy and the practical temper of our age are in contrast with quietism."[19] The energy, drive, and expansionary activities—to say nothing of the wars—of his age fostered a disdain for those who desired to spend time reflecting and contemplating on issues of significance. So, he observed that "our active temper … disdains"[20] meditation. A cultural preference for active pursuits was not something Dabney uncritically admired. He saw that the insistence that the only thing of import was results, actions, and activity resulted in a pragmatic outlook that distorted what study and contemplation was still engaged in:

> This bustling and materialistic age has so perverted our habits, not only of business, but of study, that we value truth only for the excitement of its pursuit, or from some application to satisfy our material wants. Some have so misunderstood the spirit of philosophy herself as to glory in this groveling perversion as her chief honor.[21]

There is a spiritual malaise to any church or culture that only values the activities and results of effort. Dabney regretfully wrote, "Our whole tendency is not only busy and utilitarian, but sensuous and materialistic."[22]

Clearly, society and the church do need leaders who are men of action—who aspire to do great deeds for God and His glory. Dabney admired the indomitable will and incredible industry of Reformers such as Luther. He praised him: "Luther burst upon Europe as teacher, preacher, critic, poet, musician, statesman, ecclesiastic, polemic, patriot, and filled it with the din of his activity." But it is surely significant that the famed activity of Luther, which reverberated down the centuries, flowed from a contemplative outlook. We must ponder the implications of the fact that "It was amidst the musings of a convent and the reveries of his prison at Wartburg that the fires of this will were kindled."[23] Dabney's point is that genuine, impactful activity in life and ministry flows from deep contemplation upon the issues that matter. The life of contemplation and the life of activity are not opposites, as most assume. They are organically related. The one flows from the other.

While warning that activism and contemplation are dangers to the Church, Dabney analyzes them and shows that the two outlooks are related to one another. Both have something in them that is commendable. They are both dangers to the Church when embraced uncritically and as practiced by the world, but neither is wholly wrong. Both postures have been compelling and attractive through all ages. So we need to grapple with the fact that "errors which have no elements of truth can have no vitality."[24] The challenge Dabney seeks to meet is not merely to warn us of twin dangers but to commend an approach to meditation that retains what good there is in activism and quietism. So, we proceed to consider his view of Christian meditation.

Meditation Commended

Dabney strongly urges the necessity of meditation. He wrote, "The Christian life must have its seasons of quietude and calm meditation. Too much of even a religious bustle is unwholesome for the soul."[25] In our culture, we too have a great deal of the activist spirit. We see that there is much to do and understandably want to plan, organize, manage and lead vital projects. The bustle of secular life is often replicated in a religious church setting. We are blessed with an incredible array of academic tools to help us study and research Scripture. Still, the posture with which we approach God's Word cannot be allowed to remain at the level of intellectual knowledge, vital though that is. So, we need to allow Dabney's strong commendation of taking time to meditate on Scripture to change our attitudes and practices.

Definitional clarity

Sadly, the twin errors of mysticism and activism feed

19. "Meditation," p. 645.
20. "Meditation," p. 646.
21. "Meditation," p. 647.
22. "Meditation," p. 645.
23. "Meditation," p. 650.
24. "Meditation," p. 645.
25. "Meditation," p. 652.

off one another and combine to compel many to dismiss the value of meditation out of hand. The mystical tradition misrepresents the nature of true meditation and does so in a way almost calculated to be repugnant to an activist culture. "The Quietists represented the meditative habit as a passive state of soul; and our active temper, regarding it as such, disdains it."[26] We discover that exploring twin errors was not merely a rhetorical strategy for Dabney to make a middle path more appealing. It allows the interaction between the errors to be exposed. We learn that many undervalue meditation because the distortions involved in both errors combine to make meditation seem disdainful.

The positive doctrinal step taken to remedy this is to seek definitional clarity. The errors of mysticism and activism combine to give many a false understanding of meditation. The contemplative approach they reject is not genuine Christian meditation—a straw man has been rejected. So, the solution is to promote a fundamental aspect of definitional clarity regarding the nature of meditation: "I assert that true meditation is, in the best sense, active."[27]

Christian meditation is neither a useless nor a wasteful, passive inactivity. Instead, meditation is an active, purposeful, joyful, and infinitely valuable adoration of God. Such meditation can be practiced (imperfectly) in this life, and it is the supreme joy of the future age:

> God himself is the uncloying object of meditation, full orbed, many sided, of manifold and infinite perfection. Let men call the meditative Christian a dreamer. It were better for us to sleep in this world of sin and sense, if only we dreamed of him. I prove the excellence of this exercise of soul by the fact that it is the great characteristic of our heavenly state. The vision and fruition of God are a part of its bliss. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8)[28]

Time spent seeking definitional clarity is of great value in theology. Establishing that meditation is active in its nature is a definitional insight of great worth. It enables it to be shown that common reasons for dismissing meditation are baseless. It also invites us to explore further what active impact and value meditation has for the believer. It is to that we now proceed.

Use of Scripture

Dabney shows the power of meditation through his citation of and approach to Scripture. Having our beliefs and practices shaped by the Bible as our ultimate rule and authority is of vital importance to the Reformed churches. So it is decisive that "the Bible, and especially the Psalms," call us to "meditation upon God and joy in his perfections."[29] No less than seven Psalms are cited in the article: Psalms 1:2, 4:4, 17:15, 39:3, 63:5–6, 104:34, 119:18.

The way an author uses (or ignores) Scripture is very significant. In his seminal study *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology*, David Kelsey set himself the task "to examine comparatively a variety of ways in which theologians have construed and use Scripture in the course of their actual practice of theology in order to help authorize their theological proposals."[30] Since that book, there have been a number of further efforts to self-consciously analyze how the Bible is used in theology. Paul Helm, for example, has been sharply critical of the widespread over-reliance on narrative models of Scripture in theology, pointing out that this has depreciated classical doctrines such as God's attributes.[31] Recently Katherine Sonderegger has argued that contemporary theologians do not pay enough attention in their writing to the foundational role in Scripture held by the Law and Pentateuch.[32] All this is to say that when seeking to read an article with understanding, we ought to regard not just what is claimed but the way Scripture is used to shape and validate claims.

Significantly, our article begins with a citation of Psalm 104:34 heading it. The verse is of particular importance to Dabney as he not only leads with it but also quotes it in the main body of the writing. Setting a verse like this in the heading of an article communicates a conscious desire of the author to submit all subsequent opinions to the Bible. A message of reformed commitment to Scripture's authority to judge and test all views is communicated to readers merely by placing a verse at the top of page one. The implicit acknowledgment of Scripture's authority is valuable because the introduction focuses not on exegesis but rather offers a poetic and whimsical reflection on reverie and daydreaming. Placing a verse at the top of the first page suggests to readers that even while talking about matters that appear removed from Scripture, and even while evaluating them at the bar of reason and experience (as Dabney

26. "Meditation," p. 646.
27. "Meditation," p. 646.
28. "Meditation," p. 648.
29. "Meditation," p. 650.
30. David Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1975), p. 2.
31. Paul Helm, *Faith, Form and Fashion: Classical Reformed Theology and its Postmodern Critics* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2014).
32. Katherine Sonderegger, "The Bible as Holy Scripture," *Pro Ecclesia*, Vol. 31, 2 (May 2022): 127–141.

does). We are in due course to be recalled to the supreme test of all opinions: God's written Word.

Psalm 104:34 in the Authorized Translation reads, "My meditation of him shall be sweet; I shall be glad in the Lord." Such a comment describes the practice of meditation upon God as "sweet." That is, meditation on God is enjoyable and pleasurable. It offers a foretaste of heaven's joys. Time spent meditating on God trains our hearts to enjoy God more than the "fleeting pleasures of sin" (Heb. 11:25). As sweet meditation is commended in Scripture, believers are taught that mere intellectual understanding is sub-biblical when it comes to knowledge of God. The Authorized Version is a rendering of Psalm 104:34 full of affectional power. Some modern translations lack the affectional phraseology that made this verse so apposite for a study of meditation. The English Standard Version and New International Version both use the word "pleasing" rather than sweet. This word is more flat, unemotional, and lacks the sort of affectional pull that attracted Dabney's attention. It is also worth noting that modern translations (including the New American Standard Bible) specify that the psalmist's meditation is pleasing to God specifically. So, the NASB translates, "Let my meditation be pleasing to Him; As for me, I shall be glad in the Lord." A significant amount of Dabney's article focuses on the Christian's experience and pleasure of meditation; a point one can glean from the Authorized Version of his key text but not from other translations. So, we see that the placement, repetition, and rendering of a Scriptural text have significant implications for doctrinal analyses in a theological article.

While Dabney gives many arguments for the value of meditation to the Christian, ultimately, it is because "Scriptures … teach the exercise of adoring meditation"[33] that he commends it. Reading the Psalms quoted in the article has a cumulative impact; we feel the weight of Scriptural testimony to the importance of meditation:

> But his delight is in the law of the Lord;
> and in his law doth he meditate day and night. Psalm 1:2

> Stand in awe, and sin not:
> commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Psalm 4:4

> As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness:
> I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. Psalm 17:15

> My heart was hot within me,
> while I was musing the fire burned:
> then spake I with my tongue. Psalm 39:3

> My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness;
> and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:
> when I remember thee upon my bed,
> and meditate on thee in the night watches. Psalm 63:5-6

> My meditation of him shall be sweet:
> I will be glad in the Lord. Psalm 104:34

> Open thou mine eyes,
> that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Psalm 119:18

Many today depreciate the citation of Bible verses, claiming that it is proof-texting. The assumption is that such an act treats doctrinal matters in an immature, simplistic, and reductionistic manner. This prevailing view is a misunderstanding that the Reformed reject. The Westminster Confession includes a vast number of Bible verses cited as proof texts. These are themselves part of the Confession. Those who hold to the Confessional Standards are obliged to uphold the doctrines there proved and the method of so doing. The rich history and value of so using Scripture has been defended in Michael Allen and Scott Swain's article "In Defense of Proof-Texting." They make a convincing case that proof-texting "historically has served a wonderful function of disciplinary symbiosis amongst theology and exegesis."[34]

Dabney's quotations from Psalms legitimize his doctrine of meditation and commendation of it. They invite readers into an experience of the pleasures and joys of the very meditation he writes of.

The way Dabney introduces and cites Bible verses is direct, plain, and clearly with the assumption that Scripture is authoritative. His citations are numerous, but they are not exhaustive. So he wrote, "This text, with its kindred ones, teaches us that the Christian life must have its seasons of quietude and calm meditation."[35] With this comment, Dabney shows that he is selecting verses that he knows reflect the tenor and wider content of the Bible. His quotations from the Bible gesture toward the rest of Scripture. Readers are implicitly invited to search the Scriptures for

33. "Meditation," p. 650.

34. R. Michael Allen & Scott Swain, "In Defense of Proof-Texting" *JETS*, 54, 3 (Sept. 2011): 589–606.

35. "Meditation," p. 656.

themselves and see that the doctrine of meditation outlined is to be found there also. Such an invitation underlies the manner in which Dabney cites Scripture. In some other articles he makes the invitation to search Scripture explicit. So, for example, he elsewhere concludes an article:

> The best book to be read by him who is inquiring into the evidence of the Bible is the Bible itself. This is no paradox. There is a stranger who wishes to be received as a trustworthy person. He offers you certain testimonials from abroad which, he claims, will prove satisfactory when verified. But you, as a practical man, thrust them aside, and prefer to converse with the stranger himself. If you can do so frequently and intimately enough, to gain a thorough personal acquaintance of your own, you prefer to judge him for yourself. Thus do with the Bible. Search the Scriptures honestly and diligently, and you will find out whether they are from God, or whether they speak of themselves.[36]

Use of truth

Having relied much on citations from the Psalms, Dabney proceeds to make more comprehensive doctrinal arguments about the use Scripture enjoins we make of truth. Since new covenant believers have "a sweetness which the Psalmist could not taste,"[37] it is only right to expect doctrinal explication of meditation that goes beyond citation of Psalms.

So, it is argued that without meditation upon truth, we are unable to use truth. We are like a "miser"[38] who hoards up gold but cannot use the coinage for its intended end. By showing that meditation is necessary for the proper use of truth, Dabney allays activists' fear that meditation will be a gateway to idleness. In reality, it is only by meditation upon the truth revealed in the Bible that it so seeps into our souls that we are empowered by God's Spirit to act on it in real life. To show how desirable such action-oriented meditation should be, Dabney reflects on four impacts Christian meditation has on believers:

Firstly, meditation leads people to perform great deeds. We earlier mentioned Luther as an example Dabney gives. King David is given as a Scriptural model. He meditated on God's Words in his Psalm-singing and composing. This planted the Word of God deep in his heart, such that he felt compelled by great zeal for God's glory to act for God. King David was a "warrior, conqueror, legislator, busy founder of a polity and dynasty; he, more than any other inspired author, delighted in holy musings, and satisfied his soul with midnight meditations, as with marrow and fatness."[39]

Secondly, the practice of meditation gives the believer great joy and pleasure. Against those who urge duty to be set against pleasure or who misrepresent the Reformed Faith as dampening of pleasures, Dabney urges that both Scripture and general human experience show us that meditation upon beautiful subjects brings happiness:

> The habit of silent adoration is a fountain of happiness to the soul. "I will be glad in the Lord," saith the text. There is immediate pleasure in the sight of a material object of taste. We pause instinctively over a flower. We stand before a masterpiece of art, and crave leisure to enjoy it, deprecating analysis, criticism, and even converse, that the soul may silently imbibe the happiness of its perfection. When we look up, and see the moon walking in brightness, and the stars shooting their radiance from a stainless and unfathomable depth, we receive a spell of peaceful joy upon our hearts.[40]

The subject of Christian meditation is God himself. This grants even more pleasure than the lesser matters people tend to enjoy reflecting upon. "But most happy are we when our meditations are charmed by the beauty of holiness and our eyes filled with the perfections of God; for there are the transcendent glory and symmetry to satisfy the intellect, the taste, and the conscience at once. What thought can be as sweet and grand as that of the Christian's God."[41]

Thirdly, Christian meditation is a holy act. Other forms of meditation are merely intellectual or aesthetic. Since the believer meditates on a Holy God, the experience of so communing with Him is a holy devotion. There is an ethical, moral purity to Christian meditation that is unique to it. Our "divine object is the image of perfect moral beauty, the supreme object of moral complacency. And this is at once the highest and purest sentiment of the soul, in which reason and heart and conscience find their supreme satisfaction."[42]

Fourthly, meditation upon the holy God sanctifies

36. R. L. Dabney, "The Bible its own Witness" in *Discussions*, Vol. 1, pp. 115–131.
37. "Meditation," p. 652.
38. "Meditation," p. 647.
39. "Meditation," p. 650.
40. "Meditation," p. 650.
41. "Meditation," p. 650.
42. "Meditation," p. 651.

us. As we gaze by faith upon God, we are united to Him and changed by His Spirit. We become like that which we ponder. "The crowning good of a meditative spirit is that, as it dwells upon God, it is sanctified by its converse with" God.[43] Dabney observes that in heaven, Christians will see the Lord and through that vision be transformed to become like him. He quotes 2 Cor. 3:18 and 1 John 3:2 to support this biblical view of heaven often associated with Augustine.[44]

Having commended meditation as essential to a healthy Christian life, Dabney diagnoses some of the spiritual illnesses that arise from neglect of meditation. He notes that there is a kind of churchgoer who can only tolerate church if the service titillates intellectual vanity by means of a sermon that appeals to pride or curiosity. The only purpose of a sermon to such a listener is to increase their intellectual knowledge of the Bible. He jests of such listeners:

> Had these men stood where Isaiah was when he heard the Seraphim proclaim, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory," while the temple was filled with smoke, and the solid pillars of its door vibrated with the thunder of their tones, they would only have said in their hearts, "Well, what of that? We knew it before." The triteness of such a doxology would quite have fatigued them![45]

So, we see the essentialness of meditation for healthy Christian living and worship. The knowledge we glean from Scripture was never intended to merely satisfy academic curiosity. It should be pondered, prayed over—meditated upon—so that our hearts are warmed and changed by the spiritual reality of seeing Christ by faith. Meditation on God's Word is a primary means of grace that the Spirit uses to sanctify our desires and shape our attitudes.

Conclusion

While mystics thought meditation would drive those who excelled at it to retreat from the world and live in solitude, the Reformed believer finds that meditation on God draws them into regular church fellowship—which equips them to live the following six days a week in the world for God's glory. Meditation, as Dabney commended it, draws believers into regular church worship and gives them a taste for the spiritual joys found in the ordinary means of grace:

> Sacred meditation explains the delight which every true believer takes in prayer and praise. These acts of worship are sweet to him, because they are simple and direct acts of communion with God; because they present his perfections as the immediate objects of adoring thought and love.[46]

Union with Christ is the spiritual heartbeat and reality of our relationship with God. Meditation on all God is and all He has done for us in Christ is the practical means that the Spirit uses to press the sanctifying joys of heaven into our hearts. Shallowness in our spiritual experience leads us to not care for worship on the Lord's Day. Without regular meditation on God and His Word, our intellectual knowledge and religious practice withers on the vine. "The indifference of the major part of men to these exercises shows how shallow and external is their religious life."[47] Perhaps we should heed Dabney's advice and set aside time to meditate on all that God is and all God has done for us. It could be what God uses to change our attitudes, actions, and churches at the deepest level possible.▪

43. "Meditation," p. 652.
44. Augustine, *City of God,* Book 22, p. 29.
45. "Meditation," p. 653.
46. "Meditation," p. 653.
47. "Meditation," p. 653.

"Make Men Do":
Robert Lewis Dabney and the Power of the Pulpit

By Russell St. John

Introduction

Robert Lewis Dabney valued preaching. He preached extensively, trained seminarians to preach for nearly thirty years,[1] and published his mature thought in his *Sacred Rhetoric*.[2] During fifty-plus years of pulpit ministry, Dabney enjoyed a reputation for powerful preaching.[3] While he, like every flawed herald, often failed to implement his homiletical principles in his preaching,[4] his principles nevertheless profit contemporary preachers who will sit at his feet.

This article explores Dabney's homiletical thought in two areas—the preparation of the man for the pulpit and the power of the message from the pulpit. Undergirding both lies Dabney's bedrock conviction that preaching must occupy the highest throne among the duties that comprise a pastor's work. Addressing his preaching students, Dabney stated:

> I may claim, that as you come here to be made preachers of the gospel, and as its proclamation from the pulpit is to be your prominent task, all other studies are ancillary to this which we now undertake. It is sacred rhetoric which teaches you to apply to the lips of perishing man the expressed wine of all other acquisitions.[5]

Dabney thus contended that preaching forms the end toward which all seminary training must press and to which every pastor must devote his best labors.

Inasmuch as Dabney therefore strove to inculcate in his students a skillful sacred rhetoric, he nevertheless understood that the agency of the Holy Spirit represents the principal component of powerful preaching. He argued that the "word is only made effectual to the calling and sanctification of any rational adults, by the almighty inworking of God's Holy Spirit."[6] Though men must plant and water, "only God gives the growth,"[7] and Dabney noted:

> Whenever the Spirit breathes, the icy bonds of spiritual death are dissolved, and the hearer's soul is thus enabled to respond legitimately to its proper, spiritual inducements. Human skill in the work of persuasion must obviously be in strict subordination to this divine agency, and in strict conformity to its instrument, divine truth.[8]

While Dabney therefore described with care the human traits that commonly accompany powerful preaching, he attributed all spiritual fruit to its true source—the presence and power of God. Dabney recognized that "[t]he best minister on earth may be appointed by God's secret purpose to the sad mission given to Isaiah, to Jeremiah, and even to their Lord during his earthly course, 'to stretch forth their hands all the day long to a disobedient and gainsaying people.'"[9] It belongs to men to

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1. Dabney joined the faculty of Union Theological Seminary in Hampden-Sydney, Virginia in 1853, and taught preaching from the 1855–56 school year through the 1882–83 school year.
2. Robert L. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric; Or, A Course of Lectures on Preaching* (New York, NY: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1870).
3. Thomas Cary Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (Edinburgh, UK: Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), p. 167.
4. See Russell St. John, *Empty Admiration: Robert Lewis Dabney's Expository Homiletic* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020).
5. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, pp. 19–20.
6. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 36. Here Dabney echoes the language of Westminster Shorter Catechism 88 and 89.
7. 1 Corinthians 3:7
8. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 239.
9. Robert L. Dabney, "Spurious Religious Excitements," in *Discussions, Volume 3: Philosophical,* ed. C. R. Vaughan (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1996), p. 472.

labor faithfully, but to God to apply a man's labor as he sees fit. All the power is his.

The Preparation Of The Man

Overview

No sermon descends from heaven like the thundering of the Lord's voice on Mt. Sinai. Rather, God speaks through human co-laborers,[10] and Dabney believed that human co-laborers require thorough preparation for the pulpit. As Dabney considered what traits *must* mark a man who stands prepared to preach, he emphasized piety, calling, and weaponry.

Piety

Dabney understood that sustained power in pulpit ministry proceeds from God's grace. Arguing that "it is grace which makes the preacher,"[11] Dabney equated divine grace with ministerial piety, speaking interchangeably about grace and piety. "The first requisite is *piety*. All Protestants are agreed that it is preposterous to set that man to expound the gospel who neither understands, nor loves, nor believes it."[12] Yet Dabney also asserted, "It is divine grace which makes the effective minister,"[13] while teaching that "[t]he prime qualification of the sacred orator is sincere, eminent piety."[14] Bringing together divine grace and the piety it produces in believing men, Dabney insisted:

> In order to be capable of any power of persuasion, you must be men of ardent and genuine religious affections. You must be men of faith and prayer; you must live near the cross and feel "the powers of the world to come." We must learn again the great truth that it is divine grace which makes the true minister.[15]

Sanctification, which is "the work of God's free grace,"[16] touches every believer, but after noting that piety must mark the life of "every common Christian," Dabney contended:

> The pastor must rise far higher; he must exhibit a symmetry and elevation of Christian character, an exaltation above all carnal ambitions, which will make him venerable and lovely in the sight of his flock. Such a character clothes his instructions in a weight and sweetness which no talent or learning can give.[17]

Dabney maintained that the pastor's position as a herald of the King required piety, and he claimed that "no man who had not himself known Christ, and felt the powers of the world to come, could faithfully bear the responsibilities of a herald of that world."[18]

Dabney's understanding of unction in heraldry hinged upon the piety of the preacher. Far from simple passion, Dabney defined unction as that "temperature of thought and elocution, which the Spirit of all grace sheds upon the heart possessed by the blessed truths of the gospel."[19] No man under the influence of the Holy Spirit speaks from raw or uncontrolled emotion, for unction "does not expel intellectual activity, authority and will," but instead "superfuses these elements of force with the love, the pity, the tenderness, the pure zeal, the seriousness, which the topics of redemption should shed upon the soul of a ransomed and sanctified sinner."[20] Dabney therefore explained, "To affect unction is manifestly impossible. It is, in short, a quality not merely intellectual or sentimental, but spiritual. Although not identical to ardent piety, it is the effluence of ardent piety alone."[21] Apart from piety, no herald represents the King with the unction the King's message demands.

Dabney understood, moreover, that pulpit ministry often teems with discouragement. Fruit comes slowly, if at all. Men refuse the summons of the King. Congregants complain. The King's own subjects offer tepid obedience to their Sovereign. Preachers languish through seasons of doubt. In such circumstances, only a man of deep piety perseveres. Dabney thus noted:

> No man is fit for the care of souls, except he is deeply imbued with scriptural piety and grace. He must have a faith firm as a rock, and humble as strong, with profound submission to the divine will, which will calm

10. 1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 6:1.
11. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 7.
12. Robert L. Dabney, "What is a Call to the Ministry?" in *Discussions, Volume 2: Evangelical*, ed. C. R. Vaughan (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1982), p. 32 [emphasis original].
13. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 260.
14. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 40.
15. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 250.
16. Westminster Shorter Catechism 35.
17. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 266.
18. The Dabney Collection at Union Seminary features seventeen boxes of material. Each box contains multiple files, and within each file reside multiple documents. The above quotation comes from Box 10, File 2, 2 Timothy 2:2, "Education Sermon for West Hanover Presbytery."
19. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 116.
20. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 116.
21. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, pp. 116–17.

> him amidst all delays and all discouragements that God will bless his own word in his own chosen time.[22]

In short, piety insulates against the discouragements of the preaching office.

As Dabney summarized his understanding, he stated plainly that "only the eminent Christian can be an eminent preacher of the gospel."[23] Eminent personal piety, borne of divine grace, must mark those who preach, for piety represents the first, greatest preparation for pulpit ministry. No man who lacks it stands prepared to preach.

Calling

Defining a call to ministry as a call to preach, Dabney asked, "What, then is a call to the gospel ministry? We answer, *it is an expression of the divine will that a man should preach the gospel*."[24] Dabney noted that the reception of a man as a candidate for ministry under the oversight of a presbytery purposed to determine "whether he is fit for a preacher."[25] Preaching represents the primary outward and ordinary means of grace,[26] and Dabney consistently pressed the Church to identify, train, and send preachers into the harvest field.[27]

To that end, Dabney urged every pious Christian man to pursue a call to preach until Christ called him to a different vocation. While Dabney, of course, recognized that many pious men never receive a call to preach, he nevertheless expected all believing men to test themselves for ministry, in essence placing the onus upon the man to prove that he was *not* called to preach. Arguing that the Scriptures "plainly teach that the only condition of discipleship permitted by Christ to any believer is complete self-consecration to his service,"[28] Dabney remarked:

> If a Christian man proposes to be a teacher, physician, lawyer, mechanic, or farmer, it must be, not chiefly from promptings of the world or self, but chiefly because he verily believes he can, in that calling, best serve his heavenly Master. If he hath not this consecration, we do not say he is unfit for the ministry only; he is unfit to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.[29]

Arguing, "The truth is, the direct and main work of all secular professions is to save souls,"[30] Dabney urged every Christian man fully to consecrate himself to Christ and to pulpit ministry until clearly called to save souls by means of an alternate vocation:

> [W]hile all Christians, of course, are not to be preachers, and while none should preach whom God does not call, in such a time as ours every Christian who can preach, should conclude that the *a priori* presumption is in favor of his doing so until the contrary is evinced.[31]

Inasmuch as Christians rightly fear a man who intrudes himself into the pulpit unprepared and uncalled, Dabney equally feared the opposite, arguing that "the danger is not only on the side of [a man] running uncalled, but also of tarrying when he ought to run."[32] He therefore asserted that "every true Christian on the earth, young and old, male and female, ought to feel, with reference to the work of preaching, that he would be glad to preach if God permitted him."[33]

Such permission only comes through the calling of the visible Church, and Dabney recognized that a call to preach includes both an inward and an outward component. A man's own sense of divine leading to the ministry represents the inward component, while the Church's concurrence represents the outward. Dabney believed that Christ, the Head of the Church, superintends calling through his Holy Spirit: "The full and certain call to the ministry is uttered by the Holy Spirit, both to the candidate himself and to the church."[34] Dabney thus taught that "God [will] make known his will to the candidate and to his brethren, not only through the medium of the Scriptures, but also of outward circumstances and qualifications viewed in light of the Scripture truth."[35] He encouraged men to lay more credit to the sober opinions of mature Christian brothers than to their own internal sense of calling, for "men are more often in the dark, by reason of self-love, concerning their

22. Dabney, "Spurious," 474.
23. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 117.
24. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 27 [emphasis original].
25. Robert L. Dabney, "Memorial on Theological Education," in *Discussions, Volume 2: Evangelical*, ed. C. R. Vaughan (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1982), p. 65.
26. Westminster Shorter Catechism 88 and 89.
27. In a sermon Dabney preached at Tinkling Spring Church on a "Day of Prayer for Colleges" (Box 8, File 1, Matthew 9:38), he urgently exhorted his congregation to pray for God to raise up harvesters for the mission field, and exhorted each young man in the congregation prayerfully to consider whether he was called to the ministry of preaching.
28. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 28.
29. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 28.
30. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 42.
31. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 41.
32. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 44.
33. Dabney, "What is a Call," pp. 33–34.
34. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 27.
35. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 29.

own characters, than their acquaintances."[36] When, however, the inward and outward call aligned, Dabney believed that a man must answer this call as a call from Christ himself.[37]

When Dabney began teaching at Union Seminary in 1853, Presbyterians in America had employed a seminary model for pastoral education for just over forty years,[38] but over the course of that time, Dabney had observed the development of a disturbing trend, which struck at the heart of the Presbyterian practice of calling:

> Presbyteries, because the seminaries profess to give a certificate of examination of a mature course of study, are far too much inclined to take for granted the candidate's scholarship. As a matter of course, he who has his seminary testimonial gets his license. Where, in practice, is the instance to the contrary?[39]

Said plainly, a seminary degree essentially guaranteed ordination. This practice rankled Dabney, for he believed that the Church, and the Church alone, bore Christ's authorization to call men to preach. He argued, "[T]he minister is God's ambassador, and the sovereign alone can appoint such an agent."[40] The visible Church, not the seminary, represents the divinely ordained mechanism through which the sovereign Lord appoints men to preach, and Dabney cautioned that no seminary degree should supplant the judgment of the Church. He even urged presbyteries regularly to reject seminary graduates for licensure, writing:

> I am persuaded that one of the best things which could befall the cause of ministerial training among us, would be the constant rejection of a part of our applicants for licensure by the Presbyteries. If the worst qualified were remanded to seek more thorough preparation, it would both infuse a more diligent spirit in our Seminaries, and increase the number of worthy candidates for the ministry.[41]

Dabney thus challenged presbyteries to perform their rightful work, and to examine men for fitness to preach, refusing to conflate a seminary degree with a true call to the pulpit.

More than the bane of slack presbyteries, however, Dabney perceived in lay-preaching a grave threat to Presbyterianism. He insisted upon an ordained ministry, arguing against the practice of lay preaching, which waxed popular among Methodists and Baptists. Addressing the "success" of D. L. Moody, Dabney recognized Moody's gifts but also chastised him for refusing to hone his gifts by means of thorough preparation:

> If his natural gifts, unassisted by ministerial training and sanctions, enable him already to surpass us, that is not the question. The question is, whether the gifted layman, with this training and ordination, might not surpass us a great deal farther in glorifying God? If he might, then he is solemnly bound to do it.[42]

Dabney therefore explained: "[W]e do not complain that [Moody's] preaching is not good, but that it is not better,"[43] and he illustrated the infidelity of an untrained ministry by describing the actions of a burly lumberjack in the service of a master whom he loves:

> He may be gifted by nature with a giant frame, so that with a dull and inferior axe he cuts more wood for the master in the day than another with his natural feebleness who has the keenest axe. By "putting to more strength," he may even cut the average day's task. But if, by grinding his axe thoroughly, he is able to cut even two days' task in one, if he loves the master he will grind it. And even if his day is advanced toward the middle of the forenoon, if he finds that an hour devoted even then to a thorough grinding, will result in a larger heap of wood well cut by nightfall, he will stop at that late hour to grind.[44]

But Moody refused to grind.

Exposing in stark terms the question at issue, Dabney argued, "If [a] man is mistaken in supposing he has the gifts for lay-preaching, he should be stopped. If he really has them, then Christ thereby calls him into the regular ministry, either as a pastor or evangelist."[45] Any man so called ought willingly to submit to a course of seminary preparation, for "[t]he man who is fit for a minister

36. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 32.
37. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 34.
38. Princeton Seminary began in 1812, while Union, Columbia, and others followed in the years and decades thereafter.
39. Dabney, "Memorial," p. 59.
40. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 26.
41. Box 10, File 2, 2 Timothy 2:2, "Education Sermon for West Hanover Presbytery."
42. Robert L. Dabney, "Lay-Preaching," in *Discussions, Volume 2: Evangelical*, ed. C. R. Vaughan (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1982), p. 86.
43. Dabney, "Lay-Preaching," p. 86.
44. Robert L. Dabney, "A Thoroughly Educated Ministry," in *Discussions, Volume 2: Evangelical*, ed. C. R. Vaughan (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1982), p. 660.
45. Dabney, "Lay-Preaching," p. 84.

will not refuse the additional labor for Christ, when he learns that it is requisite for his more efficient service of Christ."[46] Moody's refusal to submit to ministerial training, coupled with his hubris in assuming himself fit for preaching *without* the call of Christ through his Church, seemed to Dabney to disqualify Moody from the very office he pretended to hold.

Dabney believed Presbyterians could not "out-Baptist the Baptists" and should never attempt to do so. Lay-preaching, absent the oversight of the Church and without its call, militates against biblical Presbyterianism and "opposes the deliberate judgment of the wisest and best of our fathers."[47]

Dabney thus maintained that any man who sought to preach must own a call *from the Church*, proving his preparation to ascend a pulpit.

Weaponry

In 1869 Dabney wrote a "Memorial on Theological Education,"[48] presenting it to the General Assembly's Committee on Seminaries. In his "Memorial," Dabney noted that the Synod of Virginia had, in 1853, increased the "parochial duties" of students at Union Seminary, ostensibly to equip them with greater practical skills for parish ministry,[49] and he stated, "In my opinion, the attempt has been a failure and should be relinquished."[50] In explaining his view, Dabney likened the seminarian's work to that of a bladesmith who forges and hones a sword for combat:

> No one can dispute that a practical knowledge of pastoral duties, and skill in preaching the gospel from house to house, are essential to the scribe who is thoroughly instructed to the kingdom of God. But it by no means follows that therefore the two kinds of preparation must, or can be, pursued together. A sword needs to be not only forged and tempered, but ground. Until the latter is done, it will not cut. Yet the smith does not therefore attempt to grind it while he is tempering it. The one process would spoil the other. So, the attempt to give thorough scholarship, and that to cultivate personal tact at the same time, have been found incompatible. A great deal has been said of the usefulness of green, awkward, impractical book-worms. Much of this is true; but I see no evidence that the awkwardness is produced or increased by the scholarship. The former defects are usually the consequences of natural traits of taste and temper, which thorough mental culture would rather correct than exaggerate. The rest of the cure must be effected, if at all, by the young minister's own experience under the pressure of pastoral responsibilities.[51]

To Dabney's mind, pastoral experience, not the seminary, best cultivated pastoral skill.

Dabney therefore deplored any lessening of the theological and academic rigor of seminary education in favor of the inculcation of pastoral skills, believing that this ill-considered shift of emphasis forced young men to enter the ministry with a less honed, less useful blade. Asserting, "During the years which are intended for mental culture, this culture should be the main thing,"[52] Dabney urged the Church not to expect seminaries to produce men who possess mature pastoral skills, warning that such a course would necessarily produce men who possess immature theological opinions. Dabney rightly understood that men lose some part of their languages and theology after leaving seminary, that vocational ministry offers little time for theological or academic growth, and that a man naturally acquires pastoral skill over the course of his ministry. Seminaries ought then to stress theology, academic rigor, and mastery of the subjects of redemption, knowing that while pastoral skill will grow, theological memory will often fade.[53]

Dabney, moreover, noted that the Presbyterian Church serves an important and providentially ordained function among the churches of Christendom, writing:

> Presbyterianism is providentially fashioned and employed to do for Christendom her own peculiar part. It is the conservative branch of the family of churches, checking the departures of all others from sound doctrine. It is the exemplar of scriptural organization. It is the sustainer of the more thorough education of both ministry and laity. And we assert that, constituted as poor human nature now is, it is entirely reasonable to expect that Presbyterianism cannot, in the nature of the case, both perform all these her peculiar functions, and also compete successfully for the largest and most promiscuous numbers.[54]

Arguing, "I assert that the strength, usefulness and respectability of the Presbyterian Church are chiefly due

46. Dabney, "Thoroughly Educated," p. 667.
47. Dabney, "Thoroughly Educated," p. 657.
48. Dabney, "Memorial."
49. Dabney, "Memorial," p. 66.
50. Dabney, "Memorial," p. 67.
51. Dabney, "Memorial," p. 67.
52. Dabney, "Memorial," p. 67.
53. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 264.
54. Dabney, "Thoroughly Educated," p. 656.

under God to her standard of education in her ministry,"[55] Dabney feared that any attempt to win greater numbers to the Presbyterian Church risked forfeiting the very strengths of Presbyterianism that made it so valuable to, and unique within, the visible Church on earth. Presbyterians must sacrifice strength of theology to gain strength of numbers, and Dabney assailed the madness of any such trade.[56]

For his own part, Dabney pressed upon the consciences of his seminary students their responsibility to redeem their seminary training by means of hard, focused work. Arguing that a preacher must possess "a real mastery of the theology of redemption,"[57] Dabney insisted, "It is the preacher's business to be better informed than [the hearer] of sacred truth. If the religious teacher is not, he is unfit for his profession."[58] Dabney did not require that every preacher display genius but only noted that "a fool has no business in the sacred office, whatever may be his zeal or his opportunities for training." At the same time Dabney affirmed that "plain, manly good sense, inspired and dignified by true piety, will always come up to my standard."[59]

To achieve this end, Dabney pressed seminarians to circumscribe their interests in service of their calling, contending, "In your own department, that of evangelical history and doctrine, you are sacredly bound to display such competency, such maturity of opinion, such faithful and honest research, as will make every fair-minded hearer respect your theological *dicta*."[60] In a similar vein, James Waddell Alexander argued that each preacher must "heroically … determine to be ignorant of many things in which men take pride."[61] While men of other vocations might enjoy the freedom to pursue a variety of interests, Dabney asserted that a preacher must proscribe ancillary interests, delving deeply into a narrow theological shaft:

> You need not pretend to talk agriculture, physics, politics, belles-lettres, fine arts, with the experts in the various branches of knowledge; but you may honestly avow, when they are the subject of conversation, that you have not judged it your business to master them, and may keep your mouth closed. Such an attitude is always respectable. But when the votaries of these arts and sciences approach the theology of redemption, show them that there you are master of them all. To do this, you need only constant and faithful study of your own department, and this, I repeat, it is your clear duty to bestow.[62]

Dabney expected preachers to wield a keen sword, and he saw no path toward it save the path of real theological mastery. A man prepared for the pulpit must possess weaponry fit for the task.

Summary

Robert Dabney strove to fill Presbyterian pulpits with men thoroughly prepared to preach. He, therefore, required that every preacher display eminent personal piety, possess a true call from the Church to preach the gospel, and devote himself to the acquisition of theological weaponry fit for spiritual battle. To Dabney's mind, no man bereft of these criteria stands prepared to preach.

THE POWER OF THE MESSAGE

Overview

Dabney nevertheless granted that thoroughly prepared men—pious men, called men, men owning real theological weaponry—can preach powerless sermons, and he therefore impressed on seminarians and preachers alike three foundational attributes he believed vital to every powerful message. Every sermon must demonstrate fidelity, eloquence, and ambition.

Fidelity

Returning again to his conviction that "the preacher is a herald," Dabney stated that "the first quality of the good herald is the faithful delivery of the very mind of his king."[63] Fidelity to Christ, not merely in terms of pious personal devotion but also by means of "rightly handling the word of truth,"[64] grounds preaching in the "Word and Spirit," in which spiritual power reside.[65]

Dabney recognized that a faithful herald translates,

55. Robert L. Dabney, "The Standard of Ordination," in *Discussions, Volume 3: Philosophical,* ed. C. R. Vaughan (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1996), p. 562.
56. "What our church needs is a more faithful and strict execution of our rules by the presbyteries, instead of a degradation of them." In Dabney, "Standard of Ordination," p. 568.
57. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 264.
58. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 241.
59. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 265.
60. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 265 [emphasis original].
61. James W. Alexander, *Thoughts on Preaching: Classic Contributions to Homiletics* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2009), p. 132.
62. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, pp. 265–66.
63. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 105.
64. 2 Timothy 2:15
65. The Westminster Confession of Faith attributes effectual calling

interprets, and explains his King's message. Far from simply repeating the bald words of the King, a faithful herald makes the hearer understand the King's will. The preacher must therefore stand before the congregation as "an intelligent medium of communication," for "he has brains as well as a tongue; and he is expected so to deliver and explain his master's mind, that the other party shall receive not only the mechanical sounds, but the true meaning of the message."[66] On the other hand, "[I]t wholly transcends his office to presume to correct the tenour of the propositions he conveys, by either additions or change,"[67] for "the herald does not invent his message; he merely transmits and explains it."[68] Dabney therefore contended:

> The text must be adopted and discussed only in the very sense which it had in the mind of the Spirit as he uttered it. The preacher has no concern with, and no right to, any other.... The propriety of my law is plain from the fact that the preacher is a herald, and that it is God's word which is committed to him as his instrument for the redemption of men. If his task is to deliver and commend God's message, what right has he to change it or to represent it as other than it is?[69]

Dabney excoriated any preacher who played fast and loose with the Scripture, charging, "The falsehood of that man is full of impiety, who, avowedly standing up in a sacred place to declare God's message to perishing souls, says that the Holy Spirit has said what he has not said."[70] Arguing, "Our business with [Scripture] is to commend God's own meaning in it—nothing more, nothing less, to every man's conscience in his sight,[71] he asked, "Would you teach [your congregation] to revere the authority of [the] word?," and he answers, "Show them that you yourself revere it."[72] Anything less represents infidelity to the King.

Congregants instinctively recognize fidelity when they hear it, and Dabney cautioned his students against misrepresenting or going beyond the teachings of the text, stating, "The people roughly but accurately express [textual fidelity] by the phrase 'sticking to one's text.'" It is simply a strict fidelity throughout the discussion to the subject and teachings of the text.[73] This recognition, coupled with the preacher's charge from Christ to care for souls,[74] ought, Dabney believed, to make every man "intensely honest and prayerful in his study."[75]

A sermon, moreover, publicly teaches the art of biblical interpretation. Noting that "[a] prime object of pastoral teaching is to teach the people how to read the Bible for themselves,"[76] Dabney exhorted his students to set an exacting standard:

> It is the preacher's business, in his public discourses, to give his people teaching by example, in the art of interpreting the Word; he should exhibit before them, in actual use, the methods by which the legitimate meaning is evolved.... The pastor must teach his flock how to expound for themselves, by frequent practice in company with them.[77]

The pastor who brings textual infidelity, interpretive laziness, or exegetical deficiencies into the pulpit will soon see these faults reflected in the pews.

As a crucial component of the fidelity he required, Dabney taught that the person and work of Christ offers the interpretive key to the Scripture.[78] He exhorted faithful preachers to proclaim the Scripture in light of Christ's redemptive work. While contemporary preachers often refer to this manner of interpretation and preaching as "Christ-centered," Dabney described it as preaching with an "evangelical tone," explaining:

> We cannot describe it better than in the words of the apostles, when they so frequently speak of their work as "preaching Christ" or "preaching Christ crucified." We do not conceive that they mean to declare, the only facts they ever recited were those enacted on Calvary, or that

(WCF 10.1) and sanctification (WCF 13.1) to the "Word and Spirit," and confesses that "the grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word" (WCF 14.1). So also, in justification the elect "receive and rest on [Christ] and his righteousness, by faith" (WCF 11.1). Effectual calling, saving faith, justification, and sanctification therefore proceed ordinarily from the ministry of the Holy Spirit working in and through the Word of God.

66. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 36–37. Dabney looked to Nehemiah 8:8 for his pattern: "They read from the Book of the Law, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading." Of Nehemiah's description, Dabney wrote, "We shall seek in vain for a more apt and scriptural definition of the preacher's work than is contained in these words." Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 23.
67. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 37.
68. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 36.
69. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 97.
70. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 97.
71. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, pp. 105–106.
72. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 160.
73. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 105.
74. Hebrews 13:17
75. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 98.
76. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 81.
77. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 81.
78. See Luke 24:27; 45–47

> they limited themselves exclusively to the one doctrine of vicarious satisfaction for sin. The abstracts of their sermons, recorded in the New Testament, show that this was not true. But we find that these facts and this doctrine were central to their teachings. They recurred perpetually with a prominence suitable to their importance. More than this, they were ever near at hand, as the *focus* to which every beam of divine truth must converge. The whole revealed system, with its doctrines and duties, was ever presented in gospel aspects. The law, when preached as a rule of conviction, led to the cross. The law, as a rule of obedience, drew its noblest sanctions from the cross. Such being the method of inspired men, I would willingly define evangelical preaching by the term scriptural.[79]

To preach any part of Scripture as though it stood outside the interpretive lens of Christ seemed to Dabney to distort the meaning of Scripture itself.

Dabney therefore taught that fidelity in preaching requires not merely that a preacher proclaim the mind of his King from the text but that he do so in the light of the redemptive work of his King. No preacher guilty of infidelity should expect the King to bless his sermon with a "demonstration of the Spirit and of power."[80] Thus, fidelity stands as the first attribute of a powerful sermon.

Eloquence

When modern ears hear talk of "eloquence," we tend to think of exactly that which Paul forbids preachers to employ. We think of "lofty speech or wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:1), "plausible words of wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:4), the "peddl[ing] of God's word" (2 Cor. 2:17), "disgraceful, underhanded ways," "cunning," and "tamper[ing] with God's word" (2 Cor. 4:2). But Dabney meant none of these things. Rather, he defined eloquence as "*[t]he emission of the soul's energy through speech*"[81] or as "the soul's virtuous energy through speech."[82] Dabney believed that the piety of the preacher—his love for Christ and his sincere yearning for the souls of men—under the ennobling and empowering influence of the Holy Spirit bursts forth in the sermon, overflowing in eloquent speech.

In the same way that a man can share emotional sympathy with another man, Dabney also noted that men share spiritual sympathy and that this sympathy of souls comprises the core eloquence. He clarified:

> Eloquence is not the mere communication of a set of dry notions; it is a sympathy, a spiritual infection, a communion of life and action between two souls, a projection of the orator's thought, conviction, emotion and will into the mind and heart of the audience. Nothing, therefore, is a true oration which is not a life, a spiritual action, transacted in the utterance.[83]

Note that Dabney insisted that eloquence takes place "in the utterance." Because eloquence consists of a living communion between souls through the medium of *speech*, an elegantly written essay, no matter how spiritually rich, can never produce eloquence if read or recited to a congregation. Dabney's peer, John Broadus, felt similarly, writing:

> When a man who is apt in teaching, whose soul is on fire with the truth which he trusts has saved him and hopes will save others, speaks to his fellow-men face to face, eye to eye, and electric sympathies flash to and fro between him and his hearers, till they lift each other up, higher and higher, into the intensest thought, and the most impassioned emotion—higher and yet higher, till they are borne as on chariots of fire above the world,—there is a power to move men, to influence character, life, destiny, such as no printed page can ever possess.[84]

Dabney therefore derided those who preach from a manuscript, chiding, "Reading a manuscript to the people can never, with any justice, be termed preaching,"[85] and he referred to reading from the pulpit as an "indolent and slovenly practice."[86] On the contrary, Dabney exhorted his students to speak face-to-face, soul-to-soul with God's people:

> The pastor should be recognized as one who affectionately hungers for the spiritual good of his charge. His admonitions should be received by them as the outpourings of a compassion which cannot be restrained. He sees the worth and danger of their souls in the light of eternity, and his eloquence is inflamed from the very altar of God.[87]

79. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, pp. 114–15 [emphasis original].
80. 1 Corinthians 2:4
81. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 32 [emphasis original].
82. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 33.
83. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 333.
84. John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (New York, NY: Sheldon & Co., 1871), p. 18.
85. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 328.
86. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 331.
87. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, pp. 266–67.

The man who cares deeply for his flock will speak eloquently to them, and his eloquence will heighten the mutual bonds of spiritual affection he shares with his hearers.

How then must a man prepare to preach? Far from suggesting that men "wing it," Dabney advocated for thorough preparation in the study, followed by extemporaneous speech in the pulpit. Dabney advised students who worried about forgetting crucial information while preaching, "Let not your minds concern themselves chiefly about the verbal dress of the thought, but about the thought itself. The clear and just conception will not fail to clothe itself in lucid words."[88] Teaching that "[l]anguage is only a medium for the transmission of ideas,"[89] he noted, "If you are truly masters of your thoughts, you will have no lack of correct words."[90] If you ask a man to tell you how he met his wife, he will not read from a manuscript, for he knows the story. If you ask him in six months' time to tell you again how he met his wife, he will use different words, but he will substantially repeat the same story. So also, when a preacher knows the *ideas* the text conveys, he will surely possess the right *words* to convey those ideas when the moment demands. Dabney therefore cautioned:

> There is a most mischievous mistake as to the nature of good speaking. It is but unaffected, serious, perspicuous *talking*. That which is simplest is best. That language which presents the idea with the most transparent naturalness is in the best style. Who is there in his sense that cannot *talk* when he is interested? The man of plain good sense, whose mind is thoroughly informed with divine truth, and whose heart is instinct with divine love, will not fail to find words and utterance.[91]

Dabney thus encouraged his students to master their *ideas* before preaching and not to concern themselves with individual words or phrases, but to speak freely, soul-to-soul.

Illustrating the folly of the preacher who thinks about his speaking while he speaks, Dabney suggested that it is "as though the man who desired to rouse his sleeping neighbor from a burning house should bethink himself of the melody of his tones, while he cries fire."[92] Far from worrying about such melodies, Dabney taught his students that "[h]e who has the most numerous, just, and weighty ideas, in most natural order, and whose own soul is most fully possessed and penetrated with them, usually has the finest style."[93] The preacher who prepares well should not fear that he will speak well.

Dabney's counsel, then, bordered on simplistic: *Prepare thoroughly, then talk*. Noting that "[t]he truest art is that which is most natural,"[94] Dabney taught, "The more we can feel the love of Christ, and the nearer we can draw to the cross, the judgment, and the eternal world, the more we shall feel that all else than native simplicity and directness is out of place, and that all else is unnecessary."[95] Abhorring any attempt at verbal affectation or show or the false eloquence of mere rhetorical polish, Dabney insisted, "If we wish to strike a blow which shall be felt, we will not take up a bough laden with foliage. We will use a naked club."[96]

Nevertheless, Dabney never set eloquence over against rhetorical training but instead taught that the latter serves the former.[97] John Broadus likewise noted that some men denigrate "rules" of rhetoric, speaking as if "they had been drawn up by would-be wise men, who undertook to tell, on general principles, how one *ought* to speak. But they simply result from much thoughtful observation of the way in which men *do* speak, when they really speak well."[98] Dabney agreed, stating that unless an objector to the use of rhetorical training "holds men's faculties [to] permit no employment of methods, and that their first untaught essays are necessarily their best, he must grant a legitimate art of sacred rhetoric."[99] Rhetorical training sharpens the tongue by sharpening the preacher's familiarity with words well-spoken.

Yet Dabney never conflated rhetorical skill with true eloquence, and he rejected any view of eloquence that amounted to the emotional manipulation of listeners. Instead, he exhorted his students to reach the emotions *only* through the intellect. Asking, "How shall the heart be reached except through the head?,"[100] Dabney asserted that "no people can be formed into stable, consistent and righteous Christians without much doctrinal instruction."[101] He pointed to the example of the

88. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 280.
89. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 280.
90. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 337.
91. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 37 [emphasis original].
92. Robert L. Dabney, "Simplicity of Pulpit Style," in *Discussions, Volume 3: Philosophical*, ed. C. R. Vaughan (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1996), p. 87.
93. Dabney, "Simplicity," p. 81.
94. Dabney, "Simplicity," p. 82.
95. Dabney, "Simplicity," p. 90.
96. Dabney, "Simplicity," p. 85.
97. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, pp. 16–17.
98. Broadus, *Preparation and Delivery*, p. 25 [emphasis original].
99. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 17.
100. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 53.
101. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 55.

apostles, who were "always grounding their appeals to the heart on appeals to the mind."[102] While men might respond emotionally to a passionate preacher as to any effective orator, Dabney cautioned that a preacher might "excite by the scintillations of his rhetoric" but "if he has not instructed them in divine truth, he has done nothing. A permanent religious effect is impossible."[103] Sanctification only comes through truth,[104] and Dabney not only required preachers to employ eloquence in service of biblical truth but also cautioned that rhetorical skill itself offers no true eloquence but merely "scintillations."[105]

No preacher whose rhetoric aims to serve truth rather than to supplant it and who shares an abiding spiritual sympathy with his flock, seeking their good through the Word, will fail of eloquence, for by his speech, he will commune soul-to-soul with those who hear him. For Dabney, this soul-to-soul eloquence represents the second attribute of every powerful sermon.

Ambition

Ambitions that deserve no place in the pulpit nevertheless churn in the heart of every preacher. Vainglory, the applause of men, fame, reputation, and the desire for a larger church, a more prominent pulpit, a book deal, or a place on the celebrity conference speaker circuit entice preachers' souls. But as Dabney noted, a preacher "professes to stand between the living and the dead,"[106] and his ambitions must run in another direction:

> He deals with the attributes of a jealous and majestic God, the destiny of souls to immortal bliss or woe, the tomb, the resurrection trump, the judgment-bar, the righteous Judge, the glories of heaven and the gloom of hell, the gospel's cheering sound, the sacred tears of Gethsemane, the blood of Calvary and the sweet yet awful breathings of the Holy Ghost. The preacher's mission is to lay hold of perishing men, and by the love of the Redeemer drag them from the pit.[107]

What ambition, then, must animate the man who ascends a pulpit? He must strive to "drag [the perishing] from the pit." Stating that the "object of preaching is the salvation of the soul,"[108] Dabney asserted:

> The end, I repeat, of every oration is *to make men do*. But the things which the sermon would make men do, are only the things of God. Therefore it must apply to them the authority of God. If your discourse urges the hearer merely with excellent reasons and inducements, natural, ethical, social, legal, political, self-interested, philanthropic, if it does not end by bringing their wills under the direct grasp of a "thus saith the Lord," it is not a sermon; it has degenerated into a speech.[109]

Preachers must not merely impart theological information, for a sermon must "make men do," and Dabney insisted that "the aim of all rhetorical discourse is to produce a practical determination of the hearer's will."[110] Maintaining that "[t]he one ulterior end of preaching is the holiness of the hearer,"[111] Dabney noted that every sermon presses toward an end, either implicitly or explicitly, and he exhorted every preacher to cultivate a self-consciously holy ambition for his preaching, arguing, "The true minister must … have a desire to see souls snatched from hell fire, truth upheld, sin curbed, the happiness of true religion diffused, and the Holy Trinity glorified in the redemption of transgressors."[112] This ambition *must* animate the sermon, for it animates the Holy Spirit, in whose power and by whose indwelling presence the preacher speaks. "Unless the preacher's will is ardently directed toward this end, the salvation of the hearer, the main element of his power is lacking. But what is the direction of the will, save love for souls? And this is preeminently the spirit of Christ."[113] Since the indwelling Spirit eagerly pursues the souls of men, the preacher through whom the Spirit would speak must likewise seek the fruit of salvation through Christ's appointed means—preaching. Dabney thus challenged every preacher to conform his ambition to the ambition of the Holy Spirit.

Such ambition requires humility, for a preacher must set aside all self-oriented desires, and Dabney pleaded:

> You must so hunger for the salvation of the souls before you, that you shall desire to make the effect of sacred truth fill them, to the exclusion of yourself. You must be willing to be nothing in their eyes, and to let your

102. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 55.
103. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 55.
104. John 17:17
105. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 55.
106. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 296.
107. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 296.
108. Robert L. Dabney, "The Gospel Idea of Preaching," in *Discussions, Volume 1: Theological and Evangelical*, ed. C. R. Vaughan (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1982), p. 595.
109. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 34 [emphasis original].
110. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 169.
111. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 238.
112. Dabney, "What is a Call," p. 33.
113. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 40.

> effect be everything. He is not the true preacher who sends his hearers home exclaiming, "How eloquent the minister today" … But he is the true sacred orator, who dismisses them so possessed and overpowered by God, that they have forgotten the creature who was the channel of the truth.[114]

No preacher whose ambition for the sermon contradicts the Spirit's own desires should expect a "demonstration of the Spirit and of power"[115] to attend his sermon. Nor should any preacher expect the Spirit's blessing should he deviate from the spiritual purpose of preaching, and Dabney warned:

> The appropriate mission for the minister is to preach the gospel for the salvation of souls. The servant who by diverging into some other project not especially enjoined on him, nor essential for him to perform, precludes himself from his allotted task, is clearly guilty of disobedience to his master, if not treason to his charge.[116]

On the importance of preaching the things of the Word and not of the world, Dabney stated, "God has reserved for our spiritual concerns one day from seven, and has appointed one place into which nothing shall enter, except the things of eternity, and has ordained an order of officers, whose sole charge is to remind their fellowmen of their duty to God."[117] But "when the world sees a portion or the whole of this sacred season abstracted from spiritual concerns, and given to secular agitations, and that by the appointed guardians of sacred things, it is the most emphatic possible disclosure of unbelief."[118] Surely "[t]he result of such a perversion of the pulpit is, uniformly, an outburst of corruption in the bosom of the nominal Christianity which is cursed by it."[119] And thus, Dabney noted, "[N]o wonder that when the appointed restraints of Gospel truth are withdrawn, and this ministration of pride … applied at the same time, the progress in depravity should be frightfully rapid."[120] Preachers must confine themselves to know nothing "except Jesus Christ and him crucified,"[121] protecting the pulpit from political, cultural, social, and "secular agitations."[122]

Dabney certainly understood the place of legitimate Christian concern for the course of nations and the public welfare. He conceded, "Christianity is designed to produce important collateral results on the social order of nations."[123] Nevertheless, he argued that "these secular results are the minor, the eternal redemption of souls is the chief end of God in his Gospel."[124] He therefore advised:

> [T]he only innocent way … in which the minister of religion can further these secular results, is so to preach each man's own sins and redemption to him as to make him personally a holy man. When society is thus purified, by cleansing the integral individuals who compose it, then, and then only, will the social corruptions of commonwealths be effectively purged away.[125]

Preach Christ, and social transformation will follow. Preach social transformation, and progress in depravity will follow.

Dabney thus painted before the eyes of every preacher a picture of the work to which Christ calls and which must form the heart of the preacher's pulpit ambitions:

> [Y]our work is far more than humanitarian: you are the messengers of that supreme and infinite God "of whom and through whom and unto whom are all things, to whom belongs glory forever and ever." You are the appointed instruments "to make known by the church the manifold wisdom of God unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places." To you is committed the honour, before men and angels, of that display made in redemption of the most sacred moral perfections of God. The sword of the spirit which you handle is two-edged: it kills where it does not make alive. The cordial which you offer to the lips of dying men is a "savour of death unto death" if it is not made a savour of "life unto life." The time and opportunity allowed you to rescue the perishing are both precarious and limited; for the objects of your zeal are "standing in slippery places," over the flames of perdition. The professed motive of your ministry is at once the most disinterested, tender, urgent and sacred by which a human soul can be swayed; for as the prospective woes which excite your compassion toward your fellow-men are the most frightful, the divine blood and grace which you exhibit are the most hallowed objects which man can conceive.[126]

114. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 260.
115. 1 Corinthians 2:4
116. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 41.
117. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 42.
118. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 42.
119. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 44.
120. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, pp. 44–45.
121. 1 Corinthians 2:2
122. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 42.
123. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 45.
124. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 45.
125. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, pp. 45–46.
126. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, pp. 23–64.

How can any preacher allow vainglorious ambitions to enter into a ministry such as this?

Holy ambition, to save souls and to "make men do,"[127] represents the third attribute of every powerful sermon.

Summary

Fidelity, eloquence, and ambition—the preacher who possesses these Word-defined and Spirit-empowered attributes will not fail to preach powerful sermons. Dabney, therefore, exhorted his students to strive for a powerful preaching ministry, writing:

> Let me impress you with the high responsibility of ascending the pulpit, and beseech you to form a lofty ideal. He who proposes to sway the souls of a multitude, to be their teacher, to lay his hands upon their heart-strings, to imbue them with his passion and will, makes an audacious attempt. But nothing less than this is true preaching.[128]

The preacher who cultivates fidelity to the King, eloquence as the communion of souls, and the very ambition of the Holy Spirit Himself to save the lost and sanctify the found will not fail to preach with divine power.

CONCLUSION

Robert Dabney died in 1898, but one need not wonder what he would say to Presbyterians today. In the face of diminishing pastoral piety, lack of ecclesiastical clarity about the nature of calling, and the replacement of real theological mastery with soft "pastoral" skills, Dabney would surely insist, "What we most need is repentance, and not innovation."[129] Without repentance, fidelity wanes, eloquence devolves into mere rhetorical flourish, and ambition wanders the path of worldly pursuits.

But repentance terminates in renewed zeal for Christ, and by *his* blessing, prepared men will proclaim powerful messages until Christ shall come again.▪

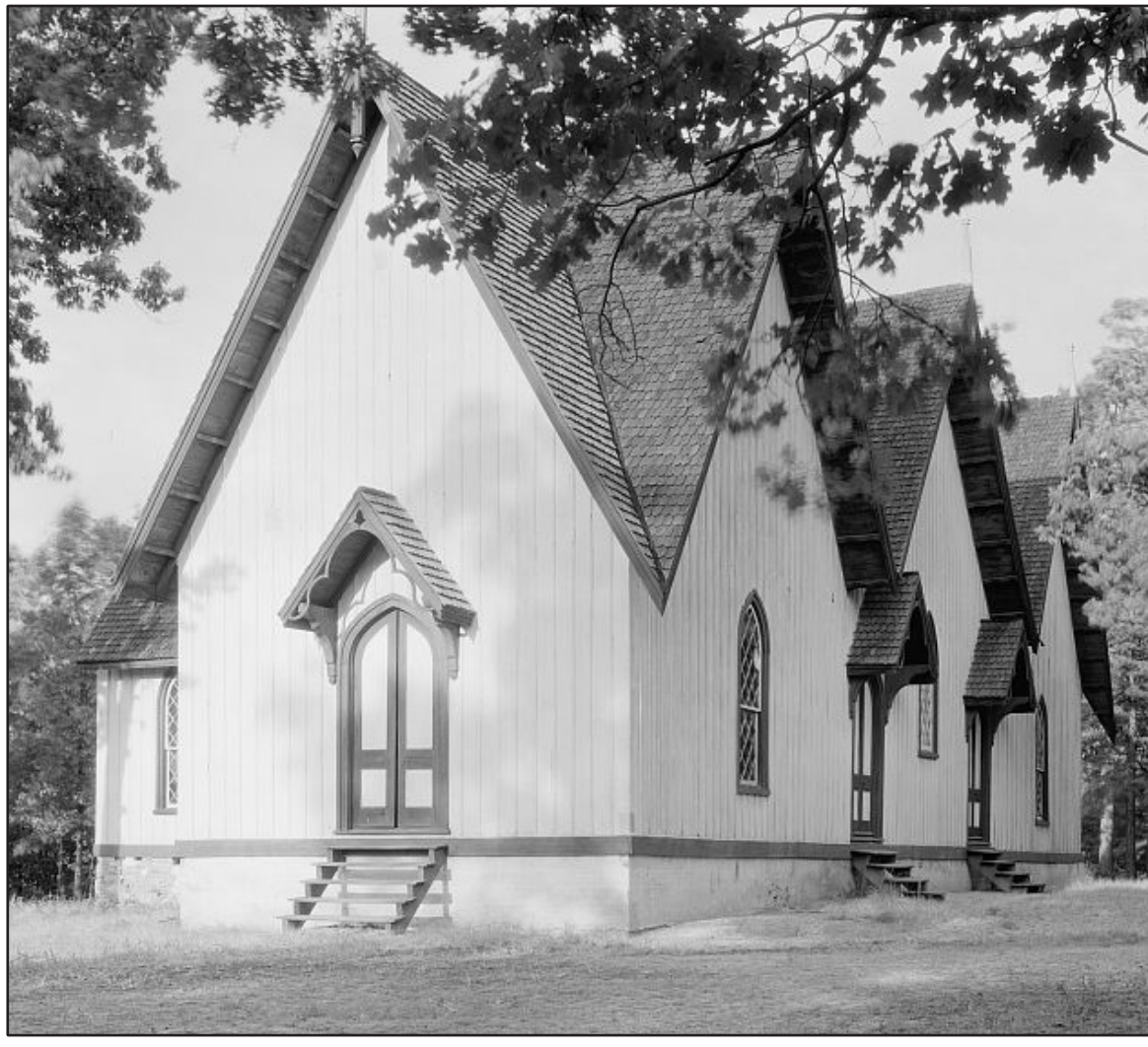
127. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 34.
128. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 344.
129. Dabney, "Thoroughly Educated," p. 656.

***In Brief:* Scripture Prohibits Women Preachers, by Robert L. Dabney.[1]**

The argument, then, whether any woman may be a public preacher of the word should be prevalently one of Scripture. Does the Bible really prohibit it? We assert that it does. And first, the Old Testament, which contained, in germ, all the principles of the New, allowed no regular church office to any woman. When a few of that sex were employed as mouth-pieces of God, it was in an office purely extraordinary, and in which they could adduce a supernatural attestation of their commission. No woman ever ministered at the altar, as either priest or Levite. No female elder was ever seen in a Hebrew congregation. No woman ever sat on the throne of the theocracy, except the pagan usurper and murderess, Athaliah. Now, Presbyterians at least believe that the church order of the Old Testament church was imported into the New, with less modification than any other part of the old religion. The ritual of types was greatly modified; new sacramental symbols replaced the old; the temple of sacrifice was superseded, leaving no sanctuary beneath the heavenly one, save the synagogue, the house of prayer. But the primeval presbyterial order continued unchanged. The Christianized synagogue became the Christian congregation, with its eldership, teachers, and deacons, and its women invariably keeping silence in the assembly. The probability thus raised is strong.

Secondly, If human language can make anything plain, it is that the New Testament institutions do not suffer the woman to rule or "to usurp authority over the man" (See 1 Timothy 2:12; 1 Corinthians 11:3, 7–10; Ephesians 5:22, 23; 1 Peter 3:1, 5, 6). In ecclesiastical affairs, at least, the woman's position in the church is subordinate to the man's. But, according to New Testament precedent and doctrine, the call to public teaching and ruling in the church must go together. Every elder is not a public teacher, but every regular public teacher must be a ruling elder. It is clearly implied in 1 Timothy 5:17 that there were ruling elders who were not preachers, but never was the regular preacher heard of who was not *ex officio* a ruling elder. The scriptural qualifications for public teaching, the knowledge, piety, experience, authority, dignity, purity, moral weight, were *a fortiori* qualifications for ruling. "The greater includes the less." Hence it is simply inconceivable that the qualified person could experience a true call to public teaching and

1. Robert L. Dabney, "The Public Preaching of Women" (from *The Southern Presbyterian Review* [1879]:), *Discussions*, volume 2, pp. 102–114..



Briery Church in Briery, Prince Edward County, Virginia, was designed by Robert L. Dabney (then professor of theology at Union Theological Seminary) and built circa 1855. Photograph by Frances Benjamin Johnston (1930–1939), Johnston Archives, Library of Congress.

not also be called to spiritual rule. Hence, if it is right for the woman to preach, she must also be a ruling elder. But God has expressly prohibited the latter, and assigned to woman a domestic and social place, in which her ecclesiastical rule would be anarchy.

This argument may be put in a most practical and *ad hominem (*or *ad fæminam*) shape. Let it be granted, for argument's sake, that here is a woman whose gifts and graces, spiritual wisdom and experience, are so superior her friends feel with her that it is a blamable loss of power in the church to confine her to silence in the public assembly. She accordingly exercises her public gift rightfully and successfully. She becomes the spiritual parent of new-born souls. Is it not right that her spiritual progeny should look up to her for guidance? How can she, from her position, justify herself in refusing this second service? She felt herself properly impelled, by the deficiency in the quantity or quality of the male preaching at this place, to break over the restraints of sex and contribute her superior gifts to the winning of souls. Now, if it appear that a similar deficiency of male supervision, either in quantity or quality, exists at the same place, the same impulse must, by the stronger reason, prompt her to assume the less public and obtrusive work of supervision. There is no sense in her straining out the gnat after she has swallowed the camel; she ought to act the ruling elder, and thus conserve the fruits she has planted. She ought to admonish, command, censure, and excommunicate her male converts, including, possibly, the husband she is

to obey at home, if the real welfare of the souls she has won requires.

The attempt may be made to escape this crushing demonstration by saying that these women consider themselves as preaching, not as presbyters, but as lay persons, that theirs is but a specimen of legitimate lay preaching. The answers are, that stated, public lay preaching is not legitimate, either for women or men, who remain without ordination (as was proved in this *Review*, April, 1876 [i.e., Dabney's "Lay-Preaching;" see *Discussions*, 2.76–95]); and that the terms of the inspired prohibition against the public preaching of women are such as to exclude this plea.

Let us now look at these laws themselves; we shall find them peculiarly, even surprisingly, explicit. First, we have 1 Corinthians 11:3–16, where the apostle discusses the relation and deportment of the sexes in the public Christian assemblages; and he assures the Corinthians, verses 2 and 16, that the rules he here announces were universally accepted by all the churches. The reader will not be wearied by details of exposition; a careful reading of the passage will give to him the best evidence for our interpretation, in its complete coherence and consistency. Two principles, then, are laid down: first, verse 4, that the man should preach (or pray) in public with head uncovered, because he then stands forth as God's herald and representative; and to assume at that time the emblem of subordination, a covered head, is a dishonor to the office and the God it represents; secondly, verses 5, 13, that, on the contrary, for a woman to appear or to perform any public religious function in the Christian assembly, unveiled, is a glaring impropriety, because it is contrary to the subordination of the position assigned her by her Maker, and to the modesty and reserve suitable to her sex; and even nature settles the point by giving her her long hair as her natural veil. Even as good taste and a natural sense of propriety would protest against a woman's going in public shorn of that beautiful badge and adornment of her sex, like a rough soldier or a laborer, even so clearly does nature herself sustain God's law in requiring the woman to appear always modestly covered in the sanctuary. The holy angels who are present as invisible spectators, hovering over the Christian assemblies, would be shocked by seeing women professing godliness publicly throw off this appropriate badge of their position (verse 10). The woman, then, has a right to the privileges of public worship and the sacraments; she may join audibly in the praises and prayers of the public assembly, where the usages of the body encourage responsive prayer; but she must always do this veiled or covered. The apostle does not in this chapter pause to draw the deduction, that if every public herald of God must be unveiled, and the woman must never be unveiled in public, then she can never be a public herald. But let us wait. He has not done with these questions of order in public worship; he steadily continues the discussion of them through the fourteenth chapter, and he there at length reaches the conclusion he had been preparing, and in verses 34, 35, expressly prohibits women to preach publicly. "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted to them to speak" (in that public place), "but to be in subordination, as also the law saith. And if they wish to learn something"—about some doctrine which they there hear discussed but do not comprehend—"let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for women to speak in church." And in verse 37 he shuts up the whole discussion by declaring that if anybody pretends to have the Spirit, or the inspiration of prophecy, so as to be entitled to contest Paul's rules, *the rules are the commandments of the Lord (*Christ), not Paul's mere personal conclusions, so that to contest them on such pretensions of spiritual impulse is inevitably wrong and presumptuous. For the immutable Lord does not legislate in contradictory ways.

The next passage is 1 Timothy 2:11–15. In the eighth verse the apostle, having taught what should be the tenor of the public prayers and why, says: "I ordain therefore that the males pray in every place" (in which the two sexes prayed publicly together). He then, according to the tenor of the passage in 1 Corinthians 11, commands Christian women to frequent the Christian assemblies in raiment at once removed from untidiness and luxury, and so fashioned as to express the retiring modesty of their sex. He then adds: "Let the woman learn in quiet in all subordination. But I do not permit woman to teach" (in public) "nor to play the ruler over man, but to be in quietude. For Adam was first fashioned; then Eve. Again, Adam was not deceived" (by Satan), "but the woman, having been deceived, came to be in transgression " (first). "However, she shall be saved by the child-bearing, if they abide, with modest discretion, in faith and love and sanctity." In 1 Timothy 5:9–15, a sphere of church labor is evidently defined for *aged single women*, and for them only, who are widows or celibates without near kindred. So specific is the apostle that he categorically fixes the limit below which the church may not go in accepting even such laborers at sixty years. What was this sphere of labor? It was evidently some form of diaconal work, and not preaching, because the age, qualifications and connections all point

to these private charitable tasks, and the uninspired history confirms it. To all younger women the apostle then assigns their express sphere in these words (verse 14), "I ordain accordingly that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give no start to the adversary to revile" (Christians and Christianity). Here is at least strong negative evidence that Paul assigned no public preaching function to women. In Titus 2:4, 5, women who have not reached old age are to be "affectionate to their husbands, fond of their children, prudent, pure, *keepers at home,* benevolent, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled." And the only teaching function hinted even for the aged women is, verse 4, that they should teach these private domestic virtues to their younger sisters. Does not the apostle here assign the *home* as the proper sphere of the Christian woman? That is her kingdom, and neither the secular nor the ecclesiastical commonwealth. Her duties in her home are to detain her away from the public functions. She is not to be a ruler of men, but a loving subject to her husband.

The grounds on which the apostle rests the divine legislation against the preaching of women make it clear that we have construed it aright. Collating 1 Corinthians 11 with 1 Timothy 2, we find them to be the following: The male was the first creation of God, the female a subsequent one. Then, the female was made from the substance of the male, being taken from his side. The end of the woman's creation and existence is to be a helpmeet for man, in a sense in which the man was not originally designed as a helpmeet for the woman. Hence God, from the beginning of man's existence as a sinner, put the wife under the kindly authority of the husband, making him the head and her the subordinate in domestic society. The Lord said (Gen. 3:16), "Thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Then last, the agency of the woman in yielding first to Satanic temptation and aiding to seduce her husband into sin was punished by this subjection, and the sentence on the first woman has been extended, by imputation, to all her daughters. These are the grounds on which the apostle says the Lord enacted that in the church assemblies the woman shall be pupil, and not public teacher, ruled, and not ruler. The reasons bear upon all women, of all ages and civilizations alike. Hence the honest expositor must conclude that the enactments are of universal force. Such reasons are, indeed, in strong opposition to the radical theories of individual human rights and equality now in vogue with many. Instead of allowing to all human beings a specific equality and an absolute natural independence, these Scripture doctrines assume that there are orders of human beings naturally unequal in their inherited rights, as in their bodily and mental qualities; that God has not ordained any human being to this proud independence, but placed all in subordination under authority, the child under its mother, the mother under her husband, the husband under the ecclesiastical and civil magistrates, and these under the law, whose guardian and avenger is God himself. And so far from flouting the doctrine of imputation as an antiquated barbarism, these Scriptures represent it as a living and just ruling principle, this very day determining, by the guilt of a woman who sinned six thousand years ago, when combining with the natural qualities of sex propagated in her race, a subordinate social state and a rigid disqualification for certain actions, for half the human race. Between the popular theories of individual human right and this sort of political philosophy there is indeed an irreconcilable opposition. But this is inspired. The only solution is that the other, despite all its confidence and arrogance, is false and hollow. "He that replieth against God, let him answer it."

The inspired legislation is explicit to every candid reader as human language can well make it. Yet modern ingenuity has essayed to explain it away. One is not surprised to find these expositions, even when advanced by those who profess to accept the Scriptures, tinctured with no small savor of infidelity. For a true and honest reverence for the inspiration of Scripture would scarcely try so hopeless a task as the sophisticating of so plain a law. Thus, sometimes we hear these remarks uttered almost as a sneer, "Oh, this is the opinion of Paul, a crusty old bachelor, an oriental, with his head stuffed with those ideas of woman which were current when society made her an ignoramus, a plaything, and a slave." Or, we are referred to the fable of the paintings of the man dominating the lion, in which the man was always the painter, and it is said, "Paul was a man; he is jealous for the usurped dominion of his sex. The law would be different if it were uttered through woman." What is all this except open unbelief and resistance, when the apostle says expressly that this legislation was the enactment of that Christ who condescended to be born of woman?

Again, one would have us read the prohibition of 1 Cor. 14:34, οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτέτραπται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν; "it is not permitted to females to babble." Some pretended usage is cited to show that the verb, λαλεῖν is here used in a bad sense only, and that the prohibition to a woman to talk nonsense in public address does not exclude, but rather implies, her right to preach, provided she preaches well and solidly. No expositor will need a reply

to criticism so wretchedly absurd as this. But it may not be amiss to point out in refutation that the opposite of this λαλεῖν in Paul's own mind and statement is "to be silent." The implied distinction, then, is not here between solid speech and babbling, but between speaking publicly at all and keeping silence. Again, in the parallel declaration (1 Tim. 2:12), the apostle says, Γυναικὶ δὲ διδάσκειν οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω, where he uses the word διδάσκειν; concerning whose regular meaning no such cavil can be invented. And the apostle's whole logic in the contexts is directed, not against silly teachings by women, but against women's teaching in public at all.

Another evasion is to say that the law is indeed explicit, but it was temporary. When woman was what paganism and the oriental harem had made her, she was indeed unfit for ruling and public teaching; she was but a grown-up child, ignorant, capricious and rash, like other children; and while she remained so the apostle's exclusion was wise and just. But the law was not meant to apply to the modern Christian woman, lifted by better institutions into an intellectual, moral and literary equality with the man. Doubtless were the apostle here, he would himself avow it.

This is at least more decent. But as an exegesis it is as unfair and untenable as the other. For, first, it is false that the conception of female character Christianized, which was before the apostle's mind when enacting this exclusion from the pulpit, was the conception of an ignorant grown-up child from the harem. The harem was not a legitimate Hebrew institution. Polygamy was not the rule, but the exception, in reputable Hebrew: families; nor were devout Jews, such as Paul had been, ignorant of the unlawfulness of such domestic abuses. Jewish manners and laws were not oriental, but a glorious exception to orientalism, in the place they assigned woman; and God's word of the Old Testament had doubtless done among the Jews the same ennobling work for woman which we now claim Christianity does. To the competent archeologist it is known that it has ever been the trait of Judaism to assign an honorable place to woman; and the Jewish race has ever been as rare an exception as Tacitus says the German race was to the pagan depression of the sex common in ancient days. Accordingly, we never find the apostle drawing a depreciated picture of woman; every allusion of his to the believing woman is full of reverent respect and honor. Among the Christian women who come into Paul's history there is not one who is portrayed after this imagined pattern of childish ignorance and weakness. The Lydia, the Lois, the Eunice, the Phoebe, the Priscilla, the Damaris, the Roman Mary, the Junia, the Tryphena, the Tryphosa, the "beloved Persis" of the Pauline history, and the "elect lady" who was honored with the friendship of the aged John, all appear in the narrative as bright examples of Christian intelligence, activity, dignity, and nobleness. It was not left for the pretentious Christianity of the nineteenth century to begin the emancipation of woman. As soon as the primitive doctrine conquered a household, it did its blessed work in lifting up the feebler and oppressed sex; and it is evident that Paul's habitual conception of female Christian character in the churches in which he ministered *was at least as favorable* as his estimate of the male members. Thus the state of facts on which this gloss rests had no existence for Paul's mind; he did not consider himself as legislating temporarily in view of the inferiority of the female Christian character of his day, for he did not think it inferior. When this invasion is inspected it unmasks itself simply into an instance of quiet egotism. Says the Christian "woman of the period" virtually, "I am so elevated and enlightened that I am above the law, which was well enough for those old fogies, Priscilla, Persis, Eunice, and the elect lady." Indeed! This is modesty with a vengeance! Was Paul only legislating temporarily when he termed modesty one of the brightest jewels in the Christian woman's crown?

A second answer is seen to this plea in the nature of the apostle's grounds for the law. Not one of them is personal, local, or temporary. Nor does he say that woman must not preach in public because he regards her as less pious, less zealous, less eloquent, less learned, less brave, or less intellectual, than man. In the advocates of woman's right to this function there is a continual tendency to a confusion of thought, as though the apostle, when he says that woman must not do what man does, meant to disparage her sex. This is a sheer mistake. His reasoning will be searched in vain for any disparagement of the qualities and virtues of that sex; and we may at this place properly disclaim all such intention also. Woman is excluded from this masculine task of public preaching by Paul, not because she is inferior to man, but simply because her Maker has ordained for her another work which is incompatible with this. So he might have pronounced, as nature does, that she shall not sing bass, not because he thought the bass chords the more beautiful—perhaps he thought the pure *alto* of the feminine throat far the sweeter—but because her very constitution fits her for the latter part in the concert of human existence, and therefore unfits her for the other, the coarser and less melodious part.

But that the scriptural law was not meant to be temporary, and had no exclusive reference to the ignorant

and childish woman of the Eastern harem, is plain from this, that every ground assigned for the exclusion is of universal and perpetual application. They apply to the modern, educated woman exactly as they applied to Phæbe, Priscilla, Damaris and Eunice. They lose not a grain of force by any change of social usages or feminine culture, being found in the facts of woman's origin and nature and the designed end of her existence. Thus this second evasion is totally closed. And the argument finds its final completion in such passages as 2 Timothy 2:9 and verse 14. A few aged women of peculiar circumstances are admitted as assistants in the diaconal labors. The rest of the body of Christian women the apostle then assigns to the domestic sphere, intimating clearly that their attempts to go beyond it would minister to adversaries a pretext to revile. Here, then, we have the clearest proof, in a negative form, that he did not design women in [the] future to break over; for it is *for woman as elevated and enlightened by the gospel he preached* that he laid down the limit.

Every true believer should regard the scriptural argument as first, as sufficient, and as conclusive by itself. But as the apostle said in one place, that his task was "to commend himself to every man's conscience in God's sight," so it is proper to gather the teachings of sound human prudence and experience which support God's wise law. The justification is not found in any disparagement of woman as man's natural inferior, but in the primeval fact: "Male and female made he them." In order to ground human society God saw it necessary to fashion for man's mate, not his exact image, but his counterpart. Identity would have utterly marred their companionship, and would have been an equal curse to both. But out of this unlikeness in resemblance it must obviously follow that each is fitted for works and duties unsuitable for the other. And it is no more a degradation to the woman that the man can best do some things which she cannot do so well, than to the man that woman has her natural superiority in other things. But it will be cried: "Your Bible doctrine makes man the ruler, woman the ruled." True. It was absolutely necessary, especially after sin had entered the race, that a foundation for social order should be laid in a family government. This government could not be made consistent, peaceful or orderly by being made double-headed, for human finitude, and especially sin, would ensure collision, at least at some times, between any two human wills. It was essential to the welfare of both husband and wife and of the offspring that there must be an ultimate human head somewhere.

Now let reason decide, was it meet that the man be head over the woman, or the woman over the man? Was it right that he for whom woman was created should be subjected to her who was created for him that he who was stronger physically should be subjected to the weaker; that the natural protector should be the servant of the *protegée*; that the divinely ordained bread-winner should be controlled by the bread-dispenser? Every candid woman admits that this would have been unnatural and unjust. Hence God, acting, so to speak, under an unavoidable moral necessity, assigned to the male the domestic government, regulated and tempered, indeed, by the strict laws of God, by self-interest and by the tenderest affection; and to the female the obedience of love. On this order all other social order depends. It was not the design of Christianity to subvert it, but only to perfect and refine it. Doubtless that spirit of willfulness, which is a feature of our native carnality in both man and woman, tempts us to him; feel that any subordination is a hardship, so that it is felt while God has been a Father to the man, he has been but a stepfather to the woman. Self-will resents this natural subordination as a natural injustice. But self-will forgets that "order is heaven's first law;" that subordination is the inexorable condition of peace and happiness, and this as much in heaven as on earth; that this subjection was not imposed on woman only as a penalty, but as for her and her offspring's good; and that to be governed under the wise conditions of nature is often a more privileged state than to govern. God has conformed his works of creation and providence to these principles. In creating man he has endued him with the natural attributes which qualify him to labor abroad, to subdue dangers, to protect, to govern. He has given these qualities in less degree to woman, and in their place has adorned her with the less hardy, but equally admirable, attributes of body, mind, and heart which qualify her to yield, to be protected, and to "guide the home." This order is founded, then, in the unchangeable laws of nature. Hence all attempts to reverse it must fail, and must result only in confusion.

Now, a wise God designs no clashing between his domestic and political and his ecclesiastical arrangements. He has ordained that the man shall be head in the family and the commonwealth; it would be a confusion full of mischief to make the woman head in the ecclesiastical sphere. But we have seen that the right of public teaching must involve the right of spiritual rule. The woman who has a right to preach, if there be any such, ought also claim to be a ruling elder. How would it work to have husband and wife, ruler and subject, change places as often as they passed from the dwelling

or the court-room and senate chamber to the church? When we remember how universally the religious principles, which it is the prerogative of the presbyter to enforce, interpenetrate and regulate man's secular duties, we see that this amount of overturning would result in little short of absolute anarchy.

Again, the duties which natural affection, natural constitution, and imperious considerations of convenience distribute between the man and the woman make it practicable for him and impracticable for her to pursue, without their neglect, the additional tasks of the public preacher and evangelist. Let an instance be taken from the nurture of children. The bishop must be "husband of one wife." Both the parents owe duties to their children; but the appropriate duties of the mother, especially towards little children, are such that she could not leave them as the pastor must for his public tasks without criminal neglect and their probable ruin. It may be said that this argument has no application to unmarried women. The answers are, that God contemplates marriage as the proper condition of woman, while he does not make celibacy a crime, and that the sphere he assigns to the unmarried woman is also private and domestic.

Some minds doubtless imagine a degree of force in this statement, that God has bestowed on some women gifts and graces eminently qualifying them to edify his churches, and as he commits no waste he thereby shows that he designs such women at least to preach. Enough has been already said to show how utterly unsafe such pretended reasonings are. "God giveth no account of his matters to any man." Does he not often give most splendid endowments for usefulness to young men whom he then removes by what we call a premature death from the threshold of the pastoral career? Yet "God commits no waste." It is not for us to surmise how he will utilize those seemingly abortive endowments. He knows how and where to do it. We must bow to his dispensation, whether explicable or not. The case is the same in this respect with his ordinance restraining the most gifted woman from publicity. But there is a more obvious answer. God has assigned to her a private sphere sufficiently important and honorable to justify the whole expenditure of angelic endowments-the formation of the character of children. This is the noblest and most momentous work done on earth. Add to it the efforts of friendship, the duties of the daughter, sister, wife and charitable almoner, and the labors of authorship suitable for woman, and we see a field wide enough for the highest talents and the most sanctified ambition. Does self-will feel that somehow the sphere of the pulpit orator is more splendid still? Wherein? Only in that it has features which gratify carnal ambition and the lust for carnal applause of men. But let it be noted that *Christians are forbidden to have these desires!* Let, then, the Christian comply with God's law requiring him to crucify ambition, and the only features which made any difference between the private and the public spheres of soul-culture are gone. The Christian who, in the performance of the public work of rearing souls for heaven, fosters the ambitious motive, has deformed his worthiness in the task with a defilement which sinks it far below that of the humblest peasant mother who is training her child for God. Does the objector return to the charge with the cavil that, while the faithful mother rears six, or possibly twice six, children for God, the gifted evangelist may convert thousands? But that man would not have been the gifted evangelist had he not enjoyed the blessing of the modest Christian mother's training. Had he been reared in the disorderly home of the clerical Mrs. Jellyby, instead of being the spiritual father of thousands, he would have been an ignorant rowdy or a disgusting pharisee. So that the worthiness of his public success belongs fully as much to the modest mother as to himself. Again, the instrumentality of the mother's training in the salvation of her children is mighty and decisive; the influence of the minister over his hundreds is slight and nonessential. If he contributes a few grains, in numerous cases, to turn the scales for heaven, the mother contributes tons to the right scales in her few cases. The one works more widely on the surface, the other more deeply; so that the real amount of soil moved by the two workmen is not usually in favor of the preacher. The woman of sanctified ambition has nothing to regret as to the dignity of her sphere. She does the noblest work that is done on earth. Its *public* recognition is usually more through the children and beneficiaries she ennobles than through her own person. True; and that is precisely the feature of her work which makes it most Christ-like. It is precisely the feature at which a sinful and selfish ambition takes offence.▪

R. L. Dabney: Master of Education

By Zachary Garris

Robert Lewis Dabney was a Renaissance man. Yet as diverse as his skill set was, Dabney was at his core a Christian educator. This is demonstrated by his persistent commitment to teaching others from the pulpit and in the classroom, as well as his writings devoted to educating readers on a wide range of topics, including education itself.

I. Dabney the Educator

Pastor and Teacher

As a student at Hampden-Sydney College, Dabney left early in 1837 to spend the next two years helping his widowed mother on the plantation. During that time, he also taught at a local school, similar to the country day school he attended as a youth. He finished his Master of Arts at the University of Virginia in 1842. He then graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1846, serving briefly as a missionary in his hometown in Louisa County from June 1846 to June 1847. Dabney then pastored Tinkling Spring Church from 1847 to 1853 while also serving as a headmaster at a classical academy. After being awarded an honorary doctorate from Hampden-Sydney in 1853, Dabney accepted a call as a professor at Union Theological Seminary. Dabney taught at Union from 1853 to 1883, first as professor of Ecclesiastical History and Polity and later in 1859 as Professor of Systematic Theology until his departure in 1883 (holding the title of adjunct in 1859 until Samuel B. Wilson's death in 1869).[1] While teaching at the seminary, Dabney co-pastored Hampden-Sydney College Church from 1858 to 1874 with his brother-in-law Benjamin Mosby Smith (1811–1893), who held the chair of Oriental and Biblical Literature at Union Seminary from 1854 to 1889.[2] Dabney also helped teach courses at Hampden-Sydney College during this period.

Dabney left Virginia in 1883 to become the Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy at the newly established University of Texas, where he served until his retirement in 1894. Along with R. K. Smoot, he founded the Austin School of Theology in 1884 (which in 1902 became Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary). Even after he was completely blind in 1890 and was asked to resign by the University of Texas in 1894, Dabney continued to lecture occasionally until his death in 1898. In the year prior to his death, he produced one of his best books, *The Practical Philosophy*, and lectured at Davidson College and Columbia Seminary on "The Penal Character of the Atonement of Christ Discussed in the Light of Recent Popular Heresies," which was published as *Christ Our Penal Substitute*.

Author

In addition to the classroom, Dabney also educated through his pen. He produced a large corpus of writings on a variety of topics, chiefly on the subject of theology. Dabney's systematic theology notes were published as a book in 1871, *Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology* (2nd ed. published as *Systematic Theology* in 1878). This was, as Morton Smith said, "the nearest thing to a complete text of Systematic Theology ever produced by a Southern Presbyterian

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1. T. C. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (1903; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977), p. 195.

2. Dabney was married to the sister of Smith's wife, both daughters of Rev. James Morrison. Along with A. R. Fausset, Smith wrote *The Poetical Books of the Holy Scriptures: With a Critical and Explanatory Commentary* (1859, 1867), where Smith wrote the sections on the Psalms and Proverbs.

theologian."[3] Dabney covered an assortment of theological topics in journals, later collected in his *Discussions*, and wrote a booklet on *The Five Points of Calvinism* that was published in 1895. While possessing a first-rate intellect, Dabney exercised theological humility in refusing to speculate on questions he did not think Scripture addressed adequately, including the order of the decrees (infralapsarianism vs. supralapsarianism), the origin of the soul (creationism vs. traducianism), and how Adam's guilt was imputed to his descendants (mediate vs. immediate imputation).[4]

In 1855, Dabney wrote a biography of his mentor at Union Seminary, Francis Sampson, who had died the prior year before reaching the age of 40. The book was titled *A Memorial of the Christian Life and Character of Francis S. Sampson, D. D.*[5] Dabney then edited Sampson's work, *A Critical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, which was published in 1856. Dabney reflected later in life, "Let me say that if I ever had any special intellectual growth and vigor, I owed it to three things, first, to the Master of Arts course in the University of Virginia, second, to Dr. Sampson, and third, to my subsequent mastery of Turretin."[6] Dabney was also a skilled philosopher. He wrote *The Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century Considered* (1875; 2nd ed. 1887), in which he made use of Scottish Common Sense Realism to criticize the Enlightenment philosophy that relied merely on the senses (hence "sensualistic" philosophy). Dabney's last written book, *The Practical Philosophy* (1897), surveys human personality and then sets out ethics for the Christian personality.

Southern Educator

Dabney is known as a Southern partisan, and this was no less true in his dedication to training ministers. In 1860, prior to the War Between the States (1861–1865), Dabney declined two offers to minister in the North. The first was to pastor Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City after James W. Alexander died the prior year. The second offer was by Charles Hodge to serve as a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary. Writing on March 31, 1860, Hodge highly praised Dabney—"You are not only the first, but the only choice of the friends of the Seminary.… There has not been a dissenting voice among all those to whom we have had access."[7] However, Dabney declined Hodge's offer, opting to remain at the less prestigious Union Seminary so that he could continue training Presbyterian ministers in the South. In this way, Dabney followed John Holt Rice (1777–1831), who earlier in 1823 had accepted the Hanover Presbytery's offered professorship (which led to the formation of Union Seminary) over the offered presidency of the College of New Jersey (later Princeton). As Rice wrote to Archibald Alexander on March 5, 1823, "I am convinced that a Theological Seminary in the South is necessary.… The majority of students in the South will not go to the North."[8]

Dabney served as chaplain for the Confederacy in 1861 and then the following year as chief of staff under his fellow Virginian, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson (1824–1863).[9] After the war, Dabney made it one of his chief tasks to defend the South both politically and morally through his writings. He memorialized one of the greatest men produced by the Old South in his 1866 biography of Jackson, entitled Life and Campaigns of Lieut. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson.[10] Dabney also sought to defend the South's practice of slavery against the criticisms of the Northern abolitionists, publishing his response in 1867, A Defence of Virginia (and Through Her, of the South). Dabney spent the rest of his days fending off the wave of progressivism that he thought invaded the South after the Union army. He wrote a variety of essays for journals after the war, many of which are critical of industrial capitalism, public education, and egalitarianism. Dabney was a prophetic and fiery writer, and his flame was in full force in these writings on the social issues of his day. These essays were collected and published at the end of his life in the four-volume Discussions, edited by his friend C. R. Vaughan. Dabney's dedication to training Southern

3. Morton H. Smith, *Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1987), p. 216. The original quote erroneously says "thng."

4. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 556; R. L. Dabney, *Systematic Theology* (1878; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1985), pp. 233, 317, 320, 340–341; R. L. Dabney, *Discussions*, 5 Vols. (1890–1897; repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1982–1999), 1.165–166. The original *Discussions* were four volumes, while volume 5 was a later addition of essays published by Sprinkle Publications.

5. A shorter essay on Sampson is found in Dabney, "Memoirs of Francis S. Sampson, D. D.," in *Discussions*, 4.392–434.

6. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 83.

7. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 201.

8. John Holt Rice, Letter to Archibald Alexander, dated Richmond March 5, 1823, in William Maxwell, *A Memoir of the Rev. John H. Rice, D. D.* (1835; repr., Harrisonburg: Sprinkle Publications, 2016), pp. 232–233.

9. See Jonathan W. Peters, ed., *Our Comfort in Dying: Civil War Sermons by R. L. Dabney, Stonewall Jackson's Chief-of-Staff* (Destin, FL: Sola Fide Publications, 2021).

10. Two shorter works on General Jackson can be found in Dabney's *Discussions*: "Stonewall Jackson, Lecture," 4.149–175; "True Courage, a Memorial Sermon on the Death of General T. J. Jackson, June, 1863," 4.435–452.

ministers and defending the South's traditions made him one of the most significant influences in the Southern Presbyterian church. As his biographer T. C. Johnson said of Dabney, "He did more than any other man of his generation to impress the peculiar type of theology characteristic of the Southern Presbyterian Church between the years of 1865 and 1895 upon that church."[11]

II. Dabney on Education

On Preaching

Dabney's lectures on preaching were published in 1870 as *Lectures on Sacred Rhetoric* (later republished as *Evangelical Eloquence*).[12] Unlike most modern preaching professors, Dabney was well-acquainted with classical rhetoric, which he combined with biblical insight as he approached the subject of preaching. Dabney urged preachers to practice the "expository method" that "explains extended passages of Scripture in course," as it is "the only natural and efficient way to do that which is the sole legitimate end of preaching, convey the whole message of God to the people."[13] The application of such exposition should focus on salvation, not "politics," as "the preacher's business is the redemption of the soul, and his instrument is the Bible truth." Here we see Dabney's adherence to the spirituality of the church. While he did not deny the place of applying biblical principles to the "social evils of the day," he said this should only be done "as God so applies them in the Bible" and "no farther." As Dabney said, "Let the preacher take the application of the principles, as well as the principles applied, from the word of God; let him take, not only his starting position but his whole topics, from God's word, and he will be in no danger of incurring that sarcasm" aimed at those who "take their texts from the Bible, and their sermons from the newspaper."[14]

Dabney thought preaching should be didactic, but it should come from the heart—"Let the preacher's own soul be fully penetrated and aroused by sacred emotion. The heavenly flame must be kindled first in your own bosom, that by this law of sympathy it may radiate thence into the souls of your hearers."[15] The preacher should reason with his hearers, for "he who does not reason is no preacher: he establishes no conviction."[16] Yet in order for the preacher to "be capable of any power of persuasion," he must be a man "of faith and genuine religious affections."[17] Dabney considered extemporaneous preaching to be "the true method of speaking."[18] Yet recognizing the challenges of this method, he encouraged preachers to prepare by writing out the sermon and then mastering its content.[19] But regardless of the method, excellent preaching requires "strenuous effort," as he "who labours most on each sermon is usually the best preacher."[20] As for Dabney's own preaching, Morton Smith said, "His preaching was always didactic. His method of delivery varied with the occasion. He often wrote out everything, and then memorized it. On other occasions he preached from his manuscript. At still other times, he simply used an outline."[21] Smith added, "He is said to have given enough material in a single sermon for the average minister to develop anywhere from two to six sermons. This speaks of the rich wealth of material that he had available and brought to bear on a text as he proclaimed the Word. This very feature, however, is just what would make him more difficult for the average person to follow."[22]

On the Education of Pastors

Dabney thought seminaries should focus on training ministers in the Bible. In an 1883 letter to G. B. Strickler, his later successor as Professor of Church History at Union, Dabney said, "The plan of our Seminary, as a biblical seminary, makes the Bible itself a text-book for every professor. The Old Testament was my text-book for the history of the church of the old dispensation; my human helps, Prideaux's *Connexions* and Alexander's *History of the Israelitish Nation*. The Book of Acts was my text-book for the apostolic age of the new dispensation, with old Mosheim for the rest (with Murdock's notes)."[23] Thus, Dabney thought that even church history should begin with biblical history. In an earlier 1856 article in the *Central Presbyterian*, Dabney said of Union Seminary, "This institution was intended by its great founder, Dr. John H. Rice, to be a school of *Biblical Theology*." He added that the Bible "is the text-book of the theologue, and the grand concern of his training is to fit him for understanding its contents." Biblical studies "are the most likely to be least cultivated in subsequent life," and thus they "should be most perfected in

11. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 553.
12. R. L. Dabney, *Evangelical Eloquence: A Course of Lectures on Preaching* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1999).
13. *Evangelical Eloquence*, pp. 78–89.
14. Dabney, "The Gospel Idea of Preaching," in *Discussions*, 1.596–597.
15. *Evangelical Eloquence*, pp. 247–248.
16. *Evangelical Eloquence*, p. 196.
17. *Evangelical Eloquence*, p. 250.
18. *Evangelical Eloquence*, p. 332.
19. *Evangelical Eloquence*, p. 338.
20. *Evangelical Eloquence*, p. 344.
21. Smith, *Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology*, p. 187.
22. *Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology*, p. 188.
23. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 141.

the Seminary"—"lay the foundation here thoroughly, and a respectable theological progress in after life is ensured."[24] Accordingly, Dabney thought each professor at Union should "be required to expound some portion of the original Scriptures" so that "he may be brought into immediate contact with the Word of God in his studies." Dabney thought all seminary professors should primarily be scholars of the Bible—"Exegetical study is the great means for cultivating a right literary spirit in the theologian." This was the case even for the professor of theology, as "the man who cannot expound Scripture respectably can certainly never be qualified to teach Christian theology."[25]

As for Dabney's method as a teacher of systematic theology, he held two class periods on each theological topic. At the end of the second class, Dabney provided students with a syllabus on the chalkboard, which included questions and assigned leading authors on the next subject. The assigned readings were from various theologians, especially Francis Turretin's *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae* in Latin and John Dick's *Lectures on Theology* in English. In the first class period, Dabney covered 10 to 12 pages of Turretin in Latin. Each student was required to write his own thesis on the topic, which Dabney corrected at home.[26] Dabney lectured on the topic in the second class period, where he "taught by means of dialogue."[27]

As for the seminary student, Dabney argued he should begin "with the great fact that the Word of God (in the originals) is the grand repository of all the data of the science of divinity." Thus, the ministerial student should begin with "preparatory studies" that "facilitate his study of the Bible itself," which includes "mastering of the Hebrew language" that brings the student to "the open door of the temple of divine truth." The second step is to study the Bible's "contents," which is "hermeneutics and exposition." After this, the ministerial student should proceed to systematic and pastoral theology, learning "the mutual relations of the Scripture facts and doctrines, that they may assume in his mind the strength of a system," but also applying this system "for the redemption of men," which is pastoral theology.[28] Morton Smith commented, "This all reflects the balanced view of theological education that Dabney maintained. It must be first Biblical, then systematic; pastoral, and finally historical."[29]

In 1869, Dabney submitted to the Committee on Seminaries at the General Assembly his "Memorial on Theological Education," in which he recommended reorganizing the seminary curriculum with additional theology classes. Dabney's proposal was rejected partly because of B. M. Smith's argument that these proposals would give the biblical languages a less prominent role.[30] As part of his proposed reorganization, Dabney also argued for a "standard of proficiency" for earning a seminary degree to replace the set number of years required, which would allow students to go at their own pace—"The course, indeed, should be made so rich that no mortal, whatever his preparation or talent, could complete it in less than two years … let the student's own capacity alone decide for him whether he shall expend two or four, or five years in the course."[31]

Dabney thought the seminary should teach the Bible in the original languages and that pastors should be classically trained in Greek and Latin as he himself was.[32] In response to attempts to lower the educational standards for ministers, Dabney argued in 1883 that pastors should be highly educated. Having such high standards was not the church excluding the less educated from the pastorate, for, "The man who is fit for a minister will not refuse the additional labor for Christ, when he learns that it is requisite for his more efficient service of Christ."[33] The other professions, such as law and medicine, were "advancing largely" in training requirements, and the pastor's "professional tasks are infinitely more responsible"—"it is no time for ours to go back."[34] In 1891, Dabney wrote a response to an overture that would lower the standard of ordination for ministers by, in Dabney's words, not requiring "them to exhibit any classical scholarship whatever, nor any knowledge of philosophy, nor of either of the languages of inspiration."[35] Dabney objected that "the door into our ministry is already made too wide."[36] Appealing to 2 Timothy 4:2 and Titus 1:9, Dabney argued the pastor is required to not only instruct his flock in redemption

24. *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 152.
25. *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 153.
26. *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 196.
27. Douglas Floyd Kelly, "Robert Lewis Dabney," in *Reformed Theology in America: A History of Its Modern Development*, ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), pp. 215–216.
28. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, pp. 151–152.
29. Smith, *Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology*, p. 189.
30. William B. Sweetser, Jr., *A Copious Fountain: A History of Union Presbyterian Seminary, 1812–2012* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), pp. 161, 475.
31. Dabney, "Memorial on Theological Education," in *Discussions*, 2.57–58.
32. Dabney, "A Thoroughly Educated Ministry," in *Discussions*, 2.656–667.
33. "A Thoroughly Educated Ministry," in *Discussions*, 2.667.
34. "A Thoroughly Educated Ministry," in *Discussions*, 2.672.
35. Dabney, "The Standard of Ordination," in *Discussions*, 3.551.
36. "The Standard of Ordination," in *Discussions*, 3.553.

but also "defend their faith by refuting and convincing all assailants." Thus, "this Bible principle must require of pastors continually widening qualifications instead of contracted ones, as the expansion of secular knowledge furnishes the enemies of the cross with new and varied weapons."[37] Pastors must not be ignorant of other sciences outside the "supreme science" of theology.[38] A less educated ministry, as seen in other denominations outside Presbyterianism, led to "spurious revivalism," and "the only guarantee of doctrinal unity and orthodoxy, next to the inworking of God's Spirit, is a thoroughly educated ministry."[39]

On Parenting and Education

Dabney's conviction that parents are the primary influence on children is best captured in "Parental Responsibilities," a sermon he delivered to the Synod of Virginia in October 1879. Dabney highlighted the special responsibility parents have in raising their children, a responsibility grounded in "the unique and extensive character of their authority over their offspring." Dabney expounded on the magnitude of the parents' influence on their children, as it is parents who determine their children's wealth, reputation, character, and opportunities—"Let the extent of the parent's legitimate or unavoidable power over his children be pondered. As he is industrious and discreet, or indolent and prodigal, he decides for his children whether they shall begin their adult existence with a competency or as paupers. As he is virtuous or vicious, he decides for them whether they shall bear an honored name, or be branded with the mark of infamy at their outset in society." Dabney continued, "His neglect of their early mental culture determines whether they shall reach adult life stupid boors or educated and intelligent men. Yea, more than this, character itself, at the outset of manhood, is mainly determined by the parents, and that chiefly by their example; so that they have the power of deciding with probable effect whether their children shall begin their careers with base or with virtuous principles and habits."[40]

The influence of parents on a child is so significant that "there is no power allowed to any creature under heaven over another responsible creature so wide as this providential power of the parent."[41] Part of this power involves the passing on of the parents' religious beliefs. Some parents seek to be "unbiased" or "neutral" in this regard, but Dabney considered this impossible—"It is made both his privilege and his duty to impose the principles and the creed which he has sincerely adopted as the truth for himself upon the spirit of his child. Some men, it is known, vainly prate of a supposed obligation to leave the minds of their children independent and 'unbiased' until they are mature enough to judge for themselves. But a moment's thought shows that this is as unlawful as impossible. No man can avoid impressing his own practical principles on his child. If he refrains from words, he does it inevitably by his example."[42] Dabney added, "He must 'bring up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Which is that nurture? Popery? Presbyterianism, Rationalism, or Infidelity? At the time the training is to begin, the child is wholly unqualified to judge; the parent must judge for him."[43] Dabney concluded, "These considerations prepare us to expect that the parent's influence will be more effectual for good and evil than any or all others that surround the young soul…. The parent has the first and all-important opportunity."[44]

This led to Dabney's masterful description of the significance of parental education: "The education of children for God is the most important business done on earth. It is the only business for which the earth exists. To it all politics, all war, all literature, all money-making, ought to be subordinated; and every parent especially ought to feel, every hour of the day, that, next to making his own calling and election sure, this is the end for which he is kept alive by God—this is his task on earth. On the right training of the generation now arising, turns not only the individual salvation of each member in it, not only the religious hope of the age which is approaching, but the fate of all future generations in a large degree. Train up him who is now a boy for Christ, and you not only sanctify that soul, but you set on foot the best earthly agencies to redeem the whole broadening stream of human beings who shall proceed from him, down to the time when men cease to marry and give in marriage. Until then, the work of education is never ending." Dabney went on to say, "The supreme end of the family institution is as distinctly religious and spiritual as that of the church itself."[45] And again, "The instrumentalities of the family are chosen and ordained of God as the most efficient of all means of grace—more truly and efficaciously means of saving grace than all other ordinances of the church."[46] Thus,

37. "The Standard of Ordination," in *Discussions*, 3.559.
38. "The Standard of Ordination," in *Discussions*, 3.560.
39. "The Standard of Ordination," in *Discussions*, 3.564, 566.
40. Dabney, "Parental Responsibilities," in *Discussions*, 1.682–683.
41. "Parental Responsibilities," in *Discussions*, 1.683.
42. "Parental Responsibilities," in *Discussions*, 1.684.
43. "Parental Responsibilities," in *Discussions*, 1.685, citing Eph. 6:4.
44. "Parental Responsibilities," in *Discussions*, 1.687.
45. "Parental Responsibilities," in *Discussions*, 1.691–692.
46. "Parental Responsibilities," in *Discussions*, 1.693.

Dabney viewed parenting as a covenantal task, where God works through faithful Christian parents to save and shape His children. As far as we can tell, Dabney lived out his commitment to the education of children. Of his three sons who survived to adulthood, Charles went on to serve as president of the University of Tennessee and the University of Cincinnati, and Samuel and Lewis became lawyers in Texas.

III. Dabney's Opposition to Public Education

Public Schools in Virginia

Dabney wrote several essays staunchly opposing "public" schools, or what were known as "common" schools at the time. However, the context of these essays should not be ignored. After the War Between the States, progressive policies swept through the South, including in Dabney's home state of Virginia. Dabney's writings attacked such progressivism, with the primary targets being feminism, industrial capitalism, and public education. Thus, Dabney did not merely propound a philosophy of education but was responding to the introduction of a statewide educational system in Virginia. Tax-funded public schools were foreign to the early American South, which explains why Dabney referred to them as the "Yankee theory" of schooling.[47] Public schools had existed in New England since the days of the Puritans, but the *statewide* school system was a 19th-century novelty in America, first implemented in Massachusetts in 1837 under the leadership of Horace Mann. In the South, Thomas Jefferson had pushed for public schools, but the aristocracy opposed them, following the English tradition that focused education on the privileged class.[48] Churches in the South attempted to provide mass education through Sunday schools, with Presbyterians establishing one of the first of such in Fredericksburg, Virginia in 1816, but these failed for a variety of reasons.[49] Virginia allowed some funds for "pauper schools" in 1810, and the legislature in 1829 created some free government schools, though few counties took advantage of them.[50] By 1855, public schools "were in operation in six eastern and four western counties and three Tidewater towns," but the War destroyed any beginnings of a public school system.[51]

It was not until Reconstruction that Virginia created a statewide public school system. Congress required the Southern states to write new constitutions, and in July 1869, the Radical Republicans helped Virginia ratify a constitution that required a statewide public education system by 1876. Though anti-Reconstruction politicians won political office in 1870, the Virginia General Assembly followed the constitutional mandate by electing William Henry Ruffner (1824–1908), a Presbyterian pastor from Lexington, Virginia, as the first superintendent of public instruction on March 2, 1870. Ruffner created a centralized system with a state board of education and county superintendents funded by property taxes. The schools were segregated but provided free education for both blacks and whites from age five to 21. The governor signed this legislation into law on July 11, 1870, and schools opened on November 1, 1870. Ruffner served as Virginia's superintendent of public instruction for 12 years, and his influence led many to describe him as the "Horace Mann of the South."[52]

Dabney understood this statewide school system as a Northern infiltration designed to reconstruct Southerners—a "false system imposed on us by our conquerors."[53] Dabney, along with C. R. Vaughn (1827–1911), a professor at Union Seminary after Dabney moved to Texas, adhered to the "Virginia theory" that education was primarily a responsibility that belonged to parents and not the state, though allowing for public schools for the poor. The church may aid parents in this task of education, seen in that Presbyterians established Washington College and Hampden-Sydney College but left them in the hands of trustees.[54] As for the poor, Dabney argued the statewide school system would in fact "obstruct parental and philanthropic effort."[55] In a letter to the *Texas Presbyterian* in 1879, Dabney clarified his position, stating that while "the state should not usurp the right and function of educating youth, as though it were primary in the matter … it does not thence follow that the State can have nothing to do with education." "The old system of Virginia was the wise, the true, the consistent system," where the state "created no primary schools, but encouraged parents to create them." Rather than the state being "guilty of the fatal communistic error of making the education of the children a commonwealth function to be paid out of taxes," the old Virginia system was built on charity—"helping only the unfortunate and the poor, by paying the tuition of

47. Dabney, "The Negro and the Common School," in *Discussions*, 4.176.
48. E. T. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South: Volume One: 1607–1861* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1963), p. 236.
49. *Presbyterians in the South: Volume One*, p. 237.
50. *Presbyterians in the South: Volume One*, p. 239.
51. *Presbyterians in the South: Volume One*, p. 473.
52. *Presbyterians in the South: Volume One*, p. 346.
53. "The Negro and the Common School," in *Discussions*, 4.176.
54. E. T. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South: Volume Two: 1861–1890* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1973), p. 352.
55. Dabney, "Secularized Education," in *Discussions*, 4.241.

their children in such schools in the vicinage as parents chose to create and the parents aided chose to select."[56]

Yet in opposing public schools, Dabney was swimming against the tide. Other Southern leaders supported public schools, including James Henley Thornwell (1812–1862) and Robert J. Breckinridge (1800–1871), with the latter even serving as superintendent of the Kentucky schools from 1847 to 1853. These men held that education belongs to the state and not to the church, as the church's mission is spiritual. However, they wanted public schools that were religious and taught the Bible, though not sectarian or denominational.[57] A third view, closer to Dabney's, was that of Thomas Smyth (1808–1873) of South Carolina, who argued that education belongs to the church. Smyth held that education is religious and "if the distinctive principles of Christianity are to be excluded from the schools of the State, these schools must be abandoned."[58] Thus, Dabney was not only up against the likes of Thornwell and Breckinridge but also Presbyterians in Virginia such as Ruffner and his own brother-in-law B. M. Smith. Dabney did not always get along with Smith, his co-pastor and colleague at Union, partly because of their disagreement over public education. For his entire life, Smith had been devoted to establishing such schools for all children in Virginia. In 1838, he wrote to the governor of Virginia, David Campbell, to propose organizing public schools based on the Prussian model, and in 1869 he called for the state to educate all children with schools supported through taxation.[59] Smith was thus an ally of Ruffner, even presenting a paper in 1870 to the Educational Association of Virginia that criticized Dabney's views on public schools. He also served as superintendent of public instruction for Prince Edward County from 1870 to 1881.[60]

Dabney's Debate with William Henry Ruffner

A debate ensued between R. L. Dabney and W. H. Ruffner, Virginia's first superintendent of public instruction, when Dabney voiced his opposition to the Virginia system with an article published in April 1876 in the *Southern Planter and Farmer*.[61] Ruffner responded by defending the Virginia system with four articles in the Richmond *Enquirer* and *Dispatch* (April 5, 8, 12, 13),[62] along with a more personal letter to Dabney published in the *Central Presbyterian* (April 5, 1876). Dabney then responded to Ruffner with four articles in the *Enquirer* and *Dispatch* (April 18, 22, 25, May 4).[63] Finally, Ruffner closed the debate with seven additional articles, six in the *Enquirer* (May 8, 12, 13, 16, 23, 26) and the seventh (June 22) printed only in the August 1876 edition of the *Educational Journal of Virginia* (which reprinted the other six in the July 1876 edition).[64] Overall, Dabney published five articles and Ruffner eleven.[65] Adding to the intrigue of this debate is that Ruffner was a fellow Presbyterian minister and a former classmate of Dabney at Union Theological Seminary.[66] Ruffner began at Union but then enrolled at Princeton Seminary in 1846 (the year Dabney graduated from Union), although Ruffner's health led him to withdraw in the spring of 1847.

Charles William Dabney (1855–1945), son of Robert and former president of the University of Tennessee and University of Cincinnati, summarized the debate in his *Universal Education in the South*. According to Charles, the root difference was that his father, R. L. Dabney, was an "aristocrat" and "individualist" who held that "the state's duty was merely to protect the family and should not interfere with any of its functions, the chief

56. E. T. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South: Volume Two: 1861–1890*, pp. 343–344, citing the *Texas Presbyterian* (December 12, 1879).

57. *Presbyterians in the South: Volume Two*, p. 482.

58. *Presbyterians in the South: Volume Two*, p. 481, citing an article without a named author, "The General Assembly," *Southern Presbyterian Review* 1/2 (September 1847): 97–98.

59. Sweetser, *A Copious Fountain*, p. 158.

60. Francis R. Flournoy, *Benjamin Mosby Smith: 1811–1893* (Richmond, VA: Richmond Press, 1947), p. 135.

61. R. L. Dabney, "The Negro and the Common School," *The Southern Planter & Farmer* 37/4 (April 1876): 251–262; republished as Dabney, "The Negro and the Common School," in *Discussions*, 4.176–190. Dabney dated his article February 21, 1876.

62. C. W. Dabney said there was also an April 6 article only published in the *Enquirer* (C. W. Dabney, *Universal Education in the South: Volume 1: From the Beginning to 1900* [Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936], p. 154). However, Ruffner said his reply only included "four articles in the Richmond *Dispatch* and the Richmond *Enquirer*" (*The Educational Journal of Virginia* 7 [June 1876]: 352).

63. Reprinted in Dabney, "The State Free School System Imposed Upon Virginia by the Underwood Constitution," in *Discussions*, 4.191–224. C. W. Dabney listed the dates of his father's responses in the *Enquirer* as April 20, 22, 26, and May 4 and said the April 20 article did not appear in the *Dispatch* (*Universal Education in the South: Volume 1*, p. 154). However, these dates conflict with those given in the *Discussions*.

64. C. W. Dabney listed the dates of Ruffner's closing responses in the *Enquirer* as May 10, 18, 20, 24, 28, June 2 (*Universal Education in the South: Volume 1*, p. 154), but this conflicts with Ruffner's given dates in *The Educational Journal of Virginia* 7 (July 1876): 387–412; (August 1876), 453. In this August edition of the journal, Ruffner explained that his seventh article did not appear in the *Enquirer* because their office lost the manuscript.

65. Dabney's five articles can be found in his *Discussions*, 4.176–224. Ruffner's responses to Dabney were published in revised form in *The Educational Journal of Virginia* 7 (June 1876): 352–362; (July 1876): 387–412; (August 1876),: 453–457.

66. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 85.

of which was the training of the children."[67] Ruffner's argument, on the other hand, was "based on the Jeffersonian theory of the state," where "[a]ll the people of the democracy must be educated to protect their rights," something the family and church schools "can never do." Charles thought Ruffner's responses to his father were "designed to meet the local issues and win the support of the people of Virginia for the school system."[68] Thus, the debate involved the clashing of two opposing views of civil government, differences that can be seen in their arguments summarized below.

Dabney's Initial Article and Ruffner's Response

The article that sparked the debate was Dabney's "The Negro and the Common School," published in April 1876 in the *Southern Planter and Farmer*. Dabney spoke of the "deadly tendencies of the Yankee theory of popular State education," which he considered a "Yankee heresy" being "imposed on us by our conquerors."[69] He contended that the "poor, harassed Southern parent" was taking the "bait" that "promises deceitfully to relieve him of his parental responsibility" (p. 177). Defending his aristocratic view that every civilized country must have a "laboring class," Dabney argued the attempt of universal education to "elevate that laboring class into a reading body … is a vain vision" (p. 185). He predicted the public school system would produce "just as many adults in the State, who practically will not read, and who will forget how, as before" (p. 188). As this relates to black citizens in Virginia, Dabney thought the school system would "fail" to elevate the "negro" in society. Yet if it were to "succeed," this would lead to "amalgamation," the mixing of blacks and whites (p. 185). Dabney's solution was to reform Virginia's school system "both for blacks and whites, back towards the system of our fathers," a private system that "left the parent supreme in his God-given sphere" to direct the education of his children (pp. 188–189).

In response to Dabney's article, Ruffner wrote four letters published in the *Richmond Enquirer and Dispatch*. Ruffner's April 13 article explained these did not encompass "a complete defence of public education" but only a brief "exposition of two or three points assailed by Dr. Dabney." In his more personal letter to Dabney, dated April 5 in the *Central Presbyterian*, Ruffner admitted he wrote "some unpalatable things." Yet he reminded Dabney that it was he who "began it" with his initial "attack." Ruffner expected what he wrote would "offend" Dabney, but he said he wrote "in sorrow, and not in anger." Ruffner's first article in the *Richmond Enquirer and Dispatch*, dated April 5, 1876, criticized Dabney for using disparaging language about the public schools. Things quickly got personal, as Ruffner said Dabney implied that he received too high of a salary, to which Ruffner responded that Dabney made the same amount in a less expensive area. Ruffner even dismissed Dabney's attack as "chiefly emotional."[70] In Ruffner's second article, dated April 8, he argued it was the business of the state to help the poor. And in response to Dabney's concern over taxation, Ruffner argued many forms of taxes could fund the schools, and such taxes were worth it for the benefit of the state. In his third article dated April 12, Ruffner said Dabney "knew better" than to charge that the public schools were invented by "Yankees," and he argued that it was no problem for the lower classes to read on top of their labor (p. 355).

In his fourth article dated April 13, Ruffner addressed the issue of blacks in public schools, claiming that Dabney "ignored" using "Christian means of dealing with the colored people," whose "moral condition" was "deplorable" (pp. 358, 360). Ruffner explained his view that the state is to educate "for the same reason that she punishes," which is "to promote order and honest industry; but principally for the development of her citizens" (p. 360). In this way, "men might be allowed to prefer the school to the jail" (p. 359). Thus, the "negro" should be educated because he "is improvable under culture" and can be "made more intelligent, more moral, more industrious and more skillful" (p. 360). Ruffner was more optimistic than Dabney about the future of black Americans, saying, "I am strongly of the opinion that a great moral work is now going on among the blacks which will be highly beneficial to society." Yet Ruffner still wanted "separate" (i.e., segregated) schools for blacks and whites, which he thought would "gradually overcome that contemptible ambition to associate with white people, which has been instilled into their minds by the blundering policy of the Northern people and the Federal Government" (p. 361). Thus, Ruffner disputed Dabney's claim that public schools would lead to the "amalgamation" of the races, stating that Dabney had too low a view of his fellow whites.

Dabney's Response to Ruffner

Dabney responded to Ruffner's four articles with four letters of his own published in the *Enquirer and Dispatch*. In his April 18, 1876 article, Dabney attacked

67. *Universal Education in the South*, p. 155.
68. *Universal Education in the South*, p. 159.
69. "The Negro and the Common School," in *Discussions*, 4.176.
70. W. H. Ruffner, "The Public Free School System," *The Educational Journal of Virginia* 7 (June 1876): 352.

Ruffner's "free schools" as part of "Radicalism," declaring they were "exactly the opposite to the name falsely assumed" since they were paid for by "compulsion"—"They are virtually thrust down our throats by the bayonet." Dabney said compulsory "attendance" would soon follow in Virginia, and thus, "The only freedom of your system is *your freedom* to compel other people's money."[71] Dabney argued the logic of the system would also lead to the state justifying redistributive welfare programs, as "physical destitution of the citizens is as dangerous to the State as ignorance; therefore the State would be entitled to interfere for her own protection and repair that calamitous condition of destitution which their own and their parents' vices and laziness have entailed on a part of the people, by confiscating, for their relief, the honestly-earned property of the virtuous and thrifty and their children." Thus, "the friends of this principle will in due time become consistent, and claim at least the last inference, along with the first" (pp. 194–195). Condemning the "pagan" view held by ancient Sparta and Plato that children belong to the state, Dabney said, "It is the teaching of the Bible and of sound political ethics that the education of children belongs to the sphere of the family and is the duty of the parents" (p. 194). As for influencing children, "home education" has "so much more potential than that of the school, that the little *modicum* of training which a 'common-school' system can give to the average masses is utterly trivial and impotent as a means of reversing the child's tendency. That which costs nothing is never valued" (p. 197). This is not to say Dabney had no concern for the minds and hearts of the destitute, as he simply offered a different solution than public schools—"The work must be done by laying hold of the sentiments, hearts, and consciences of parents and children together—not through their grammatical and arithmetical faculties. The agents for this blessed work are *the neighbor and the church.* Christian charity and zeal, with the potent social influences descending from superiors to inferiors, in a society which is practically a kindly and liberal aristocracy; these may break the reign of ignorance and unaspiring apathy. The State cannot; the work is above its sphere" (pp. 198–199).

In his second article, dated April 22, 1876, Dabney attacked what he called "the absurd and impossible idea of the Leveller," referring to the idea that the public schools could make it "possible for all men to have equal destinies in human society." Dabney said such a system "fosters a universal discontent with the allotments of Providence, and the inevitable graduations of rank, possessions and privilege." He considered this egalitarian desire to be "anti-Christian," as the Bible inculcates "contentment with our sphere" (p. 200). According to Dabney, "It is utterly false that every American boy may aspire to the higher stations of life." Such positions can only be reached by the few, as "[p]rovidence, social laws, and parental virtues and efforts, do inevitably legislate in favor of some classes of boys in their start in that race, and if the State undertakes to countervail that legislation of nature by levelling action, the attempt is wicked, mischievous, and futile." Dabney recognized exceptions, such as King David, but in such "instances of native merit," the government "has no need to legislate." Yet attempts to level natural advantages are ineffective, as "[t]he larger part of every civilized people is, and ever will be, addicted to regular, manual labor" (p. 201). Dabney believed that such manual labor prevents humans "from abusing their leisure," which "would be devoted, not to intellectual pursuits, but to wasteful and degrading vices." He again argued that the state cannot "force" reading and writing on children, for "when these become laboring men they will cease to read and write" (p. 202). Moreover, the "smattering of State education" would only create "readers one-quarter or one tenth cultivated," which is worse than "ignorance" because it would open "Pandora's box" and launch the masses into "an ocean which they are incompetent to navigate" (pp. 203).

In his third article, dated April 25, 1876, Dabney argued Virginia's public school system would result in "a mixture of the children of the decent and the children of the vile in the same society during the most plastic age," which would corrupt the children of decent families (p. 207). Students significantly influence one another—"Every experienced teacher knows that pupils educate each other more than he educates them. The thousand nameless influences—literary, social, moral—not only of the play-ground but of the school room, the whispered conversation, the clandestine note, the sly grimace, the sly pinch, the good or bad recitation, mould the plastic character of children far more than the most faithful teacher's hand" (p. 208). Anticipating the argument that Christians should seek to influence unbelievers, Dabney responded, "While we fully recognize the Christian duty of seeking the degraded and of drawing them up to purer associations, we beg leave to demur against employing our innocent and inexperienced children as the missionaries." While some argue "it is the teacher's part to prevent those 'evil communications

71. Dabney, "The State Free School System Imposed Upon Virginia by the Underwood Constitution," in *Discussions*, 4.192.

which corrupt good manners,'" Dabney dismissed this as "impossible." He anticipated another objection—"Have children's morals never been corrupted in private schools?" Dabney answered that such corruption only proves that parents need to be increasingly vigilant in choosing associations, but the public school system "insists upon extinguishing all such conscientious watchfulness" (p. 210).

Dabney's fourth article, dated May 4, 1876, resembles his later essay, "Secularized Education." Here Dabney laid out his most potent argument against state education, which deals with the subject of religion in the schools. He asked, "What religion shall be taught to the children by the State's teachers as the necessary part of the education of reasonable and moral beings?" (p. 215). Dabney argued for the "absolute necessity of Bible instruction in schools." And if the *state cannot teach the Bible, this proves that "the* State is unfit to assume the educational function." Dabney quoted Daniel Webster—"In what age, by what sect, where, when, by whom, has religious truth been excluded from the education of youth? Nowhere; never. Everywhere, and at all times, it has been and is regarded as essential. *It is of the essence, the vitality of useful instruction" (p. 219)*. The entire curriculum must be immersed in Christianity—"[W]e claim more than the admission that each man should at some stage of his training, and by somebody, be taught Christianity; we mean in the fullest sense that Christianity must be a present element of all the training at all times, or else it is not true and valuable education." While it is "the prerogative of a merciful Providence" to overcome the "defects" of a non-Christian training, "surely this comes far short of a justification for us if we willingly employ faulty methods which have a regular tendency to work evil" (p. 220). Dabney continued, "The moral judgments and acts of the soul all involve an exercise of reason; so that it is impossible to separate the ethical and intellectual functions…. Man fulfills the ends of his existence, not by right cognitions, but by right moral actions … knowledge is really valuable *only as it is in order to right actions.*" This moral basis of education led Dabney to the following conclusion—"It follows that *any training which attempts to be non-Christian is therefore anti-Christian*. God is the rightful, supreme master and owner of all reasonable creatures, and their nearest and highest duties are to him. Hence to train a soul away from him is a robbery of God, which he cannot justify in any person or agency whatsoever. He has not, indeed, committed to the State the duty of leading souls to him as its appropriate task. This is committed to the family and to his church. Yet it does by no means follow that the State may do anything tending to the opposite" (p. 221). As a spiritual and moral task, the Bible is essential to education—"Grant the inspiration of the Bible, and we have a basis of moral appeal so simple and strong that practically all other bases are comparatively worthless, especially for the young…. There can be, therefore, no true education without moral culture, and no true moral culture without Christianity." Further, such moral culture requires that teachers "must be Christian" (p. 222).

Secular education would bring great harm, as "[t]he exclusion of the Bible would put a stigma on it in the child's mind which the parent cannot afterwards remove." This would especially harm the poor since "[t]he parents who are too poor, ignorant, delinquent to secure their children secular schooling will, by the stronger reason, be sure to neglect their religious education." In other words, if parents are unable to attain schooling for their children, then they are also not going to provide religious education to overcome the secular education of the public schools. Yet the "deficiencies" of these parents are the "sole pretext for the State's interference" in education. Dabney concluded that the old private education system in Virginia was better because "it leaves to parents, without usurpation, their proper function as creators or electors of their children's schools" and "wholly evades the religious question" that was "insoluble" to Ruffner. Dabney closed his portion of the debate with Ruffner with these words—"Government is not the creator but the creature of human society. The Government has no mission from God to make the community; on the contrary, the community should make the Government…. Noble races make their governments; ignoble ones are made by them" (pp. 223–224).

Ruffner's Closing Argument

The last word was left to Ruffner, who closed his debate with Dabney with seven additional articles, six in the *Enquirer* (May 8, 12, 13, 16, 23, 26) and a seventh (dated June 22) in the August 1876 edition of the *Educational Journal of Virginia*. These responses were longer and more substantial than his initial four letters to Dabney. In his article dated May 8, 1876, Ruffner focused on the historical argument, asserting Dabney's views did not "represent Virginia, either present or past."[72] Dabney "did not want the masses of the people, either white or black, to be taught by any system," and thus, he even "oppose[d] the old Virginia restricted system" (p. 388).

72. W. H. Ruffner, "Mr. Ruffner's Reply to Dr. Dabney on the Free Public School System," *The Educational Journal of Virginia* 7 (July 1876): 387.

Ruffner said the "Scotch-Irish" who founded Dabney's former church "did not believe that workingmen should be excluded from books," and neither did Samuel Davies nor the founder of Union Seminary, John H. Rice (p. 390). Even a 1779 committee in Virginia that included Thomas Jefferson recommended a public school system to be funded by taxes (p. 391).

In his article dated May 12, 1876, Ruffner surveyed the early 19th-century history of the push for a public school system in Virginia, the purpose of which was "to educate the poor without distinction, and to educate them with the children of the rich." Dabney, on the other hand, favored the method of the "old Massachusetts system," where a 1647 law required teacher wages to "be paid by the parents or masters of such children, or by the inhabitants in general by way of supply" (p. 392). Ruffner put this dilemma before Dabney—"Either you are un-Virginian in your education doctrine, or you are both Prussian and Yankee! You may take your choice" (p. 393). Ruffner then claimed George Washington, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, and Thomas Jefferson as "friends of popular state education" (pp. 394–395). In his article dated May 13, 1876, Ruffner addressed the subject of literacy, disputing Dabney's prediction that public education would produce "just as many adults … who practically will not read and who will forget how as before." He also disputed Dabney's claim that his prediction was already being fulfilled in Massachusetts and Prussia (p. 397). Ruffner appealed to data that the literacy rates of countries with public schools were better than those without, as well as testimony that the poor read books in those countries.

In his article dated May 16, 1876, Ruffner responded to Dabney's final argument that education should be religious but public schools would not be able to teach religion properly. Ruffner "fully agreed" with Dabney that, in Ruffner's words, "Religious truth should form a prominent part of the subject matter of every child's education" (p. 400). However, Ruffner disputed Dabney's statement that "Christianity must be a present element of all the training at all times," arguing that if this were the case, then "no child should be allowed to have any education which the parent does not give" and thus "all schools must be abandoned … except the strictly family school." Ruffner recognized Dabney allowed for primary schools and colleges so long as the teachers were Christians, to which Ruffner responded with "Amen and amen" (p. 401). Yet Ruffner went on to say a demand for Christian teachers, particularly of one's own denomination, is "impractical." Further, outside of exceptional cases, religion was never "a part of primary school instruction in Virginia" (p. 402). Thus, Ruffner concluded that, contrary to Dabney, "the school teacher's business is Christian ethics, not Christian theology." And such ethics could "unite" professing Christians and Jews and "unbelievers of every grade," including men like Thomas Huxley and Rousseau, who "admire[d] the Bible" (p. 403).

In his article dated May 23, 1876, Ruffner addressed the issue of the Bible in public schools. Appealing to Scotland, Prussia, and the early American colonies, Ruffner claimed that "as a matter of historical fact, the public schools, which you say dare not teach religion at all, have taught religion more regularly, and more thoroughly, and more soundly, than it has ever been taught in private schools" (p. 404). Ruffner criticized Dabney's proposal for the state to pay the tuition only for poor children, arguing that if such education taught religion, it would still involve "religion taught by State money," something Dabney opposed (p. 406). Ruffner's position was that the state "may formally teach the recognized morality of the country … but distinctively religious teachings shall be left to volunteer agencies" where the teaching "is agreeable to the parents." Ruffner appealed to the prior 50 years of the University of Virginia and 37 years of the Virginia Military Institute, which were not "vehicles of infidelity" but contained Christianity. Thus, "There is no need to legislate Christianity into the schools of a Christian people" because "schools maintained by free, popular governments of necessity express and conserve the religion of the people" (p. 407). In his article dated May 26, 1876, Ruffner argued that public education would reduce crime. This is because "ignorance and crime" are "closely related as cause and effect" (p. 407). Experience and observation of jails show that "nine-tenths of the crimes are committed by ignorant people; and that the more generally intelligent a community is, the more moral and law abiding it is" (pp. 407–408). Thus, by combatting ignorance, public education would alleviate crime. After disputing Dabney's statistical claims, Ruffner provided his own statistics supporting a strong correlation between illiteracy and crime in other countries and New England.

Ruffner closed the debate with his June 22, 1876 article addressing "several miscellaneous points."[73] He disputed Dabney's accusation that Virginia's public school system was descended from the Spartans and Plato's Republic, as the Virginia system instead followed the view of Aristotle. Whereas Plato "advocated the absorption

73. W. H. Ruffner, "Dr. Ruffner's in Reply to Dr. Dabney," *The Educational Journal of Virginia* 7 (August 1876): 453.

of the family and the individual in the State," Aristotle "subordinated the State to the family." Moreover, "those ideas did not originate with the Greeks," for "a system of public schools, supported by taxation, existed in Judaea after the return from the captivity" (pp. 453–454). As for Dabney's argument that children from vile families would corrupt the children from decent families, Ruffner said Dabney's "real aim" was at the mixing of "different social classes." Yet even Virginia's former "pauper system" resulted in poor children being intermingled throughout the private schools (p. 454). Ruffner admitted "misrule" was a problem in earlier schools because of "untrained" teachers and a lack of "the guidance of regulations or the backing of law." But "if all our influential citizens would only help, instead of trying to hinder our work, the time would soon come when every one of the evils you so broadly characterize would cease to exist. The school would become a place of safety, refinement, and moral as well as intellectual culture." Ruffner thought the enforcement of "school laws and regulations" would protect the "decent children … from the association with the incorrigibly vile" and even change "the vile class … into a decent class." Ruffner added, "Private teachers cannot enforce such regulations as are required in public schools" (p. 455).

While both parties made substantial arguments, readers today have the advantage of judging the debate through the outcomes of the state public school system. Of course, Ruffner did not anticipate factors such as the influence of the federal government in education and social changes in the 20th century. Yet it still stands that many of Dabney's predictions came to pass, while Ruffner's promises appear overstated.

Secularized Education

While W. H. Ruffner had the last word in their debate, Dabney went on to write other articles on education, including "Free Schools" in the *Southern Planter and Farmer* (January 1879) and "Popular Education as a Safeguard for Popular Suffrage" in the *Princeton Review* (July–Dec. 1880).[74] Dabney built on his earlier arguments against Ruffner and appeared to sharpen them in his greatest single essay on education, "Secularized Education," an 1879 article that first appeared in *Libby's Princeton Review*.[75] Dabney addressed two questions in this essay: (1) "Who is the agent entitled to control education?" and (2) "What is right education?" In response to the first question, Dabney argued that education is ultimately the responsibility of parents, not the church or the state. As for the second question, he argued that proper education has the Bible as its foundation and moral formation as its end.

If the state is to educate all its citizens, which in America includes a variety of religious adherents, how can it accommodate such diverse religious beliefs? Dabney said there have been four suggestions: (1) "forcing the religion of the majority on the minority;" (2) "Each denomination may have its own schools endowed by the State;" (3) "give 'unsectarian' religious instruction in the first hour of the day, while parents who dissent from it are allowed to detain their children from school until that hour has passed;" and (4) "secularize the State's teaching absolutely" (pp. 228–229). The first solution of forcing the majority religion on everyone has the obvious problem of the state endorsing a religion and oppressing dissenters. The second solution of having a variety of religious state schools would result in many denominational schools that do not have enough students to fill the schools in all locations, as well as leave the state endorsing particular denominations, some of which contradict one another. The third solution of providing religious instruction at the beginning of the school day has the same problem as the first two, as it would involve the state establishing a particular religion. Even though families could opt out, it would punish such dissenters by taxing them for something they do not want. This leaves the fourth solution to secularize state education, limiting schools "to matters merely secular, and leaving parents or the Church to supplement it with such religious teaching as they may please, or none." Dabney spent the majority of his essay examining this option that was later adopted by the United States—"Let us see whether this plan is either possible or admissible. This is really the vital question" (p. 229).

In order to address whether secular education is possible, Dabney said education must first be defined. He answered, "Education is the nurture and development of the whole man for his proper end." According to Dabney, while it may be possible to teach an art or skill, such as using a hammer, in a secular manner, that is not education, and the state does not claim to limit itself to teaching such skills. Instead, the state "claims to educate," with the goal of training students as citizens. But if the state seeks to educate in this way, it must be asked, "Is a really secularized education either possible or admissible?" (p. 230).

Dabney provided six reasons why secular education is not possible or admissible. "First, No people of any age, religion, or civilization, before ours, has ever

74. "Free Schools," in *Discussions*, 4.260–280; "Popular Education as a Safeguard for Popular Suffrage," in *Discussions*, 5.396–420.

75. "Secularized Education," in *Discussions*, 4.225–247.

thought so" (pp. 230–231). Every society in history has grounded its education in religion, whether it be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, or pagan. "Second, True education is, in a sense, a spiritual process, the nurture of a soul" (p. 232). As such, "Every line of true knowledge must find its completeness in its convergency to God, even as every beam of daylight leads the eye to the sun. If religion be excluded from our study, every process of thought will be arrested before it reaches its proper goal." "Third, If secular education is to be made consistently and honestly non-Christian, then all its more important branches must be omitted, or they must submit to a mutilation and falsification, far worse than absolute omission" (p. 233). Dabney said it is hard to see how someone can teach history, psychology, ethics, and law without speaking favorably or unfavorably of the beliefs of Christians, deists, materialists, or any other belief system. He then asked a series of piercing questions, "Shall the secular education leave the young citizen totally ignorant of his own ancestry…? Can he [the physicist] give the genesis of earth and man, without intimating whether Moses or Huxley is his prophet…? How much of the noblest literature must be ostracized, if this plan is to be honestly carried out?" (p. 234). Dabney concluded, "Christian truths and facts are so woven into the very warp and woof of the knowledge of Americans, and constitute so beneficial and essential a part of our civilization, that the secular teacher, who impartially avoids either the affirmation or denial of them, must reduce his teaching to the bare giving of those scanty rudiments, which are, as we have seen, not knowledge, but the mere signs of knowledge." "Fourth, Of all rightful human action the will is the executive and the conscience the directive faculty." Teachers must teach students to work hard, be obedient, and tell the truth—"But on whose authority" does the teacher give these demands? (p. 235). When God and His Word are removed, moral authority falls on the might of parents or the government, which is not Christian morality. "Fifth, We need the best men to teach our children. The best are true Christians, who carry their religion into everything." Yet because such Christians would have trouble teaching in secular schools, "the tendency must be towards throwing State schools into the hands of half-hearted Christians or of contemptuous unbelievers" (p. 237). "Sixth, To every Christian citizen, the most conclusive argument against a secularized education is contained in his own creed touching human responsibility." Christian parents should want to provide their children with a Christian education, but secular education is not a Christian education and "a non-Christian training is literally an anti Christian training."

Dabney spent the rest of his essay elaborating upon this last point that secular education is anti-Christian. He argued that while the state is "not an evangelical agent" to convert souls, it also does not have the right "to become an anti-evangelical agency." The state does not have the right to "war against" Christianity. Thus, "While we have no right to ask the State to propagate our theology, we have a right to demand that it shall not oppose it. But to educate souls thus is to oppose it, because a non-Christian training is an anti-Christian training" (p. 238). Dabney anticipated the objection that "if the State may govern and punish, which are moral functions, she may also teach." He responded, "If we are prepared for the theocratic idea of the State … then we can conclude thus." Therefore, consistency in this objection would require "a State religion, a beneficed clergy, a religious test for office, and State power wielded to suppress theological as well as social error." Yet since America does not have such a theocracy, the state should stay out of education. Dabney further argued there is a difference between governing and teaching—"while secular ruling and punishing are ethical functions, they are sufficiently grounded in the light of natural theism. But teaching is a spiritual function" (p. 239). Teaching requires redemption of the student, which cannot be attained by nature as governance can.

This logic led Dabney to make a striking prediction about America's public schools—"But nearly all public men and divines declare that the State schools are the glory of America, that they are a finality, and in no event to be surrendered. And we have seen that their complete secularization is logically inevitable. Christians must prepare themselves then, for the following results: All prayers, catechisms, and Bibles will ultimately be driven out of the schools" (p. 242). It took almost a century, but Dabney's prophecy came to pass when the U.S. Supreme Court banned school-sponsored prayer in *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and school-sponsored Bible reading in *Abingdon v. Schempp* (1963) as alleged violations of the First Amendment. Dabney further predicted such secularization of the public schools would bring great harm upon the church—"for humanity always finds out sooner or later, that it cannot get on without a religion, and it will take a false one in preference to none. Infidelity and practical ungodliness will become increasingly prevalent among Protestant youth, and our churches will have a more arduous contest for growth if not for existence" (p. 242).

Dabney pointed out that the American public school system has its roots in theocratic states, including Scotland and Prussia, as well as the early American colonies like Massachusetts and Connecticut that pioneered state education. However, in what appears to be a counterargument to Ruffner's closing argument three years earlier, Dabney emphasized these "held firmly to a union of Church and State."[76] The American system thus follows the education model of theocratic nations but removed the religious aspect that was foundational to those systems. How then should state education be regarded "when it is imported into commonwealths whose civil governments have absolutely secularized themselves and made the union of the secular and spiritual powers illegal and impossible?" To answer this, Dabney returned to the question he raised at the beginning of his essay regarding who ought to control education—"Is the direction of the education of children either a civic or an ecclesiastical function? Is it not properly a domestic and parental function?" (p. 243). The family appeared prior to both the church and the state, and it is out of the family that the social institutions of church and state arise.

Along with this authority given to parents comes an extensive influence upon children—

> God has provided for the parents social and moral influences so unique, so extensive, that no other earthly power, or all others together, can substitute them in fashioning the child's character. The home example, armed with the venerable authority of the father and the mother, repeated amidst the constant intimacies of the fireside, seconded by filial reverence, ought to have the most potent plastic force over character. And this unique power God has guarded by an affection, the strongest, most deathless, and most unselfish, which remains in the breast of fallen man. Until the magistrate can feel a love, and be nerved by it to a self-denying care and toil, equal to that of a father and a mother, he can show no pretext for assuming any parental function.

Thus, a state that seeks to teach children that which is contrary to the parents' beliefs is undermining parental authority. As Dabney said, "If the father conscientiously believes that his own creed is true and righteous and obligatory before God, then he must intuitively regard the intrusion of any other power between him and his minor child, to cause the rejection of that creed, as a usurpation." Such usurpation by the civil government is "in the direction of despotism" (p. 244). Though parents are fallible, "the supreme authority must be placed somewhere." And God has indicated that "no place is so safe for it as in the hands of the parent, who has the supreme love for the child and the superior opportunity." Acknowledging many parents neglect and pervert the power, Dabney responded, "And does the State never neglect and pervert its powers? With the lessons of history to teach us the horrible and almost universal abuses of power in the hands of civil rulers, that question is conclusive. In the case of an unjust or godless State, the evil would be universal and sweeping. Doubtless God has deposited the duty in the safest place."

Dabney invoked the different spheres of authority—"God has immediately and authoritatively instituted three organisms for man on earth, the State, the visible Church, and the Family, and these are co-ordinate in rights and mutual independence. The State or Church has no more right to invade the parental sphere than the parent to invade theirs" (p. 245). For Dabney then, the essential problem with the statewide public school system was that it confused the spheres of the state and the family, with the state, in fact, usurping the family's role in education. As Dabney argued, "God designed the State to be the organ for securing secular justice" (p. 246). The state, along with the church, ought to "recognize the parent as the educating power." The state can encourage education by "holding the impartial shield of legal protection over all property which may be devoted to education," but it should not provide that education. Recognizing the proper sphere for education—the family—would solve the problem of the state attempting to school children from different religious backgrounds. If Dabney's model were followed, he concluded, "Our educational system might present less mechanical symmetry, but it would be more flexible, more practical, and more useful" (p. 247).

IV. Was Dabney Inconsistent in Teaching at the University of Texas?

It may be asked whether Dabney, who vehemently opposed secular education, was inconsistent in accepting a position as Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy in 1883 at a non-Christian educational institution, the University of Texas. Dabney provided his explanation in this matter to Edward Porter Palmer, who served as president of the Presbyterian College of Texas from 1882 to 1885, in a letter that was published as "The University of Texas and the College" in the *Southwestern Presbyterian* (February 14, 1884). There Dabney argued that a state institution is not necessarily a "godless or anti-Christian one." In the case of the University of Texas,

76. "Secularized Education," in *Discussions*, 4.242.

it was theistic because Texas as a state required civil officials to "acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being," and legislators were required to swear to their performance "so help me God." Thus, "Texas refuses to recognize the atheist as a fit organ of political society." Further, the constitution of Texas protected men's "natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences," and Texas had a Sabbath law forbidding work on Sunday. Therefore, Dabney concluded that the state of Texas was not "agnostic or atheistic" but "theistic," and as an institution of the state, the University of Texas reflected this same position.[77]

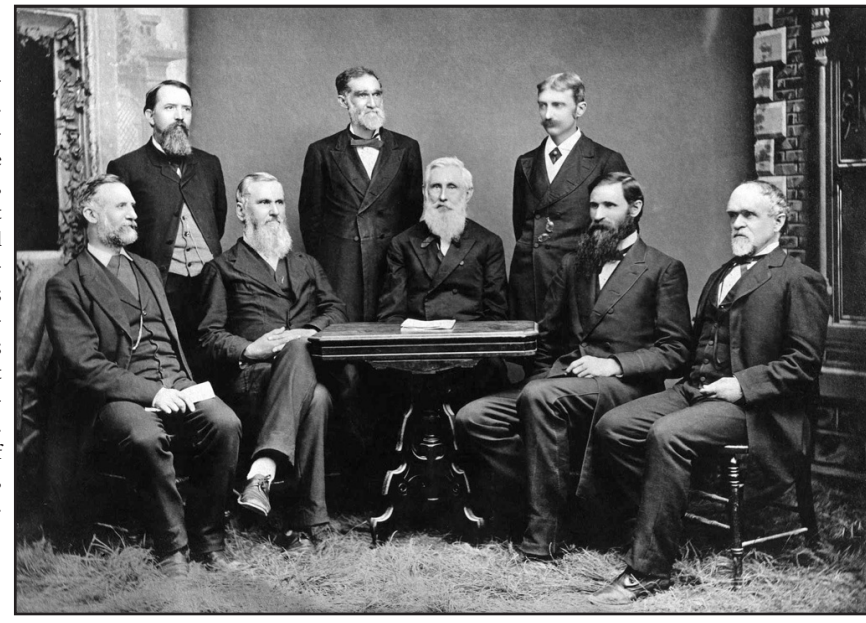
Dabney said he was able to teach at the university because it did not "suppress all recognition of God" and was not "hostile" to his teaching or Christian students.[78] While Dabney considered the University of Texas to be "complementary" to denominational colleges, he hoped the state university would come to focus only on graduate studies, similar to the German model. Further, he considered it "better and safer" for a student to receive his ungraduated training in a Christian college than in a state university, where the teaching method should be more suited for mature men than youths.[79] Thus, state universities should have departments devoted to science and literature, and the only way to fund such departments is by the state itself (the exception being Princeton).[80] Thus, Dabney supported a state university devoted to graduate studies of science and literature so long as the state was theistic and not hostile to Christianity. Yet Dabney was aware of the potential political change that would alter the circumstances of Texas, where "[a]nti-Christian influences" would lead to rulers insisting that such public education becomes "agnostic." In that case, Dabney said such an institution would be "virtually anti-Christian."[81]

Sean Michael Lucas, a biographer of Dabney, argued Dabney "appeared strangely inconsistent with his arguments against public education made in the 1870s," where in his debate with Ruffner, "he had argued that state-funded education had to be agnostic because the state itself was agnostic." Lucas said, "It is hard to understand how such a vague religious requirement [the Texas constitution's reference to a Supreme Being] could be the difference between Virginia's public schools and the Texas state university." Lucas added, "when Ruffner proposed a broadly ethical Christianity as the foundation of Virginia's public schools, Dabney had mocked the possibility because education itself was a religious function that required discussion of key doctrinal issues such as sin and redemption. Yet Dabney in Texas appeared to be content with a higher educational system that was based on a broadly ethical, natural religion." Lucas appealed to the question Ruffner had earlier asked Dabney—"And how will you get along with your theory as respects colleges and Universities? Can you send a son to our State University?" Lucas commented, "Ruffner believed that Dabney could not with any sort of consistency do so. That Dabney still did not recognize the inconsistency at the time he wrote the article in 1884 was obvious."[82]

In response to Lucas's charge of inconsistency on Dabney's part, it should first be stated that there is a difference between whether one should hold a teaching position at a school and whether one should send a student there. Dabney seems to have been able to freely teach his Christian philosophy at the University of Texas, and thus there is no inconsistency in relation to his criticism of a state school system. If Dabney was teaching at a state university and openly teaching Christian philosophy, then the university was not godless and anti-Christian, at least not in its entirety.

Second, the context of Dabney's earlier writings on the Virginia state school system differed from that of his letter on the University of Texas. Whether a state university should exist was not the question before him in 1884. While Dabney in the 1870s was arguing against a new statewide public school system in Virginia, in 1884, he considered "the relations of the University of Texas and the Christian denominations and colleges" within Texas, as well as his teaching position at the university.[83] His defense of the University of Texas was not a full-scale endorsement of the model. In fact, Dabney hoped the "tendency" of the university would be towards only training "post-graduate" students in "science and literature," following the German model.[84] Thus, Lucas's claim that Dabney "appeared to be content with a higher educational system that was based on a broadly ethical, natural religion" is incorrect, as Dabney wanted to limit the state university's

77. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 465.
78. *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 466.
79. *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, pp. 467–468.
80. *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 468.
81. *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 469.
82. Sean Michael Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2004), 204. The quote is from W. H. Ruffner, "Mr. Ruffner's Reply to Dr. Dabney on the Free Public School System," *The Educational Journal of Virginia* 7 (July 1876): 403. (Lucas cited W. H. Ruffner, *Public Free School System* [n.p.: n.d. (c. 1874)], p. 28.)
83. Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 464.
84. *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, pp. 467–468.



The first faculty of the University of Texas at Austin. From left: John Mallet, physics and chemistry; Leslie Waggener, English language, history, and literature; Robert Dabney, mental and moral philosophy and political science; Robert Gould, law; Oran Roberts, law; Henri Tallichet, modern languages; Milton Humphreys, ancient languages; and William LeRoy Broun, mathematics. Used with permission of The UT History Corner, https://jimnicar.com/.

education to science and literature for graduate studies. This is a far cry from Ruffner's public school system for children, who are more impressionable than graduate students.

Third, Dabney's 1884 letter to E. P. Palmer revealed his own concerns about the University of Texas. While the university was not hostile to Christianity at the time, Dabney recognized this could change quickly and that a move to make the university's education "agnostic" would be "virtually anti-Christian." This was the same argument Dabney made in his earlier writings against the Virginia statewide public school system, only there Dabney predicted this would happen to the public schools. Regarding the university, Dabney even stated it would be "better and safer" at the time for a student to receive Ungraduated training in a Christian college because the state university is more suited for "mature men" than "youths" due to the "methods of teaching" and "the temptations of a city."[85]

Thus, we may return to Ruffner's and Lucas's question to Dabney—"And how will you get along with your theory as respects colleges and Universities? Can you send a son to our State University?" Based on Dabney's letter to E. P. Palmer, the response is that Dabney thought colleges should be Christian, and he thought state universities should at least be theistic, not be hostile to Christianity, and only teach graduate studies. As for whether Dabney could send his own sons to a state university, he stated it was "better and safer" to send children to a Christian college and then a state university only for graduate studies. This was the case for his son Charles, who earned a B.S. from Hampden-Sydney College and then an M.S. in chemistry from the University of Virginia (as well as a Ph.D. from the University of Göttingen). Therefore, a close reading of Dabney's 1884 letter to Palmer does not reveal the "inconsistency" that Lucas claimed was so "obvious."[86] Dabney only defended a limited role for the state university in training mature men in graduate studies.

Conclusion

From his early days as a pastor and seminary professor to his final years teaching philosophy at the University of Texas, Robert Lewis Dabney was a master educator, particularly a master *Christian* educator. Dabney was at heart a teacher, leading him to educate from the pulpit, in the classroom, and with the pen. He not only taught students but also gave significant thought as to *how* to teach students. Dabney firmly held that all true education, not just seminary education, should be rooted in the Word of God. This was why he thought the statewide public education system would fail, as the Bible would be ousted and Americans would be left with a secular school system fostering unbelief among children. While he would likely consider it little consolation, many of Dabney's predictions regarding public schools have come to pass, vindicating his criticism of secular education and bolstering his case for Christians to provide their children with a distinctly Christian education.▪

85. *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, pp. 467–468.
86. Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 204.

Mandate or Warrant?
The Biblical Grounds for Christian Education & Schooling

By Zachary Groff

Concerns of hearth and home are matters of incalculable importance and considerable controversy. What man would willfully discard the individual blessings of liberty that allow him the leverage to protect, provide for, and delight in his family? This concern for all things personal and domestic is no more emphatically expressed than in discussions of child-rearing. Topping the list of important and controversial domestic interests is the instruction of children to which the Apostle Paul refers in Ephesians 6:4 as "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (KJV).[1] In homes committed to a biblical covenantal understanding of the family, the instruction of children involves the encouragement of "holy and happy"[2] spiritual development and discipleship from infancy.

The children of believers are not only a heritage from the Lord and a special gift to parents, but also members of God's covenant community. Thus, Reformed and Presbyterian Christians frequently refer to their children as "covenant children." They are to be students of the Christian Faith—even baptized disciples—from infancy, and thus are not to be excluded from the assembling together of the saints in corporate worship, religious instruction, and family devotion. Regular practices of prayer, Bible reading, and singing in the context of the Christian home lay the foundation for lifelong discipleship in the Faith. Consistent, firm, and tender-hearted parental discipline attuned to God's Word is second in importance only to regularly attending upon "public and private exercises of God's worship" (WLC 117; WSC 60; see also, WCF 21.8) for the promotion of a child's overall welfare and maturity. A close third in order of importance for consideration is the matter of education. It is here—at the nexus of devotion, discipline, and education—that a child's spiritual formation takes place, that his soul is shaped.

Just how important to parents is the instruction of their children? As American Presbyterian theologian and educator R. L. Dabney (1820–1898) has rightly observed, "No parent can fail to resent, with a righteous indignation, the intrusion of any authority between his conscience and convictions and the soul of his child."[3] To repeat the opening words of this article, the instruction of one's children is a concern of hearth and home, a concern of incalculable importance and considerable controversy. Thus, discussions of Christian education and schooling are especially weighty, being both important in their own right and fraught with familial emotion.

What direction does God give to those who desire to glorify Him and secure the good of their children in the matter of Christian "nurture and admonition" (i.e., instruction)? Specifically, is there a biblical mandate for schooling (and specifically Christian schooling) designed as an alternative or supplement to parental instruction? If there is no mandate for such schooling, is there a biblical argument to be made in favor of forming, employing, and supporting Christian schools? It is the purpose of this article to explore the divine mandate for Christian education by delineating the Bible's directions to parents and church leaders in the instruction

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1. Unless otherwise indicated, subsequent Scripture references are taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB1995).

2. This phrase is taken from Joseph P. Engles, *Catechism for Young Children* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1840), p. 10.

3. R.L. Dabney, *Discussions, Volume 4: Secular* (Mexico, MO: Crescent Book House, 1897), p. 244.

of children, particularly as these directions pertain to the matter of formal schooling. Along the way, various approaches to the education of covenant children will be outlined and considered. The conclusion of this article is that while there is no biblical mandate as-such for Christian schools, there is a biblically informed prudential warrant for Christian schools.

This article proceeds with three main parts and a brief conclusion to present the Bible's teaching about Christian education and schools set in the context of the history of American Presbyterianism. The first section presents definitions of "biblical mandate," "prudential warrant," and a variety of options presently extant in the modern West for the education of children. Having established the vocabulary in the first section, the second section describes several influential opinions which have shaped the Christian education movement in the English-speaking world, with particular focus on significant American Reformed and Presbyterian figures. With recent historical trends in the background, the third section sets forth the biblical understanding of the Christian education of children. The final brief section brings the article to a conclusion with a carefully articulated answer to the question "is there a biblical mandate for Christian schools?" Included in the conclusion are summary evaluations of options available to parents.

Definitions

In the consideration of any potentially controversial issue, it is crucially important to lay out acceptable and clear terms for discussion. The terms "biblical mandate," "prudential warrant," "Christian education," "Christian school," "private school," "public school," and "homeschool" are all especially relevant to the matter at-hand in this article. As such, the above terms require careful definition. What immediately follows is a treatment of these terms as they relate to biblical teaching regarding the education of children. For each term, it is the author's aim to be precise without being pedantic.

First in the list of terms for discussion is "biblical mandate," which must be defined according to its constituent parts. For something to be considered "biblical," it must faithfully and coherently relate to or be explicitly expressed in the Bible.[4] For example, the biblical account of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth is recorded primarily in the Gospels, and to a lesser extent in the biblical book of Acts. A faithful summary of Jesus's life and ministry as recorded in the Gospels and Acts would likewise be biblical. Such biblical accounts or summaries are opposed to non-biblical accounts found in the so-called Gnostic Gospels or other contradictory materials published centuries later (e.g. the Quran, the Book of Mormon, etc.).

A "mandate" is simply an authoritative order, directive, or command that must be obeyed by the subordinates to whom it is issued.[5] In matters of applied Christian ethics, the subordinates in question are ethical agents seeking to be obedient to God, who has plainly revealed Himself and His will to man (see WCF 1.1; WLC 2; WSC 2, 3). Thus, a "biblical mandate" is an order or command explicitly stated in, or necessarily inferred from, the teaching of the Bible as God's Word. For example, the Cultural Mandate of Genesis 1:28, the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, the summary of the moral Law found in Matthew 22:37–40 (where Christ references Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, respectively), and the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18–20 are biblical mandates. In these passages, God by His Word mandates human fruitfulness, mankind's rule over nature, the love of God and neighbor, and the evangelization and discipleship of the nations in the upbuilding of Christ's church to the glory of God.

Restatements or necessary implications of the Bible's explicit precepts or approved examples are rightly to be considered "biblical mandates."[6] For example, nowhere does the Bible teach explicitly that men must believe in the doctrine of the Trinity to be saved. However, the Bible teaches that God is Father, Son, and Spirit, and that it is God the Father, Son, and Spirit to whom sinners must repent in faith for eternal life. Such faith and repentance necessitate true knowledge, and thus men must believe in the doctrine of the Trinity in order to be saved. Thus, the command to believe in the

4. It is possible to speak of someone's speech or writing being "biblical" because of stylistic resemblance or imitation of the language of the Bible. This sense of "biblical" is not what is being employed here in this paper.

5. Historically, Presbyterians have referred to the divine right or *jure divino* of some biblical directive, such as the divine right of a particular form of church government (i.e., Presbyterianism). Part One of the famous work by the London Provincial Assembly in defense of Presbyterianism as advocated by the Westminster Assembly, *Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici*, spells out the various ways a divine right may be determined from Scripture. For a recent critical edition of this significant work, see *Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici or The Divine Right of Church Government By Sundry Ministers Within the City of London,* ed. Chris Coldwell (Dallas, TX; Grand Rapids, MI: Naphtali Press; Reformation Heritage Books, 2020), pp. 53–84.

6. See the fine exploration of Westminster Confession of Faith 1.6 by Ryan M. McGraw, *By Good and Necessary Consequence*, Explorations in Reformed Confessional Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), especially pp. 3ff.

doctrine of the Trinity in order to be saved is a "biblical mandate."

In contrast, non-biblical mandates are of two kinds. There are non-biblical mandates that contradict or go beyond Scripture by requiring something which the Bible does not require or otherwise prohibits, such as "popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience" (WCF 22.7). Furthermore, there are non-biblical mandates that obscure or fall short of the full scope of the Bible's counsel on a certain matter, such as the teaching that as long as a Christian worships God on a weekly basis, the day of the week is of no importance. The Westminster Standards directly address this erroneous position at three points (WCF 21.7, WLC 116, WSC 59), each of which may be consulted for confessional development of the observance of the Christian Sabbath on the first day of the week. For the protection of Christian liberty, the proper instruction of the conscience, and the prosecution of acceptable service to God, individual Christians—and especially church leaders—must be able to distinguish "biblical mandates" from non-biblical mandates. For the purposes of this article, it is important to recognize that not all things good or useful for the Christian life should be enforced in terms of a biblical mandate; some matters are better to be recommended under the parameters of the next term.

Second in the list of terms is "prudential warrant," which likewise must be defined according to its parts. For something to be considered "prudential," it must be characterized by practical wisdom, that intangible personal asset that helps men to live well. For example, while it may be equally healthy for someone to order a side of asparagus or a side of onions with his lunch, the prudentially wise man would choose to order asparagus rather than onions before an important job interview to avoid offending the interviewer. The basis of his choice is practical wisdom, or prudence, motivated by principles of conduct derived from Scripture (e.g., do not needlessly offend your neighbor and/or superiors) and informed by knowledge learned from experience (e.g., the scent of onions on a person's breath is offensive to most people). Thus, the man's choice of asparagus over onions is a *prudential* choice. As defined here, the modifier "prudential" is not in any way opposed to "biblical." The two terms are complementary, with the latter shaping and informing the former.

The technical definition of the Latin term *prudentia* as used historically in theological prolegomena likewise describes practical wisdom for life. Richard Muller defines *prudentia* as "the form of knowledge that guides practical judgment by means of universal principles of conduct and action."[7] This practical aspect of theology enjoys a central place in the historical development of the discipline. For example, Genevan Reformed Scholastic theologian Francis Turretin (1623–87) contended that theology "is more practical than theoretical."[8] He continued,

> That theology is more practical than speculative is evident from the ultimate end, which is practice. For although all mysteries are not regulative of operation, they are impulsive to operation. For there is none so theoretical (*theōrēton*) and removed from practice that it does not incite to the love and worship of God. Nor is any theory saving which does not lead to practice (Jn. 13:17; 1 Cor. 13:2; Tit. 1:1; 1 Jn. 2:3, 4; Tit. 2:12).[9]

In Turretin's estimation, theology is theoretical-practical, or a blended discipline of theoretical and practical matters. Dutch theologian Petrus Van Mastricht (1630–1706) likewise wrote, "This theoretical-practical Christian theology is nothing less than the doctrine of living for God through Christ,"[10] an understanding of theology which he sought to develop comprehensively[11] and has been recognized by eminent theologians as both sound and useful.[12]

God's Word does not minimize the value of prudence. In fact, the Bible emphasizes the importance and utility of sanctified practical wisdom without at all denying its spirituality. Several Hebrew and Greek terms found in Scripture refer favorably to prudence. In the Old Testament, the word עָרַם (to be prudent, shrewd, cunning, or sensible) and its cognates describe a range of characters and character traits. Though the term

7. Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology*, 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), p. 252. The author is indebted to Dr. Ryan M. McGraw (Morton H. Smith Professor of Systematic Theology, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary) for this citation, which is drawn from the course outlines for his Prolegomena & Theology course.

8. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Volume 1: First Through Tenth Topics*, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger, vol. 1 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1992), p. 21.

9. Turretin, 1.23.

10. Petrus Van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology, Volume 1: Prolegomena*, ed. Joel R. Beeke, trans. Todd M. Rester, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), p. 98.

11. See Van Mastricht, especially pp. 98–112.

12. For but one example, consider Jonathan Edwards' oft-quoted words in a letter to Joseph Bellamy dated January 15, 1747, that Mastricht's work "is much better than Turretin or any other book in the world, excepting the Bible, in my opinion."

sometimes refers to or describes those who are crafty in their scheming against God and His people,[13] it is most frequently employed in the Hebrew scriptures to describe those who are commended for their wisdom. One of the explicit themes of the Proverbs is "to give prudence to the naïve" (Prov. 1:4; cf. 8:5; 14:15, 18).[14] David is twice described with this word as "prudent" in juxtaposition to the foolishness of Saul (1 Sam. 16:18; 23:22), and God speaking through Jeremiah laments the failure of Edom's historic wisdom and "prudence" in Jeremiah 49:7. A more frequently occurring Hebrew term is שָׂכַל (to be prudent), which generally connotes practical wisdom, circumspection, consideration, and insight leading to prosperity. With the possible (and notable) exception of Gen. 3:6, every use of this term in the Old Testament refers to a commendable person or act, either by direct characterization[15] or by contrast.[16] In the New Testament, the terms φρόνιμος, σώφρων, συνετός, σοφός and their cognates refer to prudence and its direct corollaries.[17] The adjective φρόνιμος (shrewd, wise, prudent) is Christ's term of choice for describing the wisdom of the five young women who were prepared for the appearance of the bridegroom in His parable of the ten bridesmaids in Matthew 25, and His recorded sayings using this term elsewhere in both Matthew's Gospel[18] and Luke's Gospel[19] are positive. Paul uses the same term in an ironic sense to admonish those who are "wise" in their own estimation when writing to the churches in Rome[20] and Corinth.[21] The word σώφρων is Paul's preferred term for describing the prudence or sensibility required of overseers in the church,[22] as well as for the wisdom expected of older saints.[23] The complementary terms συνετός and σοφός are paired in Matthew 11:25 to describe those who are regarded as advanced in learning and understanding. The term σοφός in Ephesians 5:15 and James 3:13 describes one who lives wisely. It is precisely this sort of person that Paul calls for when he writes to the Church in Corinth, "I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man (σοφός) who will be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?" (1 Cor. 6:5f). Defined as practical wisdom, prudence—or perhaps, prudential aptitude—is an indispensable asset for the Christian who wishes to live well. Prudential considerations are certainly not opposed to biblical considerations, and frequently they are identical. Prudential considerations are not only expressed in Scripture, but also shaped by the Holy Spirit's application of God's revealed will to the heart and life of the believer.

While the word "warrant" possesses a technical meaning in the academic discipline of Philosophy in connection with philosophical epistemology,[24] its use here with "prudential" is in a non-technical sense for applied Christian ethics. In this latter sense, "warrant" is simply an authorization, sanction, or justification for pursuing a particular course of action. A warrant differs from a mandate in that the latter is authoritatively commanded and therefore required of an ethical agent whereas the former is merely justified and therefore authorized. Thus, a "prudential warrant" is a sanction derived from practical wisdom informed by Scripture interacting with reason, nature, and experience under the superintending influence of the Holy Spirit.

The remaining terms under consideration in this article are related to each other insofar as they touch on the matter (and manner) of the instruction of children. "Christian education" refers specifically to character formation, nurture, and instruction that is distinctively Christian, being derived from and based upon the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. Dabney's remarks on education in contrast to mere training (i.e., "dexterity in any art") are helpful at this point. He observed, "It is properly the whole man or person that is educated; but the main subject of the work is the spirit. Education is the nurture and development of the whole man for his proper end."[25] Christians recognize that "man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever" (WLC 1; see also WSC 1). Therefore, Christian education is intended explicitly to nurture

13. See Gen. 3:1; Exod. 21:14; Josh. 9:4; Job 5:12, 15:5; Ps. 83:3.

14. See also, Prov. 8:12; 12:16, 23; 13:16; 14:8; 15:5; 19:14; 22:3; 27:12.

15. See Gen. 48:14; Deut. 29:9; 32:29; Josh. 1:7, 8; 1 Sam. 18:5, 14, 15, 30; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 18:7; 1 Chron. 28:19; 2 Chron. 30:22; Neh. 8:13; 9:20; Job 22:2; Pss. 2:10; 32:8; 41:1; 47:7; 64:9; 101:2; 119:99; Prov. 1:3; 10:5, 19; 14:35; 15:24; 16: 20, 23; 17:2, 8; 19:14; 21:11, 12; Isa. 41:20; 52:13; Jer. 3:15; 9:24; 23:5; 50:9; Dan. 1:4, 17; 9:22, 25; 11:33, 35; 12:3, 10; Amos 5:13.

16. See Job 34:27, 35; Pss. 14:2; 36:3; 94:8; 106;7; Prov. 21:16; Isa. 44:18; Jer. 10:21; 20:11; Dan. 9:13.

17. Note that the Septuagint sometimes supplies πανουργία as a translation word for prudence (e.g., Prov. 1:4; 8:5), but New Testament usage of this term reserves it for the more negative concept of skilled craftiness or shrewd trickery (see Luke 20:23; 1 Cor. 3:19; 2 Cor. 4:2; 11:3; Eph. 4:14).

18. See Matt. 7:24; 10:16; 24:45.

19. See Luke 12:42; 16:8, 18.

20. See Rom. 11:25; 12:16.

21. See 1 Cor. 4:10; 10:15; 2 Cor. 11:19.

22. See 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8.

23. See Tit. 2:2, 5, 12.

24. See Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

25. Dabney, *Discussions,* 4.230.

and develop the hearts and souls of students in serving and delighting in the Triune God.

A "Christian school" is a formal and institutional society of students, teachers, and administrators established for the sake of delivering Christian education to enrollees; its oversight model must be confessionally Christian. A "private school" is a formal and institutional society of students, teachers, and administrators established for the sake of delivering education to enrollees; its oversight model must be privately constituted (but not necessarily sectarian, parochial, or explicitly religious). A "public school"[26] is a formal and institutional society of students, teachers, and administrators established for the sake of delivering socially and publicly beneficial education (however defined) to enrollees; its funding and oversight model must be constituted and guaranteed by the government. A "homeschool" is a formal and institutional society of at least one parent or guardian and at least one child established for the sake of providing education to the child(ren) in their home; its oversight model must be determined privately by the parent(s) or guardian(s).

Though these terms as defined are helpful and the distinctions they highlight are important, it is worth noting that significant overlap between categories is possible. For example, the categories of "private school" and "public school" are obviously distinguishable, but private schools usually must secure government approval in order to operate under privately constituted oversight for day-to-day education and administrative operations. Such governmental requirements differ from one jurisdiction to the next, and some "private schools" (e.g., charter schools) are appreciably more beholden than others to public directives and government oversight. Another categorical overlap occurs when there is an established church or some other settlement between the government and religious communities in a jurisdiction. Current and historical examples abound of both "private schools" and "public schools" that are also "Christian schools." Consider, for example, the arrangements that presently exist in both Switzerland and the Netherlands, where there exist publicly funded and overseen (either by the State Church or in cooperation with a recognized Free Church) sectarian schools (e.g., Roman Catholic and Protestant) operating concurrently alongside non-sectarian public schools. Though "Christian schools" in these settings may not maintain a commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture or to the Word of God as determinative of the nature and quality of education, they likely once did.

In most (if not all) industrialized nations, all schools (including homeschools) must conform to certain basic regulations to comply with applicable laws (i.e., for physical safety, the prevention of truancy, and age-appropriate tracking of academic progress). Notwithstanding government reporting requirements for "private schools" and "homeschools," there is no meaningful overlap between the categories of "private school" and "homeschool" on the one hand and of "public school" on the other. There is considerable overlap between "homeschools" and "private schools" when the "homeschool co-op" phenomenon is taken into consideration. Homeschooling families frequently form cooperative associations, or co-ops, to work together by leveraging common efforts, shared resources, and complementary specialties among parents for the purpose of more effectively and efficiently educating their children in extrafamilial groups. Some homeschool co-ops develop into private "Christian schools" (as defined above) over time. Despite the possibility for overlap between categories, the distinctions drawn in this section are helpful for setting the terms of discussion for what follows.

Influential Opinions Shaping the Christian Education Movement

Since at least as early as the mid-nineteenth century, a variety of approaches to Christian education have shaped public opinion in the English-speaking world.[27] The widespread expansion of taxpayer-funded day schools for children as young as six years of age during the nineteenth century was without meaningful (i.e., in terms of sheer scale of penetration into society) historic precedent. Though early American experiments in wedding together church and state for the purpose of government and the education of children are interesting insofar as they illustrate local approaches and attendant developments in education, such efforts had collapsed by the early nineteenth century. By the late nineteenth century, the introduction of compulsory public education in the form of tax-funded public schools in both the American North and (to a lesser extent) the American South ignited an open and vigorous conversation about education which has continued without abatement.

One early and formative champion of compulsory public schooling was Massachusetts politician Horace Mann (1796–1859), who served as the first Secretary of

26. Alternatively, the terms "state school" or "government school" occur frequently in historical and recent literature about schooling. The term "public school" will be employed in this article.

27. For a helpful, if somewhat dated, history of Christian education, see C.B. Eavey, *History of Christian Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964).

the Massachusetts Board of Education (1837–48). In this role, Mann opened "normal schools" for the training of teachers in Massachusetts, argued against sectarian education, and introduced the Prussian-derived "factory school model" to American educators. Mann is widely regarded today as the "father" of modern public education, which is significant considering his determined resistance to any Christian education that included in its curriculum a straightforward exposition of the doctrines of total depravity and the eternal conscious torment of hell for unrepentant sinners.[28] He vigorously campaigned for his policies, oftentimes at great personal expense. His herculean investment of time, energy, and money paid off for his cause.

State governments in the American North enthusiastically adopted many of Mann's policies for the widespread reform of education in the second half of the nineteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century, vastly (twelve times) more American schoolchildren were enrolled in public schools than in private schools,[29] with over 50% of all school-aged children enrolled in a formal school program of some kind.[30] It was in this environment of the increasing prevalence and popularity of non-sectarian public schools that Christian educators, pastors, and intellectuals began to articulate and advocate for an approach to Christian education that could withstand what looked like a secular takeover of schooling.

At the heart of the burgeoning interest in Christian education was explicit support for parental oversight and involvement in the upbringing of children.[31] R. L. Dabney's direct approach to the issue is representative of scholarly advocates for Christian education in late nineteenth-century America. He explicitly identified the locus of oversight and control of education as being in the home. Dabney asserted, "God has provided for the parents social and moral influences so unique, so extensive, that no other earthly power, or all others together, can substitute them in fashioning the child's character."[32] In another place, he wrote forcefully, "The home education is [*sic*] so much more potential than that of the school, that the little *modicum* of training which a "common-school" system can give to the average masses is utterly trivial and impotent as a means of reversing the child's tendency."[33] In other words, the education and resultant character formation of children depend more on parental influence than on any other influence, considered either independent of or in conjunction with all other influences.

Elsewhere, Dabney multiplied arguments from Scripture and reason for the institutional primacy of the family in the Christian education of children. Arguing against the implementation of taxpayer-funded compulsory public schools in Virginia during the period known as Reconstruction following the American Civil War, he risked offending sensitive readers in writing, "It is the teaching of the Bible and of sound political ethics that the education of children belongs to the sphere of the family and is the duty of the parents. The theory that the children of the Commonwealth are the charge of the Commonwealth is a pagan one, derived from heathen Sparta and Plato's heathen republic, and connected by regular, logical sequence with legalized prostitution and the dissolution of the conjugal tie."[34] In yet another essay on education, he expanded on the practical and political benefits of parental oversight in education.

> This old system evinced its wisdom by avoiding the pagan, Spartan theory, which makes the State the parent. It left the parent supreme in his God-given sphere, as the responsible party for providing and directing the education of his own offspring. This old plan, instead of usurping, encouraged and assisted, where assistance was needed. It was wise again, in that it avoided creating salaried offices to eat up the people's money, and yet do no actual teaching. It was supremely wise, in that it cut the Gordian knot, "Religion in the State school," which now baffles British and Yankee wit. It set that insuperable difficulty clear on one side, by leaving the school as the creature of the parents, and not of the State. It was wise in its exceeding economy, a trait so essential to the State now.[35]

28. For a biographical sketch of Horace Mann, sympathetically detailing his emphatic rejection of his Calvinist Christian upbringing, see Barbara Finkelstein, "Perfecting Childhood: Horace Mann and the Origins of Public Education in the United States," *Biography* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1990): pp. 6–20.

29. Thomas D. Snyder, ed., *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait* (Washington D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, 1993), p. 36.

30. Snyder, ed., *120 Years of American Education,* p. 14.

31. One notable exception to this rule was the position of Southern Presbyterian luminary James Henley Thornwell (1812–1862) who argued in favor of public schooling, believing that secular education was the responsibility of the state and outside the spiritual mission of the church. For Thornwell's argument, see Benjamin Morgan Palmer, *The Life and Letters of James Henley Thornwell, Ex-President of the South Carolina College, Late Professor of Theology in the Theological Seminary at Columbia, South Carolina* (Richmond, VA: Whittet and Shepperson, 1875), pp. 325–38.

32. Dabney, *Discussions,* 4.244.

33. Dabney, *Discussions*, 4.197.

34. Dabney, *Discussions*, 4.194.

35. Dabney, *Discussions*, 4.189f.

Thus, Dabney reasoned, the state as-such may properly assist the family as-such in the education of children through subsidizing the erection of parent-supervised schools, but it must avoid the tendency to inflate an administrative bureaucracy that unavoidably burdens the taxpayer. In Dabney's argument, protecting the prerogative of parents to direct the education of their children has the practical benefit of eliminating the need for administrative bloat. Tragically, Dabney's insightful critique of the introduction of "common-schools" in Virginia was stained by his racially charged—and thus sinfully embittered—critique of attempts to extend equal rights in terms of both suffrage and formal day school education access to Freedmen and their children (respectively) after the American Civil War. Despite Dabney's unmistakable disapprobation for the education of black Americans during Reconstruction, his main concern was to condemn government control of the education and character formation of children.

In his longest single article against "secularized education," Dabney posed the question, "Is the direction of education of children either a civic or an ecclesiastical function? Is it not properly a domestic and parental function?"[36] The answer he furnished to his readers involves four considerations. First, Scripture teaches that God created marriage (and thus, the family) for the propagation of a godly seed by which the earth would be filled with a blessed humanity. Furthermore, both the Fifth Commandment and the sequence of redemptive history relate children directly to parents, and only by inference and extension to all other lawful authorities. That is, Scripture teaches that parental authority is fundamentally prior to the authority of either church or state, presbyter or magistrate. Second, Dabney argued that the providence of God as operative in nature shows that education is a parental right and obligation because children inevitably inherit their social status (e.g., wealth, position, responsibilities, reputation) from their parents. Third, as stated above, parental influence far eclipses and surpasses that of any other influence on the formation of a child's character. Thus, education is fundamentally a home enterprise. Fourth, and most significantly for Dabney, "the heart's own instinct" is decisively in favor of regarding the parent's place as first in right and importance in the education of children. Dabney wrote,

> But the best argument here is the heart's own instinct. No parent can fail to resent, with a righteous indignation, the intrusion of any authority between his conscience and convictions and the soul of his child. If the father conscientiously believes that his own creed is true and righteous and obligatory before God, then he must intuitively regard the intrusion of any other power between him and his minor child, to cause the rejection of that creed, as a usurpation. The freedom of mind of the child alone, when become an adult, and his father's equal can justly interpose. If this usurpation is made by the visible church, it is felt to be in the direction of popery, if by the magistrate, in the direction of depotism [sic].[37]

Far from being an assertion of mere sentiment between parents and their children, Dabney's elaboration on this point is an argument from the father's deliberate and conscientious concern for his child's mental and spiritual development. Dabney contended that not only can neither state nor church rival the father's concern, but they must not attempt to usurp it, lest they transgress the divinely decreed bounds of their activity. Defining the church, the state, and the family as circles or spheres[38] of jurisdiction, Dabney argued, "God has immediately and authoritatively instituted three organisms for man on earth, the State, the visible Church, and the Family, and these are co-ordinate in rights and mutual independence. The State or Church has no more right to invade the parental sphere than the parent to invade theirs."[39] Among those functions belonging to the sphere of the family is the direction of the education of children. While Dabney did recognize important roles for both the state and the church in the education of children—in the support of faithful parents and in the punishment of wrongdoers—the essence of his argument against state control of education is that education and its oversight is fundamentally a function of

36. Dabney, *Discussions,* 4.243.

37. Dabney, *Discussions,* 4.244.

38. Dabney's formulation on this point resembles the "sphere sovereignty" doctrine attributed to Dutch Reformed theologian, pastor, publisher, and politician Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920). Kuyper's influence on the development of the global Christian education movement cannot be overstated, though his influence in the American context is mediated primarily through twentieth-century authors and educators in the Dutch Reformed tradition, some of whom receive limited interaction in this article. For more on Kuyper's views on education newly translated into English and published in authoritative scholarly editions, see the relevant portions of Abraham Kuyper, *Our Program: A Christian Political Manifesto*, ed. Harry Van Dyke, Collected Works in Public Theology (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015); Abraham Kuyper, *Pro Rege: Living Under Christ the King*, ed. John H. Kok, 3 vols., Collected Works in Public Theology (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016–2019); Abraham Kuyper, *On Education*, ed. Melvin Flikkema and Jordan J. Ballor, Collected Works in Public Theology (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019).

39. Dabney, *Discussions,* 4.245.

the home and the prerogative of parents. He wrote in conclusion,

> Let us suppose, then, that both State and Church recognize the parent as the educating power; that they assume towards him an ancillary instead of a dominating attitude; that the State shall encourage individual and voluntary efforts by holding the impartial shield of legal protection over all property which may be devoted to education; that it shall encourage all private efforts; and that in its eleemosynary character it shall aid those whose poverty and misfortunes disable them from properly rearing their own children. Thus the insoluble problems touching religion in State schools would be solved, because the State was not the responsible creator of the schools, but the parents. Our educational system might present less mechanical symmetry, but it would be more flexible, more practical, and more useful.[40]

Several decades later, Presbyterian theologian and educator J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937) articulated similar sentiments in calling for a renewal of vital spirituality in America. "Whatever be the causes for the growth of ignorance in the Church, the evil must be remedied. It must be remedied primarily by the renewal of Christian education in the family, but also by the use of whatever other educational agencies the Church can find."[41] More explicitly and emphatically than Dabney, Machen identified a complementary role for the Christian (or church) school in what he believed to be primarily the work of the family. In a 1933 address originally delivered before the Educational Convention of the National Union of Christian Schools in Chicago, Machen argued strenuously against State-controlled education and in favor of Christian schools, "Against this monopoly of education by the State, the Christian school brings a salutary protest."[42] The basis of Machen's argument for 'The Necessity of the Christian School' (the title of his address) is that it complements and protects the parental prerogative to oversee the education of children. Immediately following his commendation of the Christian school, Machen observed that "it contends for the right of parents to bring up their children in accordance with the dictates of their conscience and not in the manner prescribed by the state."[43] Machen championed the Christian school for its usefulness to the Christian family as a helping institution.

In considering the development of modern civilization and its attendant complexity, certain other early twentieth-century authors took a different approach and attenuated the role of the home in the instruction of children. For example, Mainline Presbyterian Christian educator and theologian Lewis Joseph Sherrill (1892–1957)[44] wrote, "But an efficient piece of teaching work in the home grows more difficult with every year of our developing civilization."[45] To address problems stemming from societal complexity, Sherrill advocated for stronger cooperation between church and the family[46] while suggesting an expanded cooperative role for the state.[47] Sherrill's openness to cooperation between the church and family on one hand and the state on the other stands in contrast to theologically more conservative and socially less progressive American Presbyterian voices (e.g., Machen and Dabney) which had decisively denied any legitimacy to the state's claim to provide non-sectarian education to children on behalf of parents.

Likewise rejecting a totalitarian role for the atheistic state in the education of children, certain American Reformed theologians in the Dutch tradition[48] recognized the historical and biblical claims of the family in the education of children. However, these same theologians granted weightier emphasis to the church as a partner in the education of children through the establishment of Christian schools. Philosopher and professor W. H. Jellema (1893–1982) wrote, "No argument is needed, I take it, to show that such a world and life view rooted in the Christian faith will issue in Christian education. That it must necessarily issue in what we today mean

40. Dabney, *Discussions,* 4.247.

41. J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1923), p. 177.

42. J. Gresham Machen, *Selected Shorter Writings*, ed. D. G. Hart (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2004), p. 162.

43. Machen, *Selected Shorter Writings,* p. 162.

44. For a thorough biographical sketch of Lewis Joseph Sherrill available freely online from Talbot School of Theology's "Christian Educators of the 20th Century" database, consult Susan Schriver and C. Ellis Nelson, "Lewis Joseph Sherrill," accessed September 20, 2022, https://biola.edu/talbot/ce20/database/lewis-joseph-sherrill; for a sympathetic analysis of Sherrill's contribution to the development of Christian education in the early twentieth century, see Roy W. Fairchild, "The Contribution of Lewis J. Sherrill to Christian Education," *Religious Education* 53, no. 5 (1958): pp. 403–11.

45. Lewis Joseph Sherrill, *Presbyterian Parochial Schools, 1846–1870*, Yales Studies in Religious Education (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 195.

46. Sherrill, *Presbyterian Parochial Schools,* pp. 193–200.

47. Sherrill, *Presbyterian Parochial Schools,* pp. 199–204.

48. For a brief historical account and analysis of nineteenth-century Dutch debates surrounding the so-called "School Question," see John Bolt, *A Free Church, A Holy Nation: Abraham Kuyper's American Public Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 332–39.

by the Christian school is not so obvious."[49] Nevertheless, Jellema sought to argue on the basis of worldview theory the theological necessity of Christian schools.

Though Jellema sought to prove that the creation of Christian schools is a necessary "outgrowth" of a Reformed world-and-life-view, his arguments tending toward that conclusion do not flow necessarily from Scripture. For example, Jellema remarked in reference to content derived from advanced grade-school education, "obviously if the parent or the minister is somehow to provide this element he will not only have to be constantly present in the classroom and have the knowledge which the teacher possesses but will himself have to do the teaching."[50] Just as Jellema argued that it cannot be expected that public schools can adequately provide all that is needful for a Christian education, so too he argued that the family and the church fall short of imparting a fully orbed world and life view. These supposed shortcomings necessitate the erection of an independent institution, namely the Christian school.

Another example of this line of argumentation is seen in the sole publication of Dutch-Canadian Christian educator and advocate D. L. Kranendonk, who put forward a biblical mandate for Christian schools in his book *Christian Day Schools: Why and How*. After establishing the biblical basis for home-based instruction in the things of the Lord, Kranendonk opined, "The family, however, is not able to satisfy all the educational needs of the child in today's complex society."[51] To address this deficiency, the family—which has "particular accountability" for the education of children—must, according to Kranendonk, resort to cooperative efforts with the church—which has "general supportive responsibility" for helping the family to fulfill its responsibility.[52] While dealing in abstract theological concepts (i.e., worldview theory, and relationships of responsibility), neither Jellema nor Kranendonk brought Scripture to bear directly on their respective discussions of the necessity of Christian schools. Nevertheless, they argued for a theological—if not biblical—mandate for Christian day schools.

Far from proving a biblical mandate for Christian schools, Jellema's and Kranendonk's arguments instead suggest a prudential warrant for such schools. This is the precise point of popular Classical Christian School educator Doug Wilson when he wrote about forty years after Jellema, "I believe that a Christian school provides Christian parents with the most efficient way to take responsibility for the education of their children, while at the same time ensuring that true education actually happens. In other words, because there is a division of labor a thorough education can be provided."[53] Wilson here suggests that a thorough education is not possible apart from some kind of division of labor in the educational enterprise, with the Christian school representing the most efficient and effective means of dividing said labor. Ultimately, this statement proves—if anything—only a prudential warrant for the establishment of the Christian school as an alternative to the purportedly less efficient and effective option of homeschooling. Though the arguments from Jellema and Kranendonk—and the suggestion from Wilson—do not ultimately prove a biblical mandate for the creation, utilization, and sustentation of Christian schools, there does exist a line of argumentation for grounding and promoting the creation of Christian schools in something more compelling than mere prudential warrant.

Christian educator and psychologist Arnold H. DeGraaff developed a more thoroughly theological argument to establish the need for Christian schools. In doing so, he sought to derive a distinctively theological mandate for Christian schools from the pairing together of God's Word in Scripture and the revelation of God's will in creation. Allowing for a certain limited open-endedness in Scripture's directions to parents in the matter of child-rearing and education, DeGraaff wrote provocatively,

> The inscripturated Word of God alone, therefore, is not sufficient to determine the specific structure of educational activities and relationships…. We *believe* that all of creation, mankind included, is subject to God's law and that He reveals His will not only in the Scriptures but also in the order of creation. If we are to gain an insight into the peculiar features of child-rearing and other forms of education, we must turn to the educational process itself and seek to discover the *norms* that govern this process.[54]

Far from being an argument against Scripture, DeGraaff's approach synthesizes scriptural principles and

49. W. Harry Jellema, "The Christian School a Prerequisite for and an Outgrowth of the Calvinistic World and Life View," in *Fundamentals in Christian Education: Theory and Practice*, ed. Cornelius Jaarsma (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1953), p. 70.

50. Jellema, "The Christian School," p. 72.

51. D.L. Kranendonk, *Christian Day Schools: Why and How* (St. Catharines, ON: Paideia Press, 1978), p. 58.

52. Kranendonk, *Christian Day Schools,* p. 59.

53. Douglas Wilson, *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning: An Approach to Distinctively Christian Education*, Turning Point Christian Worldview Series (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), p. 127.

54. Arnold H. DeGraaff, *The Educational Ministry of the Church: A Perspective* (Nutley, NJ: The Craig Press, 1968), p. 114.

creational insights to put forward what he believed to be a thoroughly biblical mandate. Ultimately, however, the heart of his argument rests on the perceived—as observed from "the order of creation"—deficiency of parents in the education of their children. DeGraaff argued that parents could not adequately prepare their children on their own ability, "since they themselves are dependent upon others for their understanding of God's law."[55] This dynamic is evident from the author's understanding of Matthew 28:16–20, in which the disciples—and by extension, the churches they will plant—are commissioned collectively (or *covenantally*) to disciple the nations. For DeGraaff, this dependence upon others is proven not only by experience and common sense, but also by the covenantal nature of reality as described by God in His Word. In developing his appeal to the covenantal nature of reality and revelation for his argument in favor of Christian schools, DeGraaff contended first that the covenantal bond between God and man is not limited to or even primarily mediated through the family. On the contrary, "all of life and all relationships seem to be encompassed and determined by this religious bond."[56] Furthermore, DeGraaff contested the claim—articulated in one instance by R. L. Dabney cited above—that God established parental authority as utterly unique. He concluded,

> If, as we have maintained, there is no essential difference in the nature of the various types of authority, if other persons as well as parents are under divine obligation to lead and to instruct, and if all such relationships must first of all be looked at in the light of the covenant between God and man, that is, if all such nurture must be seen as religiously directed education, then it is impossible to find the normative structure and the most characteristic features of child-rearing (only) in the direct command of God, the nature of parental authority, and the covenant relation as it comes to expression in the family.[57]

This line of argument allows for the extension, replication, and even substitution of filial nurture and instruction as defined in Scripture into other contexts (e.g., the Christian school), thus dismantling the uniqueness of the family as a covenantal community instituted by God for the "nurture and admonition" of children (among other purposes).

However, neither the conclusion nor the logic of DeGraaff's argument are demanded by Scripture. On the contrary, DeGraaff's argument seems to transgress the delicate balance that exists between the church and the family at the domain level. Each society—the church and the family—has within its purview a certain jurisdiction, field, domain, or sphere of function and authority. However, the family is the root out of which the church (and the state) grows. Right was Dabney when he preached, "The Christian family is the constituent integer of the church—the kingdom of redemption."[58] Colonial American Presbyterian pastor, preacher, and evangelist Samuel Davies (1723–61) similarly characterized the family, or household, as "a radical society from which all others are derived,"[59] with Christian families being designed by God as "nurseries for heaven."[60] Collapsing the distinctions that exist between church, state, school, and family is not only unnecessary when reasoning from Scripture, but even opposed to clear Scriptural teaching on this point as expressed by Dabney, Davies, and countless others.

A Biblical Understanding of Christian Education & Schooling

Though volumes have been written on a Christian philosophy of education,[61] a brief consideration of three commonly cited passages of Scripture will suffice for the purposes of this article as an examination of the Bible's teaching on education in connection with the formation and use of Christian schools. Each of the three following passages includes explicit precepts for framing a biblical vision for Christian education. Notably, nowhere do these passages (or any other passages, to the author's knowledge) demand the formation and use of Christian schools. However, they do establish a prudential warrant for Christian schools for those parents

55. DeGraaff, *The Educational Ministry of the Church,* p. 117.
56. DeGraaff, *The Educational Ministry of the Church,* p. 96.
57. DeGraaff, *The Educational Ministry of the Church,* p. 98.
58. R.L. Dabney, *Discussions, Volume 1: Theological and Evangelical* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1890), pp. 692f.
59. Samuel Davies, "Sermon XXIX: The Necessity and Excellence of Family Religion," in *The Sermons of Samuel Davies in Three Volumes*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1854), p. 82.
60. Davies, "Sermon XXIX, " p. 84.
61. For several worthwhile examples, see Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian Philosophy of Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1946); Cornelius Van Til, *Essays on Christian Education* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1974); H.W. Byrne, *A Christian Approach to Education: Educational Theory and Application*, Second Edition (Milford, MI: Mott Media, 1977); Louis Berkhof and Cornelius Van Til, *Foundations of Christian Education: Addresses to Christian Teachers*, ed. Dennis E. Johnson (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 1990); George R. Knight, *Philosophy & Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective*, 4th Edition (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006).

who wish to have recourse to such institutions for the Christian education of their children. The three passages under consideration here are Deuteronomy 6:4–9, Psalm 78:1–8, and Ephesians 6:4.

Deuteronomy 6:4–9 is a foundational text in the Torah, or Law of Moses. The passage reads,

> Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Moses—speaking as *the* authorized prophet of God and on behalf of God—in this passage commanded the people of Israel to instruct their children in the Word of God (i.e., the narrative of God's mighty acts of deliverance and the book of His authoritative Law), much as he did in Deuteronomy 4:9, at which point he directed the people of Israel, "Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons." In Deuteronomy 6:7, Moses described the arena for such instruction as the home when he directed the people to teach their children "when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." Furthermore in verse nine, the people are to inscribe the instruction of God "on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." References to domestic life are abundant in these few verses, and the picture is one of homes saturated with the Word of God. Morning and evening, mealtimes, at-home conversations, even entrance and exit into the home, were signally marked and covered by God's Word. In this comprehensive picture of daily life in God's Word, there is no direct mention of formal schooling or tutoring outside the parent-child relationship.

In Psalm 78:1–8, the Psalmist (Asaph, according to the superscription) prefaced a memorial of God's mighty deeds of redemption in the history of Israel with a commitment to fulfill the duties of parents as outlined in Deuteronomy 6:4–9. The Psalm reads,

> Listen, O my people, to my instruction; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not conceal them from their children, but tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children, that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments, and not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not prepare its heart and whose spirit was not faithful to God.

The Psalmist committed to "tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done." Familial language characterizes this poetic description of the prophetic commission to proclaim the excellencies of God to the rising generation. The prophet positioned himself and his task as complementary in relation to fathers in the covenant community, or nation of Israel (i.e., the Old Testament church). Referencing the message he had been entrusted to speak in verses two and three, he resolved, "I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us." But in the opening clause of the following verse, he characterized his audience as "their children," with the possessive pronoun (the third-person masculine plural pronominal possessive suffix in Hebrew) referring to the fathers of Israel. He was not supplanting the role of the fathers but complementing it as he addressed "their children." While the manner of transmitting the inherited narrative of God's salvation in verses five through seven is not specified, neither are schools as-such mandated for the purpose of fulfilling this covenant obligation. In fact, any argument in favor of a biblical mandate for Christian schools must acknowledge from verse eight that it seems as though the prophet's task insofar as it takes up and fulfills the responsibility of parents to instruct their children is necessitated by the sinfulness (and probably neglect) of the fathers, who are characterized as "a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not prepare its heart and whose spirit was not faithful to God." There may be prudential warrant for Christian schooling in an environment that resembles the desperate spiritual

situation described in Psalm 78:8, but it does not necessarily follow that there is a biblical mandate for extrafamilial Christian schools. Furthermore, the function of the prophet as described in Psalm 78 is more properly that which belongs to the church and its ordained ministry than that which must be performed by an institutional school distinct from the worshipping community.

Finally, Ephesians 6:4 presents direct instruction to fathers in the rearing of their children. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul directed, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the phrase "discipline and instruction" is famously rendered in the King James Version as "nurture and admonition." From this verse, fathers—and by extension, all parents—are to be immediately invested in the lives of their children. Taken together with the texts from Deuteronomy and the Psalms cited and reproduced above, there is clear continuity between the Old and New Testaments on the matter of Christian education. The education of children is the concern of parents. That is not to say that Christian parents cannot take advantage of, institute, or promote extrafamilial means of educating their children. Rather, Christians parents—and arguably, fathers in particular—are ultimately responsible to ensure their children receive and profit from explicitly Christian education under the Lordship of Christ, who according to Matthew 28:18 has received from His Father all authority in heaven and on earth and is indeed the Lord described in Ephesians 6:4.[62] At this point, schools are not introduced or mandated in any way, though certainly they are neither disallowed nor discouraged. The Bible's teaching on the daily and ongoing instruction of children is emphatically familial and ecclesiastical rather than scholastic without abnegating the permissibility and usefulness of schools. Such being the case, there are two potential examples of schools in Scripture.

The first potential example of a school society (as opposed to a possible tutoring arrangement) in Scripture is described in 1 Samuel 19:18–24, which reports on David's flight from Saul and arrival first at Ramah, and then at Naioth. The passage reads,

> Now David fled and escaped and came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth. It was told Saul, saying, "Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah." Then Saul sent messengers to take David, but when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing and presiding over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul; and they also prophesied. When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. So Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. Then he himself went to Ramah and came as far as the large well that is in Secu; and he asked and said, "Where are Samuel and David?" And someone said, "Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah." He proceeded there to Naioth in Ramah; and the Spirit of God came upon him also, so that he went along prophesying continually until he came to Naioth in Ramah. He also stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

At Naioth, Samuel was presiding over a company, or school, of the prophets. This gathering was not a precedent for today's Christian schools, though it would be appropriate to draw a parallel to modern-day theological seminaries.[63] Longtime seminary professor and first President of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. writes,

> Apparently theological training schools were begun under Samuel with those who were called the "sons of the prophets." We find the first mention of the group of the company of the prophets in 1 Samuel 10:5, 10 (see also 1 Samuel 19:19, 20; 1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 15; 4:1, 38; 5:22; 6:1). The prophetic office developed in Israel under the tutelage of Samuel. Men studied in these schools as they prepared to serve as prophets.[64]

While the historical existence of the schools of the prophets sanctions the formation of schools for specialized training of men for service in the covenant community or Kingdom of God (i.e., Christian society),[65] it does not necessarily demand the employment of Christian schools for the delivery of Christian education to child members of the covenant community. A second potential example of a school program in Scripture is found in Acts 22:3 where Paul testified before the Sanhedrin that he was "educated under Gamaliel, strictly

Continued on Page 276.

62. Kuyper, *Pro Rege*, 2.447ff.

63. cf., Clark, *A Christian Philosophy of Education*, pp. 199f.

64. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., "Seminary Education," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007): 223.

65. For a presentation of the relationship between the church as-such and the Kingdom of God more broadly conceived of as Christian society, see Geerhardus Vos, *The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Church* (New York: American Tract Society, 1903), pp. 161ff.

Paul and the Septuagint Psalter:
Reckoning with Intra-Canonical Exegesis Concerning Our Sung Praises

By Harrison Perkins

Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 5:18–19 that we be "filled with the Spirit by speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι, λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς [ἐν] ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς) has often fueled the Christian imagination concerning our sung praises in corporate worship. We have perhaps, at times, lost sight of how Paul clearly taught that singing these types of songs should be actions of *speaking to one another*, addressing fellow believers with the truth for edification rather than experientially loaded personal blessings, but nonetheless have been intrigued by his clear admonition to sing.[1] Reflections upon Paul's exhortation have been, to say the least, varied in their conclusions, ranging from a clear perception that he was enjoining exclusive psalmody to equally firm conviction that he commanded us to write our own praise and worship choruses.

The debate is certainly not a new one but goes back to the earliest days of the Reformation. However, this article's goal is not to answer this question directly, even if the author's own views will be somewhat obvious. The intent is to provide a fuller account of the data that must be considered exegetically in this question in order to reach conclusions grounded in proper biblical interpretation and to remove to some extent the strangeness many find in the idea that Paul refers to the book of Psalms. The main upshot is that we should not import our own preconceived notions into Paul's categories of songs but should at least explore whether there is exegetical information that clarifies his meaning in terms of intra-canonical coherence. This article's primary consideration is that the Greek words Paul used to exhort us to sing to the Lord come from the Septuagint translation of the Psalter. This point itself is not groundbreaking and has played a major role in these discussions for some time. This article's contribution, however, is in trying to press further into this data in order to prompt more holistic interpretation of all the issues involved in Paul's intertextual references. Arguably, the main benefit of this article is the table that presents the data of the Greek and Hebrew headings from the Psalter more comprehensively and straightforwardly than simple lists of texts, which hopefully facilitates more in-depth research on its basis.

Concerning the headings within the Psalter, the Septuagint translators did not force any one-to-one correspondence between any particular Greek and Hebrew words. For instance, שִׁיר is usually translated ᾠδὴ, and both are rendered in English as "song." In two examples, however, מִזְמוֹר is translated ᾠδὴ (Ps. 4; 38[LXX]). The interesting feature about this glossing is that, typically, the Septuagint used ψαλμός to translate מִזְמוֹר, indicating that these two Greek words could both refer to the same sort of song, which is labeled in the ESV with "Psalm." There are numerous examples also where other instances of lexical flexibility occur. For instance, in Psalm 7, ψαλμός is used to translate שִׁגָּיוֹן, which is rendered in English as "Shiggaion," showing how the Septuagint translators did not even pin the word used as the title of the Psalter to a one-to-one correspondence with a particular Hebrew word.

The Septuagint vocabulary also extends beyond simply the use of ψαλμόις, ὕμνοις, and ᾠδαῖς. It includes other categories—such as the στηλογραφία (Pss. 15, 55–59 LXX), σύνεσιν (Pss. 31, 41, 43–44, 51–52, 73, 77, 88, 141 LXX), and Ἀλληλουϊά that have no related heading in

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1. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians,* New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), pp. 380–81.

the Masoretic Text or English translations (Pss. 104–106, 113–118, 135 LXX)—highlighting not only the Psalter's internal diversity in terms of perceived form and content for the songs God inspired, but also the flexibility of the Septuagint's translators.

The event in 2 Chronicles 7:6, whereby the temple was dedicated, provides striking insight into the translation issues already noted, illumining the categories assigned to the Psalter.

> καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐπὶ τὰς φυλακὰς αὐτῶν ἑστηκότες, καὶ οἱ Λευῖται ἐν ὀργάνοις ᾠδῶν κυρίου τοῦ Δαυιδ τοῦ βασιλέως τοῦ ἐξομολογεῖσθαι ἔναντι κυρίου ὅτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ ἐν ὕμνοις Δαυιδ διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν, καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς σαλπίζοντες ταῖς σάλπιγξιν ἐναντίον αὐτῶν, καὶ πᾶς Ισραηλ ἑστηκώς.
>
> "and the priests, were standing upon their posts, as well as the Levites with instruments for songs for the Lord, those written by King David, with the purpose of confessing before the Lord that his mercy endures forever by using David's hymns through their hand, and the priests sounded the trumpet before them and all Israel stood."

For the people's corporate worship, they used "songs for the Lord" (ᾠδῶν κυρίου) but specifically those "written by King David" (τοῦ Δαυιδ τοῦ βασιλέως). As they sang these songs, the text was clear that they confessed the Lord's everlasting mercy "by using David's hymns" (ἐν ὕμνοις Δαυιδ). This apposition shows that ᾠδὴ and ὑμνὸς can both refer to the exact same song, since the priests and Levites sang their ᾠδὴ by using a ὑμνὸς by David. Notably, these *hymns*, which are *odes*, would be the songs David wrote that are now contained in the Psalter. The connection at least between ὑμνὸς and the Psalter is substantiated in Matthew 26:30 where "after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (ὑμνήσαντες ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν). Given the context of the Passover, undoubtedly the "hymn" they sang was from the Hallel Psalms, most likely Psalm 118.[2]

The lexical data involved in understanding Paul's reference to psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is then quite complex, involving several exegetical and translation issues. This article has not aimed to settle those complexities with any resolute conclusions but to reckon more thoroughly with some of the raw data that must be considered for proper exegesis of the passage. The analysis above is somewhat minimal, but the chart below has—for the first time as far as I'm aware—collated the headings from the Psalter according to the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text to facilitate further investigation, now having a full presentation of the exegetical information to interpret.

The following chart then opens a number of avenues for exegetical investigation, a few of which might be suggested here. First, there is significant work to be done concerning how the Septuagint used some terms apparently interchangeably in regard to the translation of some Hebrew words. The most prominent example likely pertains to the varying translations of the Hebrew מִזְמוֹר and the reasons that might explain those variations. Second, the instances where the Septuagint uses the terms under consideration in nearly apposite fashion would deepen our understanding of the semantic range for these lexemes but also strengthen our insight into how these terms inform the way we should understand the form and content of particular psalms. This issue pertains perhaps most precisely to the relationship of ψαλμός and ᾠδὴ. Third, there are a number of categorical headings in the Septuagint Psalter which Paul did not mention in Ephesians 5:19, which is worth considering in terms of the implications for what type of Psalm those are and Paul's intent in listing out types of songs we should sing. Is his exhortation exhaustive, the regulative principle then suggesting that we should not sing the other types of Psalms in new covenant worship, or summary, broadly directing us to the Psalter to find songs that Christians should sing? The latter seems more likely, but further exegesis can substantiate these points more precisely. More avenues of investigation will of course present themselves as exegesis specifies new conclusions, but these suggestions here provide a sketch of some ways forward.

Below is a table, displaying the headings according to the Greek Septuagint, the Hebrew Masoretic Text, and several notable English translations head each Psalm. Please note that the Septuagint numbering of the Psalms differs from the Hebrew Psalter and that the English versions follow the Hebrew numbering.

2. Herbert W. Basser with Marsha B. Cohen, *The Gospel of Matthew and Judaic Traditions: A Relevance-based Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p. 674; David L. Turner, *Matthew.* Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), p. 626; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew,* New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), p. 996; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28,* Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1995), p. 774; Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew,* New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), p. 392; concerning the parallel in Mark 14:26, see also R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 574–75; William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark,* New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans,1974), p. 509.

LXX/MT	LXX[3]	MT[4]	KJV[5]	Geneva 1615[6]	ESV
1	—	—	—	—	—
2	—	—	—	—	—
3	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
4	ψαλμός/ᾠδὴ	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
5	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
6	ὕμνοις/ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
7	ψαλμός	שִׁגָּיוֹן	Shiggaion	Shiggaion	Shiggaion
8	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
9	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
10/11	ψαλμός	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
11/12	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
12/13	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
13/14	ψαλμός	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
14/15	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
15/16	στηλογραφία	מִכְתָּם	Miktam	Miktam	—
16/17	προσευχὴ	תְּפִלָּה	prayer	prayer	(prayer)[7]
17/18	ᾠδῆς	שִׁירָה	[Psalm]* song	[Psalm]* song	[Psalm]* song[8]
18/19	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
19/20	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
20/21	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
21/22	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
22/23	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
23/24	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
24/25	ψαλμός	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
25/26	—	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
26/27	—	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
27/28	—	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
28/29	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
29/30	ψαλμός/ᾠδῆς	מִזְמוֹר/ שִׁיר	Psalm/song	Psalm/song	Psalm/song
30/31	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
31/32	συνέσεως	מַשְׂכִּיל	Psalm/Maskil	Psalm/instruction	—
32/33	—	—	—	—	—
33/34	—	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
34/35	—	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
35/36	—	—	Psalm	Psalm	—

3. Alfred Rahlfs (ed.), *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979).

4. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Hendrickson Publishers, 2007).

5. *The Holy Bible, containing the Olde Testament, and the New. Newly translated out of the Originall Tongues and with the former Translations diligently compared and revised, by his Maesties ſpecially Commandement* (London: Robert Barker, 1617) [KJV].

6. *The Bible, that is the Holy Scriptures conteined in the Old and New Testament. Translated according to the Ebrew and Greeke,* etc. (London: Robert Barker, 1615) [Geneva Bible].

7. In this instance, the ESV does include the heading but has incorporated it into the Psalm's actual lines.

8. The heading "Psalm" is included in the English translation but not in the MT or LXX.

LXX/MT	LXX	MT	KJV	Geneva 1615	ESV
36/37	—	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
37/38	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
38/39	ᾠδὴ	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
39/40	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
40/41	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm/remembrance	Psalm/remembrance	Psalm
41/42	σύνεσιν	מַשְׂכִּיל	Maskil	Psalm/instruction	Maskil
42/43	ψαλμός	—	—	—	—
43/44	σύνεσιν ψαλμός	מַשְׂכִּיל	—	Psalm/instruction	Maskil
44/45	σύνεσιν/ᾠδὴ	מַשְׂכִּיל/ שִׁיר	Maskil/song	Song/instruction	Maskil/song
45/46	ψαλμός	שִׁיר	song	Song	song
46/47	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
47/48	ψαλμός/ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר/ מִזְמוֹר	Song/psalm	Song/psalm	song/Psalm
48/49	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
49/50	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
50/51	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
51/52	συνέσεως	מַשְׂכִּיל	Maskil/Psalm	Psalm/instruction	Maskil
52/53	συνέσεως	מַשְׂכִּיל	Maskil/Psalm	Psalm/instruction	Maskil
53/54	ὕμνοις/συνέσεως	נְגִינֹת/ מַשְׂכִּיל	Maskil/Psalm	Psalm/instruction	(instruments)/ Maskil
54/55	ὕμνοις/συνέσεως	נְגִינֹת/מַשְׂכִּיל	Maskil/Psalm	Psalm/instruction	Maskil
55/56	στηλογραφίαν	מִכְתָּם	Miktam	Psalm/Miktam	Miktam
56/57	στηλογραφίαν	מִכְתָּם	Miktam	Psalm/Miktam	Miktam[9]
57/58	στηλογραφίαν	מִכְתָּם	Miktam	Psalm/Miktam	Miktam
58/59	στηλογραφίαν	מִכְתָּם	Miktam	Psalm/Miktam	Miktam
59/60	στηλογραφίαν	מִכְתָּם	Miktam	Psalm/teach	Miktam
60/61	ὕμνοις	נְגִינֹת	Psalm	Psalm	(instruments)
61/62	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
62/63	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
63/64	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
64/65	ψαλμός/ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר /מִזְמוֹר	Psalm/song	Psalm/song	Psalm/song
65/66	ᾠδὴ ψαλμοῦ	שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר	Song/Psalm	Song/Psalm	—
66/67	ἐν ὕμνοις· ψαλμὸς ᾠδῆς	בִּנְגִינֹת מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר	Psalm/song	Psalm/song	(instruments) Psalm/song.
67/68	ψαλμὸς ᾠδῆς	מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר	Psalm/song	Psalm/song	Psalm/song
68/69	—	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
69/70	—	—	Psalm/remembrance	Psalm/remembrance	—

9. It seems that the LXX translators used the phrase ἐν ὕμνοις to translate a Hebrew phrase indicating to play the song on stringed instruments. This gloss does not really seem to fit the semantic range of ὕμνος, at least if the point was to preserve the function of the original Hebrew. It would translate into English as "in praises" or "in praise songs." This textual issue might prompt worthwhile investigation into the LXX's theology, possibly suggesting that its Psalter was primarily aimed at use in the synagogues where instruments were not used to accompany singing. In light of these considerations, I have placed "instruments" in parenthesis under the English version column throughout this chart, which also removes the necessity of using a bulkier phrase in a minimalist table.

LXX/MT	LXX	MT	KJV	Geneva 1615	ESV
70/71	—	—	—	—	—
71/72	—	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
72/73	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
73/74	συνέσεως	מַשְׂכִּיל	Maskill	Psalm/instruction	—
74/75	ψαλμὸς ᾠδῆς	מִזְמוֹר/שִׁיר	Psalm/song	Psalm/song	Psalm/song
75/76	ἐν ὕμνοις· ψαλμὸς, ᾠδὴ	בִּנְגִינֹת מִזְמוֹר/שִׁיר	Psalm/song	Psalm/song	(instruments) Psalm/song
76/77	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
77/78	συνέσεως	מַשְׂכִּיל	Maskil	Psalm/instruction	—
78/79	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
79/80	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
80/81	ψαλμός	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
81/82	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
82/83	ᾠδὴ ψαλμοῦ	שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר	Song/Psalm	Song/Psalm	Song/Psalm
83/84	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
84/85	ψαλμός	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
85/86	προσευχὴ	תְּפִלָּה	Prayer	Prayer	—
86/87	ψαλμὸς ᾠδῆς	מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר	Psalm/song	Psalm/song	—
87/88	ᾠδὴ ψαλμοῦ	שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר	Song/Psalm/Maskil	Song/Psalm/instruction	Song/Psalm
88/89	συνέσεως	מַשְׂכִּיל	Maskil	Psalm/instruction	Maskil
89/90	προσευχὴ	תְּפִלָּה	Prayer	Prayer	—
90/91	ᾠδῆς	—	—	—	—
91/92	ψαλμὸς ᾠδῆς	מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר	Psalm/song	Psalm/song	Psalm/song
92/93	ᾠδῆς	—	—	—	—
93/94	ψαλμὸς	—	—	—	—
94/95	ᾠδῆς	—	—	—	—
95/96	ᾠδὴ	—	—	—	—
96/97	—	—	—	—	—
97/98	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
98/99	ψαλμὸς	—	—	—	—
99/100	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
100/101	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
101/102	προσευχὴ	תְּפִלָּה	Prayer	Prayer	Prayer
102/103	—	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
103/104	—	—	—	—	—
104/105	Ἀλληλουϊά	—	—	—	—
105/106	Ἀλληλουϊά	—	—	—	—
106/107	Ἀλληλουϊά	—	—	—	—
107/108	ᾠδὴ ψαλμοῦ	שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר	Song/Psalm	Song/Psalm	Song/Psalm
108/109	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
109/110	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—

LXX/MT	LXX	MT	KJV	Geneva 1615	ESV
110/111	—	—	—	—	—
111/112	—	—	—	—	—
112/113	—	—	—	—	—
113/114–115	Ἀλληλουϊά	—	—	—	—
114/116:1–9	Ἀλληλουϊά	—	—	—	—
115/116:10–19	Ἀλληλουϊά	—	—	—	—
116/117	Ἀλληλουϊά	—	—	—	—
117/118	Ἀλληλουϊά	—	—	—	—
118/119	Ἀλληλουϊά	—	—	—	—
119/120	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song	—
120/121	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song	—
121/122	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song/Psalm	—
122/123	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song	—
123/124	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song	—
124/125	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song	—
125/126	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song	—
126/127	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song	—
127/128	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song	—
128/129	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song	—
129/130	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song	—
130/131	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song/Psalm	—
131/132	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song	—
132/133	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song/Psalm	—
133/134	ᾠδὴ	שִׁיר	Song	Song	—
134/135	—	—	—	—	—
135/136	Ἀλληλουϊά	—	—	—	—
136/137	—	—	—	—	—
137/138	—	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
138/139	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
139/140	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	Psalm
140/141	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
141/142	συνέσεως	מַשְׂכִּיל	Maskil/prayer	Psalm/instruction/prayer	Maskil
142/143	ψαλμὸς	מִזְמוֹר	Psalm	Psalm	—
143/144	—	—	Psalm	Psalm	—
144/145	Αἴνεσις	תְּהִלָּה	Psalm of praise	Psalm of praise	—
145–150	—	—	—	—	—

The preceding considerations have aimed at some ground-leveling work, specifically by bringing forth the exegetical data to study Paul's reference to psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. One facet, however, is missing from the above statistics concerning the word πνευματικαῖς as the modifier in "spiritual songs." The exact designation ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς does not appear in the Septuagint Psalter, which some have said means that Paul could not be referring to a category of Psalms. Even on its surface, this dismissal of the possibility that

Paul referred to a type of Psalm is rather superficial because it demands more precision from Paul's terminology than is realistic. As we have already seen, these categories from the Psalter are somewhat flexible in meaning.[10] The translation issues in the table intensify this point, making that flexibility even more fluid in application to any New Testament implementation of these categories. All the same, the commitment to be more thoroughly exegetical in understanding Paul's exhortation does demand that we take account of this modifier and its implications, if any, for clarifying his reference at an inter-canonical level. Admittedly, this investigation raises questions about issues lacking extensive data. The combination of ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς appears only elsewhere in the New Testament in Colossians 3:16, and even the word ᾠδὴ alone is not that frequent (Rev. 5:9; 14:3).

Colossians 3:16 is instructive in this respect though, saying, "Let Christ's word richly dwell in you by teaching and admonishing one another with all wisdom by singing with thanks in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in your heart to God" (Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτούς, ψαλμοῖς ὕμνοις ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς ἐν τῇ χάριτι ᾄδοντες ἐν ταῖς καρδίας ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ). Regardless of whether Paul in Colossians expanded material from Ephesians or in Ephesians compressed the point in Colossians, the relationship between the passages is clear. Colossians similarly notes an instructive function for singing, clarifying Ephesians' instruction to "speak to one another" as the need for "teaching and admonishing one another." Most notably, the supplemental information in Colossians highlights that this edification is for making "Christ's word dwell richly in you." In other words, *the Scripture* is in view as what should dwell in our hearts for teaching through our singing. In that respect, *the Scripture* inspired by or about Christ for singing would be the Psalms (Luke 24:44–47).[11]

The other major New Testament discussion of singing occurs in 1 Corinthians 14, amidst Paul's critique of the Corinthians' misuse of spiritual gifts. Anecdotally, it has been said to me that Paul's statement that "I will sing in spirit" (ψαλῶ τῷ πνεύματι; 1 Cor. 14:15) proves that whatever the church was singing, it could not be Psalms, making this passage worth considering. Why it precludes that spiritual songs cannot be from the Psalter is not immediately apparent. Indeed, in Romans 15:9 Paul quoted Psalm 18:49 (Ps. 17:50 LXX), including the same verb: "and I will sing to your name" (καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι σου ψαλῶ). In this respect, the Septuagint categorized this psalm as ᾠδῆς. So, the verb itself can directly tie this sort of singing to psalm singing of the *ode* sort. Regarding the connection of spirit, Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 14:15 is nowhere near the same as in Ephesians 5:19 or Colossians 3:16, since it fits within an ongoing contrast in verses 13–19 between singing not only in spirit (τῷ πνεύματι) but also with the mind (τῷ νοΐ). This contrast is then between personal faculties which either have awareness of the content of the action they perform or not. Although Paul did not use the possessive pronoun in verse 15, he elided it from verse 14, excluding here a reference to the Holy Spirit. Singing in spirit then related to using the gift of tongues to sing when the language used is not mentally understood by the singer—the song's content is not addressed, so fails to inform the nature of ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς.

Paul's discourse did address congregational singing. In 1 Corinthians 14:26, he wrote, "when you come together, each has *a psalm*, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an explanation" (ὅταν συνέρχησθε, ἕκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει, διδαχὴν, ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει, γλῶσσαν ἔχει, ἑρμηνείαν ἔχει). Within the list of service items, each seems to relate to what God has revealed, since teaching, revelation, tongues, and explanation all relate to delivering or expositing God's Word. Since the sung item here is a ψαλμὸν—it is unclear why some English versions translate this word as "hymn" since that should likely be reserved for the Greek word it transliterates—there is good reason to assume that the songs sung were from the Psalter.

How does this help us understand ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς? In the context of discussing spiritual gifts, Paul still defaulted to refer to the Psalms as the basic content of Christian singing for gathered worship. What then is the exact meaning of modifying "songs" as "spiritual"? At this point in considering the evidence, it seems clear that this question in some ways is a matter of judgment rather than a determination of exegetical warrant in the specific construction. The dative would seem to be glossed either objectively or subjectively: "songs about the Spirit" or "songs [inspired] by the Spirit." The latter seems more likely given the drift of the evidence considered so far and the significant lack of songs about the Holy Spirit throughout the church's entire history, which would indicate that we have totally failed in the

10. Charles Hodge, *Ephesians* (Geneva Series of Commentaries; Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1964; repr. 2003), 221

11. If the genitive is understood as objective—"the word about Christ"—rather than, as here, subjective and possessive—"Christ's word"—the point remains the same that Paul was referring to the Scripture, since even Christ himself was explicit that *the psalms* were *about him*.

injunction here.[12] Rather, in keeping with an exhortation to be filled with "Christ's word" by singing (Col. 3:16), Paul seemed to enjoin singing Scriptural songs, drawing categories from the Septuagint Psalter, neither exhaustively listing the types of Psalms he envisioned nor intending to implement overly precise versions of traditional headings from the Greek Psalter. Regardless, psalms and hymns were inherently religious types of songs, but odes could be religious or secular, so Paul was certainly specifying that he had the religious sort of ode in view, namely those related to the Spirit.[13]

One of the issues related to this discussion of Paul's terminology for songs the church sings is synonymy. The objection to seeing Paul's three designations as all referring to the Psalter is that referring to the Psalms in three ways is too redundant to make sense of why Paul implemented three terms. Nonetheless, even some who do not recognize these terms as drawn from the Psalter contend that "It is unlikely that any sharply demarcated division is intended," suggesting that all sides of the lexical debate should be content to accept that Paul used his terms with somewhat flexible application.[14] The question is then simply where he got those terms. The objection to synonymy seems to pose that the apostle got them from unknown sources or from culture, using rather generic words without ultimately discernible (at least by exegesis) meaning.[15] The argument that Paul used terms from the Psalter poses that he got his categories from Scripture and the historic practices of the synagogue. Even apart from the source issue, the data about the lexical issues in the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint Greek shows that the point is not strict synonymy, as if Paul meant precisely the same referent by all three terms. Certainly, it undermines the misleading objection that each of Paul's Greek terms supposedly corresponded respectively to only one Hebrew term from the Psalter, since the correlation of all the headings from the Psalms shows greater flexibility and variety than such claim.[16] Rather than strict synonyms, Paul's use of Septuagint terminology shows him referring to multiple types of songs found in the Old Testament Scripture.

This objection again relates to an improper demand for an overly precise use of Old Testament terminology, as was the case with some claims about ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς. It does not hold up under the standards of linguistics nor of everyday ways of speaking. I own an album by a single artist titled "The Best of Ballads and Blues." It should be more than obvious that "ballads" and "blues" refer to different types of songs contained on the album. Yet, both types of songs come from a common source, namely the catalogue of recordings by this one artist. The point is that Paul's use of three terms from the Greek Psalter does not indicate redundant synonymity but indicates three unique categories of songs drawn from a common source, namely the catalogue of the Old Testament Scripture. More work may be needed to describe and understand those categories more precisely, but the lexical data presented here removes the synonymity objection by showing how it conflates the content of unique categories in a superficially absurd way by not reckoning with the exegetical material or its specific meaning in the original context. Paul implemented these three categories seemingly at least to show that our sung worship should not be one-dimensionally flat—as is the case in much modern praise music with its chant-like droning. The Psalter's multivalent content provides the needed variety to keep our sung worship biblically diverse, hence the need to sing its psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Those who have previously defended a synonymous understanding of these three terms may or may not have had in mind this exact formulation of one source containing multiple kinds of songs but their instinct to understand Paul's Greek word in terms of their scriptural background was certainly more exegetically grounded than those who read modern meanings into Paul's language. Their arguments, when charitably read, certainly have a semblance to the lexical data presented here when their critics do not reduce the point by an *ad absurdum* fallacy.

This essay's argument has been that there are significant exegetical factors that need exploration to properly understand Paul's reference to psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The point has not been to settle the question with any exhaustive conclusions but to bring forth a newer, fuller presentation of the biblical data with which we must reckon exegetically. The data shows extensive intra-canonical links between Paul's own phrasing and the Septuagint Psalter. Further studies must press deeper into the interpretation of this data. The presentation itself, however, demonstrates Scripture's riches to capture our imagination and to help us sing praises to the Lord.▪

12. John Murray and William Young, "The Report of the Minority to the Fourteenth (1947) General Assembly" (accessed on August 12, 2022 at https://www.opc.org/GA/song.html#Minority); Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 159 n. 157.

13. Hodge, *Ephesians*, 222. In terms of the regulative principle, this specification would certainly have bearing upon those instances where churches have used secular songs in worship in hopes to "redeem" them by using them to make church appealing to worldly minded people.

14. Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 158.

15. Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 158–59.

16. Cf. Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, 158–59 n.155.

Our Visionary Architecture for Foreign Missions†

By Philip DeHart

What is our church's vision for foreign missions? Is there a guide for establishing and developing our missions program? Such questions are as vital today as they have been in each prior generation. When, decades ago, push came to shove these questions proved to be of utmost importance to the continuing Presbyterian church in the South. Honorary Moderator Don Patterson, a great promoter of world missions, reported:

> How good it was to hear how the Lord moved in the hearts of our founding fathers to establish a "continuing Presbyterian Church" that would be true to the Scriptures and to the Confession, and obedient to the Great Commission.[1]

It was clear to these fathers that biblical faithfulness entails missions faithfulness. Missions had gone horribly wrong in the years leading up to 1973, and the PCA was keen to set a different course. The "first real controversial issue" in the PCA was how to make absolutely sure that our foreign missionaries would be free to minister *as* Presbyterians.[2] Since foreign missions means ministering outside of the bounds of the PCA, more guidance was needed than was in our Book of Church Order (BCO). Therefore, GA instructed the newly-formed Mission to the World (MTW, a permanent committee of GA) to produce a policy manual to present at GA's third annual meeting. The Assembly approved hiring someone to draft the document and the scholar-churchman, David Calhoun, was selected.[3] Calhoun was eminently suitable for the task primarily because he was a student of the Scriptures. He held advanced degrees in both Old and New Testaments. He also had experience both as a missionary and in leading a missions agency. And he was familiar with both northern and southern Presbyterian history—as well as that of the Old World. His legacy has proven that he was well-chosen.[4]

The policy manual that Calhoun and David White[5] drafted was circulated to all of the presbyteries for study and input. The version of the Manual that was eventually approved by GA[6] remains to this day, almost intact,

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†In Memory of Dr. David Calhoun.

1. Wayne Sparkman, "History of PCA Motto: 'Faithful to the Scriptures, True to the Reformed Faith, and Obedient to the Great Commission.'" *The Aquila Report*, 10 September 2017, https://theaquilareport.com/history-pca-motto-faithful-scriptures-true-reformed-faith-obedient-great-commission/.

2. This involved two related issues: giving priority to sending ordained ministers and making clear agreements with non-Presbyterian sending agencies. "Some wondered if it would actually tear us in two." Kennedy Smartt, *I Am Reminded: An Autobiographical, Anecdotal History of the Presbyterian Church in America* (Chestnut Mountain, GA: K. Smartt, 1994), p. 117.

3. Smartt, *I Am Reminded*, p. 118. See *M2GA* p.68.

4. He developed a keen interest in how the "Old Princeton" seminary had become a missionary-producing machine. He would later write a doctoral thesis, "The last command: Princeton Theological Seminary and missions, 1812–1862." For a brief overview, see David B. Calhoun, "Old Princeton: Her Missionary Outreach," 18 January 2016, http://www.placefortruth.org/blog/old-princeton-her-missionary-outreach. He would also author a magisterial two-volume history of Princeton Seminary (1994 and 1996) that highlights its missionary-training heritage. He would then balance the tables with David B. Calhoun, *Our Southern Zion: Old Columbia Seminary (1828–1927)* (Banner of Truth Trust, 2012). His commitment to the cause of foreign missions throughout his lifetime is evidenced by his recent book, David B. Calhoun, *Swift and Beautiful: The Amazing Stories of Faithful Missionaries* (Banner of Truth Trust, 2020).

5. Dr. Calhoun recalled that he "was assigned the biblical and theological matters related to world missions" while David White wrote most of the more practical parts (perhaps he meant by this the ancillary Missionary Handbook). Personal correspondence January 23, 2016.

6. Paul R. Gilchrist, ed., "MTW Policy Manual," in *PCA Digest*

as MTW's guiding document.[7] I will be referencing this approved 1979 version of the Manual because it is available online. I suggest that you print pages 678 to 689 of the *PCA Digest 1973–1993* for reference. It is eminently worthy of study by every session and missions committee as we keep asking the urgent (and controversial) question, "What is the foreign missions vision of my church?"

We can anticipate, from this awareness of its historical milieu, the main concern of the Manual: how to do foreign missions *as Presbyterians*? And, almost immediately on the heels of this question: how to preserve the unity of a denomination that is so deeply concerned about foreign missions and yet so diverse? Every local church and every presbytery continues to answer these same two questions—whether self-consciously or not—in the manner in which they execute their missions programs. I am writing to those who have a role in leading these missions programs, especially pastors, elders, and missions committee chairs. I think that this was also the intended audience of the Manual.

For its architectural vision, the Manual's first step was to establish historical and constitutional continuity. There would be no fads or special interests controlling our foreign missions. In particular, the distinctively American philosophy of pragmatism would be vigorously resisted. Foreign missions must be thoroughly and solely grounded in Scripture according to the Westminster Standards. The Manual's second step was to establish the focus: "Priority and Urgency of Planting and Strengthening Presbyterian Churches Overseas."[8] The third step was the "how"—only Presbyterian ministry methods will produce Presbyterian churches. Lastly, the crowning vision of the Manual was the entire church working together seamlessly and effectively. In sum, the Manual's architectural vision for our church's foreign missions grounds us in the Scriptures and Confession, provides us with a focus, defines our method, and promises effective collaboration.

I will take these step by step, leading you through the document. But first allow me to address a possible misapprehension by setting "presbyterianism" over against "denominationalism." Since "Presbyterian" is obviously a denomination, I need to clarify why denominationalism and presbyterianism are incompatible with respect to missions. Denominationalism plants flags. It seeks to establish the authority of man-made institutions disguised as the church. In this way, denominationalism would destroy foreign missions. Presbyterianism answers to the Great Commission, bowing to the universal authority of Christ by His Word and Spirit. Presbyterianism, in its doctrine and church government, clings tenaciously to the Lordship of Christ in every detail and has absolutely zero tolerance for the rules of men. Christ is the exclusive Lord of His church. Christ is Lord not of churches with the name "Presbyterian," but of HIS church as a whole (see Westminster Confession of Faith, or WCF, chapters 25 and 26). Christ is Lord not only over His church as it exists but also over its mission. When the Manual recommends presbyterianism, it is not promoting but destroying denominationalism.

As we now launch into the Manual, I will pass over the introductions (which have been substantially changed over time) and focus on the second section, "Reformed Theology and Practice of Missions" (pages 678 to 689). This is the meat of the document and is where Dr. Calhoun's contribution is perhaps most evident.

Grounding: A Theological Mission

The singularly important aim of the Manual is to establish the church's missions program in the church's theology. It lays out a deliberate and all-embracing structure of theological *foundation* leading to theologically norming *practice*. "The order of the division is important. The first part of the section deals with theology and the second part with practice. Theology must always judge practice. It can never be reversed."

This is not empty virtue-signaling, but a rock-solid solution for a desperate need of the hour. The Manual offers penetrating analysis of the prevailing plague of pragmatism. This pragmatism had recently burst aflame in the missiology of liberation theology. "Theology from above" was being challenged by praxis-oriented "theology from below."[9] The Manual recognized that nothing

1973–1993 (Atlanta, GA: Presbyterian Church in America, 1994), 674–89. https://pcahistory.org/pca/digest/index.html (Open the link to Part IV of Vol. 1.)

7. Unfortunately, the Policy Manual was bound together with the more transient Missionary Handbook into a single document. Consequently, the distinction between the two documents intended by GA (and recently reminded by the Administrative Committee of the 47th GA) began to dissolve. No doubt this contributed to taking the Manual out of general circulation and giving it the flavor of a rather tedious introduction to an operational Human Resources document. More importantly, changes and additions to the Handbook proceeded over the years without adequate grounding in the Manual.

8. Unless referenced otherwise, all quotes are from Gilchrist, "MTW Policy Manual."

9. The basic argument of the liberation missiologists was that theology had been, until they came along, captive to a Western paradigm of starting with theory and moving to praxis (action). They considered this approach to be not only irrelevant to the needs and theological approach of the non-Western church but also a form

but the deepest theological pursuits and assertions are able to stave off the corrosive effects of this pragmatism—and of all forms of pragmatism. "We commit ourselves to be a theological mission. We reject pragmatism as a guide for our action. We deplore a superficiality that seeks biblical grounds for positions already taken for other reasons." If we fail to be theologically driven, it amounts to "death not only of theology but also of missions." Our practice "must live under the domination of theology." The language of "commit," "reject," "deplore," and "domination" is vivid and appropriately passionate. The weight of this stewardship of missions, under the threat of "death," is intended to elicit the most extreme sobriety.

The Manual's dive into a biblical theology of missions begins with the Westminster Standards. It establishes the norming authority of the Standards by opening with the Westminster Shorter Catechism on covenant theology:

> "God, having out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin by a Redeemer." (Q.20)[10]

God "created man in His own image for fellowship with Himself" (do not miss this creational grounds for covenant theology). He will therefore bring to fruition this grand purpose in history by means of covenant (WCF 7.1). Adam having locked the covenant-of-works-door forever, God opens another door for the Second Adam to pass through—the covenant of grace. Upon the foundation of this covenantal structure of Scripture, the Manual proceeds to build a biblical framework for a theology of missions. As it moves from Old to New Testaments it repeatedly returns to the tenets of covenant theology.[11] God's sovereignty alone means nothing to the work of missions unless it solves the problem of the guilt and corruption of sin and is favorably directed towards the church in covenant (WLC 65). God's covenant purpose for a people in "fellowship with Himself" is the church's motivation for missions. Recognizing the Scriptures as the authoritative covenant document, the Manual insists that "we must work diligently and openly with all the Scripture, seeking to do justice to the whole will of God and not bending or ignoring any word in the interest of a theory." The purpose of dwelling upon this biblical framework is covenantal obedience—that we only "do the will of Him who sends us."

Before moving on from the biblical theology section into the "Reformed Practice of Missions," the manual once again raises a warning against pragmatism: "What we do with these biblical data and with other related parts of God's Word will determine what we do in missions." There is an overwhelming emphasis here on the absolute necessity of a constant, vibrant, studied, grounding in theology through-and-through: "Theology is not a preliminary activity; it is the controlling force in all our activity." Theology does not merely provide the parameters of missions activity, it is the consistent and constant "controlling force." Hence, the two sections of the manual, Theology and Practice, must never be separated. The "practice of missions" is always theological-practice.

Theological grounding always reflects on history. The whole church across the ages is the recipient of revelation. Hence, we disavow autonomy when we disavow innovation. The Manual's continuity with the historic church does not end with the hermeneutics of the Westminster Standards. It proceeds to ground MTW's identity and function in terms of the PCA's BCO and history. It quotes at length from the PCA's letter "to all the churches," claiming MTW to be totally unique. This is not the uniqueness of innovation but the uniqueness of uncompromising adherence to its historic Presbyterian identity.

> We shall, therefore, endeavor to do what has never been adequately done—bring out the energies of our Presbyterian system of government. . . We are not ashamed to confess that we are intensely Presbyterian. We embrace all other denominations in the arms of Christian fellowship and love, but our own scheme of government we humbly believe to be according to the pattern shown in the Mount, and, by God's grace, we propose to put its efficiency to the test.[12]

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of oppression. Their own missiology was thus the liberator of the church. The same idea was modified by evangelical missiologists who, no doubt wanting to affirm orthodoxy, allowed for theology to provide some kind of "fixed" boundaries. Yet, for some of them praxis remained primary. The result is a "theology from below" with an appeal to a "theology from above" which is artificial.

10. This is abbreviated from the original, ". . . sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer." Perhaps this is because the context of the quote, rejecting popular liberalism, focuses on man's sin. Or perhaps it is a typographical error since the Minutes of the 4th GA record the original wording.

11. This contrasts with theologians of the ecumenical movement who, concerning the ingathering of the nations, downplay the distinction between the forms of promise in the OT and fulfilment in the NT.

12. The entire quotation from this letter is worth careful reading. It was borrowed from a similar letter written by J.H. Thornwell

The Manual's theological opponent—pragmatism—is a constant obstacle to missions and is constantly changing shape. At the time of writing, it was prominently manifested in the Church Growth Movement (which spanned the 70's and 80's). The Manual addresses this issue directly by laying out multiple dimensions of true church growth. This sets a precedent for the Manual to be kept current. GA would be asked to add guidance to the Manual as issues are faced in each generation of missions.[13]

Our theology is "confessional"—a pledge of unity among all elders, deacons, pastors, and missionaries. This unity is always challenged by different aspects of ministry that some of us get excited about. The Manual seeks to bring balance to this pull of interest groups in different directions. "Missions is necessarily concerned with the establishing of the whole ministry of the church. . . " In order for the work of missions to move forward in good order, GA will need to speak to divisive issues that threaten the peace and purity of the church as they emerge. And, again, it is specifically our confessional theology which will function as the "controlling force" in each instance of controversy.

Given these theological convictions, the Manual defines its own role. Together with the PCA's Constitution (BCO and Westminster Standards), it functions as MTW's exclusive mandate. By following it closely (and requesting revision or guidance where necessary), MTW faithfully fulfills its obligation to "obey fully the directives of the General Assembly, to be sensitive to its mood and style and to maintain humbly its role as servant." "We recognize that the work of missions is the work of the whole church. We will listen to our church as it speaks in its various ways, and we will obey as it speaks through its highest court." The Manual also sets its own limits of authority. It must not control the missions programs of PCA churches and Presbyteries (although it does control how they relate to MTW missionaries, as we will see).[14] Limits are also implied by where the Manual is silent. It refrains from speaking where the church has not spoken. And where the Constitution has already spoken adequately, the Manual says no more. For example, the Manual assumes that a "Presbyterian church" is defined by our Constitution. It further assumes that the essential labors involved in planting and strengthening churches are sufficiently covered in our Constitution. The Manual clarifies only where necessary and thus avoids muddying the waters. To say more would be to risk schism. Mission policies would do well to follow suit.

The church must speak authoritatively where Scripture speaks clearly and only where Scripture speaks clearly.[15] By NOT saying many things, the Manual asserts and guards the authority of Christ over a united (and fallible) church. One area of silence in the Manual, for example, is the lack of definition of "world missions." Some may expect to find the popular terms "cross-cultural" or "unreached peoples." This silence, however, is not as deafening as it may seem. A Presbyterian definition of foreign missions follows different lines of thought than sociological definitions. First, ministry is essentially the same everywhere (WCF 25.3). It only varies in its circumstances. Second, as we will see below under "Method," the primary distinctiveness of foreign missions ministry has to do with how it is governed. For example, when God calls someone to serve as a missionary, this is unlike any other ministry call. The commissioning church must recognize that "in a real sense his [or her] work is an extension overseas of their own local [church] or presbytery ministry." Yet, at the same time, that work is being carried out within the jurisdiction of another (non-PCA) church (whether already present or yet to be established). This uniqueness entails a unique governing structure. The Manual does indeed define "foreign missions" by providing its governing structure. But it deliberately stops just there.[16]

Focus: Presbyterian Churches

The Manual clearly asserts the singular focus of MTW's work: "Priority and Urgency of Planting and

in 1861. The fact that this is the second Thornwell quote in the Manual is significant. For context, see Philip DeHart, "Power for Missions Restored," *Reformation21 Blog*, 22 April 2019, http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2019/04/power-for-missions-restored.php. The "government" for missions is explored below under "Method."

13. "Insider Movements" is an example of a more recent manifestation of pragmatism in church growth, for which GA provided guidance in the form of a study committee report.

14. The Manual quotes BCO 14–1, "the church recognizes the right of individuals and congregations to labor through other agencies in fulfilling the Great Commission." Hence, "MTW acts in the spirit of the statement when it seeks to respond to and guide individuals and congregations who wish to use their right in laboring through other agencies in fulfilling the Great Commission." [The current edition of the Manual does not contain this note.]

15. It is not appropriate for the church to speak with equal authority to every circumstance. (WCF 1.6)

16. With the governing structure in place, all of the other questions about what legitimately constitutes "foreign missions" is left to that government to decide. Is missions focused on "unreached people groups"? Should priority be given to the "10–40 window"? What about ministries of mercy and justice? All such questions are submitted to the governing structure (and not for a GA committee to decide autonomously).

Strengthening Presbyterian Churches."[17] The rationale for this focus is compellingly set forth:

> Therefore, the [A] priority and urgency of planting and nurturing churches overseas and [B] our God-given Reformed doctrine and Presbyterian polity mean that [C] our mission to the world must, through our own efforts and in cooperation with compatible Reformed churches, be engaged primarily in the work of planting and strengthening true Presbyterian churches.

Since, according to our theology, [A] is true and [B] is true, then [C] is necessarily entailed. The missionary programs of churches and presbyteries could benefit from such a clear statement of priority.

But how? The church-planting jurisdiction of the PCA is North America. It is only within this geographic area (with rare exception) that the PCA has presbyteries that can properly look after churches. Churches that are planted by PCA ministers outside of North America are not normally PCA churches—they are not bound by our BCO but by their own—so it is beneficial that such work be shared. And obviously it would be shared with "compatible Reformed churches." Remember from my introductory comments that a true Presbyterian church knows itself to not be the only game in town and stands rigidly against denominationalism. The Manual insists emphatically that "it is of greatest importance that the PCA find Reformed churches overseas to which it can relate its mission work and create such churches through its own witness where these do not exist."[18] In our missions work, PCA churches always relate to other churches—whether those churches already exist, or we are involved in planting them.

This "relating" of PCA to non-PCA churches is organic rather than institutional. It inspires creativity and leads to intimacy. It may involve PCA missionaries generally, MTW missionaries specifically, . . . it may not. The Manual does not try to manage all this diversity of organic relation. It confines itself to those instances where "relating" involves MTW missionaries. This is the sphere of our greatest responsibility as a denomination. Nevertheless, the Manual's principles serve as a guide for any variation on the theme of relating church-to-church in mission work.

Method: Presbyterian Ministry

I have already been hinting about what the Manual identifies as theologically sound methodology: Only Presbyterian ministry will reliably produce Presbyterian churches.

But how do missionaries go about the work of planting and strengthening Presbyterian churches outside of the jurisdiction of a PCA presbytery? The first concern of the Manual is that of polity—by what authority (meaning by what power and government) the work will be carried out. This is a distinctive feature of Presbyterian missions that requires elucidating. Presbyterian polity is covenantal. It declares that ministry is by Christ's authority and Christ's authority alone. Jesus charges his disciples to mission, but "He does not delegate it to them." "The book of Acts sets forth the scriptural role of the church—the local church—as the sending authority." Here the Manual adheres closely to the clear instruction of the BCO:

> "The church is responsible for carrying out the Great Commission." "The initiative for carrying out the Great Commission belongs to the church at every court level.[19] . ." (Chapter 15–1).

The covenantal connection between Christ and His church in ministry is bi-directional. Christ's power runs downward to each ministry while accountability runs upward to Christ. It is the whole church that is the recipient of this Holy Spirit power. It is the whole church that is accountable to her Head. If a ministry becomes isolated from the church, it is deprived of power (it cannot accomplish anything spiritual) and it is deprived of accountability (the rule of men usurps the rule of Christ). Every watt of power for ministry is Christ's power and there is not an inch of autonomy. Presbyterian churches will be established by Presbyterian means.

In order to affirm Christ's power in the church as a whole, significant emphasis is placed on the limits of the authority of the PCA's "highest court." GA must not interfere with the authority vested in the "lower courts." For example, "sending authority" is vested in the "sending body," not in GA. "In our Presbyterian system, the proper sending bodies, therefore, are the session of the local church for laymen and the presbytery for ministers." Crucially, what our BCO articulates

17. This "priority" is set over against a secondary "propriety" – "The Propriety of Cooperative Work With Evangelical Mission Agencies in Service and Support Ministries." This language does not exist in the current version of the Manual.

18. The Manual added this wise warning: "There are problems and difficulties in establishing such relationships. Considerable time may be required. There must be care and caution." [Sentences that are not in the current version of the Manual.] This is not the easiest path for missions work to follow. While pragmatism would find a faster way, our theology insists on the longer, slower, and humbler road.

19. The "court levels" of the PCA are session, presbytery, and GA.

for how presbyteries send ordained missionaries is extended in the Manual to how local churches send unordained missionaries.[20] So two controlling principles define how missionaries are sent: 1) They remain members (with all essential privileges and responsibilities) of their sending church/presbytery. 2) They hold a commission from their sending church/presbytery such that their "work is an extension overseas" of this sending body. MTW must not interfere with these mutual prerogatives between missionary and sending body. If either missionary or sending body drops the ball on this mutual relationship, MTW will feel obliged to (inappropriately) pick it up, putting the relationship in a tailspin.

Not only is GA's authority limited, MTW's authority is even further limited. MTW's authority is not that of GA itself but rather confined to that of a committee. The Manual laid out this structure clearly:

> The plan for a Reformed practice of missions presented here discusses 1) the sending bodies — the session and the presbytery, 2) the enabling Committee — Mission to the World, 3) the receiving bodies.[21]

Two churches (or presbyteries) are necessarily involved in every missions effort—the sending and the receiving bodies are representative of the "whole church." In works that involve MTW, there is also an "enabling committee" of GA that is part of "the plan." MTW is not a third party of equal authority but rather an important helper to the two churches.[22]

Authority entails responsibility. Now that the central and foundational concern of authority has been clarified, the Manual proceeds to articulate how that authority is exercised with regards to the missionaries and their ministries:

> The responsibilities of these sending bodies, in consultation with the General Assembly's Committee on Mission to the World, include recruitment, examining, training, support, commissioning, contact and home ministry assignment.

The details of each of these areas of responsibility is helpfully expounded in the Manual (pp. 684–685). In the case of MTW missionaries, this constitutes what your church or presbytery agrees to in commissioning. In my experience, this has seldom been made explicit from the outset—to the detriment of the relationship between church and missionary. Every church and presbytery can find helpful guidance here for their sending responsibilities generally.[23]

The Manual then returns to the role of MTW. Pragmatism (in missions) has always argued that the agency must do what the church has failed to do. The Manual does not tolerate this. There also seems to be an awareness, perhaps from Presbyterian history, of the (pragmatic) propensity for a servant committee to become an autonomous agency. The Manual takes a stand against pragmatism once again. It draws extensively from BCO chapter 14 to clarify MTW's role, giving special attention to 1) the limits of MTW's authority and 2) MTW's servanthood with respect to all the church courts.[24] MTW does nothing by itself; it "does not replace the sending bodies," but rather "works with," "assists," "recommends," "helps," and "enables."

Finally, the Manual comes full circle (in connecting responsibilities to authority) by clarifying the role of Receiving Bodies. This launches a series of guidelines revolving around ministry in a context external to the PCA (thus not governed by our BCO). This is the most complex (and was the most debated) portion of the Manual. It makes a valiant attempt to draw Presbyterian ecumenism into a full-orbed Presbyterian polity.[25]

Alignment: Presbyterian Order

The Manual's intent is to foster effective alignment, not only within MTW but also for the PCA as a whole:

Continued on Page 277.

20. GA specifically asked that the Manual draft provide guidance concerning sending unordained missionaries – presumably because of the BCO's silence on this detail. See also Philip DeHart, "Ten Steps to the Mission Field," *By Faith*, 8 September 2021, https://byfaithonline.com/ten-steps-to-the-mission-field/.

21. This quotation is not in the current version of the Manual.

22. In some instances, this model has evolved into a "church partnership," in which MTW may or may not be involved.

23. This is relevant not only to the particular "sending body" of the missionary but also to all of those churches that participate in sending by their prayer and financial support. See also Philip DeHart, "Staying Tied to Foreign Missions," *By Faith*, 16 January 2019, https://byfaithonline.com/staying-tied-to-foreign-missions/.

24. The Manual reinforced this in its very first paragraph: "Relationship of the Committee to the Presbyteries and Sessions of the denomination is defined by the duties assigned to the Committee by the General Assembly. Its role is to serve and offer coordinating facilities to these church courts." [These sentences are not in the current version of the Manual.]

25. Much of this section has become obsolete as fewer and fewer MTW missionaries are seconded (loaned) to evangelical agencies in supporting roles. It deserves some updating along the lines of relating PCA missions work to increasingly established churches around the world.

Prophet in the Pulpit, Pastor with the Pen:
The Pastoral Christology of John Knox

By Alexander Brown

John Knox has entered into legend as something of the hard man of the Reformation. It can be argued that this reputation is in no small part due to Knox's own characterization of how the Protestant Reformation took hold in Scotland and the part that he played in it. From his beginnings as the sword-wielding bodyguard of George Wishart, whom Knox depicts in the colors of an Old Testament prophet calling for repentance and faith, with pestilence coming upon those who neglected his warnings,[1] to his description of life as a defiant slave in a French warship (Knox, *Works* 1.227–229), generating a heroic image of a man who feared no man, not even those who held his life in their hands, to his forthright denunciations of monarchical abuse to the faces of those he opposed.[2] The picture that Knox paints of himself in his *History of the Reformation in Scotland* is one that engenders a picture of a strongman who brooked no rival nor cowered in the face of his opponents.

When this self-conscious depiction is coupled with Knox's notorious *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (*Works* 4:349–422), and his frequent depiction in artistic renderings as a man of stern face and wild excitements, flying out of the pulpit as he preached,[3] it is easy to understand why some would see Knox as the premier amongst "Scotland's Calvinist ayatollahs,"[4] ushering in the rule of a harsh and repressive Kirk.[5] Knox can easily become characterized as a bully-reformer, who forced a revolution in the religious life of Scotland by the sheer force of his thunderous personality.

This reputation has become enveloped into the national lore of Scotland's history and has made frequent appearances in popular literature, giving a widespread impression that John Knox was a one-sided figure, and that side was not particularly attractive. Donald Macleod has traced the running theme of anti-Calvinism in Scottish literature. Tracing the theme from Robert Burns, through Sir Walter Scott, to the 20th Century poet Iain Crichton Smith, Macleod has pointed out that Calvinism has gained in Scottish self-understanding a reputation of being a force of suppression and confinement that has shrouded the nation under the cloak of a harsh legalism. Within the national literature he writes that "John Knox has been the object of relentless opprobrium, the Covenanters have been pilloried as epitomes of bigotry and intolerance, Thomas Boston portrayed as a moron, the Seceders as killjoys and Wee Frees as antinomian Thought Police."[6] This has not just been the result of a proclivity to morose self-reflection, significant literary figures from outside of Scotland, such as C. S. Lewis,[7] G. K. Chesterton,[8] have been willing to promote this trope. The result has been that John Knox has entered the popular imagination as the cruel architect of a Reformation the deleterious effects of which scarred a nation for centuries.

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1. John Knox, *Works* ed., David Laing (Edinburgh, 1846; repr., Edinburgh, 2014), 1.129.

2. W. Stanford Reid, *Trumpeter of God: A Biography of John Knox* (New York, 1974), 215, 227–231; also "A Sermon on Isaiah 26:13–21, Preached in St. Giles's Church, Edinburgh, 19th August 1565," in Knox, *Works* 6.221–275.

3. Cf. John Knox preaching before the Lords of the Congregation, 10 June 1559, by Sir David Wilkie (1785–1841).

4. Arthur Herman, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World* (New York, 2001), p. 12.

5. Herman, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*, p. 9.

6. Donald Macleod, "Scottish Calvinism: A Dark, Repressive Force?" *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 19, no. 2 (Autumn 2001): 195–225.

7. C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, excluding Drama* (Oxford, 1954), pp. 196–203.

8. G. K. Chesterton, "The Hammer of God," *The Complete Father Brown Stories* (London, 2013).

It is the contention of this paper that this caricature is one that is not true to the reality of who John Knox was, nor how John Knox sought to advance the cause of the Reformation in Scotland. By examining the most personal artifacts we have of Knox's ministry, namely his correspondence, we are given a unique insight into both the man himself, and how he presented the Christ he proclaimed.

The extant doctrinal works of Knox are notoriously few and far between. While his collected works run to a generous six volumes, Knox left only one significant doctrinal treatise in his *On Predestination, An Answer to the Cavillations by an Anabaptist, 1560* (*Works,* 5:7–468), and only one complete sermon in his *Sermon on Isaiah 26:13–21, Preached in St. Giles's Church, Edinburgh, 19th August 1565* (*Works,* 6:221–275). This lack of material has left the study of Knox as a man to be something of a patchwork endeavor. However, when we limit our study to the product of his own pen, and particularly that which was directed to a specific recipient, as we find in his correspondence, we are given an ability to understand the man on his own terms.

If the *History of the Reformation in Scotland* and *The First Blast of the Trumpet* give us a picture of Knox at his most self-conscious, his letters may be considered a window into Knox at his most vulnerable, being largely personal appeals given to particular audiences. Without pretense or posturing, we find the heart of Knox on display, and, contrary to the caricature, we find that it is a distinctly tender heart.

Instead of browbeating opponents by either force of personality or polemic, what we find when we examine the products of Knox's own pen is a man who was indeed strongly committed to the Protestant cause, but one who sought to bring those with whom he interacted to behold both the majesty and the grace of Jesus Christ with a distinctly pastorally sensitivity. In his letters we find a Reformer who was jealous for the crown rights of King Jesus, who abhorred any opposition to Christ's supremacy in all things. Yet, Knox was a man who understood the dynamics of sin and so, from the position of a strong yet tender supplicant, bid his correspondents and audiences to find peace in Christ by faith.

9. Richard G. Kyle, "The Mind of John Knox" (PhD diss., The University of New Mexico, 1973), p. 101; see also Richard Kyle, "John Knox: A Man of the Old Testament," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 54, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 65–78, at p. 65—"While the entire Bible was important to Knox, he was primarily a man of the OT. Knox's trademark bore the imprint of the OT. The sources of his radicalness and uniqueness came largely from the OT and the way he interpreted it."

10. Kyle, "John Knox: A Man of the Old Testament," p. 68.

11. Kyle, "John Knox: A Man of the Old Testament," p. 67.

A Prophet in the Pulpit

One of the first things that must be tackled when seeking to examine John Knox's pastoral Christology is his own self-conception. There is an opinion among some historians that Knox viewed himself in the mold of an Old Testament prophet. Richard Kyle has stated that "it can be readily seen that Knox was less-Christo-centric in his thought than either Luther, Calvin, or Zwingli. Because Knox saw himself in the role of an Old Testament prophet, it was consistent enough that his thought would be primarily theocentric."[9]

This is certainly true when we look at Knox's more public works. His *Sermon on Isaiah 26:13–21*, which was preached before Lord Darnley (recently made King) in August of 1565 (Knox, *Works,* 6:221–274), has the tenor of an Old Testament prophet crying to his society that they turn from their rebellion and return to God. Throughout the sermon Knox conflates sixteenth-century Scotland with ancient Israel and makes a correlation between the reign of Scotland's monarch and those of theocratic Israel that is so close as to make many contemporary exegetes uncomfortable. The notorious *First Blast of the Trumpet* also carries with it a strong sense that Knox saw himself as an Isaiah or Jeremiah crying out to an apostate kingdom that they should turn from their sin and humble themselves before the Lord their God.

However, this approach must not be attributed to an insufficient Christology, or to a failure on Knox's part to grasp the distinctions between the Old and New Testaments. It is unfair to the Reformer to accuse him of adopting an over-realized continuity between the testaments.[10] And it is simply untrue to assert that Knox "did not have Luther's Christ-centeredness nor Calvin's interior witness [of the Holy Spirit] to modify the rigidity of his literalness."[11]

A better understanding of Knox's approach both to Scripture and to his public audiences is rooted in understanding the uniqueness of what Knox was attempting to do in advancing the cause of reform in the British Isles. John Calvin enjoyed something of a hot-house environment in Geneva, being able to, within the parameters of the City Counsel, establish a model Protestant community. While Calvin had a broad ambition to see the gospel spread far and wide, and founded the Academy at Geneva for such a purpose, his primary focus was the cultivation of a thoroughgoing Reformed church in Geneva, with the implementation of Reformed liturgy, and pastors colloquiums. Likewise, Luther's attention was focused on his interactions with the magisterial elements of the Roman Catholic church, very much

defining his Reformation in opposition to the false gospel he saw being promoted by Rome. Zwingli, like Calvin, had a narrower focus for his Reformation, seeking primarily to reform a city and then use that city as a launching pad from which the Reformed church could spread far and wide.

However, Knox's ambition was always different from these three. Partly due to the unique situation in Scotland religiously and politically, and partly due to his own personal aspirations, Knox wanted neither to reform a city, nor tackle the Roman Catholic church on an idealistic-philosophical level. Instead, Knox wanted to see the British Isles, overturned by Protestantism in something akin to a religious revolution.[12]

If Knox had wanted to focus on a city, Dundee was ripe to be the "Geneva of the North,"[13] with the influence of George Wishart making a lasting impression on the city and the surrounding communities through Angus and the Mearns.[14] Knox was acquainted with the proto-Reformed within the city,[15] and could have easily focused his efforts there creating in Dundee and Perth, which were equally early adopters of Protestantism, something akin to Geneva and Strasbourg.

Knox could have also focused on a more ideological confrontation with the Roman Catholic church. His early ministry in St. Andrews involved a regular back-and-forth with the Cathedral elite. The elimination of Cardinal Beaton in May 1546 brought with it an end to the conflation of religion and politics and resulted in a situation in which Roman Catholicism could be engaged on a more intellectual level. The continuing presence of Roman Catholic philosophers, theologians, and thinkers at the University of St. Andrews (such as John Mair) could have provided a rich ground for debate.

But Knox's goal was grander. He wanted to see the entire British Isles transformed by the whole-scale introduction of Protestantism. Undoubtedly the unique way in which the British Isles were unified by their system of monarchs and lords/lairds and the tight intertwining of Roman Catholicism with the political leaders and fortunes of the day meant that a patchwork Reformation seemed unlikely to take hold, or be able to withstand the powerful response it was likely to elicit. This had already been seen in the fortune of the Lollards[16] and the reaction that had resulted from the ministry of George Wishart. If Knox was to successfully bring the Reformation to Scotland then it needed to be done through a campaign of "shock-and-awe"—a campaign that boldly assaulted the powerbrokers of the day, religious and secular, and established a wholescale replacement of Roman Catholicism within a few short years.

The unique dynamics of Knox's mission field can easily account for his regular appeals to the Old Testament, and his employment of its language. It is, after all, the only place where such national reform can be found in Scripture, and in his desire to see not simply a political reform, but one that truly gripped hearts and minds, the Old Testament is the place where we see God's own strategy (via discerning the "general equity"[17]) for bringing whole-scale Reform.

And so, we can see Knox's public ministry following that same pattern. It is a gross misunderstanding to think of the Old Testament prophets as preaching law and condemnation out of some sadistic desire that those to whom they preach cower before a cruel and unforgiving God. It is far more accurate to see them warning of a coming judgment in order to elicit faith and repentance that would bring them to God and receive His gracious forgiveness. The prophets wanted their audiences to see how the law of God stands against them and condemns them for turning away from the true and living God to devote themselves to the worship of dumb idols, and then to turn back, casting themselves upon the grace and mercy of God.[18] If Knox stands in the mold of an Old Testament prophet, it is for the same ends. He warned of God's judgment with the hope that the people of Scotland and England would repent and cast themselves on the mercy of God. His words can strike a strong blow, but he preached only to inflict the wounds of a friend.[19]

12. "By the time he left England for a second exile he had become deeply attached to his new home and, alongside his Scottish identity, he regarded himself as an Englishman by adoption. In the new year of 1554 with surprise and a touch of wonder, he described his feelings for the land he had just fled: 'sometyme I have thought that impossible it had bene, so have removed my affection from the Realme of Scotland, that eny Realme or Nation could have bene equall deare unto me. But I take to recorde my conscience, that the troubles present (and appearing to be) in the Realme of England, are double more dolorous unto my hert, then ever were the troubles of Scotland.'" Jane Dawson, *John Knox* (Yale University Press, 2015), p. 54, citing Knox, *Works*, 3.133.

13. Frank D. Bardgett, *Scotland Reformed* (Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 28–29; Donald Macleod, *Therefore the Truth I Speak: Scottish Theology 1500–1700* (Fearn, Ross-shire, 2020), p. 30.

14. Reid, *Trumpeter of God*, p. 20.

15. Dawson, *John Knox,* p. 178; Bardgett, *Scotland Reformed*, p. 48.

16. A. M. Renwick, *The Story of the Reformation* (1960; reprint, Fearn, Ross-shire, 2010), pp. 26–34.

17. Westminster Confession of Faith 19. 4. "To [the people of Israel] also, as a body politick, [God] gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require."

18. Cf. Jonah 4:2.

19. Proverbs 27:6.

A Pastor with the Pen

While Knox assumed the position of prophet in the pulpit, emphasizing the law of God and his impending righteous judgment of sin, within his personal correspondence, Knox's Christ-centeredness is brought out vividly.

Richard Kyle has observed that sermons are somewhat ephemeral things, with their impact "largely depend[ing] on chemistry, charisma, and emotions—subjects that are not easily measured by biographers."[20] As any preacher knows, the same sermon can elicit different reactions and responses within both preacher and congregation depending on where, when, and how it is preached. Martyn Lloyd-Jones observed, citing Jonathan Edwards, "The first and primary object of preaching is not only to give information. It is, as Edwards says, to produce an impression. It is the impression at the time that matters, even more than what you can remember subsequently."[21] And so the product of Knox's pulpit can be a difficult source for his application of the gospel to his audiences. A much more reliable source is found in his personal correspondence in which we find the Reformer addressing particular people, in particular situations, with a particular emphasis on how they should relate to Jesus Christ.

It is in his correspondence that Knox turns from the indiscriminate call of the prophet (calling any who might hear to turn from their sin) to a more focused and personal appeal. As Knox addresses particular individuals in his correspondence there is a discernable change in tone and approach. Certainly, with his opponents he is still not shy about warning about the judgment of God, but with it there is a personal, pastoral concern. There is a personal pleading that comes through as he seeks to convince his reader of their need for repentance, and their need to turn themselves to Christ in whom salvation could be found. In his personal correspondence with his opponents, Knox appears as a man concerned not simply with national fortunes but also with the personal fate of his interlocutors.

Mary of Guise

A good example of this is found in Knox's letter of May 1556 to the Queen Dowager, Mary of Guise. With the two being on opposite sides of the rising tide of Protestantism in Scotland, it is to be expected that this letter carry with it Knox's notoriously strong and direct tone. However, even in this more polemic letter, there is a distinct pastoral desire, not simply to win an argument or to score a point, but to win the Queen Dowager to the Protestant cause, to see her repent of her resistance to the crown rights of Christ, and to submit to him in humble obedience. Knox is not seeking to make Mary subservient to himself as a political rival, but to Christ as her ultimate Sovereign. The letter is essentially an extended plea that Mary see the glories of Christ, hear the mercies of the gospel, and repent.

This, of course, was not how Mary understood the letter. Knox himself records the reaction of the Queen Dowager in his *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, recording that she gave it to the Bishop of Glasgow to read, mocking it as a "Pasquil" (*Works*, 1.252). To discount the letter as nothing more than a piece of satire shows that Knox's intended aim was not achieved, and was not even given the dignity of being received simply as another piece of political posturing. This is what precipitated Knox's public defense of this otherwise private letter, annotating it and publishing it in 1558.

That the letter did not achieve its intended aim is not to prove that the aim was not there in the first place, and a careful reading of the letter reveals a masterful weaving together of the threatenings of God's law against those who would usurp the place of Christ and obstruct the true practice of religion, and the merciful offers of the gospel to those who repent. The letter opens with a confident assertion of God's sovereignty over the fortunes of his people. Knox writes:

> All thingis [the elect of God] sustene at the commandment of Him who hath apoyntit thame to suffer, being most assuredlie persuadit, that then onlie thai triumphe, when all men judge thame oppressit; for in the cross of Chryst alwayis is includit a secreit and hid victorie, never well kawin till the sufferer appeir altogether to be (as it wer) exterminate (*Works*, 4:75).

By opening in this way Knox framed the terms of his communication, asserting that he is writing from a position of confidence and authority. Contrary to the assumptions of the Queen that she held the fortunes of the church in her hands, Knox is keen to demonstrate to her that her power was a delegated and subordinate power. Even if she should pursue a systematic persecution of the Reformed, there was no danger that she could truly win the day because even in those persecutions, the victorious work of Christ is at work to bless and bind up the people of Christ.

20. Richard G. Kyle, "The Thundering Scot: John Knox the Preacher," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 64.1 (Spring 2002): 135–49, at p. 136.

21. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Edinburgh, 1987), p. 360.

This confident beginning is then followed by a demonstration of how God made clear throughout the Old Testament his commitment to save his people in and through the distress that was caused to them by worldly rulers. Knox is setting the terms of his letter, confident in the ultimate victory of Christ over any who would assault his church. Mary may well be a powerbroker on earth, but her actions are under the rule of a sovereign God who can, and has, worked earthly evil to be the venue in which he has demonstrated his "invisible power and love" to his people (*Works,* 4:76). However, this is no powerplay or psychological manipulation. Knox is simply making clear the "veritie," or truthfulness, of the situation in which the Queen finds herself. It is in this very framework that Knox believes that the current situation must be understood if it is to be resolved properly, and even resolved safely for Mary.

Knox makes it clear that to live in the age of the New Covenant is not to move from the harsh threatenings of an Old Testament God into a more lenient age. In fact, it is to face an even greater danger because so much more has been revealed in Christ. He writes:

> Wil [God] now, after that he hath opened his whole counsail to the world, by his onlye Sonne, whom he hath commanded to be hearde; and after that He, by hys Holy Spirit speaking to his Apostles, hath established the religion in whiche he willeth hys trewe worshippers to abyde to the end: will He now, I say, admitte man's inventions, in the matter of religion, whiche before he reputed for damnable idolatry? If man or aungels wolde affirme that He will or may do it, his own veritie shal convict them of a lye; for this sentence, which he once pronounced, shall abyde immutable to the end: "Not that which appeareth good in thine eyes shall thou do to the Lorde thy God; but what the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, that do thou: adde nothinge to it, dyminishe nothinge from it" (*Works*, 4:81).

To this warning Knox then adds the following personal and pastoral appeal: "In this point, whiche is chief and principale, your Grace must dissent from the multitude of rulers, or els ye can possesse no portion with Christ Jesus in his kyngdome and glory" (*Works*, 4:81).

Far from a cold and harsh condemnation of a misogynist bully,[22] we see here a tenderness in John Knox even for those who opposed him. We see a man who has internalized Christ's command from the Sermon on the Mount to imitate God the Father in extending love to enemies and praying for those who persecute the church.[23] We see a man whose care for his enemy is such that he boldly tells her the truth about her spiritual condition, and writes earnestly out of a desire to see her repent in humble reliance upon Christ.

This is further brought out later in the letter, when Knox adds a direct and pointed appeal that his correspondent grasp the dangerousness of her spiritual condition. Specifically, he exhorts her to grapple with the implications of setting herself over and against the Gospel and with it over and against the crown-rights of Christ. Knox warns,

> How dangerous soever it shall appear to the fleshe and natural man to obey God in promoting his religion, and to make warre against the Devill, in removing darknes, pryde, and superstition; yet if your Grace looke to have your self, or yet youre seede after you, to continue in a wordily honor, and after to possesse the lyfe everlasting, submit your self, by time, under the hande of Hym that is omnipotent, embrace his will, despise not hys testament, refuse not hys graces offered (*Works,* 4:83).

Now, of course, to the cynical this can read simply as an attempt at manipulation on the deepest level, with Knox using the prospect of eternal torment to add the ultimate gravity to his argument. This, it would seem, was how the Regent read it, and summarily dismissed it. Undoubtedly many would be tempted to do the same, writing this off as typical of the misogynistic, bullying tactics of the author of *The First Blast of the Trumpet*.

There is no need for such a critical reading. While much of this rhetoric sounds like the prophet-preacher that we see in the more public works, it is not hard to discern the tender heart of a pastor-counsellor that underlies it. It does not take a great deal of insight to perceive that Knox's greatest desire is not simply to win political points or strongarm the Queen Dowager into submission. Rather Knox is revealed as seeing in Mary one who is in great spiritual danger, and who with the heart of a pastor-prophet, urgently implores her to repent and turn to Christ.

Knox is urging the Regent to see that the matter at hand—on both a personal and national level—is not simply one of politics. The core issue in Scotland is whether God will be worshiped in the ways he has revealed in Scripture, or whether superstition and the imagination of men will be the prevailing directive for

22. Roddy Martine, "Reforming Knox," *Scotland*, issue 69 (June 2013): 9, quoted in David B. Calhoun, "John Knox (1514–1572) after Five Hundred Years," *Presbyterion* 40, nos. 1–2 (Fall 2014): 1–13, at page 2.

23. Matthew 5:43–48.

life and godliness. He wants her to see that the latter path is to make herself an enemy of God, and to forsake the graces of the gospel and to enter into tremendous spiritual danger. He wants her to see that the ground on which she is standing is holy ground and that great care must be taken lest the wrath of God be provoked against her as a presumptuous creature.

This interpretation is strengthened by Knox's concession in the letter that it is not actually in Mary's gift to turn the heart of the nation. Perhaps to the surprise of the Regent, Knox freely admits that Mary is not able to bring about spiritual renewal, or even organizational transformation, simply by royal fiat—"Your Grace can not hastely abolishe all supersitition, neither yet remove from offices unprofitable pastors, which onely fede themselves, the which to publique reformation are requisite and necessary" (*Works*, 4:83).

Instead, Knox urges her to pursue more personal, organic, ground-up effort towards reform. If she turns to Christ in humble obedience, then she can use her influence to counter the wickedness of false religion and lead a long-lasting transformation of her kingdom—"but yet, if the zeal of Goddes glory be fervent in your Grace's hart, by wicked lawes ye wil not mainteyn manifest idolatrye, neither yet will ye suffer the fury of Bisshoppes to murther and devoure the poore members of Christes body" (*Works*, 4:83).

If this letter was simply an attempt at cynical manipulation this would certainly be an odd way of going about it. Instead of flattering the Queen Regent, Knox seems to take a low view of the effectiveness or the influence of her authority. One cannot but help wonder if this was the part of the letter to which Mary took most offense. Regardless, it speaks to the genuineness of Knox's pastoral appeal. He understands Christ to be a King who will brook no rival, but also a Savior who will turn away none who come to him. At the heart of this letter lies an appeal that Mary would take Him as the latter, so as not to fall foul of him as the former.

To the Brethren in London, Newcastle, and Berwick

There is a similar dynamic found in the *Godly Letter of Warning or Admonition to the Faithful in London, Newcastle, and Berwick* written in 1554—a letter written to allies in the cause of Reformation urging them to remain faithful to the Protestant cause in the face of rising opposition from the resurgence of Roman Catholicism under the recently crowned Queen Mary Tudor.

Exiled on the Continent, Knox was unable to personally minister to these brethren amongst whom he had enjoyed a successful and significant ministry under the Protestant ascendancy of King Edward VI. By taking up his pen and writing his circular letter—evidently written with the original intent of distribution among the Protestants remaining in England—Knox is able to address his former congregations personally and give them direct pastoral counsel about how to navigate the uncertain and increasingly threatening days of rising persecution.

Within this letter Knox maintains a strong emphasis on the impending judgment of God on those who would turn away from the gospel under the pressures of persecution. Using Jeremiah 2–5 Knox recounts how God has dealt with the infection of idolatry into his people in the past (*Works,* 3.171–175), proving his contention that

> The Word of God planelie speikis, that gif a man sall heir the curses of Godis Law, and yet, into his heart, sall promeis to him self felicitie and gude luck, thinking that he sall haif peace, albeit he walk efter the imaginatiounis of his awn wil and heart; to sic a man the Lord will not be mercifull, but his wrath salbe kendillit aganis him, and he sall destroy his name from under Heaven (*Works*, 3.169).

The Protestant community was facing a rising pressure to conform to the resurgent Roman Catholicism, either facing the temptations to wholly return to Roman worship or simply develop an "Insider Movement," going through the motions of Roman Catholic worship while privately holding to Protestant doctrine. Into that difficult situation Knox writes this letter to strongly urge his brethren to stay the course and continue on in the path of faithful adherence to Reformed worship, and in no way yield to the "idolatry" of Roman Catholic worship.

It is particularly noteworthy that in this letter, while Knox appeals to the Old Testament and follows his usual pattern of making direct correlations with the church of the Old Testament and the contemporary situation in Great Britain, there is running through the whole letter a continual appeal to Christ as the explicit root and ground of their confidence in the face of this persecution. At the beginning of the letter, Knox grounds his whole exhortation by reminding his readers that the "onlie comfort and joy of the saule, is God by his Word expelling ignoraunce, syn, and death, and in the place of theis planting trew knowledge of him self, and with the same, justice, and lyfe be Chryst Jesus his Sone" (*Works*, 3.166) An exhortation that is mirrored by his closing admonition,

> prepair in tyme, and determyne with your selves to abyde in Chryst Jesus, and his croce sall never oppress you as presentlie ye feir. And thairfore, deirlie Belovit in our Savioure Jesus Chryst, as ye purpose to avoid the grievous vengeance to cum, that schortlie and assuredlie sall stryk all obstinate ydolateris; as ye would haif the league betuix God and yow to stand sure and inviolated, and as you will declare yourselves to have trew faith, without which no man ever shall enter into life (*Works*, 3.214).

Explicitly Knox roots his exhortation in the surpassing worth of Christ. While the cost of faithfulness is likely to be high under Queen Mary, Knox wants his readers to remain faithful not simply because of the fear of judgment, but because they see in Jesus Christ one in whom their whole lives are wrapped up. He spurs them on not simply with calls to avoid God's judgment, but with calls to actively and consciously "abide in Christ Jesus." That is to say that Knox wants them to follow Christ's exhortation of John 15[24] to pursue a conscious, vital union with Christ in which their nourishment and strength in the face of rising idolatry and pressure to conform the Roman Catholic Establishment is found in their union with Him.

This desire that the Protestant communities of London, Newcastle and Berwick hold tight on to Christ grounds the almost Shakespearean exhortation,

> For the tender mercies of God, arme yourselves to stand with Chryst in this his schort battell. Fly from that abhominable idoll, the maintainers whereof shall not escape the vengeance of God. Lat it be knawin to your posteritie, that ye were Chrystianis and not ydolateris; that ye learnit Chryst in tyme of rest, and baldlie professit him in tyme of trubill (*Works*, 3.208).

Standford Reid is undoubtedly correct in his observation that the turmoil in Knox's soul is evident in this letter[25] as he faced the future of an England ruled by the tyrannical Queen Mary. Knox knew that the handwriting was on the wall, and it was only a matter of time before the Protestants in England fell foul of Mary's zeal to bring the nation back in line with the Roman Catholic church. This letter was written as something of a parting missive—a perhaps final letter written by a man uncertain of what the future may hold, or when he would again, if ever, be free to preach the gospel and personally build up the church of Christ. But his exhortation to them is not one of political revolution or even resistance. It is notable that for one who has become famous in large part because of the legacy of his justification of resistance to wicked rulers, there is no call to arms. There is not even an extended contemplation on the philosophical underpinnings of how they might honorably disobey a lawful magistrate.

Instead, in this, at least initially private correspondence between Knox and the congregations amongst whom he had been active, his word to them is distinctly pastoral and specifically Christological. More than anything, he wants the men and women of these congregations to hold fast to Christ. He wants them to set their eyes firmly on their Savior. As he sees the storm approaching, he wants them to lash their souls to the cross and determine that it would only be through the grace of Christ, and not in their own strength or wisdom, that they would make it through.

Knox understood that the strength of the church could only be found in its relationship to Christ. It would only be in a conscious and determined looking to him that they would be able to withstand the pressures and temptations that were coming, and so Knox writes to them with the purpose of turning their eyes firmly on Christ so that they lose sight of all else besides.[26]

Elizabeth Bowes

However, the most vivid introduction to Knox's Pastoral Christology and the application of Protestant doctrine to the lives of those with whom he interacted is seen in the wealth of correspondence with his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Bowes. These letters provide an extraordinary insight not only into the personal melancholia of Mrs. Bowes but also into the approach of John Knox to those facing spiritual and emotional trouble, even to the point of considering apostasy.

It might be expected that Knox's approach with his mother-in-law would be one of tender patience. However, we must be careful not to impose our contemporary expectations upon our 16th Century subject. Additionally, it has to be admitted that Knox's familial relations were distinctive, with a young fiancé, and a disapproving father-in-law.[27] Combined with the mythical

24. John 15:1–5. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (ESV)

25. Reid, *Trumpeter of God*, p. 100.

26. Mary D. James, "All for Jesus!"

27. Dawson, *John Knox*, *p.* 64.

persona of the hardheaded Knox, the result is that we must put our expectations to one side when we come to these letters. When we take these letters at face value, we find in Knox a pastor whose heart is gripped by the mercy and grace of God in Christ, and who is keen that his afflicted reader find refuge in him.

In the letter dated June 23, 1553 Knox addresses the "dolour," or suffering, that comes from the conviction of indwelling sin. It is notable that within this letter there is no great warning of the coming judgment of God, or how the holiness of God stands as the enemy of the sinner. Instead, there is an empathetic compassion extended to his reader, that is rooted ultimately in the knowledge of God's justice, not as the enemy of the sinner but as the guarantee of God's mercy.

Knox is keen that Elizabeth understand that the justice of God that stands as the guarantee of the salvation of the believer, writing "Mark the wordis of the Apostill, Gif we confes oure synnis, God man forgiven thame, because he is faithful and just" (*Works*, 3.341). This appeal to 1 John 1:9 is followed by a detailed explanation of the Apostle's reasoning, in which Knox demonstrates for his troubled mother-in-law how the justice of God means that he cannot require a punishment twice for the same sin, and so if Christ has, by faith, stood substitute for her in his atoning work on the cross, then she has nothing more to fear:

> Gif we understand of whom God requyris satsifactioun, whether of us, or of the handis of his onlie Sone, and whais punishment is abill to recompense oure synnis, than sall we haif greit cause to rejose, remembering that God is a just God; for the office of the just man is to stand content when he hes ressavit his dewtie. But God hes ressavit alreadie at the handis of his onlie Sone all that is dew for our synnis, and sa can not his justice require nor craif any mair of us, ather satisfactioun or recompensatioun of our synnis (*Works*, 3.342).

In other places[28] Knox lays out the justice of God as the enemy of sinners, and the compulsion to repentance, but here as he addresses one afflicted by the knowledge of indwelling sin, it is the justice of God that actually forms the foundation of his pastoral appeal and council. As God cannot, in his perfect righteousness and justice, demand punishment twice for the same sin, the knowledge of Christ's penal substitutionary sacrifice stands as the guarantee of her salvation. It is the sacrifice of Christ that is to silence doubts and "dolours" and is to be the source of comfort under the conviction of sin.

However, Knox's pastoral Christology is not just confined to the objective truth of the believer's security in the sacrifice of Christ. Knox is careful to demonstrate the good purpose of God that lies behind, in, and under the sufferings which believers are called to face. Mrs. Bowes was regularly troubled by the notion that her sufferings were a sign that she was outside of the favor of God. Struggling with assurance of salvation she seems constantly to have doubted whether or not her faith in Christ was real and leaned toward seeing her afflictions as a sign that she was not loved by God.[29] Against these doubts and accusations of the conscience Knox wielded a powerful weapon in appealing to the sufferings of Christ.

In his letter dated December 22, 1553, Knox makes the connection between the sufferings of Christ and those of the believer:

> As it is apoyntit be the providence of our Father, that the meberis salbe correspondant and lyke to the Heid, wha, in anguische of extreme dolour, cryit, "My God, my God! why hes thou forsaken me?" O wordis maist dolorous, and voce maist lamentabill, to be hard proceid from the mouth of the Sone of God! Considder, deir Sister, he was na debtour to syn nor deth; and yit, this did he suffer not onlie to make satisfactioun to the justice of God, whilk we wer never abill to do, but also to put us in comfort that his suffering was not in vane, but evin for our exempill; that in maist extremitie, yit we sall luke for deliverance whilk we must neidis ressave, gif we thirst for the same (*Works*, 3.354).

Just as important as it was for Knox to make clear that the believer is eternally secure because of the atoning work of Christ, it was important to see the connection between the sufferings of Christ and those of the believer.

First, Knox wants her to see that Christ's own sufferings mean that there is not always a direct correlation

28. See, for example, the 1558 *Epistle to the Inhabitants of Newcastle and Berwick* in which Knox reprimands his correspondents for yielding to pressure and returning to Roman Catholic Worship. "Ye have declined, yea, and trayterously fallen backe frome God, and frome his veritie once professed as they dyd; but beware (I say) that ye defend not your impietie, that ye contemne not the threatenings of God, promising to yourselves felicitie and life, when He by his Worde and holy Prophets pronouncethe against you woe, deathe, and severe judgment." Knox, *Works,* 5.483–84.

29. W. Stanford Reid, "John Knox, Pastor of Souls," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 40.1 (Fall 1977): 1–21, at p. 4. "It may have been that under constant pressure from her family, especially her husband, to return to the Roman Catholic fold, she was worried lest she had made a wrong decision in accepting the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone."

between our sins and our sorrows. Christ was perfect—"no debtor to sin nor death"—but yet he was Isaiah's Man of Sorrows,[30] and so if God's son, with whom God declared himself to be "well pleased"[31] could suffer as he did, then the believer can have grounds of confidence in this suffering. But secondly, and maybe more importantly, he wanted Elizabeth, as she shared in the sufferings of Christ,[32] to see in Christ an example of how to faithfully persevere and push through, looking to God, in His compassion, for deliverance. These sufferings are not to be understood as something that is in opposition to the love of God for her in Christ, but something that comes as a result of God's love for her in Christ. These sufferings are intended to draw her in more closely to the heart of God and rely upon him in faith more fully.

Indeed, in his letter written at the beginning of the year, Knox explained to Elizabeth how the sufferings and struggles that she was enduring were intended by God to purify her faith and draw her closer in to behold more of His grace. Writing on June 23, 1553 Knox exhorts his troubled mother-in-law to see the kind hand of God lying behind the sore providences she was experiencing:

> the power of God is knawin be oure weaknes; and theis dolouris and infirmities be maist profitabill to us, for by the same is oure pryde beattin doun, whilk is not easie uterhwayis to be done. By thame are oure miseries knawin, sa that we, acknowledging oure selves misterfull, seikis the Phesitioun. By thame cum we, be the operatioun of the Halie Spreit, to the hatred of syn; and be thame cum we to the hunger and thirst of justice; and to desyre to be dissolved, and sa to ring with oure Christ Jessu, whilk without this battell and sorrow this flesche culd never do (*Works*, 3.340).

Again, in a letter from Newcastle simply dated 1553, Knox writes "Be persuadit of the mercifull presence of our Lord God and Father, for he doith not trouble you in signe of his wraith, absence, or not regarding of yow: Na, deir Sister everie sone whom the Father loveth he chastineth" (*Works*, 3.355).

Running throughout this correspondence is this theme of urging his mother-in-law to see the kind hand of God behind the hard providences that she was called to endure. Throughout his correspondence with his mother-in-law, Knox was careful and deliberate to point her continually to the compassionate hand of God that bore her through her sufferings. Drawing her back time and again, Knox unpacked the gospel for her, never seeking to chastise her for her doubts or her lack of faith, but urging her on to see more of the riches of the finished work of Christ.

Donald Macleod has written that the

> wording of these letters is consistently well-chosen and tender. In one of the earliest (written in February 1552–53) we can even see the sort of language later associated with Samuel Rutherford: tranquility of conscience, writes Knox, rests on the fact that we embrace Jesus as the only Saviour of the world "and that we learne to apply the sueitnes of his name, which precelleth [excelleth] the ordouris of all fragrant smelling spyces, to the corruptioun of our woundis."[33]

In these letters to his mother-in-law, Knox plays the part not only of a patient and loving son, but more importantly he is a kind and gentle pastor, who with tenderness and beauty, brings this struggler back to Christ time and again to behold the glories of her Savior and the remember the confidence the gospel gives her before the face of God, and in the sufferings of life in a fallen world.

Undoubtedly, a large part of Knox's approach was informed by his own experience of the "dolours" to which he frequently refers. His own sufferings gave him an ability to empathize with his mother-in-law, which is seen dramatically when he recounts her messenger had found him in bed "efter a sair trubill and maist dolorous nyght" (*Works*, 3.352). However, Knox does not lean on his own wisdom or experience when seeking to bring comfort. Instead he consistently points to the sufficiency of Christ and fullness of the gospel.

If Elizabeth was to know true and lasting relief from her sufferings then it was imperative that she learn not to lean on her son-in-law, but on Christ alone. While Knox's sufferings enabled him to be an empathetic counsellor, it was only Jesus as her great High Priest, who in his incarnation had faced these same sufferings and temptations, that could be the source of her ultimate help. It was his throne of grace to which Elizabeth must flee, to find help in her time of need.[34]

Friends and Familiars in Jesus Christ

However, it is not just with his mother-in-law that this side of Knox is evident. In the *Certane Epistillis and*

30. Isaiah 53:3.

31. Matthew 3:17; 17: 5.

32. Cf. Rom. 8:17; 2 Corinthians 1:5; Philippians 1:29; Colossians 1:24; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 Peter 5:1.

33. Donald Macleod, *Therefore the Truth I Speak*, p. 48, citing Knox, *Works*, 3.348.

34. Hebrews 4:15, 16.

Letteris of the Servand of God Johne Knox, Send Frome Dyverse Places to His Friendis and Familiaris in Jesus Chryst we see a continual desire to point his readers back to Christ.

To an anonymous "Sister in Edinburgh," Knox writes to give this woman of evident Protestant sympathies counsel during the uncertainties of 1556. Writing to her from Dieppe, Knox writes to help her hold fast to her profession of faith in Christ. Perhaps due to some of the pressures that arose during the tumultuous days before Protestantism was secured for Scotland in the 1560 Reformation Parliament, Knox urges her to remember the "chief principallis" of her profession of faith,

> First, that salvatioun nor lyfe is nane to be found without the bodie of our Lord Jesus; while anis offirit, and suffering the death, we, and all Godis elect children, do confes the onlie sacrifice acceptabill in the sychit of God the Father, for the offences of all believers. Be whilk sacrifice ar all the elect of God not onlie anis redemit, but also sanctifeit be the same, for ever. All sacrifices for sin, uther than the death of the immaculate Lamb, Jesus, we did opinlie protest oure selves to abhor and detest. And last, all religioun not groundit upon the Word of God, we feir not to proclame abominabill and wickit (*Works*, 4:223).

The year 1556 was in the heart of the troubled years of the Regency of Mary of Guise, in which she attempted to wrestle Scotland back onto a firmly Roman Catholic footing. Knox had enjoyed a brief return to Scotland which spanned the end of 1555 and the beginning of 1556, in which he had been able to encourage the embattled Protestants, and help in the establishment of "privy kirks," secret house-churches that would provide a source of strength and encouragement in the face of official persecution.[35] When Knox left Scotland to return to Geneva he had been burnt in effigy and was "blown to the horn," being declared an outlaw.[36] Little attempt seems to have been made to actually arrest and prosecute Knox during his not-so-secret visit, and so it would appear that these efforts were designed more as the rattling of a sword designed for the intimidation of the Protestant minority.

It was in this situation that the *Sister in Edinburgh* found herself, no doubt troubled by the "sweit songs of the Divill" (*Works*, 4:224) and tempted to renounce her Protestant faith, return to Roman Catholicism and find temporal security. As Knox counsels her there is no extended meditation on the political situation, nor any word of comfort regarding the future of the Protestant cause. It would not be surprising to find a word of reassurance rooted in the strength of the Protestant movement that Knox had encountered, and an exhortation to stay strong in the hopes of a better day coming. However, there are no such temporal reassurances, only a casting her back to remember her profession of faith, and in doing that, to remember the Christ in whom she had put her faith and trust.

Her comfort and confidence were to be rooted in the finished work of Christ and the satisfaction of his atoning death. In the face of the temptation to be drawn back in to the "idolatry" of the Roman Catholic Mass, she was to hold fast to the knowledge that Christ's sacrifice was once offered, to the satisfaction of the Father, and the justification and sanctification of the elect. Amid the great temporal trouble that she faced, this spiritual anchor was to hold her fast.

It is this same gospel-logic that underpins the letter *To His Loving Brother Thomas Upcher, Inglisman* (*Works*, 4:241ff.). In this letter written to an Englishman living in Basill, presumably as part of the British Protestant diaspora, Knox writes to help him in his fight against "inward dolour, anguische, and pane" (*Works*, 4:242). Much like in his counsel to his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Bowes, Knox here writes to help his brother see how the light of the gospel penetrates the darkness of his depression.

As with the counsel to his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Bowes, there are no "pull yourself together" statements that we might expect from a man with such a reputation for being hard and bullheaded. Instead, Knox reminds his troubled reader of the grace and compassion of Christ towards his people. In the best sense, Knox takes the tact of "misery loves company," and urges this poor Englishman to see how his experience is not as unique as it might feel in the moment.

Depression is isolating, and for the Christian often comes with a deep conviction of sin, and so Knox urges his reader to consider "the lamentabill voces whilk the most elect memberis and servandis of Chryst Jesus haiff left to us in testimony of thair battell; yea, of thair anguishe and paine" (*Works*, 4:242). He wants his correspondent to see that he is not alone, and that his experience is consistent with that of believers through the ages, and even the saints in Scripture—specifically, he outlines the troubles faced by David, Job, and Paul. Undoubtedly because of his own struggles, Knox is clearly aware of the loneliness and self-accusation that

35. Steven Lawson, *John Knox: Fearless Faith* (Fearn, Ross-shire, 2014), pp. 43–44.

36. Renwick, *The Story of the Scottish Reformation*, p. 87.

can come with depression and melancholy, and so he points him to the testimony of Scripture to show him that what he is facing is not inconsistent with his Christian profession, but something that has been endured by many who have gone before him, even some of the pillars of the faith.

Crucially, Knox points out to him that his sufferings, like those of David, Job, and Paul, are wounds of grace, sent by God for the good of his children. The purpose, he writes, is to force us to contemplate our own weakness—to "dispairit of [our] awn strength" —and so cast ourselves all the more fully upon the strength of Christ:

> That this may be the better understand, I say, that what the Halie Gaist did wirk in the hartis of the Israellitis and otheris, to whom Peter maid his first sermon efter the resaving of the Halie Gaist, by few wordis, and in schort process of tyme, the same, I say, doith God wirk in us his children all the dayis of oure lyfe; for evin as thair wer be the thundering voces of Peter brocht to the sensibill feilling of thair horrible enormitie, wha had murtherit, and consentit to the murthering of the verie Messias promissit; saw ar we, be the brightness of Godis Scriptures, disclosing to us the secreitis of oure awn hartis, brocht to the feilling of Godis wrath and anger, whilk be our manifold offences we justlie haif provokit against us. Whilk revelatioun, dolour, and compugntioun, God sendeth not to us of purpois to confound us, but of verie love, be whilk he hath concludit our salvation to stand in Chryst Jesus his Sone; and thairfoir, lest by pryde and fulische presumptioun, whilk, allace! too many haif of thair awn strength, justice, and merites, we suld refuse or lyghtlie esteame so precious a gift offirit, he suffereth us to prufe our awn forces; yea, he suffereth us to sink doun with Peter, that unfeanedlie we may cry, Succour Lord (*Works*, 4:243).

As with his mother-in-law, Knox's desire in counselling this Englishman is to help him to see the "very love" of God that undergirded his sorrows. It is of God's grace that he brings us into seasons and situations in which we "sink down with Peter," unable to say or do anything but cry out, "save, Lord."

The Knox who appears in this letter is a distinctly compassionate and kind pastor. Undoubtedly, he had learned these lessons of Scripture from his own battles with the "dolours," and he applies them skillfully to his troubled correspondent. Knox is eager to see that behind the frowning providence that he was experiencing was a gracious Savior who would only bring him through such things for his own good. He assures him that this was no cruelty or neglect on the part of Christ, but an essential part of his saving love for this Englishman. It was an act of love that Christ would bring him to a point when he could no longer rely upon his own strength and wisdom, but have to, like Peter, cry "Succour, Lord," and entrust himself more fully to the kind and careful hands of his Savior.

Broad Application

When looking at a man like Knox the question must always be asked, "which interprets what?" Should the public interpret the private, or the private interpret the public? It seems truer to the man to let the direct and private interpret the general and public. To do so gives us a lens that shows that underneath his sometimes fiery rhetoric, Knox was a man whose first desire was simply the glory of Christ. His foremost desire in his ministry was that his audience, personal or public, turn away from superstition and self reliance and turn to the only sufficient salvation found in Jesus Christ. Mark Koller summarized it well when he wrote, "The towering figure that Knox presents to the modern scholar is one of stern and almost unyielding resolve. [However, as] an unexpected surprise to his many modern critics, and in spite of his own personal trials, he still proved himself to have the capacity of a tender pastor."[37]

There is a surprising warmth to Knox the correspondent, that gives us a fuller picture of Knox the Reformer, but this in turn gives us a fuller picture of the Scottish Reformation as a whole. Richard Kyle has stated that "[o]n a personal level, Knox set a standard for preaching in Scotland. His careful preparation, solid exposition, sound evangelical doctrine, and forceful presentations were imitated throughout Scotland."[38] And it is fair to say that this is true not just of his preaching, but of his pastoring as well.

While the leaders of the Scottish Reformation were attempting a project that was unprecedented in their attempt to bring Protestantism to bear on a national scale, the heart of the lead Reformer demonstrates that this was not a mere political imposition but a project that truly went after the hearts and the minds of the people of Scotland. If the heart of Knox, the undisputed leader of the Reformation in Scotland, revealed in his correspondence, gives us an insight into the heart of the project as a whole, then we can see that what was aimed at in Scotland was a devotional revolution that

37. Mark A. Koller, "The Development of the Scottish Doctrine of the Church: The Far-Reaching Ministry of John Knox," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 9.2 (2017): 169–302, at p. 276.

38. Kyle, "The Thundering Scot," p. 148.

sought to captivate the people of Scotland with the loveliness of Christ.

Tom Torrance speaks to this in his analysis of the Scots Confession. Observing that the Confession has no separate article on Justification, he writes

> What is absolutely central is Jesus Christ. Man's salvation is exclusively the work of God in Christ, God in union with Man, and therefore Man in union with God. It is an outstanding characteristic of all the documents of the Scottish Reformation that a place of centrality is given to the union of God and Man in Christ, and therefore of our "blessed conjunction" or "society" or "fraternity" with Christ.[39]

Despite being authored by the "six Johns" (Knox, Spottiswood, Wilock, Row, Douglas, and Winram), the production of such a thorough document in the space of four days heavily implies that it was largely the work of John Knox, edited and refined by his co-authors.[40] Regardless of who the chief author was, the centrality of Jesus Christ demonstrates that what we find in Knox's pastoral Christology was not just unique to him, but rather captured the tenor of the Scottish Reformation as a whole.

This was, from the perspective of the lead Reformers, to be a devotional Reformation that was built on leading people to behold the loveliness of Christ. Despite being formalized by an act of Parliament in 1560, this was not to be a top-down imposition brought to bear on a vulnerable people by something akin to a "Tartan Taliban." At its very root and core the Reformation that John Knox was pursuing was one that was rooted in hearts and minds that had been captivated by the goodness of God revealed in Jesus Christ. The warmth that we find in Knox's personal correspondence reveals to us the general timbre of those who were at the fore of early Scottish Calvinism. They carried with them a force and an urgency, even an intensity, but this was not borne of some tyrannical desire to dominate but out of a earnest desire that the people of Scotland understand the depth of their spiritual predicament and then run to Christ for refuge.

Conclusion

C. S. Lewis branded John Knox the "enfant terrible" of Calvinism.[41] Such is the reputation that has been handed down through the ages. It is in part informed and directed by Knox's portrayal of himself in his *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, in which he sought to paint a deliberate picture intended to create a national lore surrounding the Reformation that would help the Reformation take hold in the unique attempt at establishing a national Reformation. But with the wealth of other material we have available, it is ultimately lazy and uncharitable, and it is a point at which our historic imaginations tip over and deafen us so that we cannot take the man at his word.

It is easy to think of the days of the Scottish Reformation in terms of Northern European noir—to think of the characters involved being as dark and brooding as the North Sea that lashes Scotland's shores. We can easily imagine Luther's Reformation as full of song and beer, Calvin's full of Continental refinement, but Knox's Reformation as one of angst and loathing, led by a man "who prayed on hills and high crags, and learnt to look down on the world more than to look up at heaven," as G. K. Chesterton famously condemned the "Scotch religion."[42]

However, when we look into Knox's letters as sources that reveal the heart of the Reformer as he addressed friend and foe alike, free from the public persona of the pulpit, what we see in the lead Reformer of Scotland is a man who is principled, but yet tender and kind. As James Begg writes, there is in John Knox a "combination of cheery humour and the utmost firmness, of immense power and thorough disinterestedness, stern determination in public life, with a most remarkable tenderness of domestic affection, and also a deep feeling of sympathy with the helpless and oppressed."[43] He was indeed "a pastor of souls with a deep interest in the spiritual welfare of those who came under his care."[44]

Knox's reputation in the pulpit is too well attested to deny the force of his oratory, but when we take him on his own terms and open his personal correspondence we see just what it is that this man would say when he was engaging a particular, personal audience. When we do, we see that he was a man who first and foremost wanted people to see and savor Jesus Christ. John Knox was a pastor at heart who more than wanting to impose a political, or cultural, or even religious agenda on Scotland, wanted people—as people—to see and savor Jesus Christ. What John Knox's letters reveal is a man who is tender and kind, who wanted those with whom he dealt to hold fast to Christ and live only for his glory.▪

39. Thomas F. Torrance, "Justification: Its Radical Nature and Place in Reformed Doctrine and Life," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 13.3 (1960): 225–46, at p. 226.

40. Renwick, *The Story of the Scottish Reformation*, p. 111.

41. Lewis, *English Literature*, p. 198.

42. Chesterton, "The Hammer of God," pp. 133–34.

43. James Begg, "John Knox and the Reformation," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 7 (2011): 31–32.

44. Stanford Reid, "John Knox," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 40 (1), p.20.

Jean Macmath, Mistress Rutherford (1610–1675)

By Douglas Somerset

"Mistress Rutherford" is the hitherto unidentified author of a short spiritual autobiography spanning the years 1620 to 1634, and first published in 2004.[1] In this paper we show that she was almost certainly Jean Macmath, the second wife of Samuel Rutherford. Using this, we give a fuller account of Jean Macmath's life and background than has been possible before.

I. Mistress Rutherford and Jean Macmath

All that is known about Mistress Rutherford is stated in—or deducible from—her spiritual autobiography. This occupies 14,500 words and survives in a single copy among the Wodrow manuscripts with Robert Wodrow's attribution, "Mistress Rutherford."[2] From this it may be gathered, for example, that her maiden name was either Macmath or Lockhart; that she had one sister, probably younger; that her (first) husband lived in Ulster; and a few other gleanings which we mention below. One useful feature of the spiritual autobiography, which greatly assists the identification, is the attention it gives to chronology; and if, as we think, the account was written many years afterwards, she must have had a very accurate memory for these things.

The main reasons for identifying Mistress Rutherford with Samuel Rutherford's second wife, Jean Macmath, are as follows.

1. Mistress Rutherford's maiden name may well have been Macmath. In her narrative she states that her mother's sister was married to the laird of Anniston. This was John Muir of Anniston, whose wife, Margaret Foulis was the daughter of the Edinburgh goldsmith and financier Thomas Foulis.[3] Thomas Foulis's (first) wife was Jean Frances and they had two other daughters, Jean who was married to John Lockhart, and Agnes who was married to James Macmath. There is thus a good probability that Mistress Rutherford had the unusual maiden name of Macmath.

2. More than this, it is highly likely that Mistress Rutherford's maiden name was Jean Macmath. From her narrative, we gather that her mother died when she was four, her father when she was "about nine," and her grandmother when she was twelve.[4] Since Jean Frances died on 1st March 1623,[5] Mistress Rutherford must have been born between 2nd March 1610 and 28th February 1611. Agnes Foulis (who, as we have just seen, was either her mother or her aunt) died in April 1615, when she was either four or five (going by the dates just deduced) and James Macmath in August 1620, when she was nine or ten.[6] Thus both the dates fit, and it would be a remarkable coincidence if these were not her parents. It is natural, therefore, to proceed on the assumption that these were her parents and that she was born probably towards the end of 1610. Furthermore, their testaments show that James and Agnes Macmath had two daughters Jean and Agnes, and Jean was named first so presumably she was the elder. In her narrative, Mistress Rutherford mentions a sister who went to school after her, and thus was presumably younger.[7] Thus it

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1. D.G. Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative," in *Miscellany XIII* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 2004), pp. 146–188. See also D.G. Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's narrative: a Scottish Puritan autobiography," *Bunyan Studies*, Vol. 7 (1997), pp. 13–37.

2. Edinburgh University Library, Laing MSS, La.III.263, Wodrow Octavo 33, no. 6.

3. Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative," pp. 146–7, 159.

4. Ibid., pp. 152–3.

5. Testament of Jeane Frances, 1623, NRS CC8/8/52 (Edinburgh Commissary Court).

6. Testaments of Agnes Fowlis, 1616, NRS CC9/7/11 and James McMath, 1621, NRS CC9/7/17 (both Glasgow Commissary Court).

7. Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative," p. 155.

is highly probable that Mistress Rutherford's maiden name was Jean Macmath and that her younger sister was called Agnes.

3. In the seventeenth century, the Scottish name "Mrs X" generally, if not universally, meant the wife or widow of Mr X and implied that Mr X was a university graduate, or minister, or person of some note. Thus from Robert Wodrow's designation of her, the presumption would be that Mistress Rutherford was married at some point to a man called Rutherford who was a minister or university graduate.

4. From her mid-teens onwards, Mistress Rutherford moved in similar evangelical Presbyterian circles to Samuel Rutherford, as the names mentioned in her narrative show: Bethia Aird, John Gillon,[8] Charles Mowat,[9] David Dickson, and the ministers in Ireland.

5. Mistress Rutherford's first husband apparently lived in Ulster, where they went after their marriage. In 1640, Samuel Rutherford married a woman named Jean Macmath who had previously been married to a man, Hugh Montgomery, who owned land in Ulster.[10]

6. The supposition that Mistress Rutherford and Jean Macmath are one and the same does not conflict with anything known about either of them. For example, Jean Macmath and her sister both left land at their death,[11] presumably inherited from spouses or blood relations, and this fits with the social status of Mistress Rutherford and her sister. Again, both Mistress Rutherford and Jean Macmath had close connections with the Chieslie family, as we shall see below. The only tension is over ages: we have seen that Mistress Rutherford was probably born about the end of 1610, and this date is possible for Jean Macmath, though a little early. Her seven children with Samuel Rutherford were born between 1641 and March 1656,[12] so a date of birth at the end of 1610 would imply that the final child was born when she was 45. This was old for the time, but given that this final child was born five years after her previous one, it is not entirely impossible.

7. In his index to his papers, the Church historian Robert Wodrow describes her simply as "Mistress Rutherford," and to him there was one "great Rutherford," just as "Mrs Guthrie," "Mrs Binning," and "Mrs Livingstone" can be assumed to be the wives or widows of William or James Guthrie, Hugh Binning, and John Livingstone.

Combining all these reasons, we see that it is virtually certain that Mistress Rutherford and Jean Macmath are one and the same, and we now proceed on this assumption.

II. Jean Macmath

1. Family background

Some of this information has already been given in the previous section, but we repeat it here for convenience.

Jean Macmath's mother Agnes Foulis belonged to the family of Foulis of Colinton. Agnes's grandfather Henry Foulis of Colinton (d. 1571) had at least four sons—James Foulis of Colinton (d. 1609), David, Robert, and Agnes's father Thomas (d. 1628)—and various daughters, one of whom, Margaret (d. 1609), was married to the important politician Sir Thomas Hamilton of Drumcarny (1563–1637), who was successively Lord Binning, the Earl of Melrose, and the Earl of Haddington. Some of their children were prominent in covenanting circles. Meanwhile, James had six sons, of whom George of Ravelston (d. 1635) was a leading goldsmith and Robert (d. 1631) an advocate.[13]

Agnes's father Thomas became an Edinburgh goldsmith, and in due course a royal financier.[14] In 1598 he was bankrupted because of a royal refusal to pay debts but he recovered from this and developed his mining interests at Leadhills.[15] Two of his partners in this were his nephews George and Robert, just mentioned, and in 1638 Robert's daughter Anne secured the mining inheritance after legal action and married her successful advocate, Sir James Hope of Hopetoun (1614–1661).

In addition to Agnes, Thomas Foulis had two sons: Thomas who died in 1612, and David of Glendorch (just

8. For John Gillon, see W.K. Tweedie (ed.), *Select Biographies* (2 vols., Wodrow Society, Edinburgh, 1845–47), Vol. 1, pp. 353, 369; D. Laing (ed.), *Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie* (3 vols., Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1841–42), Vol. 3, p. 61; J. Kirk (ed.), *Records of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, 1589–1596, 1640–1649* (Stair Society, Edinburgh, 1977), index; C.R. Langley (ed.), *Minutes of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, 1648–1659* (Scottish History Society, Boydell Press, 2016), p. 15.

9. For Charles Mowat, see W. K. Tweedie, *Select Biographies*, Vol. 1, p. 346.

10. J.H. Stevenson and W.K. Dickson, *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, A.D. 1652–1659* (Edinburgh, 1904), No. 164, pp. 81–82. This document is of considerable interest and we return to it in Section 6.

11. T. Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford* (Edinburgh, 1828), pp. 191, 324.

12. Ibid., p. 374.

13. See M.D. Young (ed.), *The Parliaments of Scotland: Burgh and Shire Commissioners* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1992), Vol. 1, p. 260. For Robert Foulis, see F.J. Grant (ed.), *The Faculty of Advocates in Scotland, 1532–1943* (Scottish Record Society, Edinburgh, 1944), p. 76.

14. For Thomas Foulis, see his entry by Julian Goodare in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

15. See J. Goodare, "Thomas Foulis and the Scottish fiscal crisis of the 1590s," in M. Ormrod *et. al.* (eds.), *Crises, Revolutions, and Self-Sustained Growth: Essays in European Fiscal History, 1130–1830* (Stamford, 1999), pp. 170–197.

north of Leadhills) who died in 1635;[16] and two daughters: Jean who married James Lockhart of Cleuch,[17] and Margaret who married John Mure or Muir (d. 1646) of Annieston in the parish of Symington near Biggar.[18] John Mure was another of Thomas Foulis's mining partners. Thomas's wife was Jean Frances (d. 1623), of whose family background we know nothing, and after her death he married Rachel Porteous who survived him.

Jean Macmath's father James (d. 1620) had land in Schaw in the parish of Auchinleck but otherwise little is known of him at present. In his biography of Samuel Rutherford, Thomas Murray thought that there was "reason to believe" that Jean's father was a merchant in Edinburgh.[19] There was an extensive Macmath family in Edinburgh, and even a James Macmath who became a merchant burgess on 14th May 1596 by right of his wife Isobel Macmath (whose father William Macmath was a litster).[20] James and Isobel had a number of children including a son Edward born in May 1608 and a daughter Helen born in July 1612, so they are a different couple from Mistress Rutherford's parents. Furthermore James Macmath, the Edinburgh burgess, was still alive in 1625.[21] So far, we have not seen anything to connect Jean Macmath's father with Edinburgh, or with the Edinburgh branch of the Macmath family.

Thus Jean Macmath and her sister Agnes were from quite a wealthy background and had some important people in their wider family circle.

2. Early life

Jean Macmath, as we have mentioned, was born probably about the end of 1610. In the absence of any other evidence, we suppose that she was born in Auchinleck.[22] Her mother Agnes died in April 1615 when she was four and her father James in August 1620 when she was nine.[23] After his death, Jean and her sister Agnes lived with her maternal grandfather, Thomas Foulis. Where his main residence was, we are not sure, but it was not, apparently, in Edinburgh. Jean's grandmother, Jean Frances was a godly woman who taught her to pray, but she died on 1st March 1623 when Jean was twelve;[24] and, looking back, Jean felt that she had not benefitted from her grandmother's company as she should have done.[25] For the next year, she was occupied "guiding" her grandfather's house, until one of his sisters arrived to take over.

In 1624 she moved to Edinburgh and lived with an aunt, but then left the town to stay with another aunt because of the "pestilence."[26] On her return to Edinburgh she was troubled with atheistic thoughts. In 1625 she was sent to Bethia Aird's school in Edinburgh for three months. The main good that she got from this was that thenceforth she had Bethia for a spiritual counsellor.[27] Her spiritual autobiography for this period records her various temptations, one of which was a long-standing temptation to suicide, and another was a jealousy against her sister when she replaced her at Bethia Aird's school.[28]

Returning to her grandfather's house, Jean found that his second wife, Rachel Porteous, had "become very evil to her."[29] She continued there until her grandfather's death in December 1628, when she and her sister went to stay with her aunt, Margaret Foulis, and her

16. "David Foulis married Elizabeth Baillie in 1617, the contract of marriage between them being dated 31st January and 3rd March 1617, and recorded in the Books of Council and Session on 6th May 1622. After the death of David Foulis, Elizabeth Baillie married James Wood. She had issue by her first marriage, a daughter, who succeeded to the lands of Glendorch." See James W. Baillie, *Lives of the Baillies* (Edinburgh, 1872), p. 35.

17. *Index to Particular Register of Sasines for Sheriffdom of Lanark, Vol. 1, 1618–1720* (HMSO, Edinburgh, 1971), pp. 86, 164.

18. John Mure was a commissioner for the Presbytery of Lanark to the 1639 General Assembly; see *Selections from the Registers of the Presbytery of Lanark, 1623–1709* (Abbotsford Club, Edinburgh, 1839), p. 17; Kirk, *Records of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, 1589–1596, 1640–1649*, index.

19. Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 324. Murray thought that Jean was the sister of Janet Macmath who married William Dick in 1637. For this branch of the Macmath family, see Mrs J. Stewart Smith, *The Grange of St Giles* (Edinburgh, 1898), pp. 385–388.

20. M. Wood (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1589–1603* (Edinburgh, 1927), p. 157.

21. James Macmath, the Edinburgh burgess, was a ship-owner, involved in brewing and weaving, and was Master of Trinity College Hospital for the poor; see J.J. Brown, "The Social, Political, and Economic Influences of the Edinburgh Merchant Elite, 1600–1638" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1986), p. 492; M. Wood (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1604–1626* (Edinburgh, 1931), pp. 149, 196.

22. The minister of Auchinleck from 1617 to 1621 was George Walker, but the name of his predecessor in the parish is not recorded.

23. See the testaments of Agnes Foulis and James Macmath, cited earlier.

24. See the testament of Jean Frances, cited earlier.

25. Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative," p. 152.

26. The "pest" broke out on 28th November 1624; D. Calderwood, *History of the Kirk of Scotland* (8 vols., Wodrow Society, Edinburgh, 1842–49), Vol. 7, p. 627.

27. Bethia's father William (d. 1606) was minister of St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh from 1586 to 1606. Her brother John (1584–1638) was minister of Newton from 1614 to 1618 and of Newbattle from 1618 to 1638. Bethia was probably born in the 1580s. She was married to Joseph Miller (d. 1643), and her testament was recorded on 16th September 1653; see F.J. Grant (ed.), *The Commissariot Record of Edinburgh: Register of Testaments, 1601–1700* (Edinburgh, 1898), p. 7. She was a correspondent of Samuel Rutherford's.

28. Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative," pp. 155–157.

29. Ibid., p. 157.

husband, John Mure, at Annieston Tower (or Castle) in the parish of Symington near Biggar.[30] Her aunt and uncle had at least one son, John Mure younger, but he was probably a young child at that stage. The minister of the parish was William Wallace who had been there since 1598. About Pasch (Easter) 1629, Jean took communion, which apparently extended over two Sabbaths. Her narrative does not mention any examination by a kirk session prior to communion.[31] The minister's text at the service was Rev. 3:15 but she got little good, for which she was inclined to blame herself.

The minister of the neighbouring parish of Quothqan since 1617 was John Chieslie who had a considerable family which was to have various close links with Jean Macmath in later years. John Chieslie died in April 1635, and Jean's aunt Margaret Foulis must also have died in the early 1630s, because in January 1636, John Mure married Chieslie's widow Elizabeth Carmichael. Curiously, John Mure's son John later married Elizabeth's daughter Janet by John Chieslie, and thus father and son were married to mother and daughter. The eldest son of John Chieslie and Elizabeth Carmichael was Sir John Chieslie (d. 1677), a prominent Covenanter, who was one of the leading Protestors and was closely associated with Samuel Rutherford in the 1650s.[32] Meanwhile another son, William, became a Writer to the Signet and married Agnes, daughter of Jean Macmath and Samuel Rutherford, in 1664. A third son of John Chieslie and Elizabeth Carmichael was Walter Chieslie of Dalry. One of Walter's sons, Robert, became Provost of Edinburgh while another was the notorious John Chieslie of Dalry who assassinated the Lord President, Sir George Lockhart of Carnwath, in broad daylight on his way home from church in March 1689. The assassin's daughter Rachel Chieslie was the unfortunate Lady Grange who was imprisoned on St Kilda.

From Annieston, Jean Macmath returned to Edinburgh to stay with Robert Foulis, her mother's first cousin, whose daughter Anna was probably a few years younger than Jean. As we have mentioned, Robert died in February 1631 and Anna inherited the mining fortune and married Sir James Hope of Hopetoun in 1638. Robert must have lived near Granton Castle on the outskirts of Edinburgh to the north. Jean stayed there till Lammas (1st August) 1629, at which point she went to stay with other family members at Cockpen, returning to Edinburgh in November. Her conversion is difficult to place amidst her various spiritual troubles, but she seems to have attained to spiritual peace at a communion at the West Kirk (St Cuthbert's), Edinburgh, probably in July or August 1630 under the ministry of William Arthur.[33]

3. First marriage to Hugh Montgomery

About the end of 1632, Jean had a proposal of marriage from an unspecified suitor with which she was not happy, but some months later a different proposal of marriage, this time from Hugh Montgomery of Ballyharry, Ards, in Ulster, which she accepted.[34] The identity of Hugh Montgomery is not entirely clear.[35] In 1635 Robert Blair married, as his second wife, Katherine Montgomery, and it seems likely that Hugh was a brother of Katherine's. Katherine was described as "daughter to Hugh Montgomerie, laird of Busbie, in the west, who after the sale of these lands, went to Ireland and there made purchase of the lands of Ballishary and others. This gentleman had many daughters."[36] One of these daughters, Isobel, was already married to Robert Cunningham, minister of Holywood, and another, Margaret, to Robert Hamilton, minister of Killyleagh and then Ballantrae.

Busby or Busbie Castle was about two miles from Kilmarnock and had belonged to the Mowat family for generations, but was sold for debt sometime before the death of the final Mowat proprietor, Charles Mowat, in 1626.[37] One of Charles's sons, Matthew, became minister of Kilmarnock in 1641 and was a Protestor in the 1650s. The Charles Mowat in Edinburgh from whom

30. Ibid., p. 159. Annieston Tower was said to be ruinous in the 1880s, and we are not sure whether there is anything still to be seen.

31. Robert Blair was admitted to the Lord's table in 1604 at the age of twelve without prior examination; *Life of Robert Blair* (Wodrow Society, Edinburgh, 1848), pp. 6–7.

32. For Sir John Chieslie, see A.G. Reid (ed.), *Diary of Andrew Hay of Craignethan, 1659–60* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1901), pp. xxiii-xxiv; Young, *The Parliaments of Scotland: Burgh and Shire Commissioners*, Vol. 2, p. 120.

33. Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative," pp. 170–171; W. Sime, *History of the Parish and Church of St Cuthbert, or the West Kirk of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1829), pp. 45, 55. A second minister, James Reid, was admitted to the West Kirk in September 1630 (and, like William Arthur and Mistress Rutherford, he opposed kneeling at communion) but Mistress Rutherford's account of the communion mentions only one minister.

34. Ballyharry is now a district in the town of Newtonards. There are also several places called Ballyhenry.

35. The name "Hugh Montgomery" was common throughout the period, and in the 1650s there were at least seven significant men of that name; see D.B. Montgomery, *A Genealogical History of the Montgomerys and their Descendants* (Owensville, IN, 1903), p. 31.

36. *Life of Robert Blair*, p. 136. Hugh was "of the house of Eglinton" (hence a Montgomery) and his wife "of the house of Glencairn" (hence presumably a Cunningham).

37. J. Young, *Life of John Welsh* (Edinburgh, 1866), p. 102. James Paterson, *History of the County of Ayr* (2 vols., Ayr, 1847–52), Vol. 2, p. 218. The ruins of Busbie Castle were demolished as unsafe about 1950.

Mistress Rutherford received spiritual help about 1631 was perhaps a cousin of Matthew's.[38]

Hugh Montgomery, senior, probably purchased Busbie Castle in the early 1620s, and was still alive at the time of his daughter Katherine's marriage in May 1635.[39] In 1637, Samuel Rutherford wrote two letters to Lady Busbie in which he speaks of her "visitation" and affliction.[40] She would appear to have been widowed by this time, and her son-in-law Robert Cunningham had died in March 1637. Extraordinarily, Cunningham was "summoned" to the High Commission court in Dublin five weeks after his death and then fined for non-appearance, which caused great hardship to his widow and eight children.[41] This was probably the affliction to which Rutherford was referring.

The *Montgomery Manuscripts* mention a "Goodwife of Busby" who "after the 85th year of her age, walked to a communion in Comerer [Comber]." The editor thought that this "goodwife" was the widow of Charles Mowat (d. 1626) above, but given the Ulster connection (and the fact that the author of the manuscript was illustrating the longevity of the Montgomery family), it is fairly certain that it was Samuel Rutherford's correspondent, Lady Busbie.[42] Robert Blair had a daughter baptised in April 1654, so his wife Katherine Montgomery must have been born about 1610 at the latest.[43] Thus her mother, Lady Busbie was born in the late 1560s at the earliest, so the Comber communion to which she walked at the age of 85 cannot have been much before 1650.

Jean Macmath and her first husband were married in 1633. On their way to Ireland after the wedding, they heard David Dickson preaching in Irvine,[44] presumably staying at Busbie Castle, and then spent some time at Portpatrick. Here they probably stayed at Dunskey Castle, owned by Hugh Montgomery (c. 1560–1636), the first Viscount Montgomery, who is frequently but mistakenly identified as Jean's husband.[45] Instead he was probably a cousin of her husband's.

The following summer, Jean and her husband—who shared her religious views—attended many communions conducted by the Ulster Presbyterian ministers whose liberty had recently been restored to them. As we have just mentioned, two of the ministers, Cunningham of Holywood and Hamilton of Killyleagh, were probably married to her husband's sisters. This was a time of spiritual blessing and revival in Ulster,[46] but during the course of the summer her husband Hugh took ill and died, and she was ill herself, and then a posthumous baby boy was born and baptised, but also died.[47]

4. Second marriage to Samuel Rutherford

Nothing is known of Jean for the next six years but on 24th March 1640 she married Samuel Rutherford, whose previous wife, Eupham Hamilton, had died in 1630.[48] The marriage took place in Edinburgh where Jean must have been residing.[49] Samuel Rutherford's letters were first published posthumously in 1664 under the title *Joshua Redivivus* and one of them was to Jean's younger sister Agnes in October 1640, commiserating with his new sister-in-law on the loss of a child.[50]

With Samuel Rutherford, Jean had at least seven children: Catherine, born February 1641; John, born June 1642; Robert, born July 1643; Jean, born August 1645; Agnes, born May 1649; Samuel, born March 1651; and Margaret, born 18th March 1656.[51] The last of these, Margaret, was born when Jean was at least 45 which was most uncommon in those days. She was very ill and was thought to be dying: "I got a letter from M.S.R. about his wyfes feared death. Lord prevent it if it be His will and hold up the heart of His servant who is weighted with calumnye."[52]

Samuel Rutherford was in England in March 1643,

38. Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative," p. 175.

39. *Life of Robert Blair*, p. 138.

40. S. Rutherford, *Joshua Redivivus* (Rotterdam, 1664), Letters 59 and 194 (Letters 133 and 270 in the standard Bonar numbering).

41. *Life of Robert Blair*, pp. 148–9.

42. George Hill (ed.), *The Montgomery Manuscripts (1603–1706)* (Belfast, 1869), pp. 146–147. Ballyharry is four or five miles from Comber.

43. H. Scott (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae* (8 vols., 2nd edn., Edinburgh, 1915–50), Vol. 8, p. 468.

44. Dickson was preaching on Job. Sermons of his on Job 10 (1635) and Job 36 (1638 and 1639) survive; see Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative," p. 182; M. Vogan, "David Dickson: A Provisional Bibliography," *The Confessional Presbyterian*, Vol. 16 (2020): 84–92.

45. Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative," p. 182. For Jean's connection with Dunskey Castle, see Section 6 below.

46. See D.W.B. Somerset, "Mistress Rutherford and Ulster in the summer of 1634," *Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal (SRSHJ)*, Vol. 1 (2011): 267–271.

47. Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative," pp. 184–188.

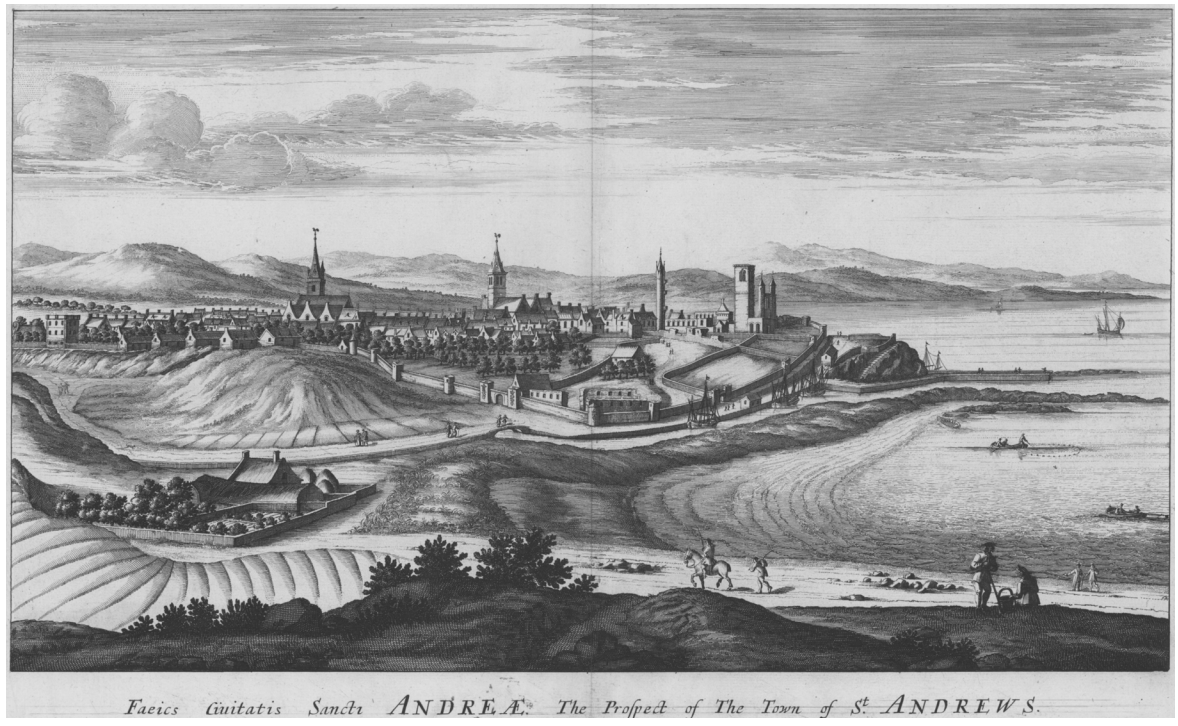
48. Eupham had at least one child, Marie, born April 1626, but it seems that none of her children survived her death, Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 347.

49. H. Paton (ed.), *Register of Marriages for the Parish of Edinburgh, 1595–1700* (Scottish Record Society, Edinburgh, 1905), p. 600. The contract of marriage had been proclaimed in St Andrews on 1st March 1640; see ScotlandsPeople website under "Samwell Rutherfurde."

50. Letter 300 in the Bonar numbering.

51. The list is taken from Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 374.

52. J.D. Ogilvie (ed.), *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston, 1655–1660* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1940), 11th March 1656, p. 27.



St Andrews, Scotland (view from the south, John Slezer, Theatrum Scotiae, 1693). Buildings shown (r. to l.): the tower and ruins of St Andrews Cathedral, the tower of the Church of St Rule, the tower of St Salvator's College, and Holy Trinity Church. Samuel Rutherford served as a minister of the city and professor of theology at the University of St. Andrews, 1639–1643,1647–1661). Rutherford married Jean Macmath on March 24, 1640.

and again from November 1643 to November 1647 at the Westminster Assembly. Jean had joined him in London by March 1644, at which time she was "under the physicians."[53] The Scots Commissioners stayed in Worcester House; and with them, presumably, were Robert MacWard and Sir John Chieslie who were amanuenses to Rutherford and Alexander Henderson respectively.[54] Robert MacWard was aged around 20 at the time, and had probably studied under Rutherford at St Andrews. He was later a regent at St Andrews in April 1650.[55] It may well have been his time with Samuel Rutherford and his wife at Worcester House that led him to write later to their daughter Agnes:

> Sometimes I have thought, if I should miss heaven, next to the face of an angry God, the most terrible and least sufferable sight imaginable would be the sight of your father and mother's face, sitting as assessors to the righteous judge, and applauding to my condemnation for not having learned at them to walk with God…O how many times have I been convinced by observing them, of the evil of unseriousness with God, and unsavouriness in discourse…They spoke and walked as those who had spoken with God, and had heard him speak, and so were constrained to watch carefully lest they did anything which in their address to him might wound their faith or weaken their confidence.[56]

Jean Macmath must have returned to St Andrews in 1645 because it was there that their daughter Jean was baptised in August. With the exception of Agnes, all their children died young, but the details about this are elusive. In a letter written in 1645, but otherwise undated, Rutherford says: "I had but two children, and both are dead since I came hither."[57] Almost certainly, this was written before the birth of Jean in August, and implies that the three eldest were dead by then, with two of them having died since November 1643.[58] One of the

53. J. Coffey, *Politics, Religion, and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 50, 52, 53; A.A. Bonar (ed.), *Letters of Samuel Rutherford* (Edinburgh, 1891), p. 617.

54. Chris Coldwell, "Westminster Abbey Library and other theological sources of the Westminster Divines (1643–1652)," *SRSHJ*, Vol. 10 (2020): 27–50 (pp. 41–42); James Kirkton, *Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1817), p. 71n.

55. *Diary of Mr John Lamont of Newton, 1649–1671* (Edinburgh, 1830), p. 16.

56. Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 362.

57. Bonar, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 621.

58. Coffey thinks that all four children were dead by then, *Politics,*



daughters died in 1661, just a few weeks before Rutherford's own death on 29th March 1661, but whether this was Jean or Margaret is not stated.[59] The only child mentioned in his will, drawn up on 8th March 1661, was Agnes.

In summary, it would appear that during the twenty-one years of her marriage to Samuel Rutherford, Jean Macmath was fairly fully occupied with the care of children. Most of her married life with him was spent in St Andrews, presumably living in St Mary's College.

5. Dunskey Castle

One intriguing aspect of Jean Macmath's life is her brief connection with Dunskey Castle, near Portpatrick.[60] The background to this is uncertain and would merit

Religion, and the British Revolutions, p. 53. One of them died in January 1644, Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 324. Another child, who had presumably been ill, was well in January 1653; Bonar, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 672.

59. *Diary of Mr John Lamont of Newton*, p. 133.

60. For a somewhat related discussion, see M. Vogan, "Did James Ussher visit Samuel Rutherford?," *The Confessional Presbyterian*, Vol. 16 (2020): 56–58.

further research. The principal evidence—perhaps the only surviving evidence—is a charter of 26th July 1653:

> The Keepers grant to Johne Shaw of Grenocke and his heirs and assignees whomsoever (subject to the legal reversion),—the 2½ merk land of Killenterna, the 2½ merk land of Uchtum Mackeirne, the 3 merk land of Craigenbuy and merk land of Auchinbea of old extent, extending in all to a 10 merk land; the £10 land of Portrie, comprehending the lands and others underwritten, viz: 3 merk land of Marrok, with the castle, tower and fortalice of Dunskey situate thereupon; the corn-mill of Portrie, with the three mills and mill-lands, astricted multures and sucken thereof used and wont, viz.: the said 10 pound land of Portrie, the 5 pound land of Kinghilt, the 3 merk land of Duntoune, with the port called Portpatrick; the lands of Marok and Duntoune, with several crofts of the said port; the 3 merk land of Enoch; the 2 merk land of Mekel Sigmanoch (Pigmanoch?); the 3 merk land of Craigoch; the town or burgh of Mongrumie and sea port of old called Port Patrick and now Port Mongrumie, with the whole anchorages, tolls, customs, and other privileges, &c., pertaining thereto,—with the castles, towers, fortalices, manor-places, &c., of the foresaid lands, all lying within the sheriffdom of Wigton;—the 3s. 4d. land of Boighall, with the 16s. land of Neitherhill of Beith; the 40s. land of Bigholme; the 54s. land of Over Boigsyde and Fulwoodhead; the 4 merk land of Marchalland, in the barony of Beith, bailiary of Cunninghame, regality of Killwinning, and sheriffdom of Ayr;—which lands pertained to Hew, now Viscount of Airds, his father, and were apprised from him on 1st August 1650, at the instance of Joane Montgrumie alias Mackmath, relict of the deceased Hew Montgrumie sometime of Balharie in the country of Doune, gentleman, and of Maister Samuell Ruthfuird, professor of divinity in the University of Saint Andrews, now her spouse, for his interest, for payment of £2,000 Scots, with £100 of sheriff-fee to Johne Hart, messenger;—which decree of apprising was assigned by the said Joane Mackmath with consent of the said Samuell Ruthfuird to Andrew Wardlaw, merchant burgess of Edinburgh, by assignation dated 15th June 1653, and was assigned by the said Andrew Wardlaw to the said Johne Shaw by translation dated 22nd July 1653: With precept of sasine. P.R. vii. 82.[61]

Apprising was an earlier form of diligence in Scots law (abolished in 1672) which allowed a creditor to obtain a security in a debtor's property. Thus the Viscount of Airds (the third Viscount Montgomery) must have owed money to Jean Macmath. How this was so is puzzling. The first Viscount Montgomery had died in 1636, and his son, the second Viscount Montgomery, in 1642. The second Viscount and his son, the third Viscount (d. 1663), were both Royalists, and the third Viscount commanded the Royalist army in Ulster which was defeated in October 1649. Fleeing into the south, he was captured by Cromwell about March 1651 and banished to Holland. His lands in Scotland and Ireland were confiscated about 1650.

The obvious connection between Jean Macmath and the third Viscount is that her first husband's father, the Laird of Busbie, had probably purchased land from the first Viscount, perhaps in the 1620s. Presumably her husband (d. 1634) had also had dealings with the first Viscount, and somehow in the course of years this debt had accumulated. Perhaps the confiscation of the third Viscount's lands in 1650 made that a good time to pursue the debt. Apprising, however, does not necessarily imply legal confrontation and may have been an amicable arrangement or device.

In 1559, the lands of Boghall, Netherhill of Beith, Bigholme, Over Bogside, and Fulwoodhead had pertained to the monastery of Kilwinning, and their subsequent fate is well covered in the *Laing Charters*, although it is not obvious how the charter above fits in.[62] Throughout the 1650s, the lands continue to be referred to as belonging to the third Viscount Montgomery,[63] and in December 1661, he confirmed their transfer to John Shaw of Greenock "to fulfil an imperfect disposition, dated at Athlone in Ireland, 26th March 1650."[64] John Shaw was presumably closely related to Elizabeth Shaw of Greenock (d. 1623), who was the first wife of the first Viscount Montgomery and the mother of the second Viscount.[65] The second wife of Andrew Wardlaw (d. 1673) was Janet Shaw (married August 1648) which possibly accounts for his appearance in the 1653 charter.[66] The December 1661 charter was dated at London, and one of the witnesses was William Chieslie, writer in Edinburgh, who was soon to become Jean Macmath's son-in-law. Given his family connections with Jean Macmath, it seems likely that his presence

61. *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, A.D. 1652–1659*, No. 164, pp. 81–82.

62. See J. Anderson (ed.), *Calendar of the Laing Charters, A.D. 854–1837* (Edinburgh, 1899), no. 704, etc. For Marchalland, likewise, see no. 691, etc.

63. See *Laing Charters*, Nos. 2412 (4th June 1650), 2416 (3rd February 1651), 2450 (20th January 1654).

64. Ibid., Nos. 2554, 2560.

65. See ibid., No. 1582.

66. *Register of Marriages for the Parish of Edinburgh, 1595–1700*, p. 715.

was not coincidental but that he was representing her interests in some way.

Meanwhile, on 15th August 1648, James Blair, minister of Portpatrick, had sasine of the Dunskey property, and again on 14th November 1653, and it is not clear how this fits into the picture either.[67] A fuller investigation of the 1653 charter by someone with a good knowledge of Scottish law might yield further light on Jean Macmath and the background of her first husband.[68]

6. Agnes Macmath and Archibald Porteous

Agnes Macmath was slightly younger than her sister Jean, so she was probably born about 1612. Her early life was very similar to Jean's but for some reason she spent longer at Bethia Aird's school in Edinburgh.[69] Her conversion seems to have occurred about 1632.[70] She must have been married by 1640 (when she lost a child, as we have mentioned), and probably considerably earlier. Thomas Murray says that at her death she left the lands of Cockburn to her niece Agnes Rutherford; while MacGibbon and Ross say that the lands were disponed to William Cheslie (Agnes Rutherford's husband) on 9th June 1671.[71] Agnes Macmath did not die until 1674, so the disposition of the lands must have preceded her death. According to MacGibbon and Ross, the lands were in the possession of the family of Lindsay of Covington from 1468 to 1670, from which we can presumably deduce that Agnes Macmath's first husband belonged to that family. It is possible, indeed, that he was the 10th laird, John Lindsay, who died in 1646, but this would be a matter for separate investigation.

Agnes Macmath's second husband was Archibald Porteous. Curiously, there are three men of this name who come into the general picture and need to be distinguished. The first was born in Edinburgh in 1617 and was dead by 1662. He was minister of Oxnam from 1640 and was the author of a pamphlet, *The spiritual exercise of soul of Dame Mary Rutherford, Lady Hundaly, 1640*.[72] His wife Margaret Riddell survived him.[73] The second was a surgeon in Biggar in 1659 who is often referred to in Andrew Hay of Craignethan's *Diary*. The third, also sometimes mentioned in the *Diary*, was the son of James Porteous, minister of Lasswade.[74] He graduated at St Andrews in 1647, presumably studying Divinity under Rutherford thereafter, and was inducted to Covington (an adjacent parish to Symington) in December 1652.[75] Jean Macmath had land in Covington and may indeed have been a heritor in the parish.[76] It was this third Archibald Porteous who married Agnes Macmath, although he must have been about fifteen years her junior. We have not discovered the date of their marriage, but probably it was during the 1650s. There were no children, or at least no surviving children.

Archibald Porteous, like Samuel Rutherford and Andrew Hay of Craignethan, was a Protestor, as was his near neighbour Sir John Chieslie of Kerswell. Indeed the Presbytery of Biggar was heavily dominated by Protestors. In 1658, after a three-year struggle, they ejected the minister of Symington, George Phin, and replaced him with the Protestor John Rae (who was later a covenanting field-preacher and died on the Bass Rock).[77]

Archibald Porteous died in February 1673 and his widow Agnes Macmath in January 1674, and both were buried in Greyfriars, Edinburgh, with William Chieslie (below) paying for the burial.[78] Next to Porteous' name, the register of interments says, "in the Canimrem," but it is not clear if this is a location or what. In 1679, Catherine Tod, the wife of William's wealthy brother Walter Chieslie of Dalry died, and Walter erected a large monument to her which remains to this day. Thereafter, Chieslies were buried in the "Chieslie tomb," but whether this was the case with Archibald Porteous and Agnes Macmath, we do not know.

67. P.H. M'Kerlie, *History of the Lands and Their Owners in Galloway,* 5 vols. (Edinburgh, 1870–79), Vol. 1, pp. 86, 87.

68. A similar charter, which might also repay research, is that granting to Robert Blair and his wife Katherine Montgomery land apprised from David, Lord Cardross in September 1654; *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, A.D. 1652–1659*, No. 362, pp. 162–163.

69. Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative," p. 157.

70. Ibid., p. 177.

71. Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 324; D. MacGibbon and T. Ross, *Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland from the Twelfth to Eighteenth Century.* 5 vols. (Edinburgh, 1887–92), Vol. 5, p. 252. There seem to be several errors in the MacGibbon and Ross statement: for example, "the deceased Agnes Rutherford" should perhaps be Agnes Macmath, who was not in fact deceased at that stage. We are presuming also that "Corrington" should be "Covington."

72. A. Porteous, *The spiritual exercise of soul, and blessed departure of Dame Mary Rutherford Lady Hundaly, and Mary M'Konnel, cousin to the said lady; which fell out in the year 1640; both died in London* (Edinburgh, c. 1745).

73. See Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 2, p. 135.

74. James Porteous is listed in Livingstone's "Memorable Characteristics"; Tweedie, *Select Biographies*, Vol. 1, p. 314.

75. See Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 1, p. 248. Archibald Porteous was deprived in May 1661. The *Fasti* mentions that he may have become indulged minister of Cumbrae in 1672, but regards this as doubtful. See Vol. 3, p. 190.

76. Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 191.

77. See, for example, W. Stephen (ed.), *Register of the Consultations of the Ministers of Edinburgh, 1652–1660* (2 vols., Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1921–1930), Vol. 1, pp. 271–3; Langley, *Minutes of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, 1648–1659*, p. xxvii.

78. H. Paton (ed.), *Register of Interments in the Greyfriars Burying-Ground Edinburgh, 1658–1700* (Scottish Record Society, Edinburgh, 1902), pp. 118, 522.

7. Agnes Rutherford and William Chieslie

Agnes Rutherford had been baptised on 20th May 1649 and was thus a couple of months short of her twelfth birthday when her father Samuel died in March 1661. The age of majority for girls was 12, so a tutor needed to be appointed for these two months. Rutherford's will reads as follows: "I nominate and constitut my said beloved spouse tutrix testamentar to the said Agnes Rutherfurd during the year of her tutorie and in case of my said spouse her mariage or death before the expyring of the said Agnes her tutorie, I nominate and constitute Mr George Rutherfurd, James Rutherfurd, Mr John Smythe of Nether Crawmond, Mr Robert Tod, Mr Robert Blair, minister of St Andrews, Mr Andrew Hay of [Craignethan], & Mr Archibald Porteous minister of [Covington], tutors testamentar to the said Agnes during her said tutorie."[79]

Of these, George and James were Samuel Rutherford's brothers, and Robert Tod remains unidentified for the present.[80] Andrew Hay of Craignethan was the author of the published *Diary*.[81] John Smythe was probably the advocate who was the son of Sir John Smith of Grotehill and King's Cramond (d. c. 1677), Provost of Edinburgh from 1643 to 1646.[82]

In 1664, at the age of 14 or 15, Agnes was married. Her husband, William Chieslie, was the younger brother of Sir John Chieslie, and had been born in 1634. He was thus fifteen years older than his wife. He was a lawyer, and in 1657 was Depute Clerk of the Bills, and in 1659 the Keeper of the Register of Hornings.[83] On 4th August 1662 became a Writer to the Signet.[84] Like his elder brother John, he was of covenanting sympathies and is often mentioned in Andrew Hay of Craignethan's *Diary*. He had first married in October 1659, but the name of that wife has not been preserved.[85]

Based on some letters to her from Robert MacWard, Thomas Murray supposed that the "religious character" of Agnes "was not altogether worthy of her descent"; and from other evidence he concluded that her husband "seems not to have been a man of respectable character."[86] We are not sure the date of MacWard's letters, but probably they were written to her in her early teens before she was married, and their exhortations and warnings cannot be taken as an indication of her spiritual state then, and still less in later life. In 1684, as we shall see, she suffered persecution for the Covenants, and this probably gives a more reliable guide to her religious character.

Her marriage to William Chieslie produced at least ten children: Samuel, baptised on 5th March 1665 (born when Agnes was aged 15), buried July 1666; Barbara, born March 1666;[87] a child, buried January 1667; Jean, born March 1668, died unmarried in 1736; a son, born in April 1670, buried February 1671; Agnes, born in June 1672, buried April 1684; a child, buried May 1674; Catherine, born March 1676; Chrystine, born May 1679; and George, born May 1683.[88]

As we have mentioned above, in June 1671 Agnes Rutherford received the lands of Cockburn from her aunt Agnes Macmath, and her husband was thereafter designated Chieslie of Cockburn. A dormer at the present Cockburn House bears the date 1672, and presumably Jean Macmath stayed in the house at some point. After her mother's death in 1675, Agnes also inherited her lands at Covington.[89] In 1678 the lands of Cockburn were disponed to James Lewis of Merchiston, but Chieslie was still a heritor of the parish, and in June 1679, he was charged to join the king's "host" to oppose the Covenanters at the battle of Bothwell Bridge. Failing to do this, he, with many other lairds, became subject to criminal proceedings in February and March 1680.[90] The outcome of these we have not discovered, but probably he was fined heavily.[91]

79. Testament of Mr Samuel Rutherfurd, 1661, NRS CC20/4/12 (St Andrews Commissary Court).

80. There was a Robert Tod, for example, who was minister of Rothes, Moray, and another who was the son of Archibald Tod, Provost of Edinburgh, and the brother-in-law of Walter Chieslie.

81. *Diary of Andrew Hay of Craignethan, 1659–60* (already cited). The introduction gives a very useful account of Andrew Hay's life and background.

82. *The Faculty of Advocates, 1532–1943*, p. 194; Young, *The Parliaments of Scotland: Burgh and Shire Commissioners*, Vol. 2, pp. 647–648.

83. John Nicoll, *Diary of Public Transactions and Other Occurrences, 1650–1667* (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1836), pp. 204, 222; *Diary of Andrew Hay of Craignethan, 1659–60*, p. 256.

84. *History of the Society of Writers to His Majesty's Signet* (Edinburgh, 1936), p. 108.

85. *Diary of Andrew Hay of Craignethan, 1659–60*, p. 166.

86. Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, pp. 327–8. For extracts from the letters, see pp. 361–362.

87. Barbara died about 1740, and is described as "Mrs"; see See F.J. Grant (ed.), *Commissariot Record of Edinburgh, 1701–1800* (Scottish Record Society, Edinburgh, 1899), p. 50.

88. Information from ScotlandsPeople website searching on name "Cheislie." Another child, William, is mentioned in *Index to Particular Register of Sasines for Sheriffdom of Lanark, Vol. 1, 1618–1720*, p. 44. One of the children, possibly George, was buried in November 1691; *Register of Interments in the Greyfriars Burying-Ground Edinburgh, 1658–1700*, pp. 118–9.

89. From a writ available online (NAS, GD86/750) it appears that it was not until December 1689 that she came into full possession of this land.

90. Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, *Historical Notices of Scotish Affairs* (2 vols., Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1848), Vol. 1, pp. 253–262. At this stage, apparently, Chieslie was no longer a Writer to the Signet.

91. R. Wodrow, *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1721–22), Vol. 2, p. 114.

We have mentioned Thomas Murray's opinion on William Chieslie's character, which was based on a couple of events in the 1680s. Against this should be set the opinion of James D. Ogilvie: "As a Writer to the Signet he had a somewhat chequered career, due largely to his covenanting principles…. His memory does not merit the obloquy cast on it by Dr Murray."[92] On the face of it, one would have to side with Murray. In December 1682, Chieslie was supposedly party to a "pretty witty cheat" in which a dying man, wishing to dispone his lands to other than his lawful heir, and being too sick to go himself, agreed for someone else, buttoned to the chin and with cap pulled down, to impersonate him before the notary. The case was "not fully made out" against Chieslie but he was fined 3000 merks.[93] The following February, he was unsuccessful in securing the payment of a £100 bond from his deceased brother Samuel's estate on the ground that "he had already intromitted with more of Samuel's effects than would pay this sum." Indeed, he had paid himself expenses that were "most gross, exorbitant, and uninstructed."[94] It may well be, however, that there was some "covenanting" explanation for both these cases. The law at the time was very much weighted against those with covenanting sympathies, and one has to be wary of taking legal evidence of the period at face value.[95]

On 16th September 1684, there was "a strict and severe search through the town of Edinburgh for suspected persons, and sundry are apprehended, as all Mr William Cheisleye's family, himself being from home; Robert Cheisley his nephew," and others. Their fault was "not keeping the church," which would show a degree of covenanting commitment.[96] The following month, William Chieslie was imprisoned for an unspecified reason, but it seems to have been something to do with the Covenanter James Nimmo.[97]

On Sabbath 31st March 1689, Agnes and her husband had the distressing experience of his nephew John Chieslie (son of his brother Walter) assassinating Sir George Lockhart, President of the Court of Session, with his subsequent torture and hanging.

Agnes died in 1694, at the relatively early age of 45, and was buried in Greyfriars on 29th July in the Chieslie tomb.[98] As we have seen, she had at least two surviving children. Her husband William died on 13th January 1704 aged 70.

8. Death of Jean Macmath

After the death of her husband Samuel Rutherford in 1661, little is recorded of Jean Macmath. Presumably she moved back to Edinburgh from St Andrews, and she probably wrote her conversion narrative at this time.[99] She was in regular correspondence with Robert MacWard in Holland who says in a letter to Lady Kenmure, "Mrs Rutherford gives me often an account of the singular testimony which she meets with of your ladyship's affection to her and her daughter."[100] Probably she assisted MacWard in gathering Rutherford's letters for the publication of *Joshua Redivivus* in 1664. In 1666, she visited Robert Blair on his deathbed, who said to her regarding his former ministerial colleague, Archbishop James Sharp of St Andrews, "I would not change my condition, though I be now lying on my bed of languishing and dying, with thine, O Sharp, for thy mitre and all thy riches and revenues, nay, though all that's betwixt thee and me were red gold to the boot."[101]

In June 1674, more than a hundred women assembled in Parliament Close in Edinburgh to present a petition to the Privy Councillors as they were descending from their coaches, seeking liberty for the Presbyterian clergy to preach. About twenty of the women were subsequently banished from Edinburgh and Leith, amongst whom was a widow named "Mistress Elizabeth Rutherford."[102] The other banished women included the widows of Robert Blair, John Livingstone, and John Nevay,

92. *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston, 1655–1660*, p. 102n.
93. Fountainhall, *Historical Notices of Scotish Affairs*, 1.384, 392.
94. William Chiesley v. William Gordon and Dr Trotter, Scottish Court of Session, 24th February 1683 (online).
95. Wodrow, *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*, Vol. 2, pp. 115–116. Writing in 1683, Fountainhall said: "We are brought to that pass we must depend and court the Chancelor, Treasurer, and a few other great men and their servants, else we shall have difficulty to get either justice or despatch in our actions, or to save ourselves from scaith, or being quarrelled on patched up, remote and innocent grounds"; Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, *Historical Observes of Memorable Occurrents* (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1840), p. 87.
96. Fountainhall, *Historical Notices of Scotish Affairs*, Vol. 2, p. 559. Robert Chieslie was warded in the Tolbooth, and released on 19th September having taken the oath of allegiance; *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, Vol. 9 (1916), pp. 154, 157. He became Provost of Edinburgh in 1694 and was knighted in 1695; see Young, *The Parliaments of Scotland: Burgh and Shire Commissioners*, Vol. 2, p. 120.
97. Fountainhall, *Historical Notices of Scotish Affairs*, Vol. 2, p. 565; W.G. Scott-Moncrieff, *Narrative of Mr James Nimmo, 1654–1709* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1889), p. 71.
98. *Register of Interments in the Greyfriars Burying-Ground Edinburgh, 1658–1700*, p. 564.
99. Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative," p. 151; Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's narrative: a Scottish Puritan autobiography," p. 18.
100. Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 327.
101. *Life of Robert Blair*, p. 493.
102. A.J. McSeveney, "Non-conforming Presbyterian women in Restoration Scotland, 1660–79" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2006), pp. 139–154, 224–5.

and there can be little doubt that the name "Elizabeth" has been mis-recorded and that the woman was in fact "Mistress Rutherford," Jean Macmath .

Jean Macmath died in 1675 and was buried in Greyfriars cemetery, Edinburgh on 16th May. Presumably this was more convenient for the family than burying her with Samuel Rutherford in St Andrews, although most of her children must have been buried there as well.

She seems to have been a woman of exceptional piety, and Robert MacWard spoke of her in the highest terms. He described her religious experience as "beyond the experience of any I know," and said of her marriage with Samuel Rutherford: "The thing in my observation that made that happy couple eminent beyond others in all holy conversation and godliness was that they were much taken up in studying the knowledge of God and of themselves; and as if every new degree of the knowledge of either they attained had been but a further discovery of their ignorance, so they carried."[103]

III. Conclusion

Jean Macmath is interesting from various angles. Her conversion narrative is very early for a Scottish Christian, indeed one of the earliest. A number of considerations—one of them being the detached and dispassionate manner in which events are related—suggest that it was written after 1660, but it is describing experiences in the 1620s and early 1630s for which there is little comparable Scottish (or Ulster) material.[104]

Her life is interesting, secondly, as illustrating the complex family relationships that developed in a society with a relatively small population and with high mortality and therefore multiple marriages. Because of her social class it is often possible to follow up the names that emerge in the exploration of her wider family.

Thirdly, it is interesting to view seventeenth-century Scotland from the female perspective, and to glimpse the sadness of burying so many children over so many years. At present, she may be the earliest known Scottish woman to have had a child at the age of 45. Scottish women had little legal standing, and yet she, her sister, and her daughter all ended up in the possession of lands through the failure of male heirs. The actual status of women was often rather different from their legal status.

Finally, her life is of interest, because of the light it sheds on Samuel Rutherford's background. Through his wife, he had closer connections than one might have supposed with several important people: for example, she had grown up with Anne Foulis, the wife of Sir James Hope of Hopetoun; the covenanting Earl of Cassilis was married to her mother's first cousin; and his daughter Lady Margaret Kennedy (friend of the Duke of Lauderdale and wife of Gilbert Burnet) was her second cousin.▪

***In Brief:* Extract from a letter from Samuel Rutherford to Agnes Macmath on the death of her child.**

"DEAR SISTER, If our Lord hath taken away your child, your lease of him is expired; and seeing that Christ would want him no longer, it is your part to hold your peace, and worship and adore the sovereignty and liberty that the Potter hath over the clay, and pieces of clay-nothings, that He gave life unto. And what is man to call and summon the Almighty to His lower court down here? "for He giveth account of none of His doings." And if ye will take the loan of a child, and give him back again to our Lord laughing (as His borrowed goods should return to Him), believe that he is not gone away, but sent before; and that the change of the country should make you think that he is not lost to you who is found to Christ, and that he is now before you; and that the dead in Christ shall be raised again. A going-down star is not annihilated, but shall appear again. If he hath casten his bloom and flower, the bloom is fallen in heaven into Christ's lap. And as he was lent a while to time, so is he given now to eternity, which will take yourself. The difference of your shipping and his to heaven and Christ's shore, the land of life, is only in some few years, which weareth every day shorter; and some short and soon reckoned summers will give you a meeting with him. But what! With him? Nay, but with a better company; with the Chief and Leader of the heavenly troops, that are riding on white horses, that are triumphing in glory:

If death were a sleep that had no wakening, we might sorrow: but our Husband shall quickly be at the bedsides of all that lie sleeping in the grave, and shall raise their mortal bodies. Christ was death's Cautioner, who gave His word to come and loose all the clay-pawns, and set them at His own right hand; and our Cautioner, Christ, hath an act of law-surety upon death to render back his captives. And that Lord Jesus, who knoweth the turnings and windings that are in that black trance of death, hath numbered all the steps of the stair up to heaven. He knoweth how long the turnpike is, or how many pair of stairs high it is; for He ascended that way Himself: "I was dead and am alive" (Rev. 1:18). And now He liveth at the right hand of God, and His garments have not so much as a smell of death." Letter 300, Bonar edition.▪

103. Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 325.

104. One closely related item – with which, however, Mistress Rutherford's narrative has surprisingly little overlap – is *Memoirs of the Life of James Mitchell of Dykes, in the Parish of Ardrossan: containing his own spiritual exercises, and some of the spiritual exercises of his two sons, that died before him, and many singular instances of divine providence, towards himself and family* (Glasgow, 1759). This has material from 1624 through to the 1640s.

James Durham:
A New Biography, Part One

By Chris Coldwell

The surveyor of Scottish Theology, John MacLeod, in noting Presbyterianism's prominent seventeenth century theologians, wrote, "It would be unpardonable not to give a place among the mighties of his day to one who was among the mightiest of them all. This was James Durham…."[1] It is true, English Puritanism and Scottish Presbyterianism in the seventeenth century had many bright and shining lights, but James Durham 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.

The Durhams of Pitkerro

James Durham of Pitkerro (1622–1658),[2] the oldest son and heir of Sir James Durham, was born "a good gentleman, of the house and family of Grange Durham, an ancient, honorable, and sometime flourishing family in the parish of Monifieth, in the shire of Angus."[3] The founder of this family was William Durham, First Baron of Grange, who received a land grant of those lands from Robert the Bruce in 1322. Alexander Durham (died by 1534), Fifth Barron of Grange, who lived in the fifteenth and into the sixteenth century, during the reigns of James IV and James V, was the founder of the Durhams of Pitkerro. The Pitkerro designation came with charters granted in 1534 by James the fifth to Alexander's son John Durham, and the Durhams possessed the lands until debt reduced their fortunes in 1681.[4] The family built Pitkerro Castle in about the

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1. John Macleod, *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History since the Reformation* (1943; 2nd ed., 1946; 3rd ed., The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), p. 94.

2. This introduction, updated, corrected, and expanded, derives from prior prefaces and other research on James Durham. See (more significantly*): Preface, *Concerning Scandal* (Naphtali Press, 1990); Editor's Preface, *Christ Crucified: Seventy-Two Sermons on the Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah* (Naphtali Press, 2001); Editor's Preface, *A Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (Naphtali Press, 2002); *"*Antiquary:* James Durham's 1652 Sermon on Ephesians 4:11–12 Taught before the Synod of Glasgow: A Transcription from Manuscript," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 12 (2016); *Introduction, *Collected Sermons of James Durham: 61 Sermons* (Naphtali Press and Reformation Heritage Books, 2017); *"*Antiquary:* The James Durham MS III: James Durham's 228 Sermons on Song of Solomon 2–8," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 13 (2017); *Editor's Introduction, *A Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (Naphtali Press and Reformation Heritage Books, 2018). See also, the life of Durham in Donald John MacLean, *James Durham (1622–1658) and the Gospel Offer in Its Seventeenth Century Context* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), pp. 66–75. See also: an overview of Durham's life in Nathan Holsteen, "The Popularization of Federal Theology: Conscience and Covenant in the Theology of David Dickson (1583–1663) and James Durham (1622–1658)", Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Aberdeen (1996), pp. 190–197; the lengthy early eighteenth-century biography (c. 1739), "A Collection of Some Memorable Things in the Author's Life," affixed to various editions of Durham's works, and also with some additional material in notes, in *Collected Sermons: Seventy-Two Sermons on the Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah* (2017), p. 27 (hereafter "Life"); and a slightly different "short account of the author's life," with extracts from manuscript sermons preached by John Carstares upon the death of Durham, prefaces *An Exposition of the whole Book of Job, with practical observations* (Glasgow: J. Bryce and D. Paterson, 1759).

3. The Durham holdings took up lands in several parishes including Dundee, Monifieth and Murroes. "The lands of Pittkerro are in the parishes of Dundee and Monifieth." Alexander Johnson Warden, *Angus or Forfarshire, the land and people, descriptive and historical,* volume 4 (Dundee: Charles Alexander & Co., 1884), page 397.

4. Warden, pp. 158, 397; Sir Robert Douglas, *The Baronage of Scotland, Containing an Historical and Genealogical Account of the Gentry of that Kingdom, Collected from the Public Records and Chartularies of this Country, the Records and Private Writings of Families and the Works of Our Best Historians* (1798), Durham of Pittkerrow, Largo, etc., pp. 473–476. J. Malcolm, *The Parish of Monifieth in Ancient and*



middle of the sixteenth century.[5] The Castle of Pitkerro or more commonly Pitkerro House, is

> A mansion in the parish of Monifieth, about two to three miles northwards from Broughty Ferry. It is a long narrow Building … measuring about 80 feet in length by about 22 feet 6 inches in width, with a round staircase tower on the south front, which is brought to the square on the top in the usual manner, as at Claypotts Castle, which is not far off. The upper part of this tower forms a room reached by the turret stair shown in recess…. The ground floor seems to have comprised the kitchen and three cellars. The first floor contained the hall and private room. From the latter a private stair leads to the cellars. The building has been considerably modernised and added to…. In 1534 Pitkerro was in the hands of John Durham, second son of Alexander Durham of Grange of Monifieth, and was doubtless built by him or some of his immediate descendants.

The first person in Durham's family to rise to significant distinction in the royal government was his great-grandfather, Alexander Durham, the third Laird of Pitkerro. He "served King James VI. and I. in the capacity of 'Argentarius,'[6] or Silversmith and Marshal. On the occasion of the King's visit to Scotland in 1617, the minute arrangements that required to be made for the journey between Berwick and Dundee were entrusted to Alexander Durham, who evidently performed his duties satisfactorily, as he was rewarded by his royal master with the sum of £226, 13s. 4d." Alexander's oldest son, Pitkerro's fourth laird and the Rev. Durham's grandfather, James,[7]

> entered the service of King James VI. as Cashier and Clerk of Exchequer, and continued to serve in these

Modern Times; with a history of the landed estates and lives of eminent men (Edinburgh and London: William Green & Sons, 1910), p. 341. John Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain*, volume 1 (London, 1833), pp. 287–288.

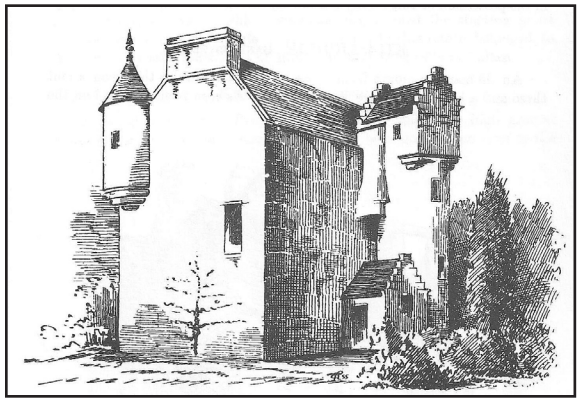
5. David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross, *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century,* volume 4 (Edinburgh: David Douglas, [1892]), pp. 127–128. The mansion survives as Pitkerro House, which was restored, modernized, and expanded by Sir Robert Lorimer, circa 1902–4, for the then new owner, Colonel Archibald Campbell Douglas Dick, C. B. The Dick family had owned the house since 1706, a grandson of the Rev. James Durham, James Durham of Luffness, having had to give up the property after inheriting it in 1689. Warden, p. 159. Malcolm, 344–345. By 1954, the house had again fallen into disrepair and was rented and renovated by a group of Catholic families to live as a community following a Benedictine lifestyle and has continued as such to this day (the property was purchased outright in about 1974). A chapel that was not in Lorimer's architectural drawings, was apparently added by the community and boasts more than one icon. Pitkerro House is a "listed building" now and protected by that designation as a structure of special architectural or historic interest.

6. "Although it is unclear when Alexander Durham first took office, he appears to have held the position of purse-master. Accounts describe him as a provider to the king's and regent's households in 1572 and only later in June 1580, when partially demitting his office into the hands of his son, James Durham, as the king's argenter and pursemaster." Amy L. Julhala, "The Household and Court of King James VI of Scotland, 1567–1603" (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 19–20.

7. Malcolm, 343.



Pitkerro House. The two photographs above show the original wing. The circular stair with possibly the room at the top which served as Durham's study is shown above and in the illustration on the next page. The photograph on the facing page shows the Lorimer expansion on the left. These photographs are used courtesy of Richard Paxman.



Pitkerro House. From *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, IV, p. 127.

> capacities James's son and successor, Charles I., at whose hands he was knighted.[8] Sir James was evidently of a pious and benevolent disposition, for he gave to the poor of the parish of Monifieth, in the year 1626, the sum of 300 merks;[9] and he applied for and obtained permission to erect on the north side of the choir of the kirk of Monifieth a burial aisle for his family—a handsome structure that stood and served many generations of Durhams until the demolition of the old church….

The estate continued to grow and under Alexander (d. 1621) and Durham's grandfather James (d. 1633), the lands of Kinnell were obtained by royal charter, and he and Durham's father sometimes are designated "of Kinnell."[10] This charter translated into English reads:[11]

> No. 111. At Edinburgh, 14 December—The King with consent, etc.—confirms a charter by Thomas Fraser of Kinnell, with consent of Robert Fraser, his father, David Fraser, his uncle, John Striviling of Eister Braikie and Margaret Striviling, his lawful daughter—in order to implement a charter in which he had granted Mr Alexander Durhame lawful son to James Durhame of Pitkerro and Helen Ramsay, his spouse, the lands of Haltoun of Kinnell with its mill, lying in the barony of Kinnell and an annualrent of 75 merks out of the lands of Wester Braikie or out of any other lands which belonged to him in the said barony, lying in the Sheriffdom of Forfar. To be held from the king by the said Alexander and Helene in conjunct fee and the heirs to be procreated between them, whom failing to the heirs and assignees of the said Alexander whatsoever, with precept of sasine—Witnessed by the said James Durhame, William Durhame of Grange, David Mauld of Both, Mr Alexander Wedderburne, clerk of the court of Dundee, Thomas Fyiff, his servitor, (writer of the charter), Mr Patrick Durhame, minister at Monyfuith, formerly in Grange, Andrew Clayhillis, merchant burgess of Dundee—At Dundee, 9 June 1620—Witnessed as in other charters.[12]

The Parents of James Durham

The father of our James Durham, James Durham, the fifth laird of Pitkerro, was the oldest of the four sons of the grandfather, also named James Durham. Sir James[13]

> was a lawyer of distinction, was appointed "Solicitor for the King and the Prince (afterwards Charles I.) in all actions before the Session,"[14] and, succeeding to his father's office of Clerk of Exchequer, afterwards attained the directorship of the Rolls of Exchequer, an office approximating to the present one of King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer. Throughout the State Records

8. Douglas, *The Baronage of Scotland,* p. 474.

9. Malcolm simply references "Kirk Session Records," presumably referring to the Monifieth Kirk Register. Some records have been transcribed and reproduced, but whether a full transcription of the register has been made in these records is not clear. There is no information on the Durham births or marriages of interest in the online records as of this date. The original which has been microfilmed is held by the New Register House. It is described as far as its contents as dating before 1600, in Frank D. Bardgett, *Monifieth Kirk Register,* Scottish Church History Society, 1988. For online records see https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/.

10. Warden, 158.

11. Translated from the Latin for this new biography of Durham by Diane Baptie (AGRA). The Latin reads: Apud Edinburgh, 14 Dec [1620]. REX,—cum consensu &c. (208. 186),—confirmavit cartam Thome Fraser de Kinnell,—[qua,—cum consensu Roberti F. patris sui, Davidis F. patrui sui, Joannis Striviling de Eister Braikie et Margarete S. ejus filie legit.,—pro perimpletione contractus de data presentium, vendidit M. ALEXANDRO DURHAME filio legit. Jac. D. de Pitkerro, et HELENE RAMSAY ejus conjugi,—terras de Haltoun de Kinnell cum molendino, in baronia de Kinnell, et annuum redditum 75 merc. de terris de Wester Braikie aut aliis terris dicte baronie ad dictum Thom. in proprietate spectantibus, vic. Forfar:—TENEND. dictis Alex. et Hel. in conjuncta infeodatione, et heredibus inter eos legit. procreatis, quibus deficientibus, heredibus et assignatis dicti Alex. quibuscunque, de reg:—cum precepto sasine:—TEST. dicto Jac. Durhame, Wil. Durhame de Grange, Davide Mauld de Both, M. Alexandro Wedderburne scriba curie Deidonane, Tho. Fyiff ejus servitore (scriptore carte), M. Pat. Durhame ministro apud Monyfuith, olim in Grange, And. Clayhillis mercatore burgen. de Dundie:—Apud Dundie, 9 Jun. 1620]:—TEST. ut in aliis cartis &c. xlix. 311." *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum, The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, A.D. 1620–1633,* edited by John Maitland Thomson (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1894), item 111, p. 32.

12. xlix.311 (*this refers to volume 49, f.311*)

13. Malcolm, p. 343.

14. Malcolm cites, "Reg. Privy Council," vol. xii. p. 248. Cf. *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, v.12, 1619–1622 (1895), pp. 248–9.

> are numerous references to this Durham, whose zeal in office is testified by various prosecutions and actions directed by him.

In 1632, James' father inherited the Durham estate and James became his heir, as oldest son.[15] His father also "obtained a new [royal] charter of the lands and barony of Kinnell, 1st March, 1634, a charter of Greenlaw, in Kirkcudbrightshire, 21st December, 1635; and another of the lands and barony of Luffness, 24th June, 1646, after which he was designed of Pitkerro and Luffness." He renewed the charter to the family holdings with Charles I in 1641, which the Long Parliament ratified in 1645.[16] The Durhams were staunch loyalists and under Cromwell's subjugation of Scotland in the 1650s, they suffered much and the father had all his lands handed over to others; however, he lived until the restoration of the monarchy and under Charles II had his property and offices restored. He died in 1663.[17]

None of the older histories and biographical notices of James Durham note the name of his mother. Douglas, who appears to be the oldest printed source for any information, simply says she was a daughter of one Hepburn of Humbie.[18] In the new *Dictionary of National Biography* entry on Durham, Kyle Holfelder writes that his mother was Helen Ramsey, the daughter of John Ramsey, minister of Tealing, but provides no sources that give that information.[19] However, several online genealogical researchers have stated this as a fact. This may be because of the following record transcription,[20]

> May 23, 1643. Obligation by James Durham of Powrie eldest son and heir of the late Mr Alexander Durham in Cuthill, in favour of Helen Ramsay his mother, now spouse to John Kinloch of Gourdie, to infeft her, for the reasons therein mentioned, in a liferent annuity of 460 merks out of the lands and barony of Powrie, and that in place of her liferent of the principal sum of 5750 merks, being the redemption price of the lands of Haltoun of Kinell, and an annualrent of 75 merks out of the mains of Breakie, which were renounced by the said James Durham in favour of Thomas Frazer of Kinell.
>
> 1656. Extract Judicial Ratification by Margaret Muir spouse to Mr James Durhame, one of the ordinary ministers of Glasgow, of a Disposition granted by him with her consent, and also with consent of Janet Ramsay mother to the said Mr James, John Kinloch of Little Gourdie now her husband, Mr James Durhame of Pitkerro, and Sir James Durhame fiar thereof his eldest lawful son, in favour of Dougald McPhersone of Ballachroan, and his heirs male, etc.: of the lands of Easter Powrie.

These records, the transcription summaries of which at least seem to have been confused by all the Jameses, relate to the rights of the previously mentioned Helen Ramsay, who shared in the charter granted to Alexander Durham. When Alexander died he was living in Cuthill (or Cuithly).[21] Helen had married again, to John Kinloch of Gourdie. While she was indeed the second daughter of John Ramsay, the minister of Tealing,[22] she was not the Rev. James Durham's mother, but his great grandmother.[23]

As for Douglas's statement that Durham's mother was a daughter of one Hepburn in Humbie, his misattribution as to which Ramsay was married to Alexander calls his accuracy into question and he is also the apparent oldest published source of that information.

15. National Records of Scotland, GD137, item 2008.

16. "Ratification in favour of Mr James Durham of his infeftments of the barony of Kinnell," in *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, ed. K.M. Brown et al. (St Andrews, 2007–2020), 1645/1/228. Date accessed: 7 November 2020.

17. Warden, 158–159. Warden, and Douglas, Warden's likely source, write that James died shortly after Sir James, but this is incorrect since the latter lived to the Restoration. It would seem that Durham's brother Alexander became heir to the estate of Sir James. He died without issue and the estate passed back to Durham's son Francis. Burke, p. 287. Douglas, p. 475.

18. Douglas, 473. Warden, p. 159. Burke, p. 287.

19. John Ramsay (1569–1618) was minister at Tealing, and also held the office of archdean at the Cathedral of Dunkeld, which at that time came with that office. Kyle D. Holfelder, "James Durham," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*New DNB*). This misinformation has been repeated in recent publications such as the volume by Donald John MacLean already noted and in this writer's introduction to *61 Sermons*.

20. National Records of Scotland, Papers of the Scrymgeour Wedderburn of Wedderburn Family, Earls of Dundee GD137, items 81, 2014; see also 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2450. The summary of Item 2014 not only calls Helen by Janet, but seems more clearly to indicate she was the mother of the Rev. James Durham. McPhersone was apparently the beneficiary of Cromwell's confiscation of the Durham lands (see item 2018). The transcriptions/summaries given have made relations unclear, but it is not certain if this is due to the original records themselves, transcription faults, or in summarizing, or misunderstanding due to all the similar names.

21. Cuithlie was about where Guynd is today, about ten miles from Kinnell, Arbroath.

22. See *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Volume 10 [1875], p. 292. Interestingly, the same month of June 1620 in which Helen is named in the new royal charter, she and her sister Catherine resigned their share in their father's lands.

23. Douglas (p. 474), and apparently drawing from him, Burke (p. 287) and Warden (158–159), state that Alexander married Jean Ramsay, the daughter of Sir David Ramsay of Balmain. By the royal charter this is clearly not correct, and it is unclear where Douglas drew his information.

If he is correct, this is possibly a reference to the first Hepburn to purchase the Humbie lands, the Rev. Adam Hepburn of Humbie, minister of Strabo, who purchased the lands in 1586. His son, Sir Adam Hepburn, who is frequently referred to as Hepburn of Humbie, was born about 1600, so some sister not known to the records could have been of age to have been able to marry Durham's father, assuming some other Hepburn relation also then living in Humbie is not in view. No records have been uncovered to shed more light at this writing, and sadly, as noted already, the family memorial crypt in the old Monifieth church was destroyed, and along with it many of the stones that would have possibly borne her name and any identifying information. The exact identity of James Durham's mother may be lost to history.

> For the destruction of the grand old monuments, mouldings, oak carvings, &c., in the ancient church, the heritors of the day are chiefly to blame. To save expense they were utilised in the erection of the new church. Considerations of regard for the memorials of the past, if these existed at all in their minds, were cast to the winds when put in the balance with pounds, shillings, and pence. In those days many of the gravestones which sorrowing relatives and kind friends had raised to keep in remembrance the memory of departed loved ones, were wantonly cast down. Some of them were used to form the stair leading up to the west door of the church, where they still lie [c. 1910], and others were removed and utilised for paving shops and dwellings in the village. It is sad to think that the heritors of Monifieth, in the first and second decades of this century, could have been guilty of such semi-barbarous acts as those above related. When the proprietors of the parish so acted, we need not be surprised that some of the villagers appropriated old gravestones to utilitarian purposes.[24]

> When the present church was being built, the burying-place of the Durhams was used as a receptacle for all kinds of masons' rubbish, and though the late Dr. Young [the then minister] tried two or three times to raise money to clear out the aisle, and to recover any of the memorial stones that might be hidden from sight, he did not succeed in his endeavour.[25]

The Early Life of James Durham

Not much is known of Durham's early year's. He was made heir by his father in 1632 and from evidence of that same year George Christie concluded that he was an intelligent child. "His writing in the writer's possession—'Ja. Durham with my hand 1632'—at the age of ten does both him and his [school] master credit, and is an index to his early development and love of books."[26] In 1643 Durham inherited a portion of the family lands in Angus "in the parish of Murroes, then called Easter Powrie, but now called Wedderburn."[27] He stood in time to inherit his father's considerable estate.

At the outbreak of the Second Reformation in Scotland, James Durham was a student at Saint Andrews University (~1637–1640).[28] He did not finish his course of studies at university and looked simply to take up

24. Malcolm, p. 375. "All the stones of it [the mausoleum of Durham of Pitkerro], on which there was any inscription, are built into the present church." *The New Statistical Account of Scotland*, volume 11 (Edinburgh and London, W. Blackwood and Sons, 1845), p. 546. As noted, the destruction was more severe than that description. "This monument was wantonly destroyed in 1812 when the old church was pulled down to make way for the present building." Agnes Hutcheson, "Jean Auchterlonie, Lady Grange and the Church of St. Rule, Monifieth," *Aspects of Antiquity: A Miscellany by Members of the Archaeological Section of the Abertay Historical Society,* Collected by Elise M. Wilson (Dundee: Abertay Historical Society Publication No. 11, 1966), p. 30. Some stones built into the 1812 church on the exterior have suffered decay, such as the dedication stone for the Durham mausoleum. Others were distributed or confiscated to put in other local building floors and garden walls.

25. Malcolm, p. 149. See the fate of other stones circa 1910 when Malcolm the local historian wrote, on pages 147–149.

26. George Christie, D.D., "James Durham as Courtier and Preacher," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society,* IV Part I (1930), p. 66. Unfortunately, this manuscript cannot be traced. Christie gives no other information about it. Durham likely attended the parish school, if he was not tutored. The kirk session determined the schoolmaster should be supported by the whole parish in 1600, and the local nobility took an interest in the Monifeith school throughout the seventeenth century as well. In 1645, Jean Ouchterlong, Lady Grange, provided scholarships for four students a year, two of the parish poor, and two of which must be of Ouchterlong or Durham blood, if there were any of age. The schoolmaster named in this charter was Charles Geddie. The first schoolmaster recorded is Thomas Young in 1599. It is not clear who the man was commended by Christie, who would have taught Durham circa 1632. It probably was not Thomas Young, though that is not impossible, and more likely one or more men served as schoolmaster before Geddie. John Urquhart became schoolmaster when Geddie died in 1653 at age 32. In the 1645 charter, Durham, or more likely his father, were named as one of the people having the right to present those nominated for these scholarships. Malcolm, pp. 170–175.

27. "Life," p. 29. Murroes parish borders both Dundee and Monifieth parishes. Durham's third great grandfather purchased the lands in Easter Powrie in 1593.

28. Holsteen, 191. Depending upon how long Durham stayed at the university, his time there may have put him in early contact with John Carstares, who was up to a year younger than Durham, and also with Samuel Rutherford if he remained through and after 1638. In his preface to the Revelation lectures, Carstares wrote that he was attending the university at the same time as Durham.

the life of a country gentleman.[29] While of an upright blameless character, he was a stranger to faith in Christ, and from the influence of his upbringing, not "well affected" to the Covenanter aims of the Second Reformation and Presbyterianism. However, due to how badly Charles I had managed the country, few Scots opposed reform. The goals of the Covenanter cause were reform of the church and establishment of a constitutional monarchy, which had broad support amongst the clergy, nobility and populace.[30] Only the most open and ardent supporters of episcopacy were deposed, and even most royalists initially supported the dual goals.[31] Laura A. M. Stewart gives the unfolding of "the standard political account" of the covenanted reform movement.

> On 23 July 1637, the new Scottish Prayer Book was publicly read for the first time in St Giles' Church in Edinburgh. The resulting riots precipitated a "crisis by monthly instalments" that culminated in mass signings of the National Covenant, initially in Edinburgh on 28 February 1638 and throughout the country thereafter. Around the same time, the Covenanter leadership formalized their organizational meetings into "Tables," representing the parliamentary estates plus the clergy. As the authority of the king's Scottish privy council ebbed away, the Tables evolved into a provisional government. At the end of the year, the first general assembly of the church held since 1618 defied the king's commissioner, James, 3rd marquis of Hamilton, and declared that episcopacy had been abjured by the 1581 Confession on which the Covenant was based. War between the Covenanters and King Charles I was now more or less a certainty. Although the scuffle on the Borders known grandly as the First Bishops' War was inconclusive, the expectation that a king backed by an English army ought to pulverize a faction of rebellious Scots handed victory to the Covenanters. Charles entered into negotiations but did not concede defeat. The Second Bishops' War was disastrous for the king. A Scottish army crossed the border and occupied the north of England. As part of their demands for a peace settlement, the Covenanters insisted that the English parliament be a party to the treaty. Protracted negotiations finally resulted in the convening of the Scottish parliament at Edinburgh, with Charles attending in person from 17 August…. By the time parliament dissolved on 17 November [1640], it had, in practical terms, "deprived the king of all power" in the ecclesiastical and secular spheres. With the Irish rebellion already under way and the king's relationship with his English parliament under great strain, the scene was set for what Conrad Russell termed the fall of the British monarchies.[32]

Durham's Conversion & Call to the Ministry

About 1640 to 1642 Durham married his first wife, "a daughter of the laird of Duntervie;" and "his wife and her mother were both very pious women."[33] This began the change in direction of Durham's life. One day while they were visiting his mother-in-law in South Queensferry, Durham, upon their entreaty, accompanied them to a Saturday church service prior to communion at what is known as the Vennel Kirk.[34] He was so taken with the simple message of the gospel presented, that he returned the next day. "Ephraim Melvil preached from 1 Peter 2:7: 'To you that believe, he is precious.'" Melville "so sweetly and seriously opened up the preciousness of Christ, and the Spirit of God wrought so effectually upon his spirit, that in the hearing of that sermon he first closed with Christ, and then went to the Lord's table and took the seal of God's covenant."[35] He became devoted to the Lord from that day and dedicated himself to reading and studying, "for which cause, and that he might be free of all disturbance of the family, etc., he caused build a study for himself on the head of the stair of his house in the country, which yet remains standing, though all the rest of that great house be pulled down."[36]

At this same time, a similar reform movement led

29. See the entry for James Durham by William Garden Blaikie in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (*Old DNB*) and also the entry by Holfelder (*New DNB*).

30. The Covenanters "clearly embraced two revolutionary causes, that of presbytery and that of the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, by which the king's opponents probably meant that Charles should defer to the wishes of the estates of the realm." I. B. Cowan, "The Covenanters: a revision article," *The Scottish Historical Review,* 47, #143, part one (Apr., 1968): 40, 38.

31. Even royalists such as James Graham, Earl of "Montrose, no lover of bishops, embraced these two views, which at this juncture remained the ideals of the majority of a covenanted nation." Cowan, p. 40. Early on Montrose was "a front-rank Covenanter," raising money and forces for the cause. Laura A. M. Stewart, *Rethinking the Scottish Revolution: Covenanted Scotland, 1637–1651* (Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 188–189.

32. Stewart, *Rethinking the Scottish Revolution*, p. 29.

33. "Life," 27. "Anna, daughter of Francis Durham of Duntarvie." (Blackie, *Old DNB*). Christie implies the date of 1642 as the year of their marriage in stating Durham was twenty years old. Christie, 66. The couple had one son, Francis Durham. Durham and his second wife, Margaret, had three sons, James, Alexander, and John. Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ; The Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation,* vol. 3 (1920), p. 456.

34. See two accounts in Robert Wodrow, *Analecta, or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences; mostly relating to Scotch Ministers and Christians,* 4 vols. (Printed for the Maitland Club, 1842–43), 3.104–5 and 2.115. The Vennel Kirk was converted into a home in 1999.

35. "Life," pp. 29–30.

36. Life, in *Collected Sermons,* vol. 2, p. 28. If this describes Pitkerro House, as it seems, this may perhaps be the room at the top of the stairs referred to in the prior description.

in England by a Puritan "Long Parliament" called for Scotland to come to their aid, during the English Civil War (1642–1646). In 1644 Durham served as a captain in his brother Alexander's regiment.[37] George Christie records the details of the next events that would change Durham's course of life, and notes that his,[38]

> somewhat idyllic life of studious leisure and local respect was interrupted by the declaration of war. The difference between King and people had widened rapidly since the signing of the National Covenant in 1638, and when England subscribed the Solemn League and Covenant at London on September 22, 1643, Scottish troops moved southwards to aid those who had risen against the King. Durham received a commission, and saw service under [General] Leslie in the summer of 1644. In January of the following year the State borrowed from "James Durham of Powrie" "on publick surtie" the sum of 600 merks or £400 (Scots).[39]

> It was while on military duty that he received what seemed to him direct guidance as to his future course of life. "He sometimes acted more like a Minister than a Captain, standing on the Head of his Company, and giving them many serious Exhortations, Advices and Counsels for their Souls, and prayed before them so powerfully and effectually, that not only all his Company, but Strangers who passed by and heard, were greatly affected and surprized, looking on him not only as a good Man, but a great Man, in whom much of the Spirit of God was."[40]

> Before going into action—probably at Marston Moor, July 2, 1644—he had called his men together for prayer, when David Dickson, Professor of Divinity at Glasgow, then with the troops, happened to ride past. Observing the act of devotion, Dickson dismounted and joined them, afterwards calling for this Cornelius-like officer and conversing with him for a little, with the result that he laid a solemn charge upon him to serve in the ministry as soon as his soldiering was finished. Durham himself was by no means clear as to doing this, but later events—"two remarkable Providences," a biographer terms them—removed his doubts. In the engagement he had his horse shot under him, while he was unhurt; and a little later a Royalist soldier, about to strike him down with his sword, held his hand for a moment to ask if he was a priest—Durham's grave carriage, his black clothes and band, then the fashion with gentlemen, had induced the question. The young Scottish officer said he was, and so his life was spared. In gratitude he vowed to devote himself to the ministry.[41]

After his military commitment was over, he pursued the study of theology under Dickson at Glasgow, "where, in a short time, he profited so as he might have been a Professor of Divinitie in any universitie in Europe."[42] Upon completion of his studies he was ordained on December 2, 1647, after passing his trials in the Presbytery of Irvine, and he received a call and first served as minister at Blackfriars church in Glasgow.[43]

> I heard Mr. Andrew Miller, late Minister of Neilstoun, tell me that he was at Irvine school, when he saw Mr. Durham come to Irvine to Mr. David Dickson, who was Minister there, and he said, he looked as if he had been a man come to some considerable years, though he was then very young, and he thought he had been some old deposed minister coming to get a favour of Mr. David Dickson; but there he passed his trials before the Presbytery of Irvine, where Mr. Colvil of Beith disputed with him.[44]

The now Reverend James Durham entered the ministry planning to leave his former life behind, but this

37. Warden, 4.159.

38. George Christie, p. 67.

39. Christie references, Scottish History Society, Second Series, vol. XVI, *Papers relating to the Army of the Solemn League and Covenant, 1643–1647,* edited with an introduction by Charles Sanford Terry, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Printed by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1917), 2.368.

40. Christie, p. 67. Christie is quoting from the older biography. See "Life," p. 29.

41. Howie gives Durham's affirmation as "I am one of God's priests." John Howie, *Lives of the Scottish Covenanters* (Greenville, SC: A Press, 1981), p. 212. See "Life," pp. 29–30 and the brief account in *Analecta,* 3.105.

42. John Livingstone, "Memorable Characteristics," in *Select Biographies,* edited by W. K. Tweedie, 2 vols. (Wodrow Society, 1845, 1847), 1.332.

43. See the letter of call from Blackfriars in "Life," pp. 30–31. Durham was "presented by the town council on 22nd September, and ordained and admitted on 2nd December; had charge of the south quarter of the city from 1647–1648…." James D. Marwick, *Charters and Other Documents Relating to the City of Glasgow: A.D. 1175–1649* (Glasgow, 1897), p. dcxxxii. Durham was licensed to preach in Irvine on May 18. Holfelder, *New DNB*.

44. *Analecta*, 3.105. The spelling has been modernized in citations from sources where it is old style or not standard English spelling. Durham and Dickson were in Irvine because of the plague. "When the pestilence was raging at Glasgow, 1647, the masters and students of the University removed to Irvine upon Mr. Dickson's motion. There the holy and learned Mr. Durham passed his trials, and was earnestly recommended by the professor to the presbytery and magistrates of Glasgow, and in a little time ordained minister to that city." Life of Dickson, *Select Biographies,* ibid., 2.11

proved a great trial. While he was spending a few weeks preaching in locations around his home in the parish of Murroes,[45] and closing his estate affairs to prepare to engage the life of a minister of the gospel, he received word to come back to Glasgow because his wife had taken seriously ill. She died shortly after his return and the first half of his short ministry he would undertake as a widower.[46]

James Durham quickly rose to some prominence in the Scottish church and was appointed to the standing commission of the General Assembly in August of 1649.[47] This was a significant appointment. The Kirk's commission on which Durham served was roughly parallel in function to the state's committee of estates, empowered to deal with kirk matters that came up in the period between General Assemblies.[48]

> From 1639, the Scottish body politic was given voice by the three estates, which had been reconstituted after the expulsion of the clerical elite as the nobility, barons (or lairds), and burgesses. The estates met either in full parliament or in a smaller, theoretically less authoritative assembly, known as a convention. An executive council, called the committee of estates, made day-to-day decisions, effectively replacing the king's emasculated privy council. Although the bodies were unicameral, the estates also deliberated separately. A parallel set of structures, headed by the General Assembly, governed the remodelled presbyterian church or kirk.

In 1650, after only a few years of ministry in his first charge, Durham was looked upon as the best candidate to replace Dickson as divinity professor at Glasgow, since the latter had been called to the chair of divinity at Edinburgh.[49] Durham appears to have been Dickson's handpicked successor. The two were close and worked together on the text of the Sum of Saving Knowledge, which early took its place in 1650 in the traditional Scottish collection of the Westminster Standards. According to Wodrow, the Sum was written by David Dickson and James Durham, and their amanuensis was Patrick Simson, George Gillespie's cousin.[50]

Despite Dickson's support, however, Robert Ramsay was chosen instead,[51] and the Kirk fixed upon James Durham for his family's "hereditary connection with the Crown, his piety, his gravity, his prudence, and perhaps his youth (he was but 28) as eminently suited to be the Church's representative at the Court of the young King," and appointed him to that service in July, 1650.[52] Durham had "the chief duty of ministering to the Royal Household devolved upon him. He acted also as the constant channel of communication between the King and the Commission, met and consulted with frequent deputations from that body and with Committees of Parliament, carried letters from and to the King and joined in the discussions and orders of the Commission when meeting near the court or when he was sent to it."[53] As a member of the Assembly's standing commission, Durham had been intimately involved in the

45. The author of "Life," in detailing his preaching in parish churches around his home when closing his affairs to take up his ministry in Blackfriars, states that Durham's parish church was in Murroes, where he had considerable lands as heritor, and that his relatives all dwelt around Monifieth and attended there, where he also was invited to preach. "Life," p. 11. But it is still possible Durham lived at Pitkerro House, which is not a mile and a half from the site of the old and present location of the Murroes parish church, while it is 5 miles from the site of the old parish church in Monifieth.

46. See the account in "Life," pp. 31–32.

47. Holfelder, *New DNB*; *The Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland holden in Edinburgh the Years 1648 and 1649,* volume 2, edited by Alexander F. Mitchell and James Christie (1896), p. 299. Durham first appears in the minutes appointed to aid the church in Stirling in renewing the Solemn League and Covenant, pp. 178, 262, 321, 319.

48. Laura A. M. Stewart, "Scottish Politics, 1644–1651," in *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution,* edited by Michael J. Braddick (Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 115.

49. *Records of the Commission for 1648 and 1649,* p. 409.

50. "It's said by some that Mr. Dickson and Mr. Durham went sometimes to the Craigs, about the High Kirk of Glasgou, and made that little piece we have called The Sum of Saving Knowledge." Dickson and "Durham drew up The Sum of Saving Knowledge, in some afternoons when they went out to the Craigs of Glasgow to take the air, because they thought the Catechism too large and dark; (and, if I be not forgot my informer, Mr. P. S. [Patrick Simson,] was their amanuensis,) and the application was the substance of some sermons Mr. Dickson preached at Inneraray, written out at the desire of my Lady Argyle." *Analecta*, 1.166, 3.9–10. Cf. Life of Dickson by Wodrow, *Truths Victory over Error* (1726; Glasgow: Bryce, 1764), p. xviii. For more information see Introduction, *61 Sermons*, page 12, n15; Coldwell, "The Development of the Traditional Form of The Westminster Standards," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 1 (2005): 168ff; "Examining the Work of S. W. Carruthers: Justifying a Critical Approach to the Text of the Westminster Standards & Correcting the 18th Century Lineage of the Traditional Scottish Text," ibid., pp. 43–64.

51. Robert Ramsay (c. 1595–1651) was minister in Glasgow from 1647. He was Rector of Glasgow University from 1648 to 1650 and Principal from the summer of 1651 until his death on September 4, 1651. The Town Council prevented Ramsay from taking the position in 1650.

52. "[A]ppointed chaplain to the king in July, 1650." *Charters and Other Documents,* p. dcxxxii. Durham lectured prior to a communion in May 1650 and lectured and preached prior to a fast before forces went to meet Cromwell July 27–28, 1650. See National Library of Scotland, MS 664a, in the Bibliography in the Appendices of James Durham, Commentary on Revelation volume 3 (Naphtali Press and Reformation Heritage Books, 2022), p. 578.

53. George Christie, pp. 68, 70. Durham would have joined the King by August 20, 1650, on which date the kirk commission had instructed George Hutcheson to join Durham and help in making

communications with and preparations for the coming of Charles II to Scotland.[54]

As chaplain, Durham was thrust into the center of the cyclone of Scottish politics of the Interregnum. The nation was divided into factions, Royalist v. Covenanter, Engager v. Anti-Engager, and Resolutioner v. Protester. These divides had unfolded through the years in which Durham prepared for ministry and up to the time of his appointment to the royal chaplaincy. Before detailing Durham's service to the king and his entry into ministry back in Glasgow, these divisions require some explanation and context.

Royalist v. Covenanter. Because of the intransigence of Charles' father, Charles I, the dual causes of a Presbyterian reformation and of a constitutional monarchy proved irreconcilable.[55] The subsequent agreement with England in the Solemn League and Covenant proved too much of an attack on the monarchy for royalists.[56] A force fighting for the king was eventually crushed by Scottish forces,[57] and by an Act of Classes those who had taken up arms for the king against the Covenanter cause were banned as "malignants" from holding office or serving in the military.

Engager v. Anti-Engager. However, with the tide of events favoring Oliver Cromwell and the Sectarians over the Presbyterians in England, the cause of both presbytery and monarchy were in peril. Still wishing to maintain both, many of the Scottish nobility sought an agreement with Charles I, known as the Engagement,[58] promising to restore him to the throne but not requiring him to subscribe to the covenants. This was unacceptable to a considerable segment of the Kirk, and by a narrow majority the General Assembly condemned the agreement. Nevertheless, the Engagers raised an army and invaded England, only to be quickly dispatched by Cromwell's forces.[59] Though a minority in the church, the anti-Engagers, aided and supported by Cromwell, seized political power and passed a considerably broader second Act of Classes on January 23, 1649.[60] This act thrust out of any civil and ecclesiastical office for various terms those who took part in the Engagement, those who did not seriously oppose it, and anyone of questionable moral character.[61] Cromwell's blessing to the anti-Engager government had been given in October, 1648.[62] This comity ended with the execution of Charles I on January 30, 1649, and the negotiations to bring his son Charles to the throne continued the political struggles between Anti-Engagers and Engagers.[63]

the king "sensible" of causes for his humiliation which they had sent previously. *The Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland holden in Edinburgh in 1650, in St. Andrews and Dundee in 1651 and in Edinburgh in 1652,* volume 3, edited by James Christie (1909), p. 193.

54. *Records of the Commission for 1648 and 1649,* pp. 355, 405, 437, 439, 440. Amongst other appointments, Durham was also appointed to committees to present overtures to parliament and to confer with the army in communicating to the English enquiring after their intentions towards Scotland. Ibid., pp. 399, 419. The chaplaincy should have gone to Robert Blair, but he was in ill health, and he could not have withstood the frequent moving about of the king's court. He also had begun to have strong issues of conscience regarding ministers getting too involved in civil affairs. Christie, p. 69. See *Life of Mr. Robert Blair…,* ed. Thomas M'Crie (Edinburgh: Printed for the Wodrow Society, 1848), p. 233.

55. "These ideals proved to be incompatible, and most authorities are agreed that the prime cause of division lay in the basic inconsistency of the covenant whereby an attempt was made to defend the person and authority of the king while at the same time promoting policies contrary to his interest." Cowan, p. 40.

56. That there was strong opposition to the Solemn League and Covenant amongst many of the nobility is affirmed by Baillie, who praised the Lord that the opposition had not been more severe. Cowan, p. 40. *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie,* ed. David Laing, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 1842), 2.102.

57. The king's man in Scotland, James Graham, Earl of Montrose, eventually raised an army and did significant damage to the Covenanters' military prestige in the eyes of the English, who lost multiple battles to Montrose in Scotland as Oliver Cromwell succeeded against the king's forces in England. Finally, almost too late, Scottish forces left England for Scotland and crushed the comparatively weak forces of Montrose.

58. "By terms of the Engagement, the Scots would provide an army to rescue Charles from his English captors and return him to his authority, in return he would institute a three-year Presbyterian trial period in England and 'endeavor a complete union of the kingdoms, so as they may be one.' Conspicuous in its absence was a clause guaranteeing Charles' personal adherence to the Covenant or the Solemn League and Covenant. The Engagement was quite clearly a compromise, and while it passed the Scottish Parliament easily, when it came to the General Assembly for approval, the deeply-split clergy narrowly defeated it." Robert Harris Landrum, *Vast Visions and Intransigent Realities: The Anglo-Scottish Union of 1851–60* (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999), p. 41. "More than any other legislation of the interregnum, the Engagement pitted the kirk against the state, striking at the distinction between the 'twa kingdomes.'" "Some of the ministers … believed that 'we should not make so many scruples to settle the throne and pull down the sectaries.'" Ibid., pp. 41–42. Baillie had already come to Blair's feelings on the matter. "I am more and more in the mind that it were for the good of the world, that churchmen did meddle with ecclesiastic affaires only." Baillie, 3.38.

59. The Battle of Preston, August 17–19, 1648.

60. This is known as Whigamore's raid. Cf. James King Hewison, *The Covenanters,* 2 vols. (1908; Revised and Corrected Edition, Glasgow: John Smith and Son, 1913), 1.448.

61. See the four classes given in Hewison, 1.452.

62. Hewison, 1.448. Both parties, who would become known as Resolutioners and Protesters, apparently could 'look the other way' and work with enemies of the covenant, the king and Cromwell respectively.

63. There is continuity to these divisions, narrowly from the

Protesters/Remonstrants v. Resolutioners. After months of negotiation, in which Durham was involved as a member of the standing commission, the late king's son was persuaded to take the covenant on June 23, 1650. It was clear he was insincere, and that he did so only because he could not return to Scotland or have any chance of gaining the crown without doing so. The clear impiety and duplicity apparent in the king's taking the covenant further intensified the divide between parties. Meantime, the English Parliament preempted what they foresaw would be a Scottish invasion by ordering Cromwell's English army to invade Scotland, which it did on July 22, 1650. In September, Cromwell and his forces managed to get cut off from supply lines and trapped at Dunbar by General Leslie's forces.[64] It should have been an easy victory. However, Leslie's forces had gone through yet another anti-Engager purge of malignants, and royalist traitors kept Cromwell informed of matters in the Scottish army. The troops were demoralized and filled with less seasoned men to make up for the purge. Leslie then made the tactical mistake of moving his forces; Cromwell made a surprise attack, catching Scottish forces asleep and unprepared to defend their position, and thus defeating the larger Scottish force on September 3, 1650. Charles II fled in a panic, believing he was going to be turned over to Cromwell, and involved himself in an ill-conceived "royalist coup d'etat" to take place on October 3, which was planned to raise troops and overthrow the Scottish government.[65] The Committee of Estates ordered commissioners, which included James Durham "the K[ing']s minister,"[66] to find and entreat the king to come back. Covenanter forces soon found him hiding in some rough accommodations and convinced him to return with them.[67]

> When the Estates learned that the king had fled, they commissioned the moderates Lothian, Sir Charles Erskine of Scottiscraig, James Sword and the minister James Durham to find Charles and convince him to return. They were instructed to express the Estates' 'grief and amazement' at his sudden and unexpected behaviour and assure him of their 'constant loyalty, faithfulnes, and affection.' They were also to inform him that if he returned quickly all would be forgiven and they would see to it that his influence in the government was increased." "Contrary to the expectations of many, this abortive *coup,* which became known as 'the Start,' proved to be extremely advantageous for Charles. The moderates realized that it was only the claim to be acting in the king's name which allowed them to remain in power. If they admitted that Charles's flight had been anything other than a good king led astray by evil counsel, they would implicitly be admitting the validity of the radicals' [i.e. Remonstrants'] charges concerning his malignancy and make their own position ideologically untenable. Accordingly, they moved quickly to placate him. On 10 October Charles was allowed to be present at the meeting of the Estates. The next day he officially apologized for his proceedings, and as was expected, claimed that he had been misled "by the wicked counsell of some men quho had deludit him." After making this submission Charles was 'kindly receaved' by the Estates and hereafter permitted to attend all governmental meetings.

While those that would be known as the Resolutioners were dealing with a "malignant" king in their midst, ministers and others of the army of the west, known as the Western Association and who would become known as the Remonstrants or Protesters, were meeting and trying to maintain the integrity of their own party. The Western Association was first set up in 1648 and was revived by the Glasgow council after the defeat at Dunbar. The Resolutioners were deeply skeptical of the intentions behind this move, but could not afford to split the armed forces; therefore, they had acquiesced

Engagement through the Remonstrance, and broadly from the founding of the Covenanter government, the main question ultimately revolving around whether and to what extent the ecclesiastical authorities could ultimately undermine the civil leadership when it disagreed with their decisions. Even at this time, as has been noted, both Blair and Baillie regretted ecclesiastical entanglement in the halls of government. "Those who implemented the orders of the Engager parliament and committee of estates were not necessarily active supporters of the lawfully constituted authorities. Many may have reluctantly concluded that whatever their misgivings both about the motivations of Engager politicians and the trustworthiness of the king, the Engagement offered the best chance, in the circumstances, of an archipelagic settlement on the basis of the Covenant [i.e. retaining the unity of the three covenanted kingdoms]. Anti-Engagers responded by asserting that it was the general assembly that possessed the right to judge 'matters ecclesiastical.' This statement implied that the assembly was entitled to a large say in diplomatic policy, thereby undermining the regime's pragmatic ambiguity about parliament's status as supreme legislator and setting limits on the freedom of the executive to make decisions." See Stewart, *Rethinking the Scottish Revolution,* pp. 20–22.

64. Hewison, 2.11–15. Alexander Leslie, 1st Earl of Leven (1582–1661), was Lord General of the Army of the Covenant.

65. This is known as The Start. "… [C]onfusion created by Charles's last minute indecision caused his royalist support to evaporate and the rising to be abortive." Covenanter forces found the king and convinced him to return. 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, University of Edinburgh (1998), 65–67.

66. James Balfour, *The Historical Works* (Edinburgh, 1825), p. 115.

67. Holfelder, Factionalism, pp. 660–67.

in essentially granting the Protesters their own army.[68] Yet the Protesters were rent by their own serious divide, in that a minority, including one of the army's leaders, Archibald Strachan, was heavily influenced by English sectarianism. Holfelder writes,[69]

> During the time that Cromwell occupied Glasgow, the [Western] Association made no attempt to resist him.[70] The leading radicals were otherwise engaged in a series of crucial meetings at Dumfries. In this convocation, Ker, Strachan and their officers were joined by Patrick Gillespie, representatives from the western presbyteries and certain radical lairds and burgesses. Wariston and Cheisly thought the meetings of such importance that they even hazarded a journey through enemy-held territory in order to attend. Cromwell's new overture to the radical colonels had brought to the fore an underlying dichotomy in the composition of the radical party—one that had been lurking thinly beneath the surface for some time: the inclination of the radical officers and certain western ministers to favour the English was inimical to the strongly antisectarian sentiments of Wariston, Guthrie and their coterie. Although the Wariston-Guthrie wing of the party were supportive of the Western army, they were staunchly opposed to any conjunction with the English. They viewed the Western Association as both a powerful bargaining chip in their dealings with the regime and as a final radical stronghold in the event that the moderates made an open alliance with the malignants. They were even willing to countenance the widespread rumours of the Association's incipient sectarianism, if the fear of such would give them further leverage in the Estates and Commission. Up until this point they had been able to successfully manage the extremism of the westerners to their advantage. Now, however, with Cromwell's excursion into Glasgow, they were confronted with the imminent possibility that the separatist behaviour of the west would go beyond mere rhetoric and coalesce in an actual conjunction with the English. It was now incumbent on Wariston and Guthrie to devise a policy which would satisfy the different opinions and preserve the unity of the radical party.[71] Failure to prevent a rift would completely undermine the authority of the radical party, irreparably damage their credibility and subvert whatever remaining ability they had to influence the agenda at Stirling. In an attempt to appease the more extreme westerners it was decided to resurrect and expand the "officers' declaration" which had been laid aside at the previous meeting of the Glasgow-Ayr synod.
>
> From the outset there were sharp differences of opinion in these meetings. Baillie relates that "Strachan's axiome and debates did put the whole armie and committee of the West in such confusion and discouragement that all acting against the enemie was made impossible." The western colonels and their officers urged an unequivocal break with the [king's] regime at Stirling; while Wariston, Cheisly and the ministers advocated working within the regime in order to influence the agenda and effect change. Strachan maintained that Charles had "so farr fallen from all his right to England, that, for his wrongs to Scotland, he aught at least to be banished … or made ane perpetuall prisoner." Wariston and the majority of ministers contended that, at least in principle, space should be left to Charles and the Estates for repentance and restoration. In the midst of their deliberations Ker and Strachan sent a message to Cromwell informing him that they were in favour of opening negotiations with him but Wariston and Cheisly would not give their consent.[72] Their debates on policy continued until 17 October, when the assembled radicals finally approved the declaration to the Estates which came to be known as the *Western Remonstrance.* The final document was a compromise; an attempt to preserve the unity of the radical party.

Even though the Western Remonstrance was a compromise document, it was not well received when submitted to the Estates on October 22 and later to the assembly's commission on October 24. Amongst other things it "complained of the hasty admission of Charles II to the Covenants," and of his conniving with malignants and of the toleration of malignants generally, and faulting specifically the treaty by which it had been agreed to bring Charles to Scotland.[73] Regarding the defeat at

68. Holfelder, "Factionalism," pp. 53–54.

69. Holfelder, "Factionalism," pp. 68–70. Strachan and others favored making an alliance with Cromwell against the Scottish forces under Leslie. Strachan's direct negotiations with Cromwell made him odious to the Protesters, and he defected to the English when deprived of command and was subsequently charged with treason and excommunicated. Durham attended the assembly commission meeting that issued the latter censure. *Records for 1650–52*, p. 193.

70. Holfelder cites Baillie, *Letters and Journals,* 3.118.

71. "Radical party" and "Moderates" are Holfelder's terms for the Anti-Engager/Protester party and their opponents. See the explanation of the terms in "Factionalism," pp. 9–10.

72. Holfelder cites *Letters and Journals,* 3.113.

73. David C. Lachman, "Protesters," in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology,* ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (IVP, 1993), p. 681. Hewison, 1.22. "The Remonstrance identified the closing of the treaty with Charles as the iniquitous fount of all the land's grief and misery." Holfelder, p. 70.

Dunbar, the Remonstrants "interpreted the disaster … as a want of God's favour" for the "compromises" made since the king's insincere taking of the covenant,[74] while their opposites faulted the policy of the anti-Engagers of continually purging the army of malignants for the Scottish army's disastrous defeat, and considered their Remonstrance "high treason." The commission meeting on November 28 condemned the Remonstrance but stopped short of any discipline at that time. The Protesters from that time stopped attending the commission, beginning the formal division of the kirk.

At this point a majority of civil and ecclesiastical leaders agreed to reverse course to rescind the Act of Classes. Upon queries from Parliament, the church's standing commission passed resolutions repealing the anti-Engager policies in December 1650,[75] and after much delay agreed with stipulations to the repeal of the Act of Classes in May 1651.[76] The General Assembly approved the resolutions in July, the Parliament having rescinded the Act of Classes on June 2.[77] Supporters of these actions were the Resolutioners, who believed the nation should unite, rescind the Act of Classes, and open up service in the army in order to have a force sufficient to repel Cromwell's forces. The Remonstrants took the label of Protesters, and believed God would support, as with Gideon, a purified army of Covenanters purged of all malignants, but no other.[78]

James Durham, Chaplain to the King

No doubt this backdrop of internecine divisions made Durham's chaplaincy difficult service, but it was also soul-vexing work. From what is known of the character of Charles II, it is not hard to imagine why serving as king's chaplain proved exceedingly grievous service for Durham.[79] Even though it is said, the "duties of this office he discharged 'with such majesty and awe' as to inspire the court with much reverence for him,"[80] Durham is recorded as saying that the king was "simple and cruel, and that he was aye glaiking[81] at sermons and prayers, in kirk and family."[82] He served in this capacity for only a few months before the situation affected his health, while at the same time he was in financial straits due to Cromwell's occupation. Among other things, he apparently was suffering as much as any from the quarterings and plunderings by soldiers, a trial of the times which he notes in his sermons, and from the lack of a stipend from Glasgow.[83]

> I suspect, indeed, ane of the grounds on which Mr. James has reason of malcontentment, is the neglect of his maintenance. I think he has his own burdens on his lands, beside that the quarterings this year, and some years bygone, hath made his rent small in itself, near to nothing; he has a numerous family, he has no stipend from Glasgow: I see not how he must not be straitened. Therefore, in the midst of all the scarcity that can be among yow, I advise, that without more delay, in the first day of Exchequer, yow appoint him a stipend at least of two hundred pounds….[84]

We find the Commission of the General Assembly

74. Lachman, ibid.

75. The first policy, which in response to a query from parliament, conceded that under "the great and evident necessitie," "'a competent force' could not be raised to oppose the English unless there was 'a more generall calling forth of the bodie of the people then heretofore hath been.'" This was the First Public Resolution. Holfelder, p. 85. The Second of May 24, repealed the Act of Classes.

76. The moderate Resolutioners on the commission, knowing parliament wanted full repeal of the Act of Classes, and knowing this would create a royalist government, dragged their feet for months. The Protesters tried to exploit this fear and proposed a union against the royalists, which in the end went nowhere. The commission finally gave the blessing the parliament wished on May 24, but with an attempted dodge, washing their hands of the consequences. "[I]t is not competent to us, but only to the King and Parliament, to make or repeall Acts of Parliament, and, therefore, that as the Commission of the Kirk had not hand in making of the Act of Classes, so neither doe we take upon us to determine the keeping up or rescinding or repealing of the same." See Holfelder, p. 119, and pp. 112–121.

77. The parliament repealed the Act of Classes on June 2, 1651. Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649–1660,* 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1894), 1.392. With the repeal the royalists came back en masse and "now had control of parliament, the Committee of Estates and all the key parliamentary interval committees. The rule of the kirke regime had ended. Not surprisingly, this realignment of power resulted in a severe reduction in the kirk's influence over the government." Holfelder, *"Factionalism,"* p. 121.

78. The majority and larger party were the Resolutioners; "with the exception of the synod of Glasgow-Ayr and its respective presbyteries, virtually all of Scotland's church courts were under the control of the Resolutioners." Holfelder's *"Factionalism,"* p. 14.

79. Baillie writes of his service to the king as "that grievous burden." Baillie, 3.150.

80. "It is said Charles II. had a great veneration for him, and stood much in awe of him." Wodrow, *Analecta,* 3.108.

81. Aye (always) glaiking. *Glaik:* light, giddy, foolish, sometimes with connotations of being flirtatious (See *Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary*). The king had already begun having affairs at a young age and would eventually lay claim to around a dozen illegitimate children by half a dozen mistresses.

82. Publications of the Scottish History Society, Second Series, vol. XVIII, *The Diary of Sir Archibald Johnson of Wariston, Volume 2, 1650–1654,* edited by David Hay Fleming (Edinburgh: March 1919), p. 137.

83. See *61 Sermons,* pp. 74, 516, 721.

84. Baillie, 3.155. Durham's family was housing with the family of Patrick Gillespie. Christie, p. 77.

granting on November 23, 1650, a respite for a time beginning December 1, due to his "present distemper and indisposition," and appointed several ministers to that duty for four months, swapping out teams at two months.[85] This plan initially may have been upended, at least for a time, by the king's request on November 28 that Durham return.[86] He may have returned, because rather than retiring for illness, he was active in the church's affairs through the end of the year. He appears before the commission on December 12, when letters from the king and Parliament are produced and read, though it is not clear if he was acting as courier; and he serves on a committee to consider the Parliament's letter. On December 13, Durham is appointed to preach to the parliament the next Lord's Day.[87] He attended the meeting in the morning on December 14, but is not recorded attending in the afternoon. And he attended the commission on December 31 in Perth, as the king was to be crowned the next day at Scone.

This all took its toll, and after attending the commission on January 6, he likely made his condition known. The next day, January 7, when he was not in attendance, a replacement was appointed during his illness. On January 22 the commission promised an answer to Durham's request of a furlough at the next meeting; however, they did not answer until March. At the same time in late January (which came first is unclear), the common session of Glasgow wrote in an undated letter asking that he might return to ministry there.[88] Durham's desire was to fill the chair of theology that had previously been offered him, and his friends believed he had been ill treated when it was denied him.

On March 18, the commission finally granted liberty to Durham "for his health and private affairs, to withdraw himself from his service and charge in attending the King and his family" for six weeks. He attended no other meetings of the commission though he was appointed to various committees to answer this or that need or correspondence. By the beginning of April, Durham was back in Glasgow.[89] On April 19, Cromwell suddenly came to Glasgow and heard "Mr. John Carstairs lecture, and Mr. James Durham preach, graciously and well to the times as could have been desired. Generally, all who preached that day in the Towne gave a fair enough testimony against the Sectaries." Old Ironsides got the message and in a meeting with the ministers the next day complained that the English were "condemned 1st, As unjust invaders", etc.[90]

On April 23, 1651, the commission appointed more ministers to "attend the Kings [*sic*] family by courses, and to be assisting to Mr. James Durham for performing all ministerial duties to them." Whether at this time and since January, Durham returned sporadically to the king, assisted by these and others, or they simply stood in for him, is not clear. Christie writes that Durham returned to the king for two months in May (Christie, 73), apparently presuming he did so after the March 18 liberty expired. Durham appears to be in Sterling on May 16, where the king and the army were;[91] but in a March 31 letter to Glasgow about taking up a position in the university, his language seems to indicate he was freed up until the meeting of the assembly at the end of July.[92] There is a manuscript lecture on Psalm 39 amongst sermons and lectures by James Guthrie dating to mid to late May, 1651, presumably given in Glasgow.[93] Christie states that he continued "occupied with the business of the Commission of Assembly.… met their deputation to his Majesty and discussed … signing of the Covenant by his English friends, … and conferring with those ministers who had been prisoners in the Tower of London…."[94] On May 24 he is listed as appointed

85. *Records for 1650–52,* pp. 117, 133, 234, 253, 335, 405, 420, 443, 549.

86. November 28, 1650, was the same day of the commission's censure of the Remonstrants. *Records for 1650–52,* p. 420.

87. *Records for 1650–52,* p. 158. The Parliament met at Perth from November 26 to December 30, 1650. The records do not note a service or sermon, the parliament sitting on that day likely after any such service. *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, ed. K.M. Brown et al (St Andrews, 2007–2020), M1650/11/22. http://www.rps.ac.uk/trans/M1650/11/22. Date accessed: 4 March 2020. If this is the occasion in view in "Life," the text was John 3:10. "While he served the Lord in the holy ministry, and particularly in that post and character of king's chaplain, his great labor and ambition was, to be accepted of God, and have God's favor and not the favor of great men; therefore he studied more to profit and edify their souls, than please and tickle their fancies, as some court parasites do in their sermons. One instance whereof was this. Being called, at a certain time, to preach before the parliament where many rulers were present, he preached from John 3:10. "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" That which he mostly insisted on before this august meeting, was, that it was a most unaccountable thing for rulers, nobles of Israel (a land of light, where divine light and revelation was, and where a great plenty of means of knowledge was) to be ignorant of, and unacquainted with these great and necessary things of regeneration, and being born again of the Spirit. And did most seriously press upon all, from the king to the beggar, to seek to know experimentally these things; an excellent pattern for all court ministers, and such as are called to preach at such public occasions. He continued with the king till he went to England." "Life," p. 33.

88. See the letter as given in "Life," p. 34.

89. "Life," pp. 35–36

90. *Records for 1650–52,* p. 420. Christie, 72, 73. "Life," p. 36. Baillie, 3.165–166.

91. *Records for 1650–52,* p. 335.

92. Baillie, 3.148.

93. NLS, MS 664a, fourth page of contents.

94. Christie, p. 73.

to go to the king with others of the commission, but he is not noted as in attendance of the commission. Despite Durham and his friends writing letters and campaigning for the Glasgow university appointment, Baillie appears to have successfully blocked this effort, believing it would be a disservice to the king and not stand Durham or the church well. By sometime in July it is clear he had not been with the king, and having recovered his health, had determined to return. Durham wrote to Robert Douglas on July 14, 1651, expressing his intent to take up again his charge once more as the King's chaplain.

> I was once in doubt whither to have staid till the Assembly or not; but being recovered in my health, and not knowing who may be with the King, I have resolved, upon Mr. Blair's advice, to go immediately to that charge, until the Assembly dispose of me and it, as shall be thought best. I doubt not when men are to be named, but ye will be careful to see them such as that task require, which I ingenuously confess does not only require more zeal, faithfulness and abilities than I have, but more than I could have thought of before experience of the snares and discouragements which accompany it.[95]

In light of this letter of July 14, Durham does not appear to have attended the summer meeting of General Assembly slated to begin July 16 in St. Andrews, as he was attempting to return to the king's side. Parliament had already passed censures on lay persons who had supported the Remonstrance, and it became clear the assembly was intent on doing something as well. "Censured and barred from election … twenty-two ministers including Samuel Rutherford and James Guthrie handed in a Protestation" which declared the assembly invalid for not being free and lawful.[96] The assembly upon hearing of the news of the defeat at Inverkeithing, moved to Dundee, but none of the Protesters attended and the assembly packed with royalists repealed the Act of Classes and deposed from the ministry James Guthrie, Patrick Gillespie and several others that signed the Remonstrance.[97] If he had been free to attend, Durham may have followed Blair's example as to the Dundee meeting, who decided to distance himself from the meeting.

> When the Assembly reconvened at Dundee on 22 July, it had lost approximately half its members. The Protesters were absent to a man and many moderates were prevented from attending because of English troop movements. Others, such as the centrist Robert Blair, appear to have withdrawn because they did not wish to be associated with the Assembly's proceedings. Many of those who remained were obscure royalist ministers from Fife and the north-east. Unlike their more moderate colleagues, these men had little respect for the Remonstrants. During the 1640s, such ministers had kept a low profile in order to escape the purges of zealous radicals. Now, with the situation reversed, they prepared to give full vent to their animosity towards the Remonstrants.[98]

Durham's exact whereabouts between July 14 and a September–October meeting of the Protesters could not be specifically traced. However, it is said he offered to go with the king to England but he refused, and the armies departed on July 31, and Durham returned to Glasgow.[99] Wariston records hearing about this on August 4,[100] so it is impossible to proclaim with certainly that Durham did not attend the Dundee assembly. Wariston in reviewing the 1651 Dundee assembly's *Warning and Declaration,* tries to read who contributed what to it, and spied "policy and prudentiality of Douglas, zeal in David Dickson, against separation, and sharpness of James Wood or James Durham."[101] There is no indication Wariston knew for sure Durham was present and he suggests either Durham or Wood for the sharpness. However, it would seem unlikely, if Blair had decided against attending the assembly, that Durham would not have done the same, so as not to be tied to any extreme action they took. But even if he was there, it hardly seems likely he would have contributed 'sharpness' to the document, if by that Wariston meant severity versus intelligence. This is because Durham in his July 14 letter to Douglas advised taking no censorious course with the Remonstrants.

> I can say little of the public, being almost afraid of every event I can think of; yet, if God would bless some overtures I heard from Mr. Blaire, of waving all bypast debates at this time, by entering on a new

95. Baillie, *Letters & Journals,* 3.560. Durham also wrote to Robert Douglas who was at Sterling, May 15, and May 23, 1651. Wodrow MS Folio 25.

96. Lachman, "Protesters," p. 681.

97. *Life of Robert Blair,* p. 278.

98. Holfelder, "Factionalism," pp. 127–128.

99. Durham "offered to goe with the king … but not finding suiteable acceptance, he returned to Glasgow…." *Select Biographies,* p. 332; Wariston, *Diary,* II, p. 104. Christie, p. 73.

100. Wariston, *Diary,* II, 105.

101. Wariston, *Diary,* II, 111.

> ground, I think it the only way of healing; wheras, if things shall conclude by hotness, after debate, it doth not cure that evil, but will readily bring on acts and censures on men, which will be of greater scandal to the Church, in my judgment, then the thing debated, and may probably draw more favourers, out of desire to suffer, with some, and by others, whereby many will be deemed to act by another principle in that then the present controversy.[102]

In the defeat of the Scottish army at Inverkeithing on July 20, Charles saw in the English army advancing north an opportunity to invade England. He marched his royalist army south attempting to gather troops on the way. As noted, Durham may have attempted to join the king between July 14 when he wrote to Douglas and the king's resolve to head toward England after July 20. After the king's refusal of his service,[103] by August 4, Durham had left and gone to Glasgow. The assembly at Dundee ordered three other ministers to attend him instead.[104] Johnson writes, "I thought it strange to hear that there was not one minister to go on with the King or army, except deposed ministers, albeit the meeting at St. Jhonston [in Perth] was most willing to send them, as there was none in 1648, when I heard that, even at Torwood, there was no evening nor morning prayers in the camp, and far less now."[105] On August 22, Charles' army arrived at Worcester and was subsequently routed on September 3, 1651. The king managed to escape to Europe.

Durham's Return to Ministry in Glasgow October 19, 1651–June 25, 1658

Relieved of his burden, and also having not been reappointed at the end of July to the Assembly's commission, Durham was free of those duties as well. While it is not clear there was any real place for him, John Carstares as moderator of the Glasgow session, wrote to Durham on August 28, 1651, imploring and practically ordering him to please come and serve the people there as one of their ministers.[106] Then, just a few days later on September 4, Robert Ramsay died, and that same day the session issued a call to Durham to the Inner Kirk (of the Glasgow Cathedral church).[107] But it was not until September 13 that men were appointed to deliver that call. With Ramsey's death Durham pressed a final time for the university position, but even this time with Baillie's support, he was denied it for good.[108] He accepted the call to the Inner Kirk, and his companion in ministry there would be John Carstares.[109] Durham spent the rest of his few years of ministry and life in this service, where he did the work for which he is most known.

The specific date on which Durham accepted this call to Glasgow is not clear. It seems likely that he did not begin his new charge until mid-October. The Protester-Resolutioner controversy was in full swing, and Durham was heavily involved. "In mid-September, they [Patrick Gillespie and the Glasgow Protesters], together with the centrist James Durham, wrote letters far and wide inviting all who were in known sympathy with their cause to a national meeting in Glasgow on 23–24

102. Baillie, 1.560.

103. Christie, p. 73. Wariston, *Diary,* II, 105.

104. Johnson's diary entry is dated August 4, 1651. *Diary,* II, p. 105. The brief commission records for the meetings at Dundee on August 1–12, 1651 do not mention this, so this may have been at the actual General Assembly at Dundee in late July, but this is not noted in Peterkin's record. The minutes for both were seized by the English and are missing. The personal account of some of the assembly's actions preserved by Wodrow does not mention Durham. Peterkin, *Records of the Kirk of Scotland containing Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies, from 1638…* (Edinburgh: Peter Brown, 1843), p. 631. *Records 1650–52,* p. 513.

105. *Diary,* II, p. 106.

106. William Ferrie, *Letters and correspondence of John Carstaires together with the letters of some of his contemporaries: To which is prefixed an account of his life* (1843; Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846), pp. 77–78. The need for Durham's services may have arisen in late July when "the Governors of the University agreed to relieve the Principal and Professors from their parochial charges, and this seemed to offer an opening, but Durham's mind was intent upon a chair as his right. Unfortunately, when the chair fell vacant by Ramsay's death in the autumn, other influences, especially the English, came into play, and he did not receive the appointment. A call of sorts was presented to him to serve in the Inner Kirk "from time to time, but in a louse way." Christie, p. 74.

107. Baillie, *Letters & Journals,* Memoir of Baillie, 1.lxvi. Scott gives the date of the call as September 4. Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ,* v. 3, p. 456. The Glasgow council approved the call on September 6, and appointed men to deliver the call on September 13. *Memorabilia of the City of Glasgow: Selected from the Minute Books of the Burgh. MDLXXXVIII–MDCCL* (Printed for Private Circulation, 1835), p. 552.

108. Cf. *Letters & Journals,* 3.238. Wariston records hearing of Ramsay's death on September 8, and while he likely would not have heard of Durham's call, his comment regarding Durham being deprived of all public ministry because he would not take sides, but strove to unite them, is in keeping with Wariston's general tendency to read providence through the glasses of his own opinions and interests. Publications of the Scottish History Society, Third Series, vol. XXXIV, *The Diary of Sir Archibald Johnson of Wariston, Volume 3, 1655–1660,* edited by James D. Ogilvie (Edinburgh: 1940), p. xxxii. "I heard of M. R. Ramsey's sudden death in Glascow, which will help to settle that presbytery. He has not long brooked [*enjoyed*] M. J. Durham's place, whom he caused putt out, howbeit the Lord had a hand in it to cast M. J. D. loose of all charge for his politic halting betwixt two opinions." *Diary,* II, p. 132.

109. John Carstares was ordained and entered the ministry at Cathcart, November 17, 1647. He was transferred to Outer Kirk of Glasgow Cathedral, first set apart in 1649 with Patrick Gillespie as minister, serving a collegiate charge with Gillespie from June 5, 1650, and then

September."[110] This meeting failed to attract the needed interest, but Gillespie immediately called for another gathering to meet in Edinburgh, which was successful, gaining the attendance of 62 ministers by September 30, including Durham.

> Extract from Mercurius Scoticus, Tuesday (Sept. 30). This day the Protesting Ministers of Scotland, and those that adhered to it, met at Edinburgh, and (as is supposed) intend to enter upon no Public Business till the next Week, and to spend the remainder of this Week in Supplication and Fasting to the Lord, every man in particular laying out his own guiltiness, in relation as well to the Public as his own private interest (Mr. James Durham being the first man), that they may be able to read his will in all his dispensations towards this Land; and the next Week to proceed upon business of the Assembly (as is supposed) and other Public business, in order to the deportment of the People in the midst of these troublous times.[111]

Durham attended the debates for much of the week, but by Saturday, October 11, Wariston notes that he had departed.[112] Given his travels, he may or may not have preached on October 12 back in Glasgow. As already noted, he had been preaching on occasion in Glasgow up to the point of commencing and taking up the formal call, during his on and off again service to the king as chaplain.[113] Perhaps the first sermon as minister of the Inner Kirk at the cathedral was one preached on October, 19, 1651. This was the first sermon on chapter two of Song of Solomon. While he does not make an explicit reference to a prior Lord's Day sermon on October 12, it seems clear he likely had at least addressed the substance of the book if not of chapter one, because he begins the sermon, "[Whe]n we began to speak of this book we show[ed] that it was taken up in [som]e short sweet conferences betwixt Christ and his Bride or believers…."[114]

Why did Durham in beginning his ministry in Glasgow, start preaching in chapter two of the book of Song of Solomon? This is because he was preaching from chapter one of Song of Solomon as his "ordinary text," when either preaching to the king and his family or when in Glasgow in the time away from that duty. We know this from a record left of the topic on which he preached, when in April 1651, as noted previously, Cromwell appeared suddenly in Glasgow.

> While I was at the college, the English army came to Glasgow, and King Charles was at Stirling with an army. Many of the army came to the church. General Cromwell came himself with his Lieutenant-General Lambert. They came into the outer church in the afternoon, very gravely and reverendy, and were set down in a seat opposite to the pulpit. I saw them all the time and they sat very reverendy. I heard Mr. Durham who was then the king's chaplain. He preached on his ordinary text. Song 1, last verse [1:17].[115]

From the published works, it is clear Durham preached multiple sermons on a single verse, and he likely completed preaching on chapter one either on that occasion or on whatever occasions he had to preach between then and taking the call to the Inner Kirk. When he began preaching regularly again, while he perhaps alludes to a prior sermon or sermons preached in summary or sporadically on chapter one, he does not begin again, but picks up where he left off with chapter two, and continued a considerable series of 228 sermons on Song of Solomon chapters 2–8, finishing sometime in about November of 1655.[116] He would also lecture on

moved to the collegiate charge with Durham in the Inner Kirk, April 26, 1655.

110. Holfelder, "Factionalism," p. 137.

111. Scottish History Society, volume 18, *Scotland and the Commonwealth. Letters and Papers relating to the Military Government of Scotland, from August 1651 to December 1653,* edited with introduction and notes by C. H. Firth (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1895), p. 327. See also Holfelder, "Factionalism," pp. 137–138.

112. *Diary,* II, p. 149.

113. This paragraph refines previous material regarding when Durham commenced his call and began preaching on the Song of Solomon, where it was cast as too doubtful that Durham preached prior to October 19. Cf. "*Antiquary:* The James Durham MS III: James Durham's 228 Sermons on Song of Solomon 2–8," *The Confessional Presbyterian* volume 13 (2017): 229.

114. Sermons on the Song of Solomon, manuscript, MSS 01203, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, Toronto, Canada. The left margin of the text was slightly out of shot in the photograph kindly provided and the letters have been surmised and inserted. Durham may still have been referring to some sermon prior to October 12, but it remains unclear at this time if he preached on October 12 and whether his text was from Song of Solomon.

115. "Mr. Gabriel Semple, 'Life,'" Scottish History Society, Fifth Series, volume 15, *Protestant Piety in Early-Modern Scotland: Letters, Lives and Covenants,* ed. David George Mullan (Edinburgh: Printed for the Scottish History Society, 2008), p. 143.

116. See the *Chronology* in Antiquary. Durham likely finished the series in the latter half of 1655. With thirty sermons remaining, the last dated sermon is dated March 11, 1655. See the multiple manuscripts and listing of sermons given in "*Antiquary:* The James Durham MS III: James Durham's 228 Sermons on Song of Solomon 2–8," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 13 (2017): 197–204. No manuscript of sermons on chapter one has been found at this writing, and given the constant moving around during his chaplaincy, notes may not have been taken

the same book of Canticles, though less fully.[117] He preached and lectured on other texts, including lecturing upon the whole book of Revelation from February 1653 until possibly May 1655. Thus, Durham began his ministry in Glasgow by tackling two of the most "mysterious"[118] books of Scripture at the same time.

James Durham's Work as Minister

Given the scope of Durham's published works it seems hard to believe he could have accomplished it all in such a short ministry. However, despite Baillie's characterization of the terms of his call to Glasgow as "from time to time, but in a loose way," Durham hardly seems to have been underutilized, and that despite the terms of the call, he was fully employed in the service of the Inner Kirk. John Carstares described the ministry of Durham in noting that when lecturing on Revelation he also,

> all that time he did also preach twice a week at least, and most ordinarily thrice, beside his daily public lecturing every fifth week according to his course in the city, and all his other ministerial duties of catechizing, visiting of the sick, exhorting of the whole from house to house, and his weekly meetings with the congregational eldership for the exercise of discipline, most dexterously, faithfully, condescendingly and indefatigably discharged by him towards about fifteen hundred souls, of whom he alone as minister had the oversight.[119]

This appears to be describing Durham's work as minister of the Inner Kirk in Glasgow Cathedral before Carstares himself joined him as co-pastor. Several of the Glasgow churches had "collegiate charges," where additional or co-ministers worked together. For instance, Patrick Gillespie was called to be the minister of the Outer High Kirk in the Glasgow Cathedral in 1648 as its first minister when that division of the space in the cathedral was set up, to which were added two collegiate ministers to share the work. This was John Carstares in 1650, and after Gillespie was installed by Cromwell as principal of Glasgow University on April 14, 1653, Andrew Gray was added in November 1653, and Robert MacWard in June 1656.[120] There was not a collegiate colleague for Durham until Carstares transferred to the Inner Kirk on April 26, 1655. So, for three and half years he apparently had the sole responsibility of the work assigned to the Inner Kirk minister, and then from that point until the end of his ministry he had John Carstares as a co-pastor to divide the work.[121] Therefore, before Carstares joined him, in addition to the catechizing and other work, Durham had the responsibility for two sermons each Lord's Day,[122] a Lord's Day morning lecture before sermon, at least one weekday sermon, most commonly Tuesday, or Thursday, though early on there are a few Saturday sermons, and every fifth week his share of the month's daily lectures in the city. As far as more specific information, we also have Carstares' statements that the lectures on Revelation were given "within a very short time, one of them every Lord's Day," and similarly that those on the Ten Commandments "were Sabbath-day morning lectures before sermon."[123]

There are precious few dates associated with Durham's sermons and lectures to construct a complete picture, but there are enough to attempt to approximate

of these sermons. In addition, there are copies of eight sermons on chapters 4, 5 and 7 in a manuscript not noticed in the article just cited. The other sermons in the volume are known to be Durham's and the dating and numbering of these aligns with other manuscripts of the sermons on Canticles. The MS contains published and unpublished material. See in the bibliography, "Sermons (1651)," Westminster College Archives, Cambridge University, in Durham, Commentary on Revelation, volume 3, p. 582.

117. Margaret Durham writes in her dedication of the Song of Solomon lectures, that at the importunity of hearers of the sermons, Durham went through the whole book again with more brevity in the Lord's Day lecture. James Durham, *Clavis Cantici; Or, an Exposition of the Song of Solomon* (1668; Aberdeen: King, 1840; rpr. Banner of Truth, 1982), p. 16.

118. "[T]he churches of Christ are obliged to God in this, that they have had from this bright candle amongst the Lord's candlesticks, a light shining upon and discovering those two mysterious Books of Scripture, Canticles, and Revelation." Carstares preface, *Clavis Cantici* (1668).

119. John Carstares, To the Judicious and Christian Reader, *Commentary upon the Book of Revelation,* Lectures on Chapters 1–3 (2020), p. 20, n3. See also Christie, p. 76.

120. Gray died on February 8, 1656. It is not clear who assisted Gillespie from Gray's death until MacWard's call. He may have shouldered the full duties as Durham apparently had until Carstares' transfer. Gillespie had ingratiated himself with Cromwell by his willingness to debate and for his sympathy with Congregationalist ministers, and Cromwell had him installed as principal of the university in place of Baillie. See Alexander D. Campbell, *The Life and Works of Robert Baillie (1602–1662)* (The Boydell Press, 2017), p. 54.

121. Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ,* volume 2, part 1 (Edinburgh: William Patterson, [1868]), pp. 5, 20, 22. *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ,* New Edition, volume III (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1920), pp. 456–57, 462, 465.

122. From the few known dated sermons, it appears for the most part that Durham preached on the Old Testament in the morning (Song of Solomon, Isaiah 53), and New Testament in the afternoon (Colossians). See the *Chronology* in Antiquary.

123. Carstares, To the Judicious and Christian Reader, p. 20. Carstares, To the Christian Reader, *A Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (Naphtali Press and Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), p. xli.

a preaching and lecturing *Chronology*[124] for his ministry in Glasgow. However, two descriptions provided by Carstares are problematic.

The Revelation lectures commenced on February 6, 1653, and appear to have been given over a longer stretch of time than Carstares indicates, which if taken at face value and one lecture per Lord's Day seriatim assumed, would have placed Durham completing the 94 lectures by November, 1654.[125] However, one manuscript notebook by George Maxwell records the single lecture on Revelation 10 as having been given on March 12, 1654.[126] This indicates a slower pace and presents almost enough time, with a few extra missed weeks, to presume that when Durham had every fifth week of lecturing in the city, that he did not lecture on the Lord's Day that week. Whether he did or did not, and there may have been other and less regular reasons for the longer time, this assumption most easily accommodates the creation of a best guess at how the various sermon and lecture series unfolded during Durham's ministry. If correct, all the known lecture series of any length on Job, Revelation, Ten Commandments and Song of Solomon, fit into the period of his ministry with about fourteen or sixteen weeks to spare and assuming a curtailing or ceasing of ministry at the end of 1657 and into 1658 when his health would have been giving away. If the assumption is not correct and some other reason accounts for the skipped dates, then there are approximately 62 or 63 more weeks that could have been filled with lecturing for which there is no record of additional series to take up that much time. Or even if he had been taking the fifth week off, after Carstares became his co-pastor, if he may have ceased that practice, that would add approximately 30 weeks of lectures open for additional material. But again, that would also mean there is a significant amount of unknown material for which, at least at this time, there is no record. Therefore, from what is known presently, this assumption of a skipped Lord's Day morning lecture every fifth week after Durham had spent the prior weekdays lecturing in the city, most simply reconciles the dates that we do know.

The other problematic description Carstares gives is of the lectures on the Ten Commandments, which is also difficult to square with the few dates that are known. Carstares writes in apologizing for the brevity of the lectures on the second table of the law, that they were

> for anything I know, never by him intended for the press. Otherwise it had been much more full; for he is much shorter on the commands of the second table than on those of the first, touching only on some chief heads, not judging it fit belike at that time and in that exercise, to wit, Sabbath-day morning lectures before sermon, to dwell long on that subject (which a particular prosecution would have necessitated him to); especially since he was at that same time to the same auditory preaching sabbath afternoons on the third chapter of the epistle to the Colossians, a subject much of the same nature.[127]

This more than implies that Durham lectured on the Ten Commandments at the time he was preaching on Colossians chapter three. However, Durham was more toward the end of an apparent series on Colossians 3 when Maxwell records that in addition to the Revelation lecture on chapter 10, that he preached in the afternoon on Colossians 3:17. Using the average length of the Revelation manuscript lectures as a guide, the lectures on the commandments would amount to possibly as many as 52 or 54 lectures. There is simply not enough time to allow inserting them somewhere before, or in the middle of the Revelation lectures if a break is assumed, given the known beginning date of that series and the specific date Maxwell records for the lecture on Revelation 10. Carstares must rather be seen to mean, that since Durham had already preached on similar second table issues in the Colossians series, there was less reason for Durham to have repeated that material when he lectured on the commandments, which likely began right after the completion of those on Revelation, given the connection Carstares makes to the sermon series on Colossians.

The lectures on Canticles were delivered, according to Mrs. Durham, after her husband's sermons on that book were finished. This would have to place them after the Revelation lectures, which ran during and completed before that sermon series ended, and after those on the Ten Commandments, which must have immediately followed to best reconcile Carstares statement. It is therefore most likely that some time had passed and that the lectures on Canticles were not taken up until around June of 1656, when Durham was preaching on Isaiah 53.

With all this predicated, and with the few dates

124. See the Chronological Catalog in *Antiquary* in this issue.

125. New College Library, Archives and Manuscripts. MSS Rev. 2. Commentary on the Revelation, chapter 1–11. Quarto. No pagination. 400pp. The first sermon is dated, 6 Feb. 1653.

126. Notes by George Maxwell, Collection, Maxwells of Pollok, Glasgow and Renfrew, 16 items/notebooks;T-PM/114/3 c. 1652–1656, Glasgow City Archives, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

127 To the Christian Reader, p. xli.

provided by manuscripts or other sources, along with other dates and historical facts, some approximation may be given of how the six years of at least Durham's preaching and teaching ministry in the Inner Kirk may have unfolded, which the Chronological Catalog presented in *Antiquary* in this issue attempts to do. Most of the focus in this Chronology is on the Lord's Day services. But as noted, each Glasgow minister also had at least one weekday preaching the daily sermon at the cathedral during the week. Durham is known to have preached Tuesday, Thursday, and apparently some Saturday sermons. While there are very few dated manuscripts that are identifiable as weekday sermons, happily a manuscript provides dates for some early Tuesday sermons, including what appears to be the first. In addition to two Lord's Day sermons, Durham also lectured each Lord's Day; but, as argued, the Chronology presumes that every fifth Lord's Day the lecture is skipped due to Durham's share of the daily city lectures the prior week. Apparently, the Glasgow ministers all took a share of these lectures. These were likely series on books of the Bible. A single known "fifth" lecture on Acts 15 by Durham may imply a series of significant size that is not easy to fit the timeframe as Lord's Day lectures (see the Bibliography in Durham on Revelation, vol. 3, p. 582). Whatever the case, skipping a week was an effective solution to expand the timeframe of Durham's lectures as the dating seems to require, without pondering more complex theories. Although it may be largely speculative, this Chronology, and the full bibliography of his works (ibid., p. 525–584) clearly present the magnitude of Durham's labors over six years of ministry.▪

***In Brief*: Dr. Alexander And Immersionism by Rev. R.L. Dabney, D.D., as published in *The Christian Observer*, 60.3 (19 January 1881): page 1, column 5.**

I have seen the preposterous paragraph from the *Examiner and Chronical*, touching Dr. Archibald Alexander's supposed conviction in favor of immersionism. Here is an authentic incident in his life, which may show how absurd this notion is. It was given me by my venerable friend, Mrs. John H. Rice. During a part of the time Dr. Alexander was the youthful president of Hampden Sidney College, the Rev. Conrad Speece and John H. Rice were tutors or professors under him. Being bachelors, they lodged in the same room and the same bed in the college. Mr. Speece had become entangled in the dogmatism of the Immersionists, and had been rebaptized by them, by dipping, in Buffalo Creek near by. But the Presbyterians, resolving to treat him with the fullest liberality, and respecting the sincerity of his convictions, continued him in his post.

One night about nine o'clock, said Dr. Rice, the president knocked at their door. Being invited in, he took a seat, and began a pleasant and somewhat jocular conversation. Soon he asked Mr. Speece a question touching some leading position of the Immersionists. The professor took up the gauntlet with a sort of surly promptitude, and made an aggressive reply. Rice saw a merry twinkle in "Little Archy's" expressive eye, and surmised that a rare fencing match was begun. It was continued until long after midnight. Dr. Alexander pursuing mainly the Socratic method, and entangling his gruff adversary more hopelessly with every answer. Rice listened and laughed until he was weary, and then quietly undressed and betook himself to bed, while the debate still went on. At last Dr. A. got up and bade them a cheery good night, with the remark, that he reckoned Janetta was beginning to think it was time a married man like him was at home. After sitting long in moody meditation over the fire, Speece also went to bed. He was in body, a big, ox-like German. All the rest of the night he lay, puffing and growling, like old Dr. Sam. Johnson, and flinging himself from side to side, giving the cover vicious jerks, much to Rice's discomfort. At length he said, "Speece, what is the matter? Why don't you sleep?"

"Because," he growled in reply, "the little villain has not left me an inch of ground to stand upon."

The result was that after a time, and thorough reexamination of the arguments, Dr. Speece repudiated his immersionism, and came heartily back into the Presbyterian Church and ministry. There he ever after maintained through a glorious and able ministry, the doctrines of pedo-baptism, being all the more hearty and firm in their support, because of his early trials about them.

This true history may also illustrate the amounts of truth usually contained in the romantic tales of persecutions by Pedo-baptists, undergone by Immersionists for the truth's sake of their gospel. Speece, during his secession, was treated with a Christian generosity, which was impervious to his surly, belligerent temper at that time.

[Originally published in the] *Central Presbyterian*.▪

Reviews & Responses

Review: Lane G. Tipton, *The Trinitarian Theology of Cornelius Van Til* (Philadelphia, PA: Reformed Forum, 2022). 181 pages. ISBN 978-0-9987487-7-1 (hardcover), 978-0-9987487-8-8 (ePub), 978-0-9987487-9-5 (Kindle).$34.99. Reviewed by Daniel J. Ragusa, pastor of Messiah's Reformed Fellowship (URCNA) in New York City.

Lane G. Tipton completed his dissertation at Westminster Theological Seminary in 2004 under Richard B. Gaffin Jr. on the trinitarian theology of Cornelius Van Til. Over the past nearly two decades, Tipton has continued to refine and advance his understanding of Van Til's thought. The mature fruit of his labor is now published in this tightly argued volume. In it he expounds Van Til's distinctly Reformed integration of the doctrines of the Trinity, the image of God, and covenantal condescension and its implications for a transcendental method of reasoning by presupposition that militates against all forms of correlativism and mutualism in the God-world relation, whether found in Aquinas, Barth, or post-conservative evangelicals who introduce change into God. His basic concern over the course of six chapters is that the Creator-creature distinction be maintained at every point in the Creator-creature relation for the sake of true religion.

Following chapter one, in which a basic orientation to Van Til's trinitarian theology is sketched, Tipton locates the core of Van Til's thought in the "deeper Protestant conception"—a term coined by Van Til's teacher, Geerhardus Vos, in his *Reformed Dogmatics*. It holds that Adam as the image of God was created in natural religious fellowship with God, being disposed for communion with him. God then condescended to Adam by an act of special providence in the covenant of works as the means by which this natural religious fellowship could reach eschatological consummation, "so that the absolute and condescended triune God himself could have become Adam's blessedness and reward" (55). This conception is antithetical to what Tipton calls the "deeper Catholic conception," which proports that man was created inherently weak and in need of a *donum superadditum* to raise his nature supernaturally to God. Both Vos and Van Til perceived that this destroys true religion insofar as it makes man's relation to God merely external. In the subsequent chapters Tipton will return again and again to this idea to show how Van Til's trinitarian formulation of the God-world relation is fundamentally driven by the "deeper Protestant conception," allaying recent attempts to import enmity into the Vos-Van Til relationship.

In chapters three and four Tipton puts to rest any charge that Van Til was a maverick theologian who wandered from the tried-and-true paths of classical Reformed theology via idealistic philosophy or any other instantiation of modernism. Rather, Van Til was self-consciously a constructive theologian who integrated the historic and confessional Reformed theologies of Old Princeton and Old Amsterdam. Tipton demonstrates this by simply tracing the sources from which Van Til directly quotes, most notably A. A. Hodge's commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith and Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*.

This proves especially helpful in resolving Van Til's apparently problematic statement that God is *one person*. Tipton observes that Van Til immediately qualifies this by saying God is *absolute personality*—the exact phrase already used by Bavinck and implicitly held by Hodge in terms of his affirmation of God's unified consciousness. Tipton further illumines the polemical context that led Van Til to this formulation. It was intended to parry the rationalism of both the theistic personalists, who denied personality to God's diversity of persons, and Gordon Clark, who denied personality to God's unity of essence by conceiving of it as "mute substance." "Van Til's aim," writes Tipton, "is to express the basic point that the essence of God is not an 'unconscious force' (Bavinck's expression)" (83). The phrasing may be contested, but there is nothing being said by Van Til that did not already belong to Old Princeton and Old Amsterdam. Tipton adds, "If we sought to refine or clarify Van Til's terminology, perhaps 'the absolute tripersonal God,' 'the absolute triune personality,' or Bavinck's more terse 'absolute personality' would express Van Til's doctrinal conception of the tripersonal unity of the Godhead without risking unnecessary misunderstanding" (85).

In chapter five, Tipton traces the direct sources of Van Til's doctrines of *autotheos* and *perichoresis* from Calvin and Charles Hodge, respectively. These two doctrines help to define for Van Til the interior life of the Trinity, which, in turn, provides the archetype for God's new relation to his image bearers in creation and covenant. This new relation, as an ectypal expression, introduces no change into the unchangeable Godhead but banishes every trace of mutualism and correlativism that would compromise true religion. Tipton

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explains, "Trinitarian persons are *absolute* in themselves as each *is* the uncommunicated essence of God; yet they are also *relative*, given the relations of origin and personal coinherence. Autothean persons in *perichoresis* are absolute, yet related; immutable, yet active. … Trinitarian persons relate authentically to the contingent creature without participating in the contingency that characterizes the creature" (126, 127). Van Til integrates these doctrines to deepen still the "deeper Protestant conception" of Vos.

Chapter six is the capstone of Tipton's study. It unfolds Van Til's representational principle which is at the heart of Van Til's trinitarian theology and apologetics. It "is Van Til's constructive appropriation of Reformed Trinitarianism and federalism in polemical engagement with all forms of philosophical correlativism and theological mutualism" (129). While the representational principle is only explicitly found in *A Survey of Christian Epistemology*, Tipton argues that conceptually it is found throughout Van Til's corpus wherever he speaks of the trinitarian persons as "mutually exhaustive" of one another. The correlate of *mutual exhaustion* is *mutual representation*. On the basis of *autotheos*, the persons exhaust the divine nature and so represent it entirely. On the basis of *perichoresis*, the persons exhaust one another and so represent one another entirely. "The image endowment in the work of creation replicates at the creaturely level the exhaustively personal dimension of Trinitarian *perichoresis*, and the special act of covenantal condescension replicates the exhaustively representational dimension of Trinitarian *perichoresis*" (137). Just as there is no residue of impersonality in the intra-trinitarian relations, so the God-world relation is wholly personal and its environment exhaustively revelational.

This has significance for the *sensus divinitatis*, the *pactum salutis*, and a transcendental method of reasoning by presupposition. First, it anchors Calvin's notion of the *sensus divinitatis* because it entails that "there is no aspect of human existence or knowledge that is immune from the absolute claims and inescapable revelation of the triune personal God" (142). This maintains the "deeper Protestant conception" over against the "deeper Modernist conception" of Barth (who denied natural knowledge of God) and the "deeper Catholic conception" of Aquinas (who denied concreated knowledge of God). Second, it entails that the trinitarian relations of personal operation *ad extra* are covenantal. This is the theological rest point for the covenant idea, which is something also found in Vos. Third, it undergirds a transcendental apologetic. Adam *began* with the knowledge of God that was gifted to him as the image of God in creation (general revelation). He also represented mankind as its federal head in covenant (special revelation). God's general and special revelation organically combined to form "one grand covenantal revelation of himself to man" (147). But this "one grand covenantal revelation" is now suppressed and rejected by sinners, so that "unbelief rests in empty and deceptive presuppositions (Col. 2:8)…. Unbelief reasons as though there is no absolute God who is absolutely revealed in nature and in Scripture (Gen. 3:1–6)" (147). By denying the absolute God of Scripture, unbelief inevitably engages in univocal reasoning, which "is rooted in some species of mutualism and leads to self-contradiction from a representational [theistic] as well as a nonrepresentational [non-theistic] point of view" (151). This explains Van Til's totalizing criticisms of the various expressions of correlativism and mutualism found in Plato, Absolute Idealism, and Barthianism. Plato embraces the really contradictory by making eternity and time correlative, Absolute Idealism by making the Absolute and historical particulars correlative in time, and Barthianism by making God and man correlative in the Christ-event. The *really* contradictory is distinguished by Van Til from the *apparently* contradictory. "There is an apparent contradiction, a point of ineffable mystery, in our confession that the condescended triune God remains immutably absolute in his relation to creation. Such a relation is incomprehensible to the creature" (155).

This seminal study of Van Til's trinitarian theology should be received as the definitive introduction to Van Til. Tipton has dug deep to the religious bedrock of Van Til's theology and apologetic: the absolute and immutable triune God of Scripture. The charges of Van Til's novelty must now take seriously the careful source analysis contained in this book. And the easiness with which Aquinas and Barth are being retrieved in the name of catholic orthodoxy today must now take seriously the caution Van Til raised.

Tipton concludes his work, writing, "Further Van Til scholarship ought to pursue these profound yet relatively unexplored vistas" (162–62). This study has forged the right path forward for further exploration.

Review: Bryan D. Estelle, *The Primary Mission of the Church: Engaging or Transforming the Culture* (Reformed Exegetical and Doctrinal Studies; Fearn: Mentor, 2022). Paperback. 442 pp. ISBN 978-1527107762. $19.99. Reviewed by Harrison Perkins, pastor at Oakland Hills Community Church, Farmington Hills, MI (OPC), online faculty in church history at Westminster Theological Seminary, and visiting lecturer in systematic theology at Edinburgh Theological Seminary.

Recent years have confronted the church with renewed need to consider our role in culture as western societies in general have seen significant upheaval concerning the status quo of social justice problems. Strident advocates for these issues have called every person and institution without exception, including the church, to take an explicit stand and lend its

overt support to their favored causes. The employed rhetoric has typically suggested that the gospel itself and the church's faithfulness are at stake in the church's involvement in the public debates about social justice, or even pandemic safety, concerns—notably in this case whether coming from conservative or progressive voices who have imposed polar opposite injunctions upon Christ's people if they are to be truly gospel people in faithful churches.

Thankfully, Bryan Estelle has provided a grounded and even keeled exploration of what the church's responsibility is, particularly in relation to the civil sphere. He argues that the church's primary task is to focus on the gospel and on shepherding Christ's people in holiness rather than addressing cultural issues and working to change society into a more "Christianized" version of itself. Although arguing for *the spirituality of the church*, the doctrine teaching that the church's tasks are determined exclusively by God's Word to focus on religious rather than civic issues, Estelle's position nonetheless balances this spiritual task with moral concerns.

In that respect, one of this book's great strengths is its careful nuance. Some works nuance a position to death, so that ultimately nothing is argued. Estelle's nuance, however, effectively holds together the church's primarily spiritual task along with an understanding that cultural issues do (at least at times) involve moral issues pertinent to Christians. The church, therefore, does have the responsibility to preach about God's moral law respecting where believers must stand regarding ethical matters, but at the same time must avoid pronouncing on how Christians should vote on particular bills and adopting a posture of advocating for particular political causes or parties. Indeed, the church must not be the mouthpiece for political factions but the embassy of God's kingdom for promoting the salvation of sinners and holding them together in church unity.

The book contains four parts. After the introduction, which helpfully frames the doctrine of the spirituality of the church against the backdrop of the social gospel's historical role in American theology, part one then looks at the biblical foundations of the spirituality of the church. The section on Genesis foundations, exploring how the accounts of the Garden of Eden and God's covenants with Noah inform the issue, draw well upon the previous work of Meredith Kline and David VanDrunen. The chapters on Joseph and Daniel as believers participating in secular courts, however, are highly original—in the best sense—in presenting the nature of Christian involvement in culture not as the church *qua* church but as individuals engaging particular vocations. Part two provides counter-examples for the spirituality of the church, looking at neo-Calvinism, liberation theology, theonomy/reconstruction, and the social justice movement. Estelle is not afraid to wade into controversial waters, staking out territory even concerning modern race issues. Given its rising popularity with a surge of scholars investigating Herman Bavinck, the chapter on neo-Calvinism will likely meet the most criticism. Part three looks at theological, confessional, and historical arguments for what the church's spirituality positively is. Part four then closes with some examination about the doctrine of Christ's headship over the church and how that should inform our understanding of the limits of the church's power, namely in preventing us from adopting any mission or cause not prescribed in our constitution, the holy Scripture.

This volume's argumentation and investigation is sweeping, ranging from biblical exegesis to historical consideration to modern cultural analysis. Estelle nevertheless succeeds in his ambitious project by providing a thought-provoking tour of the multifaceted issues that must be considered in framing our understanding of the church's spirituality and her mission in the world until Christ returns. This book is a refreshing contrast to the overly niche works arguing for the same position but on the basis of very tightly held cultural preferences, rather opening up the opportunity for the church to perform her mission successfully within any society even if unable to transform it toward particular cultural norms.

This same strength likely could have intensified with a more direct taxonomy of the modern representatives of the contrasting views. Presbyterian and Reformed denominations are presently debating exactly these issues, even making arguments about how they ought to affect examination of ministerial candidates. Estelle does intermittently include overt addresses to his interlocutors on the dividing issues of two kingdoms and the church's spirituality, helping us to connect the dots to our present situation. A clear and direct statement of the contrasting parties early on in the book may have helped readers see that the historical investigations of nineteenth-century debates in American Presbyterianism are not so much obscure instances of intra-denominational conflict but examples of how we have been here before and others have considered how to work out our theological and confessional principles. All the same, Estelle's work is a nearly comprehensive guide to navigating the background and biblical footing for the church's primary mission to bring the gospel into the world for the salvation of lost sinners.

Review: Ryan Kelly, *Calls to Worship, Invocations, and Benedictions* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2022). Hardcover. 288 pp. ISBN 978-1629959115. $19.99. Reviewed by Dr. T. David Gordon, Grove City, PA.

The second professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, Samuel Miller, taught an entire seminary course on Public Prayer, and his students over the years compared notes, and

presented to him a manuscript of the course lectures, which was published in 1849 as *Thoughts on Public Prayer*, in which he raised (and answered) an important question about the Christian ministry:

> "And which is the more serious and solemn employment, our speaking to God, and imploring his favour, or God speaking to us, and communicating his will, either in the language of instruction, of threatening, or of promise? It is not wise, however, to exalt either of these exercises at the expense of the other. Both are required in the New Testament Church; and both have a value beyond our power to estimate." (p. 14).

Miller rejected the two extremes of an entire prescribed liturgy on the one hand, and thoughtless prayer on the other; he promoted *extempore* prayer as he and others (e.g. James Waddel Alexander) promoted *extempore* preaching. In *extempore* prayer and *extempore* preaching, the substance of both was carefully and thoughtfully considered, though the precise words were not always rotely determined beforehand.

Those of us who embrace Miller's high sense of the responsibility of leading in public prayer have always been delighted to find assistance from many sources: Whoever took notes on Calvin's lectures on the minor prophets recorded also his prayers at the beginning of each session, and many of us have found such to be very helpful. Many years later (1712), Matthew Henry had published his *Method for Prayer* (re-released and edited by Dr. Ligon Duncan in 1994). In 1946, the PCUSA published *The Book of Common Worship*, which contained many prayers that its churches could employ at their discretion in public worship. Some years later (1975), Arthur Bennet edited *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions*, which has been widely employed for both private and public worship. In 1996, Terry L. Johnson edited and published the very helpful *Leading in Worship: A Sourcebook for Presbyterian Students and Ministers Drawing Upon the Biblical and Historic Forms of the Reformed Tradition*. This year, Prof. Ryan Kelly (West Chester University of Pennsylvania) has provided another excellent liturgical resource in his *Calls to Worship, Invocations, and Benedictions*.

Kelly's book includes very judicious discussion of the history of the matter in his prefatory "Historical Function, Development, and Defenses," before presenting thoughtful examples of the three categories listed in the title of the book, followed by helpful indices of all three. In each of the major sections, Kelly has organized the collection of liturgical material in accordance with the commonly employed Christian calendar (his subtitle to each major section is "By Seasons and Festivals"), though he adds lengthy and helpful selections for "Ordinary Time," which could be used with or without regard for that calendar. Even those (such as myself) who do not observe the Christian calendar will find Dr. Kelly's scriptural passages to be helpful on any occasion.

With very few exceptions, Kelly's selections are just that, selections from the Holy Scriptures, with references in the margins; and the few exceptions are mild paraphrases, adjusted to the circumstances of public worship. Those who have reservations about "prayers of human composition" will therefore have no reservations about the scriptural passages in Kelly's collection.

I recommend that users of Kelly's fine collection expose themselves to it frequently in private study or devotion; this will enable them to notice the wisdom of the selections, and enable them to be employed thoughtfully and pertinently. Further, such frequent exposure would almost certainly have the effect of furnishing the mind with many rich and lovely expressions of biblical devotional thought. Had this volume been available to me in the nine years of my pastorate, I would have cherished its wisdom and would have employed it frequently. We owe a debt of thanks to Dr. Kelly and to P&R for making this volume available to us.

Review: Zachary M. Garris (editor), *Dabney on Fire: A Theology of Parenting, Education, Feminism, and Government* (Columbia, SC: Self-published, 2019). Paperback. 132 pages. ISBN 978-1796450590. Reviewed by Ryan Biese, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Fort Oglethorpe, GA.

Robert Lewis Dabney was celebrated by his peers as perhaps the greatest theologian in the world. With the exception of James Henley Thornwell, Dabney excelled all other men in the South as a scholar, philosopher, theologian, and teacher.

Despite his prolific writing and his genius for both dissecting theological issues and anticipating the consequences of movements and ideologies, Dabney has been overlooked in recent generations in favor of other theologians of his day such as Chasles Hodge, B.B. Warfield and even G.T. Shedd.

This is likely due to many factors, but none more significant than Dabney's horrible comments on slavery and Africans generally. In this area, Dabney not only succumbed to the prevailing sinful views of his day, but in his own writing Dabney uttered reprehensible comments, which are a subject for another treatment. Nonetheless, it is disturbing how Dabney—who so thoroughly examined seemingly every other sphere of life and theological position—failed to detect the influence of the wider culture upon him in this area of anthropology. Because of this sin and failure, the wider Church has largely neglected the wisdom Dabney has to offer us.

Dabney—if he is remembered—is likely remembered for

the aforementioned views on slavery and Africans as well as his connection with the Confederate States of America. However, Dabney not only opposed, but despised the idea of secession and even went so far as to refer to South Carolina as an "impudent vixen" and secessionists as "great pests."[1] None of this excuses Dabney, but it does help us to see Dabney was more complicated than the all-too-common caricature of him.

Zachary Garris, in his brief anthology, *Dabney on Fire*, has assembled four of Dabney's later essays, provides the basis of an introduction to an overlooked and misunderstood American theologian. Garris draws us in with his introductory essay in which he notes that despite the mere 120 years since Dabney's death, the society in which we live is vastly different from the one Dabney inhabited. Up until Dabney's generation, societies changed relatively slowly; all that changed in the Nineteenth Century with the triumph of industrialism.

In his lifetime, Dabney observed what he called "progressivism," "fiscal capitalism," and "radicalism," and he warned about the consequences of such ideologies. The essays Garris selected help us to marvel at how accurately—in many cases—Dabney predicted the very dysfunctions currently plaguing American society and threatening the purity of the church in American.

Most Christians of his own day ignored his warnings on these subjects, but they are nonetheless fruitful for our study. When doctors study a disease, they do not begin their study only at "autopsy stage," but prefer to study the progression of the disease in hopes of better treating it. Likewise, Christians in our day may benefit from studying Dabney on these and other subjects to consider how the diseases of Marxist Materialism, Feminism, Crony Capitalism, and others have developed over the last several generations. The reader will no doubt quickly discern the accuracy of Dabney's predictions and see his continued relevance. Dabney understood the essence of ideologies and was able to discern the logical consequences to come more than a century later.

Garris has done the church a great service in providing these four essays in a more accessible format and recommending other resources to study Dabney further.

The Family as a Means of Grace

In an age in which the gross confusion regarding parenting has heavily influenced the church, Dabney offers a helpful corrective. In what is certainly the best chapter in the volume, Dabney's sermon "Parental Responsibilities," sets forth a vision for parenting resting on two presuppositions: the family is a means of grace and the Christian nurture of children is a divine calling second in importance only to one's own pursuit of Christ.

We often overlook the blessings of God in the parent-child relationship because it is so familiar. Yet God has called parents to be a chief means by which "the field of Divine love and benevolence is widened as time flows on." Dabney envisioned God working through parents on such a scale that the number of the redeemed would "unspeakably surpass in number the heavenly hosts" (21).

Dabney points out both in the Old and New Covenants piety in the home and the faithfulness of parents to nurture their children is necessary "to prevent the Divine Messiah from becoming a woe instead of a blessing to men" (19). As such, the "chief duty" of parents is to bring their offspring to the Saviour so they may know His blessings (24).

Parents are not merely teachers in how they "train up a child in the way he should go," but are to be God-like in their affection for their children so that children may begin to comprehend God's "infinite benevolence and pity" (30). So highly did Dabney esteem parental love that he said, "without it society would doubtless degenerate into anarchy and men into savages." Here is one of many areas in which Dabney has proven prescient; the latchkey kids reared in daycare and cartoons are now coming of age and we are witnessing a breakdown of all respect for authority and institutions across the American Republic.

The influence of parents is not only effective for civil good, but the chief purpose and potency of parental influence is for the health of the child's soul. Dabney pleads with parents to make faithful use of this potency, warning that it cuts both ways: "every way the parent has the advantage over the pastor; so that the latter has small prospect of reversing the parents work when it has been for evil" (32).

Dabney reflects on his own experience as a pastor that a child reared by his parents worshiping pagan gods has more hope than a child reared in a merely nominally Christian home. This is an urgent warning for our own time in which—tragically in so many cases—parents have abdicated all their spiritual duties toward their children to the so-called "Youth Pastor," Youth Group, and Sunday school.

Dabney described the family as "the most efficient of all means of grace more … than all the other ordinances of the church" (38). We now witness the results in the churches—and thus in society—through the intervening generations of the neglect of parental duty and of the family as a means of grace.

Parents as Educators of Their Children

It should surprise no one that Garris includes Dabney's "Secularized Education" essay in his anthology. Garris has written a number of works promoting Christian education and provided numerous resources on this subject.

1. Robert Lewis Dabney, "To His Mother on Dec. 28, 1860," in *Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, ed. Thomas Cary Johnson (1903; repr., Carlisle, PA : Banner of Truth, 1977), p. 215.

While the absence of government schools funded by compulsory taxation is almost unthinkable to many in the present day, Dabney wrote before the ubiquity of government schools. In his essay, Dabney lays out several reasons why the state and the Church are ill-suited to have charge over the education of young people and he warns of the results of a government-run school system.

It may be surprising to some that Dabney argued the church is ill-suited to the education of children. Dabney's position flows from his belief regarding the mission of the Church: "It is the Church's duty to instruct parents how God would have them rear their children, and enforce the duty by spiritual sanctions; but there its official power ends" (40). Dabney saw a distinction between a church school and Christian education.

Dabney vigorously opposed government-run schools, warning they would undermine the free state and permit the civil authority to "shape a people to suit itself" (65). In our own lifetimes, we have witnessed Dabney's predictions come to pass as the government schools produce more and more graduates who increasingly look to the government to provide for them what families and individuals once earned or provided for themselves. This has profoundly reshaped the character of the Republic.

In answer to the question of his day of what religion or sect the state schools would promote, Dabney skillfully shows government schools can properly promote none and must be secular. However, a wholly secular education system had never been tried and he predicted it was doomed to fail because education is both a spiritual and a moral task, neither of which is a secular organization competent to do (48). For Dabney, education must be Christian and those best suited to the task are Christian parents.

Dabney explained the danger of a government-run school system in that it must necessarily become secular because of the nature of the American Republic, and a secular school system will not be neutral, but will "become an anti-evangelical agency and resist the work of the spiritual commonwealth." Dabney recognized Christians have no right to expect the American State to promote Christian truth, but Christian people ought to demand the state *not* oppose Christianity (56).

Dabney highlighted the impossibility for Government schools to merely educate the intellect and leave the inculcation of morality to other sources. Dabney argues intellect and morality cannot be separated "without mischief" (52).

The history of the Early Twentieth Century has vindicated Dabney's warning regarding morality untethered from technology and science: the tactics of the First World War (poison gas, rolling artillery barrages, submarine warfare, machine guns, etc.) represented only the beginning of what men would inflict on one another without ethical constraints on science. The nihilistic tendencies of the Second World War only exacerbated the problem of secular education that venerated science and learning without the restraint of true spirituality or moral virtue.

Fundamentally, the state is ill-suited to the task of education. This is the role of the parents. Dabney argues the state is the "organ for securing secular justice," but when the state takes up a function "for which it was not designed" (e.g., the education of youths) it will itself be ruined and the task it undertook done poorly (66). Here again Dabney has proven at least partially correct: the failure of government schools to properly educate their charges has been well-documented by the media and government alike. One hopes Dabney is only partially correct and that the failure of the government school system will not also lead to the collapse of the American Republic.

A Warning and Lament Concerning Feminism

Dabney's writing is usually very enjoyable to read not only for its clarity and logic, but also because of the whimsical barbs he has seamlessly woven into his work, and his "Women's Rights Women" is no exception. Throughout the essay he not only highlights the danger, but also he humorously exposes the absurdity of the Women's Rights movement. For example, "[Women's Rights] means that a woman has a natural right to do all the particular things that a man does (if she can), to sit on juries and shave her beard, to serve in the army and ride astraddle, to preach sermons and sing bass" (73).

Dabney recognized the fundamental, natural difference between men and women, one that was being ignored—or denied—by the advocates of Women's Rights: "the State has committed the crowning outrage and inconsistency of not letting her be man because God has made her a woman" (73).

In these humorous invectives, Dabney anticipates the demands of other groups clamoring for so-called "equal rights" in the current century. It is inherent in radicalism to ignore distinctions of nature in the process of establishing a new order. In his own day it was women—overlooking their natural difference from men—who demanded to be treated exactly like men. In our own day, it is sodomite couples demanding the same rights as couples of opposite sexes or transvestites demanding to be regarded as if they were by nature what they pretend to be.

As Dabney further elaborates in his essay "Civic Ethics," the "privilege" of the franchise is not a "natural right," but something bestowed on a "limited class having qualification to use it for the good of the whole." Participation in the governing of the commonwealth—in Dabney's view—is not a burden for which all men are endowed with the divine gifts to bear (75). For that reason, Dabney argues, the right of the franchise should not be extended to any women.

Dabney's lament about the conservatives of his own day sounds familiar to a common complaint today: "American conservatism is merely the shadow that follows Radicalism as it moves forward toward perdition" (76). For Dabney, conservatives ought not be those who are simply "behind the times," but rather advocate an authentically distinct vision.

Dabney warns of the consequences of the success of the Women's Rights Women. First, he warns of the impending corruption of women by politics because they are not suited for political excitements (81). He predicts disastrous consequences for marriage and the family as women are viewed as indistinguishable from men and children are thus deprived of the foundational lessons of family life (83–84). Dabney also foretells bitter consequences for women as a result of "Women's Rights" in the removal of the protections in Christian societies for women as the weaker vessel:

> Casting away that dependence and femininity which are her true strength, the "strong-minded women" persist in thrusting herself into competition with man as his equal. But for contest she is not his equal; the male is the stronger animal…. They insist upon taking precisely a man's chances; well, they will meet precisely the fate of a weak man among strong ones (85).

In recent years with the #MeToo movement especially, we have witnessed the accuracy of Dabney's unheeded warnings. The so-called liberation of women has yielded harrowing unintended consequences for women.

Dabney does not only make criticisms and issue warnings, but offers a way forward. He calls his countrymen to reject the "new meanings" of American political axioms regarding equality and liberty and to return to an understanding that reflects the existence of superiors and inferiors in society. Dabney urges rejection of the foundation of government being "the consent of the governed" (71) and instead founded upon "the ordinance of God" (75). These are matters he will develop further in his essay "Civic Ethics."

Written shortly after the end of the Federal Occupation of Virginia, Dabney less successfully veils his bitterness toward the North in this essay than in some of his other writings. Dabney saw the Women's Rights movement as connected logically with Abolitionism and the subsequent granting of suffrage to Freedmen (70). It is at this point that Dabney's normally indefatigable logic fails him, being overly influenced by the sentiments of his peers.

Dabney's treatise on Women's Rights makes valid points and anticipates serious troubles, but his thinly veiled disdain for the North and his comments regarding abolition severely weaken and distract from his argument in this essay.

The Christian and Society

The final essay Garris includes is one of Dabney's latest works, his "Civic Ethics" from 1897. Dabney begins seeking to answer the question "What is the moral ground of my obligation to obey the magistrate," especially in a republic when the elected magistrate or civil bureaucrat may possess no inherent superiority to me (90).

Dabney shows the inadequacy of the "social contract theory" to explain why Christians should obey the magistrate. Dabney points out the basis of the social contract theory is fallacious and fictional: there was no society that moved from savagery to civilized society (98). More importantly, he argues man is not the seat of his own authority and so he is in no position to contract away his liberty (97).

Dabney next refutes the "Divine Right of Kings" as the basis of a Christian's obedience to civil authorities. He points out the polity of the Hebrew Commonwealth was a "federal republic of eleven cantons," and when a king was chosen, initially it was not an hereditary monarchy, but "an elective one." Likewise, Dabney argues the Scripture does not enjoin Christians to obey the king, but governing authorities (95). By this he shows a monarchy is not *the* "biblical" form of government.

Instead, Dabney argues for a "theistic" ground for Christian obedience in that it is "the will and ordinance of God our creator." Man was created social, argues Dabney, so there must be some agent to restrain the savagery of man's selfishness. Thus, God ordained the civil magistrate for that purpose and since God has instituted his authority, he must be obeyed (91–92).

Dabney asserted man's liberties are safest under a theistic theory of government; a government resting on "God's absolute authority over man" will least tend toward tyranny since it alone regards "the eternal standard and pattern of pure equity and benevolence," the Scripture (101).

Dabney recognizes there is no such commonwealth established on this basis, so he deals briefly with a Christian's duty when the civil magistrate commands what is immoral. Dabney takes the usual course: "he must refuse to obey, and then submit, without violent resistance, to whatever penalty the state inflicts for his disobedience, resorting only to oral remonstrance against it" (109).

Dabney delves into the fraught topic of when tyranny may be resisted violently or otherwise. Dabney does not rule out all possibility of lawful rebellion, but limits lawful rebellion to when the outrage is not a "private wrong," but the "expression of the common breast outraged by general oppressions" (111). Such a principle for just rebellion seems subjective to the point of meaninglessness.

Dabney is dreadfully subjective on the lawfulness of rebellion and almost Lutheran in his view of obedience in which he argues obedience is required except in cases of sin; in this he is even more rigid than Calvin. Calvin recognized tyrannical

governments are "full of disorder" and even goes so far as to describe such as "not an ordained government" and so acknowledges the Christian's freedom to disregard tyrannical powers.[2]

Dabney would have done well to follow what Charles Hodge had written in his 1835 *Commentary on Romans*. Hodge argued:

> The obedience, which the scriptures command us to render to our rulers is not unlimited … [but] to obey them as magistrates in the exercise of their *rightful* authority.… No command to do anything morally wrong can be binding; *nor can any which transcends the rightful authority of the power whence it emanates*…. They are ordained and invested with authority to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well. They are ministers of God for this end and are appointed for "this very thing." *On this ground our obligation to obedience rests, and the obligation ceases when this design is systematically, constantly and notoriously disregarded.*[3]

The view of government Dabney articulates, and which is rather common in our day, seems to rest on whoever has the power makes the rules and whoever has the power is to be obeyed unless he commands what is immoral. But that is eerily close to a "king of the hill" or "might makes right" model of government. Hodge adopts a more nuanced approach; the purpose for which government is ordained is to punish evil and reward good; when the government goes beyond those two aims, obedience is not a matter of Christian obligation, contrary to what Dabney seems to argue.

While it is hardly likely Dabney could have anticipated the level of intrusive and highly specific regulations magistrates have decreed and imposed in the current century, the intrusiveness of modern magistrates forces us to reconsider the Christian's duty to the magistrate. The 'civic ethics' of Hodge based on Romans 13:4–5 is far superior to that of Dabney and is one deserving of greater study as Western Christians must learn how to live in a society that is not only openly hostile to God and His people, but also presumes to regulate nearly every aspect of human existence.

Dabney's essay is not without redeeming merit, however. He rightly warns of the consequences of universal suffrage, namely if the landless masses are granted equal suffrage with property owners, it will inevitably erode the rights of private property (122). Here Dabney has again been vindicated as we are witnessing wealth transfers and redistribution on an unprecedented scale as politicians attempt to preserve their power by making grander and grander promises in hopes of winning younger and more indebted constituents.

Conclusion

The weight and significance of Dabney's life and theology are difficult to overestimate. Dabney understood both his times and philosophy so extensively that he could predict the outcomes and consequences of events and ideologies to come generations later, despite only viewing them in their most nascent expressions.

However, Dabney's ability to rightly understand the truth in such a wide range of topics only makes his views on race and slavery all the more shocking and reprehensible.

In *Dabney on Fire*, Garris skillfully pilots between the Scylla of Dabney veneration and the Charybdis of condemning Dabney wholesale. In his introductory essay, Garris acknowledges the stain on his legacy as a result of Dabney uncritically absorbing the pseudoscientific views of his contemporaries on that issue and yet he urges us to reflect upon and heed Dabney's proper warnings regarding the materialism, radicalism, and progressivism of the age.

In these skillfully selected essays, Garris shows us that studying Dabney confirms for us there is no halcyon age of Christian society and culture. Garris deserves the last word:

> Ultimately Dabney does not call his readers back to an earlier period in history, but back to the Bible. For it is God's word that people have abandoned, and it is only there that we can find a better way of ordering society (16).

Review: William E. Thompson, *In Stonewall's Long Shadow: James Power Smith, Aide de Camp* (Chapel Hill, NC: Zebra Books Publications, 2020). Hardcover. 371 pp. ISBN 978-1733586634. $19.99. Reviewed by Jonathan Peters, on staff at Reformation Bible Church & Harford Christian School.

At the urging of the military historian Douglas Southall Freeman, W. G. Bean authored the first modern biography of a member of Stonewall Jackson's staff. Bean's book, *Stonewall's Man* (1959), detailed the brief but exceptional life of Sandie Pendleton. In the succeeding years, additional authors followed suit by publishing biographies on the other staff members, including *Jackson and the Preachers* (John W. Schildt, 1982), *Hunter Holmes McGuire: Doctor in Gray* (John W. Schildt, 1986), *Jedidiah Hotchkiss: Rebel Mapmaker and Virginia Businessman* (Peter W. Roper, 1992), *Mapping for Stonewall: The Civil War Service of Jed Hotchkiss* (William J. Miller,

2. John Calvin, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), p. 479.

3. Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Philadelphia: Grigg & Elliott, 1835), pp. 532–533.

1993), *Stonewall Jackson's Surgeon, Hunter Holmes McGuire: A Biography* (Maurice Shaw, 1993), *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life* (Sean Michael Lucas, 2005), and *"Stonewall" Jackson's Chaplain: Beverly Tucker Lacy* (H. Rondel Rumburg, 2012). Then in 2020, William E. Thompson added to this list with his *In Stonewall's Long Shadow: James Power Smith, Aide de Camp*.

Thompson, pastor emeritus of College Church, Hampden-Sydney, was no stranger to Civil War publishing when he issued this book, having previously authored *Bad Friday: April 7, 1865: The Day the Yankees Came to Prince Edward Court House and Hampden-Sydney, Virginia* (2011) and *First in War: The Hampden-Sydney Boys* (2013). He also authored a history of College Church in 2013, titled *Her Walls Before Thee Stand: The 235–Year History of the Presbyterian Congregation at Hampden-Sydney, Virginia*. In his most recent publication, *In Stonewall's Long Shadow*, Thompson devoted his energies to another resident of Hampden-Sydney, James Power Smith.

Smith was born in New Athens, Ohio on July 4, 1837, but soon moved with his family to Frederick, Maryland as his father took up a pastorate there for a Presbyterian congregation. Thompson notes: "The bulk of James P. Smith's growing-up years was spent during his father's subsequent pastorates in Maryland and Pennsylvania. This family's sequential residences were all located in, or near, the Valley of Virginia, or its extended Maryland/Pennsylvania area known as the Cumberland Valley" (17). Smith studied for three years at Jefferson College in Pennsylvania, and then traveled to Hampden-Sydney, Virginia to study theology at Union Theological Seminary, taking classes from Samuel B. Wilson, Robert L. Dabney, Benjamin M. Smith, William J. Hoge, and Thomas E. Peck. He completed his studies just as the Civil War erupted, enlisted in the Rockbridge Artillery, and participated in First Manassas, the Valley Campaign, the Seven Days' Battles, Cedar Mountain, and Second Manassas.

According to Dabney, Stonewall Jackson (the great Southern Presbyterian general) "noted [Smith's] devotion and intelligence, with his wonted sagacity, selected him from the ranks, and promoted him to be his aide-de-camp, – a favor which … was requited by young Smith with fidelity which deserved to link his name in enduring bonds with the memory of his patron" (116). Such fidelity was manifested the night of May 2, 1863 when Jackson was accidentally wounded by his own men at the Battle of Chancellorsville. Smith was not present when Jackson was shot, but arrived within a few minutes to help carry Jackson off the battlefield on a stretcher. Union artillery soon opened up with such intensity that the stretcher bearers had to stop and seek cover. The young adjutant threw his body beside Jackson and held him to the ground to shield the general from any incoming rounds. The litter bearers eventually hoisted Jackson back up and carried him off the field so that he could receive medical attention. Smith stayed with the general throughout the night, and held a lantern over his body as Dr. Hunter McGuire amputated Stonewall's mangled left arm. Smith then journeyed with Jackson to Guinea Station, and allowed his body to be used as a cushion for the general as the ambulance bounced along the road. When the ambulance arrived at Guinea Station, stretcher bearers moved Jackson into the Chandler family's plantation office in their back yard. Smith remained with McGuire and other members of the staff, faithfully attending Jackson's temporal and spiritual needs even until the end. On May 10 at 3:15 p.m., Smith heard Jackson whisper his famous last words: "Let us cross over the river, and rest under the shade of the trees." Smith accompanied Jackson's body to Richmond for funeral services, and later to Lexington for burial. He then escorted Jackson's widow back to North Carolina before returning to the Army of Northern Virginia for the Battle of Gettysburg. Throughout the rest of the war, Smith served on the staffs of Richard Ewell, Cullen Battle, Gabriel Wharton, and John Echols, and likely assisted Dabney with his biography of Jackson.[1]

After the war, Smith became the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Synod of Virginia (1870–1920), and took up a pastorate in the Roanoke Valley and later in Fredericksburg, where he courted and married Agnes Lacy,[2] the niece of Beverly Tucker Lacy (Presbyterian minister and former chaplain of the 2nd Corps under Stonewall Jackson). In 1891, Smith transitioned to being a Virginia Synodical Evangelist based out of Charlottesville, and the following year, he and his family moved to Richmond,[3] where he spent the rest of his life memorializing Confederate soldiers, editing religious and historical papers,[4] and ministering at the Confederate Soldiers Home and the Virginia State Penitentiary. It is notable that Smith served as a pallbearer for R. L. Dabney in January of 1898. Of further note is that the multiple Pulitzer Prize winning historian of the South, Douglas Southall Freeman (1886–1953) served as a pallbearer for Smith when he died on August 6, 1923. Smith was at the time of his death the last surviving member of Stonewall Jackson's staff.

1. *Life and Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. Thomas J. Jackson* (1866; repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1983).

2. They were actually married at Chatham Manor (her father's estate) across the Rappahannock River, with Rev. Moses Drury Hoge conducting the ceremony. Hoge also "preached at Smith's installation service at the Fredericksburg Church" and later "dedicated the Smiths' new home in Richmond." Smith, in turn, "offered one of the public prayers at Hoge's funeral" in 1899 (pp. 266, 345).

3. Union Seminary also relocated to Richmond in 1898. Smith became friends and neighbors of the faculty and staff, including Thomas Cary Johnson, Givens Brown Strickler, and Walter W. Moore.

4. He was on the editorial staff of the *Southern Historical Society Papers* starting in 1910, and became the sole editor from 1914 to 1920.

Thompson's biography focuses chiefly on Smith's military contributions for and memorialization of Confederate soldiers. Thompson "appreciate[s] the factual story of James Power Smith's life and his many excellent written contributions, while also understanding how much he was influenced by his friendships, his experiences, his wartime stories … and his post-war captivity to [the Lost Cause] that almost all of 'Smith's kind' never criticized" (241). Rev. Thompson also finds Smith's memorialization of Civil War events in the Fredericksburg area to be of "incalculable historical value" (326). Because of Smith's labors, tourists and historians alike can visit monuments marking where Jackson was wounded, where he died, and where his amputated arm was buried.

For this biography, Thompson makes ample use of Smith's postwar writings, but also consults his almost-forgotten wartime letters now archived in the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Battlefield Park headquarters at Chatham. Thompson's transcription of these letters, as well as his inclusion of a rare 1863 photograph of Smith in uniform, adds significant information on this neglected lieutenant. One such story which Thompson unearthed was Smith's relationship with little Jane Corbin. Most Jacksonians are familiar with the general's friendship with Jane,[5] but few may realize Smith's strong attachment as well. In a letter to his sister, Elizabeth Brown, dated March 17, 1863, Smith wrote:

> I have no heart for writing to-night. We are all very sad over the death [of] Mrs. Corbin's little girl Jane…. She was a pet of mine and loved me dearly [so] that I went up and stayed in the house [Moss Neck] all night in hope that I might render some little assistance. We are [sic, were] to move this morning and as the Gen. mounted his horse, I ran in to say Good-bye. Mrs. C. said Janey was much better and wanted to see me very much—had asked for me frequently. I went to the chamber and the little child called me by name and put up her lips for a kiss. She said she was sorry I was going away [and] that I must come back soon to see her and play with her. I came away very sorry to leave my little pet so sick—but not dreaming that her life was in danger. Yet the little darling died in an hour…. I cannot tell you how much I am distressed at this loss. The child really had a strong affection—as you have seen children exhibit such affection. During the whole of her delirium yesterday afternoon she talked of me. (155)

While Thompson's biography concentrates on the Civil War and its commemoration, he does discuss some of Smith's theology and ministerial labors. Reformed Christians would likely wish that more space was devoted to these areas, recognizing, though, as Morton H. Smith said: "None of the men following Dabney wrote as extensively in the field of theology as he did."[6] In *William Sterling Lacy: Memorial, Addresses, Sermons*, J. P. Smith wrote a tribute of his friend, detailing Lacy's exemplary testimony as a classmate at Union, his courage as a fellow soldier in the Rockbridge Artillery, his pastoral service in Virginia and North Carolina, and his ministerial labors as a director and trustee of Union Seminary and as a member of the General Assembly's Committee on the Preparation of a Hymnbook. This eulogy not only informs the reader about Lacy's life but also reveals Smith's ideals for a minister:

> Willie Lacy, as so many loved to call him, was from childhood a child of grace, his faith abiding steadfast, his eye single, and his whole nature gladly consecrated. He was a devout man and full of the Holy Ghost, pure, gentle, affectionate, unworldly; simple in his habits and refined in his tastes; loving good men and women, loving music and hymns, loving humor and play, loving books, and most of all, loving Christ and his church … He preached sermons that were most carefully prepared, with scholarly exposition of the word, and faithful and earnest application. In pastoral service he excelled, knowing how to speak a word in season, and to comfort others with the comfort wherewith he was himself comforted in God. He had a facile and graceful pen, contributing papers of popular attractiveness and of influence to the church journals.[7]

The final sentence could also describe much of Smith's own testimony. Heeding Lacy's example, Smith authored a devotional book, *Brightside Idyls: Every Week of the Year* (1904), which offers light spiritual reflections on an assortment of topics, ranging from nature, history, technology, and art. While Thompson notes that Smith chaired his denomination's Executive Committee of Publication and Sabbath Schools, he does not indicate that Smith also wrote a graceful preface for one of its publications. In *The Family Altar* (1915), Smith details the importance of families setting aside a few minutes each day for household worship:

5. For a dramatization of this relationship, see the second half of *Gods and Generals* (2003). Stephen Spacek ably portrays the character of Smith throughout the film. The scriptwriters, however, took some liberties with the historical record and placed Smith on Jackson's staff earlier in the war.

6. Morton H. Smith, *Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1962), p. 322. Smith was speaking of those professors at Union that succeeded Dabney, but the phrase could apply just as well to any of Dabney's students.

7. *William Sterling Lacy: Memorial, Addresses, Sermons* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1900), pp. 5–12.

> It honors God, the giver of all our good, the source of all our happiness. It makes the home a sanctuary for God's dwelling. It binds the household together in a more hallowed love. It pleads the grace of Covenant promise. It instructs and unites all hearts in the truth and grace of Christ. It builds a wall of defense against the error and evil of the world around us. It bears witness for God, our Saviour, to the stranger within our gates. It devotes the day to the highest service and sweetens all the hours. It plants in every heart sacred memories to be profitable and happy in all the following years. It brings down from Heaven that blessing of God which maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it.

The rest of the book "contains Scripture readings, hymn selections and suggested prayers for each day of the week, over a period of four weeks, as well as special occasional prayers from men such as Edward Reynolds of the Westminster Assembly, Henry Van Dyke, Jr., James Isaac Vance, Russell Cecil, Richard Clark Reed, William Marcellus McPheeters, and James Russell Miller."[8]

Smith's facile and graceful manner can also be seen in some of the Sunday School lessons he prepared earlier in life (which the reviewer recently found). In one lesson on John 8:31–47, Smith teaches his young audience three simple points about "The True Children of God": 1) they are "free from bondage [to] ignorance and fear and sin," 2) they love Jesus Christ, and 3) they hear and obey God's voice. In another lesson on John 13:1–17, Smith admonishes the children to follow the example of Christ in washing the disciples' feet: "Instead of envy and strife, each one seeking to be greatest, you should be seeking to serve one another, even in the lowliest service."[9]

Smith likewise preached a number of plain-spoken sermons during his life, which had an air of popular attractiveness. The reviewer discovered an article in *The Central Presbyterian* newspaper on the "Sunday School Mass Meeting," which said:

> The Rev. J. P. Smith, of Fredericksburg, by invitation, was present, and delivered the address. His subject was "The Beautiful Names of Jesus." He dwelt chiefly on the title of "Good Shepherd." The address was well received by all, and especially by the children, who are generally good judges of "Children's Sermons." The hearts of all were stirred, and, we doubt not, cheered by what they saw and heard.[10]

Almost twenty-seven years later, Smith preached another well received sermon. On June 24, 1906, Smith delivered a thematic baccalaureate address on I Corinthians 16:13, urging the graduating cadets to find their "true manhood" in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The sermon was so popular that Smith had it printed in Lynchburg.[11]

But Smith's greatest denominational contribution of popular attractiveness and influence may have been in the issues of *The Central Presbyterian*, which he edited from 1892–1908.[12] Many Southern Presbyterians adopted the doctrine of the "spirituality of the church," and would have appreciated receiving Smith's newspaper, for it, according to E. T. Thompson's PCUS perspective:

> avoid[ed] taking any direct editorial positions on some of the burgeoning societal pressures that were beginning to affect many Virginian communities and church congregations, *e.g.,* the changing roles of women, child labor reforms, inadequate urban housing, [and] the sale and consumption of alcohol…. Instead, the pages of Smith's *Central Presbyterian* editions primarily

8. *The Family Altar* (Richmond, VA: Executive Committee of Publication Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1915), pp. 2–3. "The Family Altar," Log College Press Blog (March 12, 2020): https://www.logcollegepress.com/blog/2020/3/11/the-family-altar.

9. James P. Smith, "The True Children of God," *The Central Presbyterian*, August 26, 1891. J. P. Smith, "Washing the Disciples' Feet," *The Central Presbyterian*, October 7, 1891.

10. The article mentions that a thousand children were in attendance. "Sunday School Mass Meeting," *The Central Presbyterian*, October 10, 1879. For another description of Smith's preaching, see "The Alexander Chapel," *The Central Presbyterian*, August 11, 1880.

11. This reviewer would like to thank Ryan Douthat (Director of Public and Electronic Services at Union Presbyterian Seminary Library) for providing him with a copy of this sermon. It is the only known sermon that Smith ever published. J. P. Smith, *Quit You Like Men: Sermon Preached at the Virginia Military Institute Jun 24th 1906* (Lynchburg, VA: J. P. Bell Co., Inc., 1906), pp. 8–9. In his dissertation, Russell St. John criticizes Smith for the thematic nature of this discourse. St. John does not recognize that this was a baccalaureate address, which may have necessitated a different approach from what was used in the pulpit on the Lord's Day. Considering Smith's remarks elsewhere on expository preaching, the baccalaureate address may not have been a typical sermon for Smith. Russell St. John, "Empty Admiration: Robert Lewis Dabney's Expository Homiletic," (PhD diss., Middlesex University, 2018), pp. 239–240.

12. *The Central Presbyterian* was formerly edited by Thomas V. Moore and Moses Drury Hoge (1856–1860), Smith's brother-in-law, William Brown (1860–1879), James C. Southall (1879–1890), and William T. Richardson (1879–1895). Smith shared editing responsibilities with Richardson starting in 1892, and became the sole editor in 1895 after Richardson's passing. In 1909, the newspaper merged with the *Southern Presbyterian* and the *South-Western Presbyterian* to form the *Presbyterian of the South*, edited by Thornton Samuel Wilson. Smith, along with Thomas E. Converse (*Southern Presbyterian*) and George Summey (*South-Western Presbyterian*), stayed on to assist Wilson. "*The Central Presbyterian* (Richmond, Va.) 1856–1908," Library of Congress: https://www.loc.gov/item/sn89053987/. Henry Alexander White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders* (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1911), pp. 429–430.

> represented an extensive newsletter of revivals and baptisms, the founding of new churches, accounts of news from church-related colleges and seminaries, and … occasional reports about the Presbyterian outreach in foreign countries. (316–317)[13]

Readers of the biography under review may have some quibbles with the format. There are no footnotes or endnotes, making citations hard to track down; but there is anecdotal material offered in brackets and each chapter does conclude with a section of sources consulted and quoted. This reviewer noticed at least two mistakes in the narrative: a misquotation of Ernest Trice Thompson (Presbyterian historian) on page 317 and a factual error on page 348 concerning Smith as the alleged author of an article on Confederate army chaplains.[14] Some readers may also lament the absence of discussion on Smith's views of the Anglican Lambeth Conference of 1920, which called for "a reunion of divided Christendom." The biography notes that Smith protested against an organic union with the Northern Presbyterian Church (317), but does not mention that Smith opposed the Lambeth union as well, because it is, as Smith said, "an experiment that has been thoroughly tried out through the centuries and has been a failure and a disappointment, at an unmeasured cost, a denial of all liberty, deadly to all rights of conscience, [and] destructi[ve] to the truth which is 'able to make us wise unto salvation.'"[15]

These objections aside, *In Stonewall's Long Shadow* is an insightful biography of one who 'Rode with Stonewall.' Both military historians and Reformed Christians will be enriched by reading this book, and it may induce them to explore Smith's writings in greater detail.[16] If so, they will likely find that Smith, in many cases, had "a facile and graceful pen, contributing papers of popular attractiveness and of influence to the church" and history.

Review: Francis S. Sampson, *A Critical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Edited from the manuscript notes of the author by Robert L. Dabney (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, Broadway, [1856]); available online and in reprints. xv, 475 pp. Reviewed by Benjamin Shaw.

This volume appeared in 1856. The author, Francis Sampson, had died two years earlier at the age of forty. Dabney, who himself was only thirty-six, was impressed with this particular work and, knowing that the author had been at work in preparing the book for publication, undertook to finish the work in honor of Sampson. The "Editor's Preface" gives a detailed explanation of his work. Dabney's intent was to produce the work that Sampson had planned and made it his operating principle not to obtrude his own ideas into the commentary. As far as this reviewer knows, the work has never been reprinted and is currently available online at archive.org and Google Books and in facsimile reprints through print on demand services such as Lulu.com. The text is also available via Logos Bible Software.

Following Dabney's preface is an introductory essay by Sampson on the proper qualifications for a critical interpreter of Scripture. He discusses six qualifications. The first is that the interpreter must be thoroughly convinced that the Scriptures are the Word of God. Second, the interpreter must be enlightened and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. The idea of these first two qualifications is that if the situation is otherwise, the interpreter will not be properly sympathetic to the God's Word. Third, the interpreter must have a thorough knowledge of the original languages. Fourth, the interpreter must have an extensive acquaintance with collateral knowledge, such as other languages related to the biblical languages, the history of the biblical period, and other such knowledge. Fifth, the interpreter must have a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures as a whole. A single book, or a single passage, must be interpreted in the larger context of the entire Bible. Sixth, he must possess correct principles of interpretation tempered

13. Smith did take an editorial position in favor of the "limitation of suffrage … for the Negroes of the South." He paternalistically thought that this would result in their "protection and improvement." "Suffrage Limitation," *The Central Presbyterian*, September 10, 1902, quoted in Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South, Volume Three: 1890–1972* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1973), p. 253. See also "The Negro in Africa and in America," *The Central Presbyterian*, May 2, 1906 for additional evidence of Smith's ethnic prejudice.

14. It should be Walter W. Moore, "The Seminary and the War," *The Union Seminary Review* 30, no. 1 (October 1918): 1–6. Again, thanks are due to Ryan Douthat for tracking down this article, as well as the one below on Lambeth.

15. J. P. Smith, "The Lambeth Appeal," *The Union Seminary Review* 32, no. 1 (October 1920): 37–43.

16. For a listing of many of Smith's works, readers can visit Log College Press online: https://www.logcollegepress.com/james-power-smith-18371924. The list includes "Stonewall Jackson's Last Battle" (1884, 1888), *The Religious Character of Stonewall Jackson* (1897), *Brightside Idyls: Every Week of the Year* (1904), *Stonewall Jackson and Chancellorsville* (1904), *General Lee at Gettysburg* (1905), Introduction to Hunter McGuire and George L. Christian's *The Confederate Cause and Conduct in the War Between the States* (1907), *The Family Altar* (1915), "Prayer at the Unveiling of the Virginia Monument at Gettysburg" (1917), and "With Stonewall Jackson in the Army of Northern Virginia" (1920). Readers can also find Smith's memorial to William Sterling Lacy on https://www.logcollegepress.com/william-sterling-lacy-18421899. The Virginia Chronicle's online archive also provides several copies of *The Central Presbyterian* containing articles and editorials by Smith: https://virginiachronicle.com. For further reading on Smith, see John W. Schildt, *Jackson and the Preachers* (1982; repr., Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Company, 1992), 183–201.

by the skill and judgment to properly apply them. This is the standard that Sampson set for himself.

Moving on from these qualifications, Sampson deals with six preliminary questions. Today we would call this section the introduction. Sampson's conclusions are as follows. The letter was written to Jewish Christians, probably inhabitants of Palestine. Second, based largely on the external testimony of the early church, he concludes that the letter was written by Paul. Third, that it was written in Greek, as there is not evidence of the existence of a Hebrew or Aramaic form of the epistle. Fourth, that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, as 9:9 and 13:10 seem to imply that the temple was still standing. Fifth and sixth, it was written to warn the readers of the dangers of backsliding and to confirm them in their faith.

At this point, Sampson moves into the commentary proper. He begins the commentary on each section with an "Analysis," which is a synopsis of what is covered in the section. These sections generally, but not always, follow the chapter divisions in our version. A reader interested in a quick summary of Sampson's conclusions could read the Analysis sections and receive that summary.

After the analysis, he moves to a detailed verse-by-verse commentary. In this commentary he demonstrates that he meets the qualifications for the interpreter that he had lined out in his "Introductory Essay." He is familiar with, and makes extensive use of, the standard works available at the time. These include Greek grammars and commentaries in English and German. He also quotes frequently from Calvin's commentary in Latin. He illustrates points of grammar and interpretation from throughout the Scriptures, citing New Testament passages in Greek and Old Testament passages in Hebrew.

In illustrating some of his insights, I want to focus on three passages. The first is Hebrews 2:3, a common difficulty for those who hold that Paul wrote the epistle. "It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard." This seems to imply that the author himself received his knowledge of the gospel from the earlier disciples. That is the most common way to read the passage. But Sampson makes the point that same sort of language is used in Ephesians 4:14, "so that we may no longer be children." Paul certainly does not include himself among those children. He makes the further point that the author uses the first person plural throughout the passage. Read with these observations in mind, the reader recognizes that "the apostle is not necessarily included among his hearers" (82).

A second passage is Hebrews 4:10. Sampson's discussion here illustrates two things. First, that in his day, there was a Christian consensus that there is a Christian Sabbath, and that this verse refers to the final state. Commonly today, evangelicals hold that there is no Christian Sabbath, and that the reference here is to resting in Christ from trying to be saved by works. Second, Sampson's discussion gives the reader a good example of Sampson's clear brevity. "The 'works' from which the glorified believer rests, are those labours [*sic*] and sufferings which make up the toils of his militant state; including, doubtless, the great labour [*sic*] of self-denial, or mortification of self and self-righteousness" (155).

The third passage is the notorious opening section of chapter 6. The reader of this review is referred to the work itself for the perceptiveness and clarity of Sampson's discussion. Suffice it to say that his treatment of the passage is a marvel of insight from which the reader will profit much.

The website bestcommentaries.com has more than two dozen commentaries on Hebrews rated at five stars. Many are written by the best-known names among modern evangelical New Testament scholars. I would suggest that the pastor who is preparing to preach on Hebrews will be richly rewarded by substituting Sampson for one of those. But he should be prepared to make diligent use of his Greek and Hebrew, for he will need them. There are many commentaries that rightly have disappeared into the dust of the ages. This is not one of them.

Review: O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Consummation: A New Testament Biblical Theology, Volume 1: The Testimony of the Four Gospels* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2022). Paperback. 400 pp. ISBN 978-1629956305. $27.99. Reviewed by Ben C. Dunson, the Editor-in-Chief of American Reformer (https://americanreformer.org/) and visiting Professor of New Testament at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (Greenville, SC).

O. Palmer Robertson needs little introduction to Reformed pastors and engaged laypeople. His classic treatment of the biblical basis of covenant theology in *The Christ of the Covenants* has been the standard contemporary, widely-read reference on the subject in the decades since it was published (1980). He then continued in that same vein with *The Christ of the Prophets* and *The Christ of Wisdom*, as well as *The Flow of the Psalms* (the pedant in me wishes this had been titled *The Christ of the Psalms*, but the book was focused on the canonical ordering of the Psalms, so the title is understandable). Now, as a fitting capstone to these books, Robertson has begun a projected three-volume series entitled *Christ of the Consummation*, in which he will lay out a comprehensive biblical theology of the New Testament. The first volume (the subject of this review) is on the Gospels. The subsequent volumes will be on Acts and Paul's letters, and then on Hebrews-Revelation. Although an Old Testament scholar, Robertson has often crossed disciplinary boundaries during his publishing career,

writing on topics as diverse as sex, dispensationalism, soteriology, and the significance of the lands of the Bible.

There are many biblical theologies on offer today. What makes Robertson's distinctive? In one sense it is unsurprisingly *not* unique: it is biblical theology in the tradition of Geerhardus Vos, as Robertson's previous works have been. Other Reformed scholars, such as G.K. Beale, have also written New Testament biblical theologies from a similar standpoint. Robertson does, however, propose to make two unique contributions to the field of New Testament biblical theology. First, he argues that he will fill out Vos' own very limited treatment of the New Testament in his *Biblical Theology*. Second, to do so, Robertson sets out to apply Vos' "epochal" approach to New Testament revelation.

What does this mean? Whereas most biblical theologies are structured according to key themes traced across the whole Bible or focus on specific themes in each individual book of the Bible, Robertson seeks to explain the Gospels as conveying a movement, or process, of greater clarity in revelation across the movements of Christ's life and across the Gospels. He will trace, as Vos put it in *Biblical Theology*, "the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible." That is to say: Robertson argues that one can gain greater understanding by looking specifically at what is learned from the revelation attendant to Christ's birth, his ministry, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and so on (to name some of the major "epochs" of revelation). Robertson calls these "phases of intensifying revelation" to indicate the new insights gained by tracing the movement from lesser to greater revelational clarity in the life of Christ. As he puts it in his conclusion: "In these new phases of redemptive history, the heart of the revelation does not change, but it broadens and deepens in the realities of the truth" (p. 321).

A good example of what Robertson intends is seen in his treatment of the uniqueness of John's Gospel. Robertson argues that since John was written probably 20–30 years after the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) we should expect to find "maturing elements" in it (p. 254). Among those "maturing elements" are the deep spiritual insights seen in the extensive dialogues between Jesus and various interlocutors (not found in the other gospels), Jesus' ministry understood as a series of revelatory "signs," and an explicit focus on the creation and sustenance of faith. That said, Robertson admits that "[e]ven if the later dating of John is not accepted, the deeper perspectives on the person and work of Jesus are nonetheless evident throughout" (p. 256).

After defending his biblical-theological approach in chapter 1, the material of the book is split up into two main sections (although there is no formal division into two sections). Chapters 2–6 focus on the key "phases of redemptive history" seen in Christ's life. Then Chapter 7 provides an overview of what all four Gospels have in common, before providing a detailed treatment of the key distinctives of each Gospel on its own terms.

The material in chapters 2–6 spans the entire incarnate ministry of Christ. First, there is a chapter on "preliminary revelations" (ch. 2), which includes the announcements of Christ's birth, the preparatory ministry of John the Baptist, Christ's baptism, and his confrontation with Satan. Second, there is a chapter on Jesus' own teaching about himself (ch. 3), including his teaching on how his coming fulfills the Old Testament, the titles he used for himself and accepted from other people (son of man, son of God, messiah, etc.). Third, there is a chapter on Jesus' ministry (ch. 4), focused on his teaching and miracles. Fourth is a chapter on how Jesus brought in the kingdom of God through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension (ch. 5). Included in this is a discussion of Christ's extensive teaching on the coming and nature of the kingdom. And finally, there is a chapter that delves in greater detail into Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension (ch. 6).

Chapter 7 is devoted to the unique witness of each of the Gospels. However, it begins with a section on the "united witness" of the four Gospels. Included in this section is an overview of how each Gospel gives the same basic narrative picture of Christ's life, despite significant differences of emphasis (especially in John's Gospel vs. the Synoptics [Matthew, Mark, Luke]). The rest of this section analyzes key statements found nearly verbatim in the Synoptics. Both of these sections reveal that—despite different emphases—all four Gospel authors were telling the same, truthful (thus absolutely trustworthy) story about Jesus Christ. The rest of the chapter looks at the unique elements in each of the four Gospels. God gave the church four portraits of Christ, and therefore, attending to what is unique in each is vital. After chapter 7 a very short conclusion wraps up the book, returning to the key contribution Robertson set out to make: tracing the significance of the process of divine revelation as we see it in the four Gospels.

There is much to appreciate in this clear and faithful exposition of the Gospels. First, despite there being numerous biblical theologies available today, few are written from an unabashedly Reformed standpoint. Robertson does not delve much into systematic theology, but Reformed theology clearly undergirds what he writes. In this sense I could see this being a useful book for Reformed seminary professors to use in their classes, especially if they are concerned about the baggage that sometimes comes along with otherwise helpful treatments of New Testament biblical theology from non-Reformed authors (views on the place of God's moral law, for example).

I also appreciated the forthright pastoral focus of the book. Robertson does not shy away from direct application of the truths of biblical theology to the life of the church and the

individual believer. Robertson rightly grounds these exhortations in the direct teaching of the New Testament, which he unpacks in detail: whether it be Luke writing so that his readers would have certainty regarding the significance of Christ's incarnate mission (Luke 1:1–4), or John writing so that his readers might believe and in doing so find eternal life (1 John 5:13), or Paul writing to Timothy on how the church must conduct itself in the world (1 Tim. 3:14–15), Robertson shows how every single writing in the New Testament explicitly calls for a response of faith and obedience. It is only right that he would do so in his book as well; this is the very purpose for which the New Testament was written.

Additionally, there is solid and enlightening discussion of nearly every aspect of the Gospels in Robertson's book. There is little, in fact, that he does not address, and insightfully so. The only surprising lacuna to me was that he did not spend as much time on the parables and Sermon on the Mount as I would have expected (pp. 77–81, and then occasional references elsewhere [e.g., pp. 210–12, 238–40]).

There are really only two issues I think worth critiquing, the first one being much more minor. First, in terms of structure, I think the book could have benefitted from a clear division into two formal sections: 1. Phases of redemptive history in the life of Christ (chapters 2–6, totaling 135 pages) and 2. The contribution of each Gospel (chapter 7, totaling 161 pages). Chapter 7 itself would probably have benefitted from being split into five separate chapters, one for the overview of common elements in all Gospels and one for the distinctive contribution of each Gospel. This is not a point about the substance of Robertson's argument, but I think a division like this would probably make things easier for the reader, and help them mentally calculate the significance of each section prior to beginning the book.

Second, despite having learned much from Robertson's scholarship and from Geerhardus Vos' approach to biblical theology, I struggled somewhat to see what is gained by attempting to explain Christ's redemptive mission according to specific "phases" of revelation. While it could perhaps be said—in light of the totality of the four Gospels—that we can see that this revelation did originally come in phases of sorts (birth, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, etc.), it would no longer appear possible to treat them as phases once we have the totality of revelation given in four discrete narrative accounts. That is to say: we cannot experience revelation in "phases" as the original apostles (for example) might have since our only access to this revelation is the final narrative account of each Gospel, each of which treats Christ's life as a whole. In other words, we can't get "behind" the Gospels to see something more basic than the actual form of the Gospels as it currently exists. I don't believe this leads Robertson to make any claims that are false, but it does give me pause regarding what additional insight can be gained from an approach attempting to see *more* than a simple narratival reading of the Gospels would provide.

Robertson, in his introduction, argues that a key contribution of his redemptive-historical perspective is that it "recaptures the vitality and excitement associated with the inbreaking of God's climactic actions and words in the redemption of his people" (p. 8). By this I believe he means that we can, in a way, almost image ourselves in the story of Christ as it unfolds and see how stupendous, even shocking and transformative, it would have been for Christ's original disciples and interlocutors. There may be something to this, but I'm not certain a straightforward narratival reading misses this. In fact, this vitality and excitement is always present in good stories, which (without denying their divine inspiration and supernatural power) the Gospels certainly are. The attempt to capture the "process of revelation" also ends up requiring a fair amount of repetition between chapters 2–6 and chapter 7. The latter chapter (on unique witness of each Gospel) inevitably has to cover the same material as chapters 2–6 (individual "epochs" of revelation regarding Christ). This was inescapable given the focus of the book (which Robertson recognizes).

As I mentioned above, one of the main benefits that Robertson posits for his approach is that it allows us to see "maturing elements" when comparing later Gospel writings (or later revelations) to earlier ones. In particular he has John's Gospel in mind, which is likely 20–30 years later than the Synoptics. But the dating of all of the Gospels will inevitably remain somewhat speculative and tentative, since we have little objective data to base conclusions on. It might not be wise to base conclusions on such tentative information. Robertson argues that his specific conclusions are not dependent on setting specific dates for writings or individual revelations (within the life of Christ). However, if that is the case, then I'm not sure why it is necessary to seek significance in the *process* of revelation, rather than the end product of revelation (each Gospel as a whole).

These questions aside, Robertson's book is a very helpful overview of the Gospels and all they contain. The book is full of careful and faithful exposition and explanation. The book would work well in a seminary or college classroom setting. Although I've spent significant space posing a question about the "process of revelation" approach, this should not be taken to represent hesitation on my part in recommending the book. I simply think the question worth asking, and have therefore tried to articulate it with sufficient space and care as to be helpful. In the end, if a reader ignored everything I wrote on this point, they would still come away with a very helpful introduction to the teaching and theology of the four Gospels, and to a profound and

pastoral meditation on the person and work of Christ. This is primarily what Robertson set out to accomplish, and in this book he certainly achieves his goal.

Review: Tadataka Maruyama, *Calvin's Ecclesiology: A Study in the History of Doctrine;* Foreword by Richard Muller (Eerdmans, 2022). Hardback. 480 pp. ISBN 978-0-8028-8185-4. $65.00. Reviewed by Thomas Haviland-Pabst.

With this monograph on the ecclesiology of John Calvin, Tadataka Maruyama has provided the reader with an expanded and revised version of his earlier Japanese monograph entitled *Calvin's Reformation Ecclesiology* (Tokyo: Kyobunkwan, 2015). Aside for this 2015 work, he is the author of *The Ecclesiology of Theodore Beza: The Reform of the True Church* (Geneva: Droz, 1978).

Maruyama, in giving an attentive historical eye to Calvin's ecclesiology, notes two challenges that face the historian faces. The first challenge "concerns his textual materials and those of others relevant to the topic" (p. 1). The second challenge "concerns the intrinsic development of his ecclesiology in" (p. 1) its historical context, i.e., considering the complexities that attend the man himself and the period in which he lived.

Regarding the first challenge, the author pushes against a method which deduces a "comprehensive and harmonized concept of the church" (p. 2) from Calvin's perspective as if the material available consists of one, unified corpus. Moreover, he rightfully asserts that Calvin's "final *Institutes* of 1559" (p. 2) cannot be seen to encapsulate the entirety of Calvin's ecclesiology. Given the diversity and complexity of Calvin's corpus, Maruyama's method is to "address … Calvin's main materials, both in Latin and French" (p. 1) that are of relevance to the focus of the book and, as such, the material explored, both from Calvin and non-Calvin sources, will be necessarily selective.

Regarding the second challenge, Maruyama proposes a "three-stage development" (p. 2) of Calvin's ecclesiology. In chapters 1–2, the first stage is discussed, which Maruyama labels "Catholic Ecclesiology" (p. 2). The focus on this first stage is the largest section of the book, amounting to about half its length (pp. 9–224). Chapter 3 discusses the Strasbourg period in Calvin's life (1538–41), which the author argues was pivotal for preparing Calvin to become the Reformer we know him as today and, as such, it served to transition him to the second and third stages of his ecclesiological development. Chapter 4, then, covers these last two stages ('Reformed Ecclesiology' and 'Reformational Ecclesiology') in detail.

The first chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section discusses Calvin's academic formation. Here, Maruyama covers, in order, the early French Reformation, Calvin's time in Paris at university, his studies in law, Calvin's move to humanistic studies at the Collège Royal which gave birth to his first writing—a commentary on Seneca's *De clementia*. The second section starts with Calvin's 'sudden conversion' to "radical evangelicalism' (p. 32) and ends with his exile in Basel. Section 3 discusses Calvin's writing of the first *Institutes* (1536) and the formation of his 'Catholic' ecclesiology.

At this juncture, a few things are worth noting. First, Maruyama takes the position that Calvin's work on Seneca is best understood "as a work of [Calvin's] moderate evangelical humanist period" (p. 24), in contrast with those who would argue that it is merely a humanistic work (Wendel) or "a book of the age" (Oberman), though it is these things as well. Therefore, it hinted at his later development as a Reformer. Second, he argues that Calvin's 'sudden conversion' was not "from humanist to reformer" (*pace* McGrath) but from moderate to radical evangelicalism, with the former denoting continually reforming efforts within the Roman Catholic church and the latter denoting reforming efforts with a clear break from the Roman Catholic church (pp. 31, 33). Third, Maruyama suggests that the first *Institutes* was written within the framework of the 'divided body of Christ,' given the conflicts with Roman Catholicism, Lutherans and Reformed, and the Radical Reformation (p. 50). As such, starting with Calvin's discussion of the sacraments in the 1536 *Institutes* "provides a key to understanding" Calvin's ecclesiology at this juncture (p. 52). Thus, the author discerns two key concepts that undergird Calvin's 'Catholic ecclesiology': (1) "the suprahistorical reality of the church based upon God's election" (p. 65) and (2) "the church gathered" historically (p. 66). By describing Calvin's ecclesiology in this period as 'Catholic,' while noting his move toward 'radical evangelicalism' (following Luther), Maruyama is noting Calvin's concern to restore the back to "the biblical and catholic faith" (p. 113).

Connected to this is the fascinating discussion of Calvin's view of "relationship between … Christ's kingdom and his two kingdoms theory" (p. 74). Here, we see Calvin take issue with the two extremes of Catholicism and Münster Anabaptism, with the latter reducing the kingdom to "their church institution" and the latter placing the focus on "an earthly realization of Christ's kingdom in the world" (p. 75). However, with this, and perhaps most intriguingly, Calvin also departs from "Luther, Zwingli, and Bucer" (p. 75) since Luther and Bucer are closer to the Roman Catholic extreme and Zwingli to the Anabaptist. In contrast, Maruyama describes Calvin's view as a "distinction but not separation" (p. 75). That is to say, for Calvin, Christ's kingdom is the top point of a triangle, with church and state serving as the two bottom points; thus, Christ's kingdom is expressed in the church and in the state, respectively, and the church and state are held in tension.

Given this schema, the author writes that "Calvin's teaching is too comprehensive to be simply represented by the earthly two kingdoms theory" (p. 75).

The second chapter, which covers the early period of the Genevan Reformation and the practice of a 'Catholic' ecclesiology, is divided into three sections. Section 1 discusses the moderate evangelicalism of Lefèvre and Farel's understanding of evangelicalism. Section 2 gives attention to three documents that were foundational for the early reforming efforts of Geneva: (1) ecclesiastical ordinances (*Articles*); (2) a confession of faith (*Confession*); and (3) a catechism (*Instruction*) (pp. 148–9). Section 3 elaborates on Calvin's efforts toward reform in Geneva by discussing the 'Caroli Affair,' which dealt with "Calvin's apology for the Catholic faith," and the *Two Epistles*, which dealt with "the reform of worship and ecclesiastical order" (p. 197).

Noteworthy here is Maruyama's contention that Lefèvre, Farel and Calvin's first *Institutes* reflect "three distinctive types of reform," respectively, "in the early French Reformation" (p. 119). While Farel was a 'radical' evangelical, in line with Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, he departed from them by maintaining a congregationalism that was closer to his teacher, Lefèvre. Moreover, in discussing the 'Caroli Affair,' i.e., Caroli's accusation that Farel and consequently Calvin were guilty of the errors of "Arianism or Sabellianism" (p. 182), brings to fore Calvin's biblicism and thus his refusal to subscribe to "the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds" (p. 187), preferring to prove his orthodoxy with the Bible alone. This, in turn, avoided opening the door to the claim of "the council's infallibility" (p. 187) by the Roman Catholic church. Calvin's biblicism is then coupled with what Maruyama calls his "practical activism" (p. 222). The latter is seen in his *Two Epistles*, which present a choice to the moderate reforming efforts of Lefèvre and his followers: either "the pope's kingdom" or "Christ's kingdom" (p. 224).

The third chapter, which serves as a hinge between Calvin's earliest, 'Catholic' approach of ecclesiology and his next two approaches to ecclesiology (to be discussed in the last chapter), there are three sections. The first section discusses Bucer's Strasbourg. The second section discusses the relationship between Bucer and Calvin and the third section explores Calvin's second *Institutes* (1539) and his *Romans Commentary*.

With Maruyama's discussion of Bucer, he notes that his "unique contribution" was to "introduce Evangelical confirmation to Reformed theology" (p. 244), which is distinct from the Anabaptist approach to church discipline centered on the baptism of believers rather than infants.

Furthermore, the author brings significant clarity to the 'Bucer influence theory,' which posits that Bucer exerted a significant influence on Calvin, seen especially in the latter's ecclesiology. He argues that the handwritten document of Bucer revealed in 1974 (published in 1988) titled *Theological Advice* offers clear criticisms of Calvin's aforementioned *Two Epistles* at points, which suggests significant differences between these two men such as Bucer's rejection of Calvin's view that the Catholic ceremonies were idolatrous, affirming instead that they are still of positive value. Judiciously, Maruyama makes clear that the original advocates of the 'Bucer influence theory' did not have access to *Theological Advice* and thus they didn't have the full picture. Calvin and Bucer also depart on the question of the essence of the church, with Calvin arguing for two marks (preaching the word and sacraments) and Bucer adding a third mark, namely, church discipline.

The fourth and final chapter gives attention to the second and third stages of Calvin's ecclesiological development. Section 1 gives attention to Calvin as a Reformer of Geneva and Europe. Section 2 describes Calvin's "Reformed ecclesiology" (p. 379). Section 3 discusses the final stage of Calvin's ecclesiology, what the author labels "Reformation ecclesiology" (p. 401). By labeling Calvin's ecclesiology as "Reformed," the author describing it as "Calvin's Reformed ecclesiology," which is distinct from while in consultation with "other Evangelical Reformers" (p. 379). As an aside, Maruyama notably sees 'Reformed' as historically more accurate as a designation of the approaches of Zwingli, Bucer and Calvin than the labels "Zwinglianism, Bucerianism, and Calvinism … often used among researchers" (p. 379), especially given the distance of the 'Reformed' from both Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism.

Discussing the mature ecclesiological views of Calvin, the author argues that this last phase of his life can be divided roughly in two halves: (1) pre-1555 and (2) post-1555. By 1555, Calvin's goal for reform in Geneva is realized and "definitely settled" (p. 330); after 1555, Calvin's efforts turned toward France and Europe. Along the way, much like his earlier discussion relating Calvin to Farel and Bucer, Maruyama considers whether Calvin is Luther's heir. Interestingly, the author takes the position that, while narrowly speaking Calvin would reject such a notion, it is fair to say that "Calvin's Reformation was his conscious effort to visibly present" Luther's emphasis on grace "to the mid-sixteenth-century European world" (p. 378).

Moreover, Maruyama returns to the question of church discipline in his discussion of Calvin's 'Reformed' ecclesiology, arguing that, for Calvin in his third *Institutes* (1543), church discipline was a "secondary ministry" whereas "ministry of the word and the sacraments" was primary (p. 388). Thus, church discipline existed in a "dialectical relation" to the two marks, i.e., "clearly distinguished but never separated" (p. 389).

Turning his attention to the third and final stage of Calvin's ecclesiology, Maruyama clarifies that 'Reformational

ecclesiology' is "a historical concept" rather than "a theological" one (p. 401). Calvin's intention here is to place his concept of "the Evangelical church and its reform" in "the framework of God's salvation history" (p. 401) as it was taking place in his own day. Calvin's early 'Catholic ecclesiology' serves as "the founding stratum of his ecclesiology" (p. 401), as it situated "Protestant Evangelicalism" as "the central manifestation of the Catholic church" (p. 402), with Calvin's 'Reformed ecclesiology' displaying his view of "church's form as quite distinct from" those forms of the church advocated by Luther, Zwingli, and Bucer (p. 402).

Now, with this last stage of his ecclesiological development, Calvin's musings take a decidedly eschatological and prophetic turn since, for him, salvation history was coming to bear upon Europe and, as such, Maruyama writes that "the Reformation church was viewed as … the living/visible image of Christ's kingdom" while at the same time it was "a [suffering] remnant" in resistance to ungodly powers (p. 444).

There are a number of strengths that attend this significant exploration of Calvin's ecclesiology. First, the author is deeply conversant with both primary sources and secondary sources. Second, the author's arguments are trenchantly explored and judicious. Third, Maruyama moves the conversation forward at various points. Most notably, by comparing Calvin with Farel, Bucer and Luther, he distinguishes Calvin as a theologian in his own right and thus brings to the fore Calvin's unique contributions to the Reformation era. Fourth, because of the depth of argumentation Maruyama provides, this is essential reading not only for those interested in the narrow question of Calvin's ecclesiology, but also for Calvin and Reformation studies more broadly. Indeed, this is truly a remarkable achievement that ought to garner much praise. This monograph will undoubtedly be lauded as the gold standard treatment of Calvin's ecclesiology for years to come. Given these strengths, this book comes highly recommended.

Review: Robert Haldane, *Sanctification of the Sabbath: The Permanent Obligation to Observe the Sabbath or Lord's Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2022). Paperback. 80 pages. ISBN 978-1-60178-906-8. $10.00. Reviewed by Zachary Groff.

Writing on the matter of the Christian Sabbath and its widespread desecration in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, Southern Presbyterian theologian Robert Lewis Dabney (1820–1898) opined, "the wisest friends of truth and good have taken the alarm."[1] One such "friend" who championed the joys and recovery of the Lord's Day as the Christian Sabbath was Scottish nobleman, theologian, and evangelist Robert Haldane (1764–1842).

Though the various details of Haldane's life and accomplishments in service to Christ are fascinating at many points, the most celebrated story of his ministry relates to the three years he sojourned in continental Europe, including one particularly significant year in Geneva, Switzerland.[2] It was during his time in Geneva that Haldane left a lasting impression on the spiritual culture and theological development of the rising generation of Reformed ministers in his day. Haldane became God's appointed instrument for the advancement of true Christian religion during a low point in Geneva's spiritual history.

Being preoccupied with the things and interests of the Lord and sincere devotion to God, Haldane emphasized Bible study, personal evangelism, preaching, and fervent prayer in his lifetime of ministry. As evidenced by Reformation Heritage Books' newly republished edition of Haldane's *Sanctification of the Sabbath: The Permanent Obligation to Observe the Sabbath or Lord's Day*, he likewise emphasized the enduring importance and value of the Lord's Day. He was not alone in this concern. The subject of the Christian Sabbath and its obligations (or lack thereof) garnered notable attention in Haldane's day.

Confessionally committed Reformed and Presbyterian authors on both sides of the Atlantic in the nineteenth century published reams of material defending the propriety of Christian observance of the Lord's Day. They did so in the context of the Industrial Revolution which was gaining steam (both literally and figuratively) in Great Britain, the European continent, and the United States. Dramatic changes in the manufacture and movement of goods led to what many pastors and theologians regarded as the widespread desecration of the Christian Sabbath. Dabney's lament is representative of the concerns of many likeminded Christians in his day: "Especially is the law of rest trodden upon by those great carrying corporations which seem to feel themselves already too great for the law."[3] In fact, Jon English Lee observes in the preface to the new Reformation Heritage Books edition of *Sanctification of the Sabbath* that Haldane extracted his treatise on the Lord's Day out of his more well-known commentary on the *Epistle to the Romans* for independent publication as a booklet "during a controversy surrounding the Scottish railways being run on Sunday."[4]

As highlighted by the twelfth issue of *The Confessional*

1. R.L. Dabney, *Discussions, Volume 1: Theological and Evangelical* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1890), p. 496.

2. Alexander Haldane, *The Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey, and of His Brother, James Alexander Haldane* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1853), pp. 413–93.

3. Dabney, *Discussions,* 1.545.

4. Robert Haldane, *Sanctification of the Sabbath: The Permanent Obligation to Observe the Sabbath or Lord's Day* (1842; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2022), p. xiv; subsequent citations of this book appear in parentheses.

Presbyterian published in 2016, there is yet keen interest in the Lord's Day among confessional Presbyterian churchmen and scholars. Though many Christians—including many Presbyterian pastors seeking to minister in good faith—have adopted less strict views on the Lord's Day than what is articulated in the Westminster Standards (see WCF 21.7–8, WLC 115–121, WSC 57–62), several Reformed authors have made able defenses in recent years for the enduring character of God's moral law. Such defenses include several books, articles, and media productions that emphasize the enduring applicability and relevance of the Fourth Commandment (as numbered by Reformed and Evangelical believers).

While historical and theological defenses of the gracious and permanent nature of God's moral directives for the Lord's Day are of great use to the Christian, it is the Bible alone that gives the final word on what ought to be the true Christian appraisal of the Lord's Day. It was Robert Haldane's conviction that the Word of God speaks clearly and authoritatively on the matter of Christian Sabbath observance, and thus he wrote, "But no argument, however cogent, unless immediately derived from the Scriptures of truth is sufficient to establish the obligation to sanctify the seventh day which must always be rested on the authority of God. It is, therefore, of great moment that the divine character of the sabbatical institution should be distinctly understood" (p. 1). In making his defense of the Christian obligation to set aside the proverbial seventh—or sabbath—day, Haldane has left behind a profoundly biblical and insightful treatise for posterity.

Haldane divided his exegetical excursus into nine brief chapters, bookended by an Introduction and a Conclusion. The little volume makes for delightful reading on a Lord's Day afternoon, as it is both eminently readable and saturated with Scripture. Haldane's great aim was to engage with Scripture to answer the question of whether "there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9).[5] Though the nineteenth century diction and syntax may prove difficult for some readers, this volume is notably accessible for its time and well worth reading.

Chapters 1, 2, and 8 contain Haldane's observations on the applicability of the Sabbath for the Old Testament patriarchs prior to the life and ministry of Moses, for the Old Covenant (Jewish) nation of Israel, and for the New Covenant (Christian) church. In chapters 3 through 6, Haldane developed an argument for the permanence of the Fourth Commandment as part and parcel of the Ten Commandments as a whole. His argument begins with the promulgation and preservation of the Ten Commandments, and then applies the biblical principles derived from his exegetical treatment to establish the permanence and universality of the Fourth Commandment.

In chapter 7, Haldane handled three common objections—one of which was supposedly derived from Romans 14, the exegetical trigger for this work as an excursus in Haldane's commentary—to the teaching that there is such a thing as a Christian Sabbath: a) "that the preface to the Ten Commandments shows that they were incumbent only on the Jews" (p. 33); b) "that its sanctions prove that it was a Jewish institution" (p. 34); and c) "that the Lord Jesus Christ has relaxed or modified its requirements" (p. 36). Though Haldane's response to the third objection is the most extensive, each of his answers is helpful for readers who bring sincere questions arising from superficial readings of the understandably difficult texts of Romans 14:5, 6; Galatians 4:10, 11; and Colossians 2:16, 17.

With terse and incisive exegetical observations, Haldane presented a convincing case for Christ's and His apostles' interest in the perpetuity of the moral law of God, including—but not limited to—the requirement to observe the Sabbath. For example, Haldane insightfully observed,

> In foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, and referring to the flight not of Jews but of His disciples, at a time when everything peculiar to the Jewish dispensation would be abrogated, He directs them to pray that it might not be in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day (Matt. 24:20), which, from the nature of the season and their sense of the obligation of the fourth commandment, would impede their flight (pp. 38f.).

The good and necessary inference of Christ's teaching at this point of the Olivet Discourse is that He fully expected His disciples to be observing one day in seven as "the Sabbath day" for rest and worship as the gathered flock of God. Though neither the strongest nor most prominent of Haldane's arguments, this exegetical observation drawn from Matthew 24:20 is but one example of the biblical reasoning and insight that pervade Haldane's treatise from beginning to end.

In concluding this chapter on handling objections, Haldane expressed a question appealing to the heart of every believer. "And what Christian is there who does not thank God that He has appointed for him the Sabbath day as a day of rest? And who does not feel the benefit of it when he is enabled to sanctify it as he ought?" (p. 44). Indeed, appreciation for the Sabbath as a gift from God to man, and the appointment of Lord's Day observance as a means of grace for communion with God through Christ the Lord of the Sabbath, must suffuse any discussion of the subject. Otherwise, it is all too easy to turn this inestimably valuable gift of God's grace into a legal instrument of will-worship.

In his extended systematic theological treatment of the Sabbath, Dabney expressed this idea well. Citing Isaiah 58:13,

5. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture references are taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB1995).

Isaiah 56:2, Mark 2:27, and Exodus 20:11 in rapid succession, Dabney summed up the case, "the Bible speaks of the sabbath not as a ritual burden, laid on the neck of the church because it was in its minority, but *as a privilege and a blessing*."[6] And further,

> To appoint the means of grace for his people, this was God's part. As long as any ordinance was commanded by him, our part was to make use of it, humbly and faithfully, *as a means of grace*, in order to strengthen the faith and repentance which brings us to the Saviour. But the moment any man undertook to build up his self-righteousness on will-worship he was under a soul-destroying error, which must not be tolerated one moment.[7]

But the Lord Jesus Christ said it best in Mark 2:27 when He authoritatively declared, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

Returning to Haldane's little book, the last chapter is the author's lengthiest and most original portion of the whole. Haldane entitled chapter 9 "The Change from the Last to the First Day of the Week Has Not Invalidated the Obligation of the Sabbath." As suggested by the title, Haldane presented God's appointment of the first day of the week as the day of worship to support his primary argument in favor of the permanent obligation to observe a weekly Sabbath as a day of rest from worldly employments and recreations. Whereas the first eight chapters of the book establish that the obligation of sabbath observance is not unique to the Law of Moses (i.e., the ceremonial and judicial law of Israel expressed in the Torah), this final chapter shows that the change from the last day of the week to the first day of the week does nothing to abrogate that obligation's enduring relevance to the New Covenant church.

Haldane's argument begins with a recognition of Christ's authority expressed in Mark 2:28, that "the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath," and launches into an enthralling survey of Old Testament antecedents and shadows anticipating the coming change inaugurated by the Messiah. The first reference is to God's work of creation in Genesis 1, which is superseded by His glorious work of redemption, as expressed in Isaiah 65:17, 18, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness." Indeed, God commanded the Old Covenant people of God in Deuteronomy 5:15 to observe the Sabbath in remembrance of their redemption from slavery in Egypt, even as the obligation to observe a day of rest is grounded in creation (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:11). Connecting the divine works of creation and redemption, Haldane contended,

> That God purposed to appoint the day of His resting from the work of this new creation as the Sabbath which He was afterward to bless and hallow in remembrance of it, in place of that day which He had formerly consecrated to the memory of His resting from the first creation, appears from His commanding the Israelites to observe the Sabbath in remembrance of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. That deliverance was an eminent type of the redemption of His people by Christ from the bondage of Satan. But if the Israelites were commanded, in commemoration of this shadow, to sanctify one day in the week, which is the reason given for their doing so in the recapitulation of the fourth commandment (Deut. 5:15) instead of that formerly given to them at its first announcement respecting the creation (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:11), this was an intimation that the great and glorious work of which that deliverance was a shadow was afterward to be the object of weekly commemoration (pp. 52f.).

From this starting point, Haldane proceeded then to Psalm 118:19–24, where especially verses 22 and 23 are applied by Christ to Himself in the Gospels (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10, 11; Luke 20:17), and subsequently cited or alluded to by the apostles in reference to Christ in the remainder of the New Testament (Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4–8). The Lord was the stone which the builders rejected in Psalm 118:22, but His bodily resurrection from the grave in glory on the first day of the week is a cause for great rejoicing to His people as He powerfully completed the work of redemption on their behalf. Thus, just as the angels sang together and shouted for joy at the dawn of creation (Job 38:7) on the first day of the creation week, so now the day of Christ's resurrection on the first day of the week is the church's weekly occasion for rejoicing "at the finishing of the new creation" (p. 54). Christ rested from the work of redemption on the first day of the week, and this is properly now—as anticipated by the Old Testament texts cited above—to be recognized as the Christian Sabbath, even until the end of the world.

The next theme which Haldane traced out has to do with the eighth day motif in the Old Testament. His treatment addresses the eighth day as "the first of a new series" (p. 55) anticipating the finished work of Christ. Haldane explicitly mentioned the ordinances surrounding circumcision (Gen. 17:12) on the eighth day after birth and the ceremonial uncleanness of the mother (Lev. 12:2, 3) during that time of

6. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.524.
7. Dabney, *Discussions,* 1.526–27.

waiting. "Circumcision, then, being such a seal to Abraham, from whom Christ was to spring, was to be impressed on himself and his posterity and to be performed on the eighth day, the day on which that righteousness was, by the resurrection of the Messiah, to be 'brought in'" (p. 56). The other "typical and shadowy institutions" (p. 56) which Haldane drew forth as anticipations of the move of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first/eighth day of the week include the offering up of animal sacrifices to the Lord (Exod. 22:30; Lev. 22:27), the consecration of Aaron and his sons (Lev. 9:1), the cleansing of lepers (Lev. 14:10) and physical defilements (Lev. 15:14, 29), and the atonement of Nazirites who had become defiled (Num. 6:10). All these eighth-day ordinances of the ceremonial law considered together point forward to Christ and his work which was finished on the corresponding first day of the week. The first/eighth day was the day of the week on which "Jesus was received as the firstborn from the dead; His sacrifice was accepted, and on which, as the Great High Priest, He was "consecrated forevermore" and when He made atonement for His people, by which they are cleansed from sin" (p. 57).

Other eighth-day examples from across the Hebrew Scriptures join those cited above. Haldane cited the sanctification of the Temple—"that illustrious type of the body of the Redeemer" (p. 57)—in the time of Solomon (2 Chron. 7:8, 9) and Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29:17, 20) as bearing witness to the importance of the eighth day and its anticipation of the resurrection of Christ's body. Ezekiel's vision of God's temple-city in Ezekiel 43:26 and 27 emphasizes the eighth day as the day of worship in "the Redeemer's kingdom and church" (p. 58) as prefigured here. The Feast of Booths/Tabernacles point forward to the fifteenth day, or eighth day of the second week, when the celebration was concluded (Lev. 23:34–36, 39; Num. 29:35, 36; Neh. 8:18). Finally, the bringing in of the firstfruits of the harvest was to take place on the eighth day (Lev. 23:11, 12), "a distinguished type of the resurrection of Him who was 'the first fruits of them that slept,' who arose from the dead on the morrow after the Sabbath—that is, the eighth day, or the first day of the week" (p. 60).

Building on his survey of the eighth day motif in the Old Testament, Haldane then remarked on the significance and typology of the fiftieth day. The Israelites' presentation of two wave loaves took place on the fiftieth day after presenting the ingathering of the firstfruits mentioned above (Lev. 23:15–17, 21), and the Jubilee took place in the fiftieth year (Lev. 25:8, 10), corresponding not to the end of a series of sevens, but the first/eighth in a series. Haldane concluded his survey of the eighth/fifteenth/fiftieth day motif in the Old Testament with a poignant question. "Can it be imagined that the eighth, the fifteenth, and the fiftieth day, all of the same import, were thus distinguished without a special purpose, and that in the wisdom of God they were not expressly specified for some very important end?" (p. 61). The answer, according to Haldane, is clear.

> This purpose is fully developed in the New Testament, where He who is the Lord of the Sabbath—without in the smallest degree impairing, relaxing, or changing the obligation to observe a seventh day's rest—appropriated to Himself the eighth day, the first instead of the last day of the week, and by recording His name upon it, calling it the Lord's Day, has blessed and sanctified it for the use of His people. (p. 62)

The remainder of the chapter is concerned with demonstrating the enduring obligation of the Sabbath on the first/eighth day of the week from approved examples and other references in the New Testament.

The evidence which Haldane presented from the New Testament is organized under four categories. The first is that Christ Himself conferred honors upon the first day of the week in His post-resurrection appearances to His disciples (e.g., John 20:19, 26). The propriety of rendering the literal Greek phrase "the first of the sabbaths" (τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων) in the accounts of these appearances as "the first day of the week" is corroborated by comparison to several other passages in which the phrase is clearly referring to the first day of the week (Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1; Acts 20:7; and 1 Cor. 16:2).

The second category of New Testament evidence for the move of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples gathered together in the upper room on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4). Haldane commented, "Here we have the explanation of the mystery in the Old Testament of the fiftieth day, connected, as we have seen, with remarkable events and ordinances" (p. 64). Not only did the disciples gather for worship on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:15; 2:1), which would have been the first day of the week, but the subsequent mass conversion and baptism of "about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41) confirmed Christ as "the first fruits of the Christian church" (p. 65) on this day of worship.

The third category of New Testament evidence is the practice of the apostles and the primitive church (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; and 16:1, 2). The fourth and final category is tied to that extraordinary revelation of the risen Christ to John the Revelator in exile on the Isle of Patmos, as recorded in Revelation 1:10. John's report there is that "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." As this appellation for the day is given without any gloss or explanation, it is to be safely assumed that the churches addressed in the following verse would know exactly which day it was to which John referred. This day, peculiarly

belonging to the Lord who is yet sovereign over all time, is distinguished from the rest as "the day of His triumph over all the powers of darkness" (p. 67). Just as the Lord's Supper is to be observed by all faithful Christians, so too is the Lord's Day in its entirety is to be held in honor and sanctified in service to—and delight in—the Triune God. In the remainder of this final chapter, Haldane pressed his readers with the continuing obligation to observe the first day of the week as the Lord's Day, which is the Christian Sabbath.

In the reviewer's studied—but humble—opinion, Haldane's work represents the finest and most useful book-length biblical treatment of the Christian Sabbath under one hundred pages. The final chapter on the move of the day of sabbath observance from the last day of the week to the first day of the week is especially captivating and compelling from a biblical theological perspective. Of course, the writing style is a bit dated and takes some getting used to for readers who are not accustomed to reading nineteenth century prose. Nonetheless, Haldane's writing is much simpler and easier to read than some of his more learned and scholarly contemporaries. He was writing for the people, and he should be read by the people.

Returning to Dabney's somewhat shorter and more systematic theological work on the same topic, there is one general and good caution worth remembering in any discussion of Christian Sabbatarianism. Considering the state of Christian sabbath-keeping in his day, Dabney wisely remarked at the outset of his study, "In actual life there is, among good people, a great uncertainty, with a corresponding confusion of usages, from great laxity up to the sacred strictness of our pious forefathers."[8] As those of us who are confessionally Presbyterian and Reformed believers seek to observe and promote the Lord's Day as the Christian Sabbath—and all which that entails—we ought to do so with grace, compassion, patience, peace, and gentleness. While condemning the willful desecration of the Sabbath and lamenting its neglect in the church and wider society is wholly appropriate, we must register our disapprobation and make our positive biblical arguments with love and compassion for those who do not yet find delight in Christ and/or in His appointed day of rest and worship. It will not always be the case that full-orbed understanding of our biblical and confessional position will yield subscription to the same among our various discussion partners in the broader church and secular culture. But let us present the case from Scripture with hopes that some might find rest and delight in Jesus Christ the Son of Man and the Promised Messiah, the Lord of the Sabbath.

8. Dabney, *Discussions,* 1.496.

Review: Crawford Gribben, *Survival and Resistance in Evangelical America: Christian Reconstruction in the Pacific Northwest* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2021). Hardback. 224 pages. ISBN 978-0-19937-022-0. $32.95. Epub. 978-0-19937-024-5. Reviewed by Dr. Daniel Ritchie, Northern Ireland.

The accepted wisdom is that the Christian Reconstructionist movement largely died out following the death of its major thought leaders, Greg L. Bahnsen and Rousas J. Rushdoony. Crawford Gribben's book on Christian Reconstructionism in the Pacific Northwest of the United States challenges this assumption. Professor Gribben examines the influence of Reconstructionism in the Pacific Northwest in relation to migration, eschatology, government, education, and media. He argues that the migration of conservatives to states such as Idaho and its proponents' use of the tools of American mass culture has led to the revival of Reconstructionism, albeit in a modified form. He goes so far as to argue that "its ideas have a greater cultural purchase than ever before" (ix) and that "Christian Reconstruction may never have been as important as it is today." (1)

To those of us who followed the intellectual arguments concerning theonomy and Reconstructionism within the Reformed community, this claim may appear outrageous. Contemporary Reconstructionism has no one of the intellectual rigour of a Bahnsen or a Rushdoony. And while Gary DeMar and the recently deceased Gary North continued to have considerable literary output, the movement as a whole has not produced anything like the substantial amount of material that it did in the 1970s and 1980s. Before we dismiss the author's thesis, however, he reminds us that the new generation of Reconstructionists has produced a far-reaching media culture, having connections to famous publishing houses such as HarperCollins, Penguin, Random House, and Simon & Schuster. This observation is a significant one, as such established publishing houses have a much wider reach than the early theonomic publishers. Indeed, they dwarf even the mainstream Reformed publishers, such as Presbyterian and Reformed, who published some of Rushdoony and Bahnsen's early literature. As a result of such publishing success, Reconstructionists are now able to spread their message more easily both to the wider evangelical community and the culture in general. Perhaps even more significantly, they have appeared in Amazon Prime and Netflix shows. Some people in the confessional Reformed community may wish to dismiss Reconstructionism as an irrelevance, but a movement that still maintains this level of influence may not be safely ignored.

While these developments do point to a wider cultural impact, some of the author's conclusions are overblown. For instance, as evidence of Reconstructionism's influence, he cites

candidates for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016 endorsing a ten per cent flat tax and calling for women who have had abortions to receive punishment. Of course, Reconstructionist ideas may have furthered such opinions, but they are hardly the sole or dominant influence in spreading these notions. As the author observes about Reconstructionism's economic outlook, it was, in many respects, largely indebted to twentieth-century Libertarianism. To most observers, Reconstructionism's ideological commitment to Libertarianism does not sit well with its professed commitment to the social application of God's law. Professor Gribben is partially correct, moreover, in stating that "theonomic ideals were shared by many of the early modern theologians and key confessional tests that had provided the Reformed tradition with its intellectual foundations in seventeenth-century England." (71) There is no disputing that many early Reformed divines held views concerning the common equity of the Mosaic judicial laws that are much closer to modern theonomy than to the opinions of most contemporary Reformed theologians. Still, there are important differences between most Reconstructionist theonomists and the framers of the Westminster Standards concerning natural law, the three-fold division of the law, the two kingdoms, natural theology as opposed to Van Tillian presuppositionalism, the establishment principle, the civil application of the first table of the law, and the role of the state in society.

Professor Gribben also expresses surprise that despite the Supreme Court moving in a more conservative direction, with the prospect of it striking down *Roe v. Wade* (a hope realised after the publication of this book), "born-again Protestants continue to think of themselves as a vulnerable and beleaguered remnant." (3) At this juncture, it is worth noting that most of the fieldwork for this monograph was completed before the 2016 presidential election, which renders some of its findings out of date. Given the aggressively Left-wing nature of the Biden Administration, social media censorship of political dissidents, and the effects of lockdown policies in Democrat-controlled states and cities, evangelicals have legitimate grounds for concern, despite also attaining some significant victories. These negative factors challenge the author's assertion that evangelicals "are embracing marginality at precisely the moment when their cultural power may be at its height." (4) Even in the case of the conservative-leaning Supreme Court, evangelical Protestants are conspicuous by their absence.

The strong points of the book include taking seriously the concerns of white evangelicals regarding their demographic replacement (a fear supported by statistics) while being careful to distinguish between those fleeing liberal states such as California with legitimate concerns about mass immigration and those ideologically committed to segregationism. Nevertheless, the author does recognise that some of the segregationists were influenced by the early works of Rushdoony. Conversely, he argues that "they may have overlooked the fact that Rushdoony presided over a mixed-race family—he was, after all, an ethnic Armenian with an Anglo-American wife and an adopted Native American son—as well as his occasional condemnations of racist prejudice." (33) This reviewer, however, does believe that it is fair to conclude that Rushdoony shared some Kinist views in his earlier years, which he later modified. Furthermore, it is possible to be broadly supportive of ethnonationalism without being a Kinist. Another strong point is the background information relating to Douglas Wilson's congregation in Moscow, Idaho. Such is the extent of Wilson's influence that Professor Gribben concludes, "Moscow may now be America's most postmillennial town" (53), though he qualifies this statement by observing that "the Christ Church community has made very little impact on local politics" (54). The author's discussion concerning the divergence between the likes of Wilson from Rushdoony and Gary North on the issue of classical education is also significant. Reliance on a classical model does not chime well with Reconstructionism's negative attitude to natural law, yet classical education has been one of the means through which Christian Reconstruction has taken place in Moscow.

While Professor Gribben's knowledge of the wider history of the Reconstructionist movement is impressive, one did wonder why he chose not to write a book on that broader topic, as opposed to a monograph on a narrower subject. Some of the discussion concerning the history of Reconstructionism was overly detailed and perhaps out of place in this volume to the point that it distracted the reader from Reconstructionism as it presently operates in the Pacific Northwest. The chapter on the media was the least problematic in this respect, perhaps because it begins with tracing the history and influence of Wilson's *Credenda Agenda* magazine, which is more directly relevant to how contemporary Reconstructionists in the Pacific Northwest became media savvy in comparison to the earlier Reconstructionists. This reviewer does, moreover, have some concerns about the book's evidential basis. For instance, the author admits that he "occasionally created composite characters for interviewees who preferred to remain anonymous". (x) Such sources are effectively worthless from a scholarly point of view, as we cannot objectively verify their claims. He also appears to cite Greg Bahnsen's comment, "The desperation to keep the Christian public from contact with hearing or considering the theonomic point of view makes one think we are dealing with pornography, rather than stodgy, age-old Puritan theology", as being directed against Vern Poythress (73), when it was aimed at the bookstores of Reformed seminaries that had banned the sale of *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*.

Some readers will be disappointed that Professor Gribben has not addressed controversies surrounding Douglas Wilson's Moscow congregation and the Federal Vision movement, plagiarism, and alleged pastoral malpractice. These subjects, however, fell outside the parameters of the author's work, which is descriptive and analytical rather than polemical. This review is based on an e-book version of the monograph, which the reviewer read on VitalSource Bookshelf. While there are advantages to reading a book in this format, including the ability to highlight important sections and quickly find references, these advantages are not significant enough to warrant the replacement of hard copies with e-books, especially for academic writing.■

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Psallo

Psalm 83:1–18

In the metrical translation you have before you, we have attempted to provide a translation that lends itself to singing, while remaining faithful to the original Hebrew. As with all translations, especially in the Metrical Psalms, some decisions are made for the sake of readability, meter, and style. In verse two, we have rendered a word often translated as "tumult" as "threatening noise" as this word (המה) is sometimes used for the roar of waves, or like the growl or bark of a dog. In verse five we have chosen to bring forth the inner animus of the "heart" of God's enemies (Hebrew לֵב) which is united against the Lord. Also literally, these who in heart are united against the Lord have made a "covenant" (Hebrew בְּרִית) where the Authorized Version (A.V.) reads "confederate." Further, where the A.V. reads that these enemies have "holpen" the children of Lot, we have rendered this as "strength to Lot's sons they do give." Here, the Hebrew literally reads, "They have been an arm to the sons of Lot." In verse thirteen, where the A.V. reads, "O my God, make them like a wheel," we have looked more at the context, and our own current understanding of the word "wheel." In his prayer the Psalmist expresses that the Lord would scatter these enemies as stubble, and as a weed that is blown along the ground, rolling like a wheel, similar to our western "tumbleweed," or Russian Thistle[1] (Heb. גַּלְגַּל). In our translation, we have rendered this substantive as "the rolling, tumbling weed." It is our hope that this metrical translation will be of use to the interested worshipper.

Psalm 83 is gathered with other Psalms called "imprecatory," where the Psalmist, using the imperative or jussive form of the verb, calls upon the Lord to rain down curses, destruction, wrath and indignation, desolation, and many other such terms (Ps. 109:17-18; 5:10; 69:24, 25). While the listing of the imprecatory Psalms might vary between scholars, it is clear that these Psalms make up a considerable portion of the inspired Psalter.[2] Further, beyond formal imprecations, where the Psalmist uses the imperative verb to call down curses upon God's enemies, there are other descriptions of judgment in many other Psalms that await the wicked, that are written for the comfort and benefit of the people of God. This portion of the Psalter has given rise to some difficulty for Christians, as some have thought this kind of sentiment sub-Christian. In his famous *Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, and Apply'd to the Christian State and Worship*,[3] Isaac Watts states,

> "I come therefore to the third I proposed, and that is to explain my own Design; which in short is this: (viz.) *To accommodate the Book of Psalms to Christian Worship*; And in order to this 'tis necessary to divest *David* and *Asaph* &c. of every other character but that of a *Psalmist* and a *Saint*, and to *make them always speak the commen sense and Language of a Christian*"… "Where the Psalmist uses sharp invectives against his personal enemies, I have endeavored to turn the Edge of them against our spiritual adversaries, *Sin, Satan,* and *Temptation*" … "In all places I have kept my grand Design in view, and that is *to teach my Author to speak like a Christian*." … "Why must I joyn with *David* in his Legal or Prophetic Language to curse my Enemies, when my Saviour in his Sermons has taught me to love and bless them?"[4]

Imprecatory Psalms

Leaving the dubious theological commitments of Mr. Watts for another time,[5] let us say here that while many may not be so bold as Mr. Watts is in these statements, truly many in the church have wondered at or even drawn back from this portion of the inspired Word as too bold, too direct, vindictive, or otherwise unfit for Christian, New Testament worship.[6] For our part, we believe it a dangerous statement to say, as Mr. Watts has above, that David, Asaph, and the rest of the inspired authors of the Psalter, being borne along by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1:19-21), ought or need to be "divested" of anything. In addition, it is an error to speak of those inspired authors, invested with the Spirit of inspiration, as importing any of their own personal animus into their utterances. They inveighed against the enemies of God, and if there was any personal animus at all, it was due to this characterization. It

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1. See Isaiah 17:13
2. Lists include Psalm 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 17, 25, 28, 31, 35, 40, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 68, 69, 70, 71, 74, 79, 82, 83, 94, 104, 109, 129, 137, 140, 143, and 144.
3. Isaac Watts, *Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, and Apply'd to the Christian State and Worship* (London: J. Clark and R. Cruttendin, 1719).
4. Watts, pp. xvi, xvii, xx.
5. See *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. LX, ed Sidney Lee (Macmillan, New York, 1899), Watson-Whewell, pp. 67-71
6. While many Psalms are retained in Christian worship, the imprecatory Psalms are often sidelined for these reasons.

Psalm 83:1–18

A Song *or* Psalm of Asaph.

Al-Damiy-Lach — Todd L. Ruddell




2For be - hold thine en - 'mies, threat - 'ning noise do make.
4They said, Come and let us, lay their na - tion waste,
6E - dom's tab - er - nac - les, and the Ish - m'el - ites,
9As Thou did to Mid - ian, to them let be done,
Ze - ba and Zal - mun - na, who with their chiefs all,
14As fire that burns the wood like flames the hills scorch,
18Let them know that on - ly, Thou JE - HO - VAH art,
They the head have rais - ed, those that do Thee hate.
That the name of Is - r'el's not re - mem - ber'd hence.
Mo - ab and Ha - gar's line, 7Ge - bal, Am - mo - nites,
To Sis - 'ra and Ja - bin, at River of Ki - shon.
12Said God's hab - i - ta - tions, we'll seize for our - selves.
15Chase them with thy tem - pest, make them fear Thy storm.
Ev'n the One Most High who's o - ver all the earth.

is grave error, and dangerous to the biblical understanding of inspiration, to say that David spoke against his "personal enemies." Rather, David, even in his imprecations, "spake by the Holy Ghost."[7]

In response to these characterizations, we believe it is improper to pit the Old Testament against the New Testament in this way. Several lines of evidence weigh in favor of a proper use of the Psalter in Christian worship.

First, the New Testament itself ought not to be considered as so very different in sentiment when it comes to the enemies of God and His people. The imprecations of the New Testament bear this out. From the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ, there are certainly enough imprecations against the scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, to answer this charge. Our Lord was not hesitant to pronounce the curses of God upon His enemies, ending the twenty-third chapter of Matthew's Gospel with, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:34-39). Many other such curses can be heard from the lips of our Lord. He will say to them, "ye are of your father the Devil" (John 8:41-44). While these are not proper imprecations, these and many other statements by our Lord during His earthly ministry speak to this kind of directness of speech concerning the enemies of our Lord and of His Christ. The Apostle Paul followed the example of the Lord in this. On several occasions in His writing and speech, this same kind of direct speech concerning the enemies of God is recorded for us in the New Testament. Standing before the High Priest, who had commanded him to be struck contrary to the Law, the Apostle declared, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall" (Acts 23:3). In his epistles, the inspired Apostle speaks against such men as Alexander, Hymenaeus, Philetus, and others who must be delivered to Satan (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17; 4:14). There are also general imprecations uttered by the Apostle. See 1 Corinthians 16:22, and Galatians 1:6-10—these are indeed imprecations, the Apostle calling down the anathema of God upon those who love not the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming, and those who teach any other gospel than that which was originally taught by the Apostles. In this last curse, he includes himself should he ever pervert the purity of that original gospel preaching.

Further on this, let us remember that the "sweet Psalmist of Israel" himself would not exact personal vengeance. When pursued by Saul, and provided with an extraordinary providential opportunity to slay him, his words were very clear: "And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless? David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed" (1 Sam. 26:9–11, AV). It would be a mistake, as was asserted above, to believe that the Psalms were written by men of personal vengeance, with less than Christian sentiments.

The Bible also declares that it is a righteous thing when God judges the wicked, and as such it is something to which the people of God look forward—the Lord in so doing vindicates His great Name, defends and gives rest to His people, and manifests His righteous judgment, advancing His glory. The judgment of the enemies of God is something over which the people of God will rejoice at the last day, and these Psalms turn their hope to the Lord's righteous judgments. Hear again the Apostle Paul:

> We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. 2 Thessalonians 1:3–10 (AV).

Beyond these observations, let us remember that imprecatory Psalms are used in the New Testament. We saw above in Acts 1:16-26, that Peter referenced Psalm 109:9-15, applied it to Judas, and used that Psalm as the basis for the closing of the circle of apostles to the number of twelve again. The Apostle Paul will do the same in Romans 11:8-10, quoting from Psalm 69:22-23, applying that curse pronounced upon the enemies of God to the Jews of His day who rejected Christ. Note in this last instance that the curse is applied by an inspired apostle upon a group of unbelieving enemies of the gospel in his day.

The last observation on the sub-biblical sentiments advanced by Mr. Watts and others is that they are based on an unproven and false assumption, that the New Testament is so very different from the Old Testament. Space will not permit a

7. Acts 1:15-20: The imprecatory Psalm 109, was that "which the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David."

full examination of this mistake, but in brief, let us remember the following things: First, the Old Testament was the Bible of the First Century church, and served very well in the hands of the apostles as they reasoned from the scriptures of that day, the Old Testament, of the gospel and glory of Christ. That the Psalms played a very large part of that preaching and witness cannot be gainsaid, seeing that there are over 400 quotations from the Psalter in the New Testament—some of them, as we have seen, imprecations. It is certainly true that the apostles were adding their own inspired work to the inspired canon, but the Old Testament, and the Psalms themselves, were not being replaced with a new ethic, or being rendered passé by a kinder gentler revelation or religion. The writing of the apostles were to appear and be kept alongside that which God had already revealed, as complimentary to it, not in place of it. Hear the Apostle Peter in this regard: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour" (2 Peter 3:1–2). Here we have Peter placing the two bodies of inspired writing alongside one another, and it is there that they are to remain. Rather than the Lord intending that the "sentiment" of the Psalter was to be replaced, the Psalter is to remain as the hymnal of the church. Certainly, all Christians must receive the Psalter as (at very minimum, a part of) what they offer to the Lord in their praise. The Psalms are placed in the mouths of God's people by the New Testament writers,[8] as well as the Old.[9] It is the opinion of this author that rather than assuming a distinction between Old Testament and New Testament sentiments, that the Psalter, as Scripture undergirding both Testaments, was intended to inform the sentiments of New Testament worship. The Psalter remains the inspired, sanctified expression of the worshipper, from one end of human affection to the other, returning to God what He has commanded to be found in the "calves of our lips."[10] The Lord has preserved the Psalter as Christian praise to assist the people of God to form *biblical* sentiments. The imprecatory Psalms form an integral part of New Testament worship, as well as the balance of the Psalter. This large portion of the Psalter is not to be put aside as sub-Christian, or distasteful, but preserved precisely to help God's people in several ways.

Use of the Imprecatory Psalms

First, the imprecatory Psalms keep the people of God on a proper "war-footing." That is, in singing the imprecatory Psalms, we proclaim the New Testament sentiment that the people of God are an army, involved in a pitched battle against a vicious yet defeated enemy. He is described as a roaring lion, and "your enemy" (1 Peter 5:8), the Accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10), Abaddon, Apollyon, the Destroyer (Rev. 9:11), The Prince of this World (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), and many other threatening titles. We are told to take up the whole armor of God, and that we "… wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12–13). We are assured that the God of peace will bruise Satan under our feet shortly (Rom. 16:20), that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty to the pulling down of strongholds (2 Cor. 10:1-6). The Apostle Paul charges Timothy to perform this soldier-work, this battle in and out of the church for the hearts, minds, thoughts, and souls of men, and in so doing he will "war a good warfare" (1 Tim. 1:18). The imprecatory Psalms remind us that we are not at peace with our enemy—we are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and we follow Christ in His assured and victorious mission to put all enemies under His feet, the last of which is death itself (1 Cor. 15:25-26). Revelation, the nineteenth chapter, reveals in prophetic form this conquering Messiah, our Captain and Head, as He comes forth to conquer all His and our enemies, and we with Him.

> And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 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 he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords. Revelation 19:11–16 (AV).

This is the fulfillment of what we sing about in Psalm 2, 22, 72, and 110 among others. The imprecatory Psalms remind us that we are on this side of the battle, that the battle is the Lord's, and continues in this day. If we sing these Psalms with understanding, and the Lord blesses this means, we will not be lulled to sleep and complacency by the siren songs of this world, but

8. See 1 Corinthians 14:26, Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16, and James 5:13.

9. 1 Chronicles 16:9, Psalm 105:2, and many other "commanding and commending examples."

10. Hosea 14:2, Psalm 69:30–31 (A messianic Psalm found in the mouth of Christ), Hebrews 13:15, and 1 Peter 2:5-9.

will be mustered into that Church Militant, and with Christ, going forth, conquering, and to conquer. Sometimes, as Peter and Paul tell us (Acts 20:27-31; 2 Peter 2:7-22), this battle will rage within the church, other times, without. No matter where the battle rages, we must acquit ourselves as "good soldiers of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3), and the imprecatory Psalms provide this instruction and reminder of our war-footing.

Secondly, we understand, with the inspired interpretation of these Psalms, that they are found only relatively in our mouths, but absolutely in the mouth of Christ, who knows those that are His. Christ singing with His church in that Mediatorial capacity[11] leads His people in praise that is perfected by His Mediation, and therefore acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. We have already seen that Psalm 109 concerns Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Christ, and this Psalm forms an interpretive key to many others, where Christ identifies Himself with His people as that Persecuted One. Psalm 69:9 exclaims, "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." Note prophetically, who the "me" is in that verse, and hear the inspired interpretation of that verse by the Apostle Paul, in which he ascribes those words to Christ, as a reference to the substitutionary atonement (Rom. 15:1-3). So, rather than the imprecatory Psalms being expressions of personal vengeance, or against personal enemies, these are, as one writer put it, "The War Psalms of the Prince of Peace."[12] The Messianic nature of the Psalter calls us to sing along with Christ our Captain as He goes forth prosecuting His victory, as Mediator asking His Father to give Him victory over His enemies. Many scholars have counseled us to sing the Psalms with "one eye on David, and one eye on Christ" to remember that these are prophetic of Christ. Further, Christ identifies with the troubles and afflictions of His people, and so intercedes for them, and these imprecatory Psalms are glimpses of this intercessory work. Hear Andrew Bonar on Psalm 35:

> In both, (Psalms 34-35—TR) too, we find *the angel of the Lord* acting as the Lord's instrument. In the former the angel acts to protect and preserve (ver. 6), because the whole song is one of the Lord's care; but in the latter the angel acts in the way of vengeance, as an instrument in inflicting the Lord's wrath (ver. 5, 6), because the burden of the Psalm is an awful intercession against those who hate the righteous without cause. Throughout this is an awful Psalm. Let us read it as the words of the Lord Jesus, and what do we find? We find Him praying to the Father for help, and then consenting to the doom of his relentless, impenitent foes; yea, rather pronouncing the doom with his own lips, even as when He shall say to the barren fig-tree, "Cut it down," and to those on the left hand, "Depart."[13]

Third, it is a failure of instruction that would leave the people of God to descend in the imprecatory Psalms to personal vendetta. "Vengeance is Mine! I will repay!"[14] declares the Lord, as all sin is first and foremost against Him.[15] Rather, in the imprecatory Psalms we are reminded of our sins, that the Lord has stirred up these enemies against us in His chastisement. Rather than pride and vengeance, the imprecatory Psalms, rightly used, humble the people of God to cry out to Him for deliverance from His chastisement visited upon them for their sins. Hear this cry mingled with the imprecations of Psalm 79:

> O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given *to be* meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and *there was* none to bury *them*. We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire? Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place. O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low. Psalm 79:1–8 (AV).

In this Psalm we see that while calling upon the Lord for relief from and judgment upon the Lord's and his enemies, the Psalmist also recognizes that these chastisements come upon him, and Jerusalem, for her sins—that these wicked persecutors are the very hand of the Lord, His sword, against His people, in fatherly chastisement of their rebellion from Him.

11. See Psalm 22:25; 35:18; 69:30.

12. James E. Adams, *The War Psalms of the Prince of Peace* (P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1991).

13. Andrew A. Bonar, *Christ and His Church in the Book of Psalms* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1860), p. 119.

14. Romans 12:19; Deuteronomy 32:25—note the parity of OT and NT sentiment here.

15. Psalm 51:4; Incidentally, all mistreatment against us is "less than we deserve." See Ezra 9:13; Psalm 103:10; Lamentations 3:22-40. Therefore *all* vengeance belongs to the Lord. Truly, there is nothing performed against us that meets with our sins. The cup of vengeance, regarding sinful human beings, is a figment of our fallen imagination. Truly only God has a right to vengeance.

After He has accomplished all He has appointed by these wicked persecutors, He will then punish them.[16]

Further, the people of God cry out to God for the destruction of their enemies, yet what if those whom they have in mind as their enemies are actually the elect of God, and will one day be converted to Christ Jesus? Even here, the Lord in His mediation turns that prayer to its proper ends. Hear David Dickson, commenting upon Psalm 83:8:

> If any of the enemies of God's people belong to God's election, the church's prayer against them giveth way to their conversion, and seeketh no more than that the judgment should follow them, only till they acknowledge their sin, turn, and seek God: fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O Lord.[17]

Finally, let us remember in these days of extreme sentiment and language, the words of the Apostle in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6:

> For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

That is to say, that the governments of this world have nothing to fear from the martial efforts of the Army of God, the Church of Jesus Christ. We do not want their lands, power, wealth, authority, or any other temporal thing. We are not rebels, we are not revolutionaries, we are not incendiaries, we are Christians, following our Lord Jesus Christ to His victory, putting all enemies under His feet, and subduing many of them to Himself. Our weapons are the Word of God, the preaching of the whole counsel of God, and our armory is made up of such pieces as Truth, Righteousness, the Gospel of Peace, Faith, Salvation, The Scriptures, Prayer, and as we follow Christ, singing the imprecatory Psalms. The advance of this church means the tempering and beautifying of every society and nation, that we "may live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty (1 Tim. 2:1-8).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the imprecatory Psalms are an integral part of Christian worship, and the people of God learn, while singing with understanding (Ps. 47:7; 1 Cor. 14:14-15), the following things:

- They are in a pitched battle with a defeated, yet fierce and vicious enemy that seeks the destruction of the people of God, and these praises remind them of this, keeping them on their war-footing (Matt. 13:39; Eph. 4:27; 6:10-20; 1 Peter 5:8; Rev. 12:12).

- Their Mediator, in whose mouth these Psalms absolutely are, sings along with them, and they follow Him in His victory.

- They are persecuted for their sins because they have sinned against God, and His chastisement has come upon them through these enemies of God and His church.

- There is no proper vengeance that they can claim—all vengeance is the Lord's, and so this cannot be a personal calling down of the wrath of God upon those who have offended them—rather they call upon the Lord to magnify His own glorious holiness, righteousness, and justice.

- Finally, that their warfare is Spiritual—they follow their Captain to His victory.

16. See Isaiah 10:10-19; Psalm 17:8-15.

17. David Dickson, *A Brief Explication of the Psalms*, vol. 2 (Glasgow; Edinburgh; London: John Dow; Waugh and Innes; R. Ogle; James Darling; Richard Baynes, 1834), p. 67.

Opuscula Selecta

William Ames's *Prolegomenon in Psalmum Secundum*

Introduction

William Ames (1576–1633), the well-known pastor and theologian, studied at Cambridge under William Perkins, the "father of Puritanism." Ames then served as a fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, but eventually left the university after his involvement in a controversy over vestments. Under increasing pressure for his Puritanism, Ames moved to Holland, where he ministered to several English congregations. He participated in the debates over Arminianism that culminated in the Synod of Dordt (1618–1619), where Ames served as an adviser to the moderator. His more well-known works include *Medulla Theologiae* (1627), a compendium of Reformed systematic theology, and *De Conscientia Eius Iure et Casibus* (1632), which concerned ethics.

The selection here is from his posthumously published commentary on the Psalms, *Lectiones in CL. Psalmos Davidis* (1635). Hugh Peter, an English minister at Rotterdam, where Ames spent the last portion of his life, dedicated the work to the officials of the city on Ames's behalf. The title page of the commentary describes it as a work in which "through analysis and, where necessary, through questions the meaning is clearly and concisely revealed and, furthermore, lessons are everywhere drawn out and skillfully applied to their uses." The target audience includes "all who practice piety, and in particular ministers of the Word."

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1. The title of this selection is Ames's, but all subheadings are the translator's. Bracketed contents are also editorial insertions, though where such brackets contain Latin text, the Latin is Ames's. Scripture references have been conformed to modern conventions. The selection is from William Ames, *Prolegomenon in Psalmum secundum, in Lectiones in CL. Psalmos Davidis* (Amsterdam: Joannes Janssonius, 1635), pp. 11–14.

The following selection breaks from the pattern established throughout the commentary. Rather than addressing particular features of a Psalm, Ames addresses an underappreciated area of 16th- and 17th-century Reformed thought: hermeneutics. The Reformed ministers of this period are rightly commended for their contributions to systematic theology and devotional literature. But, as Ames demonstrates, they were also careful, perceptive exegetes, even where we must depart from them, and consciously developed and applied their interpretive principles. Here Ames critiques the Roman Catholic *quadriga* (the fourfold pattern of exegesis, which Ames will describe in greater detail below), explains his approach to typological and allegorical exegesis, and illuminates the nature of meaning in biblical interpretation. This aids us not only in understanding the Psalms, but in interpreting Scripture as a whole. The view Ames articulates is an example of what is described in the Westminster Confession of Faith 1.9: "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" [italics added].

Prolegomenon on the Second Psalm[1]

We see three interpretations of this Psalm in those who have written on it. (1) That of the Jews, who understand the whole Psalm to be about David. (2) That of nearly all the fathers, who explain it as being simply about Christ. (3) That of the most learned Reformed theologians who, by a kind of synthetic method, interpret it partly about David, but especially, properly, and primarily about Christ.

Therefore, we have at the outset a question we must resolve. It is clearly the same one that the Ethiopian eunuch put to Philip long ago: "I ask you, about whom does the prophet say this, about himself? Or about someone else?" (Acts 8:34).

Clearly this Psalm cannot be explained as being simply about David, because it contains some elements that are not proper to David, such as those which appear in verses 8 and 12, and because we know from the testimony of the apostles that we should not do so (Acts 4:25; 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5).

There is no compelling reason to explain it as being simply about Christ, while completely excluding David from consideration. For David prefigured matters that pertain to Christ not only by his words, but also by his deeds and the nature of his life and office.

The synthetic method of interpretation is the most commendable. According to this method, the statements made here are certainly true of David, on the whole, but they do not have their complete or perfect meaning unless they correspond primarily to Christ Jesus.

As scriptural passages of this sort provided an opportunity, an error gradually crept into the church. This error holds that the Scriptures are to be interpreted in a manifold sense. Since the papists still firmly hold and fiercely defend this error, this will be a good opportunity to examine it briefly.

Roman Catholic Hermeneutics

The following is the papists' position. Divine Scripture very often contains at least two senses: the literal or historical, and the spiritual or mystical. The literal sense, they say, is that which the words immediately convey. The spiritual sense is that which is related to something other than that which the words immediately signify.

Furthermore, they hold that the literal sense is twofold: simple, which consists in the proper meaning of the words, and figurative, by which words are transferred from their natural meaning to a foreign one. They hold that the spiritual sense is threefold: allegorical, tropological, and anagogical. They call the meaning "allegorical" when the scriptural words, beyond the literal sense, signify something in the New Testament that pertains to Christ or the church. They call the meaning "tropological" when the words or deeds signify something that pertains to morals. And they call the meaning "anagogical" when the words or deeds signify eternal life.

When it comes to applying this fabricated distinction to interpreting sacred literature, the papist doctors partly agree with each other and partly disagree. They agree that (1) according to faith various meanings are certainly contained in one passage and (2) different mystical or spiritual senses are sometimes contained in one passage.

But they disagree and argue over this: (1) whether several literal senses are sometimes contained in the same words. Alonso Tostado says that this is certain according to faith. Thomas and most of the scholastics contend that this is the case. Bellarmine does not dare to affirm it, but says it is not improbable. Domingo Báñez acknowledges that such passages are rare, and that no passage has been sufficiently examined. Nevertheless, he concludes that it would be rash to deny that multiple, literal meanings ever exist in a passage.

They also dispute about (2) whether all the mystical senses are found in one and the same passage, and whether all the events and words of the Old Testament are to be explained mystically. They all say it is pious and very useful for the events narrated in the Old Testament, as a whole, to be construed in a mystical sense. There were also many among them who tried, violently and ridiculously, to stretch individual passages of the Old Testament into the fourfold sense. And papist preachers liked nothing better than to abuse the Scriptures like this, and feed their miserable people with the wind, as it were. There was a preacher in Spain, as Báñez reports, who asserted, in praise of Christ's cross, that everything made of wood mentioned in the Old Testament was a figure of Christ, even Saul's spear, along with his cup, which David stole from Saul personally while his servants were sleeping [1 Sam. 26:12]. Báñez does not praise such preaching, but gravely warns all preachers that if they find any new mystical sense, they should always be careful to say what resembles the truth and what agrees with reason. He uses the same words a crafty old fox would use if he were teaching someone how to lie. For what other advice would such a liar give his disciples than to act cautiously, if not with honesty, and always to speak, if not the truth, what nevertheless resembles it?

I think that explaining the papist position clearly and refuting it are the same thing. Nevertheless, I will lay out the arguments still more plainly.

First Argument

The first argument that undermines the fabrication of a manifold sense is that it has no basis in the Scriptures themselves.

Bellarmine, in the first place, cites the only passage from which he says one derives this division of senses: 1 Corinthians 10, where in verse 11 Paul asserts, concerning the things that happened to the Jews, that "all these things happened to them as an example [*typice*]." But we must agree about the sense of these words before we may derive from them such a manifold sense in other passages. And the meaning and intention of the apostle in this passage are far different from what Bellarmine thinks. For it is obvious from verse 6 that by "type" in this chapter the apostle just meant an example: "These things were examples [*typi*] for us, that we not desire evil." I think that here the very learned Beza dozed off for a while. He does not pay sufficient attention to the logic of the words, while he takes them as though the apostle were teaching that the Israelites' sacraments signified our sacraments, even though the purpose of the example is indicated clearly enough by the clause, "that we might not desire evil." The word is used in the same sense in 1 Timothy 4:12 and Titus 2:7. There that same apostle teaches that evangelists, and so all ministers, should show themselves in all things to be examples [*typos*] of good works.

This is so clear from what precedes and follows in this chapter that even some papist scholastics have noticed, though they are usually not very careful with the Scriptures. So Domingo Báñez in his commentary on Thomas, *ST* I, Q. 1, Art. 10:

> By "all these things" the apostle means the punishments for the sins of the Jews. He says that these things happened to them as a figure, that is, as an example for us, so that we might gain experience from another's punishment. In other words, just as those who were not

> grateful for God's blessings were severely punished, so we will be punished much more justly if we are not grateful for the greater blessings we have received.[2]

In the second place, Bellarmine and other papist doctors cite various passages of Scripture in which the same things are asserted in a literal sense in the Old Testament, but are explained in a spiritual and mystical sense in the New Testament. For example, what is said about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, the crossing of the sea, the manna, the water from the rock, and things like that.

But we reply:

(1) Even they hold that such a varied meaning cannot at all be proved from those passages. For even if one grants those passages a twofold sense, yet they will not prove from them a fivefold sense.

(2) In some passages of the New Testament where they think a new sense is given to some Old Testament passages, a new meaning is not actually established there. Rather, the words are only adapted by analogy to explain or illustrate something else, as in Romans 10:18: "Their sound has gone out into all the earth."

(3) We do not deny that there are also many allegories, that is, extended metaphors, or images of real things expressed in words. Nor do we deny that in the Scriptures there are types, that is, images of real things expressed by other real things. But we affirm the following: (1) allegory has an equally simple, though figurative, sense and uses words in their proper sense.[3] (2) The type and the reality signified by the type do not constitute two different senses, properly speaking, but two parts of one and the same sense. For the things said at one time about an image and about the person whose image it is do not have different senses, but only one. (3) If there are two senses in a typological narrative, then one sense belongs properly and immediately to the words, and the other belongs to the realities, not to the words, except through analogical adaptation.

Second Argument

The second argument against various senses in Scripture is that it has no basis in logic, grammar, or rhetoric. Since these are the arts of reason and speech, we should allow nothing in our use of reasoning or speaking that we cannot prove by them. And no one should say that this is a special quality of divine Scripture since God is its author (which is Bellarmine's argument). For although God speaks about divine things in the Scriptures, nevertheless, he speaks in a human mode and manner so humans can understand him.

For this reason alone I think we should reject [Bartholomäus] Keckermann's position. He does not properly connect the predication used in the sacraments to logic or to rhetoric, but to a kind of improper form.

Third Argument

The third argument is that multiple senses render sacred Scripture uncertain and so weaken and diminish its authority. For multiple senses cause Scripture to abound in equivocations. On this pretext, Porphyry and Julian, who hated and mocked Christianity, long ago tried to bring contempt upon the whole doctrine of our religion.

Fourth Argument

The fourth argument is that (as Bellarmine admits) efficacious arguments should be taken from the literal sense alone, since, regarding the mystical senses, it is not always evident whether they are intended by the Holy Spirit. From this concession, it follows that the various "senses" of this sort are not senses, because what is not intended by the Holy Spirit is not a sense of the Holy Spirit, nor is there any sense of the Holy Spirit from which a firm argument cannot be drawn.

Conclusion

So this is the conclusion: Scripture, as to the nature of its senses and how to interpret it, is no different from human literature, except that in Scripture God more frequently established types to express, by their own particular quality, something else.

But interpreters must not invent types of this sort arbitrarily. Rather, interpreters should recognize types when it is evident from the Scriptures themselves that it was God's intention for us to take those things as types. Otherwise, although a narrative in Scripture can occasionally be adapted by an extended comparison to explain something else, the narrative itself should not be explained in such a sense.▪

2. Domingo Báñez, *Scholastica commentaria in primam partem angelici doctoris S. Thomae usque ad LXIIII. quaestionem* (Douai: Peter Borremans, 1614), p. 68.

3. *Propria verba* are words used in their proper, or natural, sense, rather than in a metaphorical sense. See, e.g., Cic. *De or.* 3.49, 149, and Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.24. [Ed. Cicero, *De Oratore*; Quintilan, *Institutio Oratoria*.]

Antiquary

Sermons and Lectures of James Durham: A Chronological Catalog, 1647–1658

Introduction

There are few dates associated with manuscripts of James Durham's sermons and lectures (manuscripts are detailed in this issue's bibliography). However, there are enough to form guideposts to attempt an approximate chronology for his pastoral ministry from 1647–1658, focusing on his six years of ministry in the Inner Kirk of Glasgow Cathedral. The primary attention is on the Lord's Day services. However, apparently all the Glasgow ministers shared and took part in weekday preaching, with each taking at least one weekday at the cathedral during the week. There are sermons by Durham dating to Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, indicating either his day changed now and then or that he often took more than one day of the weekly preaching. In addition to the weekday preaching, there were lectures on Scripture every day in the city of Glasgow, and Durham took his turn by lecturing every day every fifth week. In addition to two Lord's Day sermons, Durham also lectured each Lord's Day; but, as argued in the biography of Durham (see page 213 of this issue), this table presumes that every fifth Lord's Day the lecture is skipped due to Durham's share of the daily city lectures that week.

The first column gives the year and the weekday if not a Lord's Day. The second column gives the month and date. The third column lists the known or presumed material and any sources for dating. Titles in the regular face indicate attributed dates, and the italic face indicates material with estimated, supposed, or doubtful dating. Durham likely began lecturing in the Inner Kirk on Lord's Day mornings on October 19, 1651. The table begins with brief information on Durham's Blackfriar's ministry. While there are some dates to some way pin down the Revelation lectures, the undated lecture series are placed merely to show that these lectures can easily fit within Durham's years at Glasgow Cathedral. Some evidence suggests Canticles must follow the Ten Commandments. The Job series could have gone anywhere there is space.

What is clear from this data is that despite Baillie's characterization of the terms of Durham's call to Glasgow as "from time to time," he clearly was well utilized judging from the amount of material generated in just six years of ministry.

Chris Coldwell■

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
James Durham's Ministry at Blackfriars and Royal Chaplaincy		
1648	Feb–Mar	Durham was ordained on December 2, 1647, and called to Blackfriars Kirk, Glasgow. Glasgow City Archives, Mitchell Library, T-PM 114/1, George Maxwell records brief notes on at least one lecture or sermon on Psalm 3 by Durham. Following this are unattributed topics of Joshua 24:19, Psalm 4, Joshua 24:19 again, Ezekiel 10:9, and Hebrews 8:10. Then follows Maxwell's notes on George Gillespie's Sermon before the Scottish Parliament on Psalm 2, March 2, 1648. Whether any of the unattributed material between the two named entries are Durham's is unknown. At this time, this dating between February and March of 1648 material is the only known of Durham's ministry at Blackfriars. Durham was to succeed David Dickson as professor of theology at Glasgow University (May 1650), but was instead appointed king's chaplain (July 1650).
1650 Monday	6–May	(L) Psalm 110. "Re(a)d and explained" "at the communion." National Library of Scotland, MS 664a. These are sermon and lecture notes by various ministers. There is a second lecture on Ps. 131 (undated) and third on Ps. 59 (28–July). There is a 12–May Glasgow communion sermon but the preacher is not identified (see Durham on Revelation volume 3 [2022], hereafter Bibliography, p. 580). During Durham's Glasgow ministry, there were only three communion seasons for the rest of the 1650s (in 1655, 1656, and 1657).

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
Saturday	27–Jul	Isaiah 26:17–19.
1651		MS 664a. "A Sermon Julii 27, 1650, one [on] the Satterday afternoone for upstirring to the fast the Sabbath following."
	28–Jul	Isaiah 26:17–19.
		(L) Psalm LIX. PM: Sermon 2 on Isaiah 26:17–19.
		The AM fast sermon is not given, nor who by (dated Lord's Day sermons are assumed AM unless noted in the MS as PM). MS 664a. "Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God," etc. A 3 Lectour one [on] the Fast 28 of Julii, 1650. At the forth going of our Armie against Cromwell's invading." This was on a Lord's Day. There is an undated lecture following this one that is noted simply as "a lectour" on Psalm 106:1–8.
	May	Psalm XXXIX. 1–13 (L or S). MS 664a. This is undated but placed between sermons by James Guthrie dated May 13, 1651 and a sermon by J. M., dated May 18, 1651

James Durham's Ministry at the Inner Kirk, Glasgow Cathedral

	19–Oct	AM: #1: Canticles 2:1. *PM: #2* (*undated*)
		This appears to be the official beginning of Durham's ministry for the Inner Kirk at Glasglow Cathedral. The date is provided from the manuscript of sermons on Canticles chapter 2 held by Thomas Fisher Library (MSS 01203). Sermon 2 is not dated. Since Sermon 3 is dated and since the topic for Durham's apparent first Tuesday sermon is known, it is assumed that he preached on Canticles 2:1 in the PM service on this date.
Tues	21–Oct	Sermon 1: Matthew 16:24.
		Westminster College Archives, Cambridge, MS Sermons (1651). This MS contains among others, seven sermons on Matthew 16:24, which were later published by Carstares as *The Great Corruption of Subtile Self* (1686). Thus, Durham was already focusing on "casuistic divinity" early in his ministry. In a letter dated May 21, 1653, Baillie writes, "I have desired him to write Case-Divinitie, wherein he is excellent, and daylie growes." *Letters & Journals*, 3.222. It is possible the four sermons published under the title of *Great Gain of Contenting Godliness* also date to this time. The second sermon was preached on 28-Oct or 4-Nov, and the third is dated 11-Nov.
	26–Oct	AM: #3: Canticles 2:1.
		MSS 01203. As noted, Sermon #2 must have been in the PM the week before or some weekday other than the prior Tuesday. Durham also was lecturing each Lord's Day morning, but dates are lacking for most of the known series. We begin noting them on February 22, 1652.
•	2–Nov	*Canticles 2, Sermon 4.* Here begins a presumed every fifth week skipping of the AM Lord's Day Lecture (denoted with the symbol •), estimated by counting back from January 30, 1653, the week prior to the dated first Revelation lecture on February 6, 1653.
	9–Nov	*Canticles 2, Sermon 5.*
		The italic face indicates the date is estimated or supposed.
Tuesday	11–Nov	Sermon 3: Matthew 16:24.
		Sermons (1651). Durham must have skipped Tuesday, November 4. The remaining four were likely preached on subsequent Tuesdays.
	16–Nov	*Canticles 2, Sermon 6.*
	23–Nov.	*Canticles 2, Sermon 7.*
	30–Nov	*Canticles 2, (AM) Sermon 8 and (PM) Sermon 9.*
		Some sermons in the series are noted afternoon and a few forenoon, and this establishes that Durham frequently continued the same text for the PM sermon.
•	7–Dec	*Canticles 2, (AM) Sermon 10 and (PM) Sermon 11.*
		Again, every fifth week it is assumed Durham did not lecture (•).
	14–Dec	*Canticles 2, (AM) Sermon 12 and (PM) Sermon 13*
	21–Dec	*Canticles 2, Sermon 14.*

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
1652	28–Dec	*Canticles 2, Sermon 15.*
	4–Jan	*Canticles 2, Sermon 16.*
•	11–Jan	*Canticles 2, Sermon 17.*
	18–Jan	AM: #18: Canticles 2:18. MSS 01203. Sermons 6–17 could have unfolded multiple ways for #18 to be this date. Here, PM sermons were added on 30-Nov, 7-Dec, and 14-Dec. Again, MS 01203 is a full set of 44 sermons in secretary hand on chapter two. See the entry for October 19, 1651.
	25–Jan	*Canticles 2, Sermon 19.* The next five sermons on Song of Solomon could have unfolded in different ways, including some Saturday sermons, if the date for sermon 25 is correct. Here, sermon 24 is placed as an afternoon (PM) sermon on February 22.
	1–Feb	*Canticles 2, Sermon 20.*
	8–Feb	*Canticles 2, Sermon 21.*
•	15–Feb	*Canticles 2, Sermon 22.*
	22–Feb	*Canticles 2, Sermon 23 & 24. (LS) Job 1* The 40 lectures on Job may have begun early in Durham's ministry and are placed here given the mention of plundering and quartering in them, the latter of which Durham had been burdened with since the occupation by Cromwell, as Baillie notes in April 1651 (3.155). They might have been given anytime where there is sufficient space in this *Chronological Catalog*.
	28–Feb	#25: Canticles 2:10.
Saturday		MS Laing III.89. This is a Saturday sermon if the date is correct. Durham's regular preaching may have been disrupted because of meetings in mid-February in Edinburgh of both the Resolutioners and Protesters, who were reacting to the English announcement that Scotland was to lose its nation status and a broad toleration of Congregationalists and sects would be granted. Though Durham is not mentioned, Blair was heavily involved brokering another attempt at uniting the parties. There was also preaching against the English settlement as violating the Solemn League & Covenant from Protester and Resolutioner alike, which may also have affected Durham's regular preaching through Canticles on the Lord's day. Holfelder, pp. 153–154; Baillie, 3.173. Nicoll's *Diary*, p. 85.
	29–Feb	*Canticles 2, Sermon 26 and 27. (LS) Job 2.* Again, the next sermons could have unfolded in different ways in order to reach a 39th sermon on April 18.
Tuesday	2 Mar	*Canticles 2, Sermon 28.* To align with an AM Sermon 31 on March 14, in addition to two sermons on February 29 and on March 7, it is supposed that one additional sermon during one of those weeks must have occurred. Here, one is placed as a Tuesday sermon.
	7–Mar	*Canticles 2, Sermon 29, 30. (LS) Job 3.*
	14–Mar	AM: #31 Canticles 2:10. *(LS) Job 4.* Laing III.89.
•	21–Mar	*Canticles 2, Sermon 32, 33.* Durham preached AM & PM or on two additional weekdays to align with the next known dates of April 3 and April 18.
	28–Mar	*Canticles 2, Sermon 34, 35. (LS) Job 5.*
Saturday	3–Apr	AM: #36 Canticles 2:14. Laing III.89. If the date is correct, this was a Saturday sermon.
	4–Apr	*Canticles 2, Sermon 37. (LS) Job 6.*
	11–Apr	*Canticles 2, Sermon 38. (LS) Job 7.*

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
1652	18–Apr	AM: #39: Canticles 2:15. *(LS) Job 8.* Laing III.89.
•	25–Apr	*Unknown.* Since both sermon 39 and 40 are dated, either the April 27 date is wrong, or Durham or someone else preached on a different topic and Durham chose to preach the next sermon on Canticles for his Tuesday weekday sermon. Interestingly, this aligns with the fifth week where it is assumed there was no lecture.
Tuesday	27–Apr	#40: Canticles 2:15. Laing III.89. If the date is correct, this was a Tuesday sermon.
	2–May	#41: Canticles 2:16–17. *(LS) Job 9.* Laing III.89.
	9–May	*Canticles 2, Sermon 42. (LS) Job 10.*
	16–May	*Canticles 2, Sermon 43. (LS) Job 11.*
	23–May	*Canticles 2, Sermon 44. (LS) Job 11.* There are 44 sermons on Canticles 2.
•	30–May	(AM) #1: Canticles 3:1. Laing III.89. To align with the next known date for the first sermon on chapter 4 on August 1, there were AM & PM sermons or weekday sermons that could have unfolded in many different ways. Here, two sermons each are assigned to 27–June, 4–July, and 11–July.
	6–Jun	*Canticles 3, Sermon 2. (LS) Job 13.*
	13–Jun	*Canticles 3, Sermon 3. (LS) Job 14.*
Thursday	17–Jun	*The Great Fire.* On this date occurred Glasgow's Great Fire, which destroyed a third of the city, killed many, and left 1,000 homeless.
	20–Jun	*Unknown. (LS) Job 15.* A second fire started between 7 and 8AM and it is uncertain if services were interrupted. It is assumed the sermon topic was affected but the regular lecture still given. "[T]he ministers preached, that this was for their compliance with the sectaries" Bulstrode Whitelock, *Memorials of the English Affairs*, vol. 3 (Oxford, 1853), p. 433.
	27–Jun	*Canticles 3, Sermons 4, 5. (LS) Job 16.*
•	4–Jul	*Canticles 3, Sermons 6, 7.*
	11–Jul	*Canticles 3, Sermons 8, 9. (LS) Job 17.*
	18–Jul	*Canticles 3, Sermon 10. (LS) Job 18.*
	25–Jul	*Canticles 3, Sermon 11. (LS) Job 19.*
	1–Aug	(AM) #1: Canticles 4:1. *(LS) Job 20.* MS Laing III.89. It was not confirmed if the first sermon on chapter 5 was dated. To align with the next dated sermon, sermon seven on chapter 5, Durham must have preached twice on the Lord's Day on Canticles and/or on some weekdays. While no other sermons on chapter four are dated, sermons 12 and 16 are noted as afternoon sermons. At sermon 17 in the MS Laing III.89 occurs the signature of Margaret Durham, who married James on December 14, 1653. Sermons (1651) also has texts on 4:11 (2), 4:12, and 4:13–14. Undated.
•	8–Aug	*Canticles 4, 1 or 2 sermons.*
	15–Aug	*Canticles 4, 1 or 2 sermons. (LS) Job 21.*
	22–Aug	*Canticles 4, 1 or 2 sermons. (LS) Job 22.*
	29–Aug	*Canticles 4, 1 or 2 sermons. (LS) Job 23.*
	5–Sep	*Canticles 4, 1 or 2 sermons. (LS) Job 24.*
•	12–Sep	*Canticles 4, 1 or 2 sermons.*
1652	19–Sep	*Canticles 4, 1 or 2 sermons. (LS) Job 25.*
	26–Sep	*Canticles 4, 1 or 2 sermons. (LS) Job 26.*

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
	3–Oct	*Canticles 4, 1 or 2 sermons. (LS) Job 27.*
Tuesday	5–Oct	Glasgow Synod: Sermon on Ephesians 4:11–12. Glasgow Synod met and Durham preached the retiring moderator's sermon. Folger Shakespeare Library, X.d.424, MS Add. 257. Transcript published in "*Antiquary:* A Transcription of James Durham's Sermon on Ephesians 4:11–12, taught before the Synod of Glasgow, October 5, 1652," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 12 (2016). A refined text was published in *61 Sermons*, pp. 916ff.
	10–Oct	*Canticles 4, 1 or 2 sermons. (LS) Job 28.* There are 20 Sermons on Canticles 4.
•	17–Oct	*Canticles 5, Sermon 1.*
	24–Oct	*Canticles 5, Sermon 2. (LS) Job 29.*
	31–Oct	*Canticles 5, Sermon 3. (LS) Job 30.* Also in Sermons (1651) undated.
	7–Nov	*Canticles 5, Sermon 4. (LS) Job 31.*
	14–Nov	*Canticles 5, Sermon 5. (LS) Job 32.*
•	21–Nov	*Canticles 5, Sermon 6.*
	28–Nov	(AM) #7: Canticles 5:2. *(LS) Job 33.* Edinburgh Theological Seminary, NRA(S)2071.
	5–Dec	*Canticles 5, Sermon 8 or other topic or missed. (LS) Job 34.* Durham was absent or preached on another topic on either December 5 or 12 to align with the next known date.
	12–Dec	*Canticles 5, Sermon 8 or other topic or missed. (LS) Job 35.*
	19–Dec	(AM) #9: Canticles 5:2. *(LS) Job 36.* NRA(S)2071. The month was omitted or obscured, but the 19th aligns perfectly with the subsequent afternoon notations and preaching both AM and PM on Canticles.
Tuesday	21–Dec	Sermon 1 on Ephesians 5:15–16. Westminster College Archives, Cambridge, Sermons (1651). This MS volume contains amongst others by Durham, seven sermons on Ephesians 5:15–16 and a seventh on verses 17–18, and two further sermons on verse 18. Howie indicates Durham preached a series of sermons on Ephesians 5:15–20 (see Bibliography, p. 572). So, it is possible there were several more sermons in the series, but whether they are no longer extant in MS or Howie made a mistake, it is unfortunate to not have Durham's preaching and speaking directly to the topic of psalm singing. In his comments on Song of Solomon and how it might be desirable to sing portions of it, we have indications that Durham held to an inspired praise position rather than what is commonly called exclusive psalmody today (singing only from the Psalter in worship). From the earliest point in the Reformation all three positions existed, psalms and hymns, scripture only, psalms only. See Ephraim Schäfli, "*In Translatiõne*: The Preface to the Constance Hymnbook by Joannem Zwick," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 7 (2011): 227. There had been no particular controversy about singing psalms, and the Scottish commissioners at the Westminster Assembly worked to produce a Psalter purged of anything but the 150 Psalms. This was then refined by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and became the Scottish Metrical Psalter of 1650. However, the lines of theory over practice were not as clear. Hence, there was the effort by at least some in the General Assembly to draft a collection of the other Scripture songs at the same time they were working on the Psalter. With the influx of sects and introduction of hymn singing, it became an issue to more thoroughly think through this issue, and so one finds by the 1670s the Covenanter position is clearly one of exclusive psalm-singing. See John Brown of Wamphray's articulation of Lord's Day worship in his *De causa Dei contra antisabbatarios tractatus*, 2 vols. (Rotterdam, 1677–78). See the English translation of his argument in Part I, *The Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007), and.

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
Tuesday	21–Dec	Sermon 1 on Ephesians 5:15–16.
		Part II, *The Confessional Presbyterian* 5 (2009).Three of these Ephesians sermons are dated. The first sermon is clearly dated 21 Dec, 1652, a Tuesday. However, the two other dated sermons, the eighth and ninth, present two wrinkles to a simple single weekday of Tuesday assigned to Durham. These are respectively dated 10–March 1653 and 17–March 1653. To fill that time, this requires at least four weeks when Durham did not preach this series, and also both those dates were Thursdays. If Durham was sick for some weeks at the end of December into January, this would have affected the other sermons and lectures on the Lord's Days. The next and only known date in the period is 6–Feb, the start of the Revelation lectures and Sermon on Canticles 5:4. It may be possible that taking up that series caused Durham to change topics for four weeks. It is not known if at the first of the year Durham switched days to Thursdays from Tuesdays, or if he took on Thursdays as well for a time. There is no subsequent sermon in this *Catalog* that is clearly preached on a Thursday (see 19–Jun), and the next known weekday sermon is not till 4–Sep, 1655, a Tuesday. Whether it continued or whether Durham's preaching on Thursdays had ended by then is not known. The preaching at the cathedral was constantly affected throughout Durham's ministry. In the career changes and illness of Patrick Gillespie, illness of Robert MacWard, deaths of Andrew Gray and Hugh Binning, Durham apparently had to fill for their preaching (Baillie, 3.368).
	• 26–Dec	*Canticles 5, Sermon 10.*
1653	2–Jan	*Canticles 5, Sermons 11, 12. (LS) Job 37.*
		NRA(S)2071. Undated Sermon 12 is an afternoon sermon.
	9–Jan	*Canticles 5, Sermons 13, 14. (LS) Job 38.*
		NRA(S)2071. Undated Sermon 14 is an afternoon sermon.
	16–Jan	*Canticles 5, Sermons 15, 16. (LS) Job 39.*
		NRA(S)2071. Undated Sermon 16 is an afternoon sermon.
	23–Jan	*Canticles 5, Sermons 17, 18. (LS) Job 40.*
		Sermon 18 is assumed to have been an afternoon sermon.
	• 30–Jan	*Canticles 5, Sermons 19, 20*
		NRA(S)2071. Undated Sermon 20 is an afternoon sermon.
	6–Feb	(L) Revelation 1 Lecture. #1. (AM) 21: Canticles 5:4. *(PM) #22.*
		NRA(S)2071. New College Library, Edinburgh, MS Rev 2. Only the first Revelation lecture is dated. George Maxwell supplies a date for the lecture on Revelation 10 (MS T-PM 114/3, 114/4).
	13–Feb	*(L) Rev. 1#2. Canticles 5, Sermon 23, (PM) #24.*
	20–Feb	*(L) Rev. 1#3. Canticles 5, Sermon 25, (PM) #26.*
	27–Feb	*(L) Rev. 1#4. Canticles 5, Sermon 27, (PM) #28.*
	• 6–Mar	*Canticles 5, Sermon 29, (PM) #30.*
		On this day, whether actually this date or whenever it was, a note in the MS states that in the afternoon, sermon 30 had to be preached in the Barony kirk in the crypt "when ane Englishman would needs preach in the high kirk."
Thursday	10–Mar	Sermon 8 on Ephesians 5:18. MS Sermons (1651).
	13–Mar	*(L) Rev. 1#5. Canticles 5, Sermon 31.*
		About this time or a bit later, Durham began to preach on Colossians 3 in the afternoon service.
Thursday	17–Mar	Sermon 9 on Ephesians 5:18. MS Sermons (1651).
	20–Mar	*(L) Rev. 1#6. Canticles 5, Sermon 32.*
	27–Mar	*(L) Rev. 1 #7.* (AM) #33: Canticles 5:7.
		NRA(S)2071.
	3–Apr	*(L) Rev. 1 #8. Canticles 5, Sermon 34.*
	• 10–Apr	(AM) #35: Canticles 5:7.
		NRA(S)2071.

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
1653	17–Apr	*(L) Rev. 1 #9.* (AM) #36: Canticles 5:7. NRA(S)2071.
	24–Apr	*(L) Rev. 2#1. Some other sermon topic than Canticles.* The dates for sermons 36 and 37 leave a week between them for no known reason. The lecture is assumed to have taken place on this date in order to align with the known date of the Lecture on Revelation 10.
	1–May	*(L) Rev. 2 #2.* (AM) #37: Canticles 5:7. NRA(S)2071.
	8–May	*(L) Rev. 2 #3. Canticles 5, Sermon 38.*
•	15–May	*Canticles 5, Sermon 39 and in PM Sermon 40.* While not dated or marked as an afternoon sermon, Sermon 40 must have been a weekday or Lord's Day afternoon sermon to align with the known dates for #37 and #41.
	22–May	(L) Rev. 2 #4. (AM) #41: Canticles 5:7. NRA(S)2071.
	29–May	Durham was in Edinburgh on May 27–28, 1653, for the rival commissioners' meetings held prior to the opening of the General Assembly on July 20, 1653. Brodie, *Diary*, p. 53. Holfelder, p. 189. This *Chronological Catalog* assumes he would not have attempted to return until at least Monday, 30–May, and it assumes, though not impossible, that he may not have even been back by 5–June or been prepared to preach, because Sermon 42 did not occur until June 12.
	5–Jun	*Unknown?* Durham may have been still away or unprepared.
	12–Jun	*(L) Rev. 2 #5.* (AM) #42: Canticles 5:8. NRA(S)2071.
•	19–Jun	*Canticles Sermon 43.* MS Sermons (1651) clearly dates sermon 43 on Canticles 5:8 to 9–Jun, a Thursday. As seen already (21–Dec, 10–Mar, 17–Mar), Durham is known to have been preaching on Thursdays in 1653. Perhaps he was preaching a "make up" sermon after being out of town? However, it is much more likely this is a scribal mistake, writing a 9 instead of 19, since 19–Jun was a Lord's Day. This is also supported by NRA(S)2071, which dates the prior Sermon 42 to a date of 12–Jun 1653. The month was noted as obscure in *The Confessional Presbyterian* 13 [2017]: 236, but a second look at MS NRA(S)2071 confirms the month to be June. With the date for sermon 42 confirmed, a mistake by the scribe writing 9 for 19 seems more likely than Durham for some reason preaching sermon 43 the Thursday before Sermon 42.
	26–Jun	*(L) Rev. 2 #6. Canticles 5, Sermons 44.*
	3–Jul	*(L) Rev. 3#1. Sermon?* The known dates require skipping Canticles for one week. The Lecture is assumed to keep on track for the dated lecture on Revelation 10.
	10–Jul	*(L) Rev. 3 #2.* (AM) #45: Canticles 5:9. NRA(S)2071.
	17–Jul	*(L) Rev. 3#3. Sermon?* It may be that in preparation for the union meeting before the meeting of the General Assembly Durham preached on something else. Again, the lecture is assumed to have been given to align with the known date for the lecture on chapter 10.
•	24–Jul	(AM) #46: Canticles 5:9. NRA(S)2071. The Resolutioner GA was broken up by Cromwell's troops on July 20 and the Protesters and all ministers ordered out of Edinburgh on July 21. Nicoll, *Diary*, p. 110. An attempt at a union meeting was held "shortly" before the GA, but Durham was by this dating clearly back to preach on July 24.
	31–Jul	*(L) Rev. 4 #1. Canticles 5, Sermons 47.*
	7–Aug	*(L) Rev. 4 #2. Canticles 5, Sermons 48*

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
1653	14–Aug	*(L) Rev. 4 #3. Canticles 5, Sermons 49.* Here begins several months where there are no known dates. In order to make the next dated sermon, Durham had to have skipped preaching on Canticles for four weeks. It may be that as the intensity of the Revelation lectures took their toll, he took breaks from Canticles, either all at once or every few weeks. For the *Catalog* it is assumed Durham broke from Canticles the same week he did from Revelation for four weeks. Interestingly, the Glencairn Uprising began at this time. "We now have certain intelligence that on the 27th July Charles Stuart's standard was set up at Killin" (*Mercurius Politicus*, No.167, August 1653). Why this would be cause for a four week break all at once for the month of August is unclear, so the weeks have been spaced as said. Another factor may have been the ill health of Hugh Binning, who died September of 1653 (*Fasti* [1920], 3.423) or August (*Analecta*, 1.167), or Durham's marriage on 14–Dec.
	21–Aug	*(L) Rev. 5 #1. Canticles 5, Sermons 50.*
•	28–Aug	*No lecture and different sermon subject?* See August 14 above.
	4–Sep	*(L) Rev. 5 #2. Canticles 5, Sermons 51.*
	11–Sep	*(L) Rev. 6 #1. Canticles 5, Sermons 52.*
	18–Sep	*(L) Rev. 6 #2. Canticles 5, Sermons 53.*
	25–Sep	*(L) Rev. 6 #3. Canticles 5, Sermons 54.*
•	2–Oct	*No lecture and different sermon subject?* See August 14 above.
	9–Oct	*(L) Rev. 6 #4. Canticles 5, Sermons 55.*
	16–Oct	*(L) Rev. 6 #5. Canticles 5, Sermons 56.*
	23–Oct	*(L) Rev. 6 #6. Canticles 5, Sermons 57.*
	30–Oct	*(L) Rev. 6 #7. Canticles 5, Sermons 58.*
•	6–Nov	*No lecture and different sermon subject?* See August 14 above.
	13–Nov	*(L) Rev. 6 #8. Canticles 5, Sermons 59.*
	20–Nov	*(L) Rev. 7 #1. Canticles 5, Sermons 60.*
	27–Nov	*(L) Rev. 7 #2. Canticles 5, Sermons 61.*
	4–Dec	*(L) Rev. 7 #3. Canticles 5, Sermons 62*
•	11–Dec	*No lecture and different sermon subject?* See August 14 above.
	14–Dec	Durham married Margaret Mure on December 14, 1653.
	18–Dec	*(L) Rev. 7 #4. (AM) #1: Canticles 6:1.* Glasgow University Library, MS GEN 370 dates the first sermon as simply December 1653. This date is assumed, counting back from Sermon 8 on 5 February.
	25–Dec	*(L) Rev. 7 #5. (AM) #2: Canticles 6:1.*
1654	1–Jan	*(L) Rev. 7 #6. (AM) #3: Canticles 6:1.*
	8–Jan	*(L) Rev. 8 #1. (AM) #4: Canticles 6:1.*
•	15–Jan	*(AM) #5: Canticles 6:1–2.*
	22–Jan	*(L) Rev. 8 #2. (AM) #6: Canticles 6:2.*
	29–Jan	*(L) Rev. 8 #3. (AM) #7: Canticles 6:2.*
	5–Feb	*(L) Rev. 8 #4.* (AM) #8: Canticles 6:2–3. MS GEN 370. After this sermon, Sermon 23 is the next dated, noted by the reader as March 14. This likely was a misreading for "Mai 14," which aligns to a weekly schedule without a lot of doubling or trip-ling up on Canticles each week, requiring only one additional sermon in the PM or on a weekday. This also aligns with the Maxwell date for the lecture on Revelation 10.
	12–Feb	*(L) Rev. 8 #5. (AM) #9: Canticles 6:3.*
•	19–Feb	*(AM) #10: Canticles 6:3.*
	26–Feb	*(L) Rev. 9 #1. (AM) #11: Canticles 6:3.*
	5–Mar	*(L) Rev. 9 #2. (AM) #12: Canticles 6:3.*

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
1654	12–Mar	(L) Rev. 10 #1 of 1. (AM) #13: Canticles 6:3 or 6:4. (PM) Col. 3:17. Maxwell. MS T-PM 114/3, 114/4. For 12–Mar, George Maxwell records hearing a sermon on Song 6:3 and one on Col. 3:17 and a lecture on Revelation 10.
	19–Mar	*(L) Rev. 11 #1.* (AM) #14: Canticles 6:4. (PM) Col. 3:17–18. MS T-PM 114/3, 114/4. Maxwell's notes record the sermons but do not have notes for a lecture.
•	26–Mar	*(AM) #15: Canticles 6:4–5.*
Monday	27–Mar	John Carstares on Genesis 2:3. MS T-PM 114/3, 114/4. Monday appears to have been the weekday that Carstares preached, while Durham's weekday was Tuesday.
	2–Apr	*(L) Rev. 11 #2. (AM) #16: Canticles 6:5.*
	9–Apr	*(L) Rev. 11 #3. (AM) #17: Canticles 6:5–6.*
	16–Apr	*(L) Rev. 11 #4. (AM) #18: Canticles 6:8.*
•	23–Apr	*(AM) #19: Canticles 6:9.*
	30–Apr	*(L) Rev. 11 #5. (AM) #20: Canticles 6:9.*
	7–May	*(L) Rev. 12 #1. (AM) #21: Canticles 6:9 (PM) #22 Canticles.* One additional sermon was preached to align with the next dated sermon on May 14, and it is assumed as a PM on this date to account for Sermon 22.
	14–May	*(L) Rev. 12 #2.* (AM) #23: Canticles 6:10. MS Gen 370. See the Note at 5–Feb above.
	21–May	*(L) Rev. 12 #3. (AM) #24: Canticles 6:11.*
•	28–May	*(AM) #25: Canticles 6:12.*
	4–Jun	*(L) Rev. 13 #1. (AM) #26: Canticles 6:13.*
	11–Jun	*(L) Rev. 13 #2. (AM) #27: Canticles 6:13.* There are 27 sermons on Canticles 6. Durham also may have completed Colossians 3 at this time. There is a nine week break before Durham takes up chapter 7. Durham preached 7 sermons on Revelation 14:13 when he lectured on chapter 14, making reference to that fact in the first sermon. MS Sermons (1651). See *61 Sermons*, pp. 63. The MS sermons are undated, with only #5 noted as PM. While this may have unfolded in different ways, they are placed to end the week before the start of Canticles 7 and to most closely match the time Durham lectured on chapter 14. In both his third sermon on 14:13 and in the third lecture on Revelation 14, Durham refers similarly to the sad case of Francis Spira. However, with seven weeks and only one PM sermon, they are difficult to align to the same day. To fit, the first sermon is placed on the day of the last lecture on chapter 13.
	18–Jun	*(L) Rev. 13 #3. Unknown sermon.* See note for June 11.
	25–Jun	*(L) Rev. 13 #4. Unknown sermon.*
•	2–Jul	*Unknown sermon.*
	9–Jul	*(L) Rev. 13 #5. Sermon on Rev. 14:13 #1?*
	16–Jul	*(L) Rev. 14 #1. Sermon on Rev. 14:13 #2?*
	23–Jul	*(L) Rev. 14 #2. Sermon on Rev. 14:13 #3?* See note for 11–Jun. The Glencairn Uprising ends with the defeat at Dalnaspidal on July 19, 1654. It is not clear if this would have affected Durham's sermon topic for one or two of these nine weeks off from Canticles.
	30–Jul	*(L) Rev. 14 #3. Sermon on Rev. 14:13 #4?* . (PM) *Sermon #5.*
•	6–Aug	*Sermon on Rev. 14:13 #6?*
	13–Aug	*(L) Rev. 14 #4. Sermon on Rev. 14:13 #7?*
	20–Aug	(L) Rev. 15 #1. (AM) Sermon 1, Canticles 7:1. *(PM) Rev. 14:13 #7?* MS GEN 370. If the estimated schedule for the 7 Revelation sermons is close to accurate, the 18 sermons on Canticles 7 fit into a once a week schedule with one skipped week (here placed at 15–Oct). But, as with all these assumptions, the way the schedule fell out may have been less straight forward, with more skips and more doubling up. Sermons (1651) has an undated sermon on Canticles 7:4.

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
1654	27–Aug	*(L) Rev. 15 #2. Sermon 2 on Canticles 7.*
	3–Sep	*(L) Rev. 16 #1. Sermon 3 on Canticles 7.*
•	10–Sep	*Sermon 4 on Canticles 7.*
	17–Sep	*(L) Rev. 16 #2. Sermon 5 on Canticles 7.*
	24–Sep	*(L) Rev. 16 #3. Sermon 6 on Canticles 7.*
	1–Oct	*(L) Rev. 16 #4. Sermon 7 on Canticles 7.*
	8–Oct	*(L) Rev. 16 #5. Sermon 8 on Canticles 7.* Thomason notes he obtained the first edition of Baxter's *True Christianity* on October 11, 1654. A later edition came out in 1656. Durham alludes to this work in his lecture on the ninth commandment. This is additional evidence that the lectures on the commandments date to after those on Revelation.
•	15–Oct	*Unknown sermon.*
	22–Oct	*(L) Rev. 16 #6. Sermon 9 on Canticles 7.*
	29–Oct	*(L) Rev. 17 #1. Sermon 10 on Canticles 7.*
	5–Nov	*(L) Rev. 17 #2. Sermon 11 on Canticles 7.*
	12–Nov	*(L) Rev. 17 #3. Sermon 12 on Canticles 7.*
•	19–Nov	*Sermon 13 on Canticles 7.*
	26–Nov	*(L) Rev. 17 #4. Sermon 14 on Canticles 7.*
	3–Dec	*(L) Rev. 17 #5. Sermon 15 on Canticles 7.*
	10–Dec	*(L) Rev. 17 #6. Sermon 16 on Canticles 7.*
	17–Dec	*(L) Rev. 18 #1. Sermon 17 on Canticles 7.*
•	24–Dec	*Sermon 18 on Canticles 7.*
	31–Dec	*(L) Rev. 18 #2.* (AM) Sermon 1: Canticles 8:1. MS GEN 370. From this date, Durham preached more than once a week on Canticles for five weeks to the 16th sermon on 11–Mar.
1655	7–Jan	*(L) Rev. 19 #1. Canticles 8, Sermons 2–15.*
	14–Jan	*(L) Rev. 19 #2. Canticles 8, Sermons 2–15.*
	21–Jan	*(L) Rev. 20 #1. Canticles 8, Sermons 2–15.*
•	28–Jan	*Canticles 8, Sermons 2–15.*
	4–Feb	*(L) Rev. 20 #2. Canticles 8, Sermons 2–15.*
	11–Feb	*(L) Rev. 20 #3. Canticles 8, Sermons 2–15.*
	18–Feb	*(L) Rev. 20 #4. Canticles 8, Sermons 2–15.*
	25–Feb	*(L) Rev. 20 #5. Canticles 8, Sermons 2–15.*
•	4–Mar	*Canticles 8, Sermons 2–15.*
	11–Mar	*(L) Rev. 20 #6.* (AM) Sermon 16: Canticles 8:6. The date may read June 11, but that inserts a significant gap of several months from sermon 15 and that date is a weekday and a Monday, not a Tuesday, Durham's normal weekday for preaching.
	18–Mar	*(L) Rev. 20 #7. Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.* Sermons 17–42 with at least a break for the July communion, likely places Durham completing Song of Solomon in October or possibly November of 1655, unless there were significant breaks for some reason. Sermon 26 is noted as an afternoon sermon.
	25–Mar	*(L) Rev. 21 #1. Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.*
	1–Apr	*(L) Rev. 21 #2. Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.*
•	8–Apr	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.*
	15–Apr	*(L) Rev. 21 #3. Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.*
	22–Apr	*(L) Rev. 22 #1. Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.*
	29–Apr	*(L) Rev. 22 #2. Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.*

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
1655	6–May	*(L) Rev. 22 #3. Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.* In a letter of September 1, 1656, Baillie writes that Durham had a fine treatise on Revelation at that point, which he encouraged him to print. Baillie, 3.312. We know that Durham had a bad form of handwriting and that he preached without any notes, or at least from none useful for preserving a transcription. That leaves over a year from this estimated completion date to have compiled a text from the notes of his hearer(s) which Baillie could so characterize. Whether that indicates Durham had already begun the work of revision prior to that date is not clear, but given his heavy preaching schedule, he may well have already started the work at a slow pace, which carried through 1657, and into his illness in 1658. Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, 3.368.
•	13–May	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.* On April 26, 1655, John Carstares was transferred from ministering in the Outer Kirk to be co-pastor of the Inner Kirk with Durham. From this point, Durham possibly only handled the morning service each Lord's Day, preparing a sermon and lecture, but no longer tasked with preparing an afternoon sermon. See the Biography in this issue on page 212.
	20–May	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 1.* The lectures on the Ten Commandment are placed here instead of those on Canticles, because of Carstares' inexact recollection connecting them to the Sermons on Colossians 3, the best reconciliation being to place them as soon after the Revelation lectures as possible. See the Biography (page 213). The number of lectures is about 52, based on an average length of five of the manuscript Revelation lectures.
	27–May	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 2.*
	3–Jun	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 3.*
	10–Jun	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 4.*
•	17–Jun	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.*
	24–Jun	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 5.*
	1–Jul	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 6.*
	8–Jul	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 7.*
Tuesday	10–Jul	*Preparation sermon on Matthew 22:2–4.* See entry for 15–Jul.
	12–Jul	*Sermon on Matthew 11:16 prior to communion. Sermon on Matthew 22:11 prior to communion.*
Thursday		Though it apparently does not exist in MS, there is reference to a sermon having been preached by Durham on Matthew 11:16 prior to a communion, dated July 12, 1665 (*sic* 1655, see *61 Sermons*, p. [430]). MS GRA 3, New College. The reference may be wrong or he may have preached twice, because there is another sermon that may be his. MS Murray 38 records an unattributed sermon on Matthew 22:11 on a Thursday prior to communion. If Durham's, this may date here or to the April 1657 communion. There are also two published preparation sermons on 1 Corinthians 11:28, which may date to this communion or the next. *61 Sermons*, pp. 440, 453.
	15–Jul	*(CS) Matthew 22:4. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 8.* It is not clear if the practice would have been to skip the lecture for communion in leu of a sermon or something other than the regular topic. Here, it was assumed it was not skipped. The first of three communion services held in Glasgow from 1650–58 was held July of 1655. Durham preached a preparation sermon on Matthew 22:2–4, and an uncredited MS sermon dated July 15 on Matthew 22:4 appears in manuscript in MS Murray 38 (sermons by Durham, Carstares, Gray, etc.; this is item 19, the next to last item). Interestingly, in the published sermons in *Unsearchable Riches of Christ*, the prepration sermon is followed not by a communion sermon but by a sermon on Philippians 1:27 after the communion. Therefore, the sermon on verse 4 at communion may very well be the missing unpublished sermon.
•	22–Jul	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.*
	29–Jul	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 9.*
	5–Aug	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 10.*

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
1655	12–Aug	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 11.*
	19–Aug	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 12.*
	• 26–Aug	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.*
	2–Sept	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 13.* Alexander Brodie had come to Glasgow but missed the morning service. *The Diary of Alexander Brodie of Brodie* (1863), p.151.
Monday	3–Sep	Brodie heard Carstares preach on Rev. 3:12. *Diary,* Ibid.
Tuesday	4–Sep	Brodie heard Durham preach on Acts 24:16, which is likely one of the six sermons on that verse that appear in *Heaven upon Earth*, and this may indicate all of those sermons were preached in the Tuesday weekday service about this time. See *61 Sermons* (2017).
	9–Sep	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 14.*
	• 16–Sep	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. Andrew Gray preached a fast sermon*
	23–Sep	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 15.*
	30–Sep	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 16.*
	7–Oct	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 17.*
	14–Oct	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 18.*
	• 21–Oct	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42.*
	28–Oct	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 19.*
	4–Nov	*Canticles 8, Sermons 17–42. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 20.* As noted above, unless there were significant interruptions, the series on Canticles likely ended in October or November of 1655. There is no record of what may have been the topic of preaching over the next eighteen weeks before Durham began Isaiah 53, or interlaced, might have stretched the sermons on Canticles 8 to have ended closer to then. However, Howie notes two sets of sermons that once existed in MS, that could have fit here: Thirteen sermons on trusting and delighting in God, and three sermons on resisting the Holy Ghost, eight on quenching the Spirit, and five on Grieving the Spirit.
	11–Nov	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 21.*
	18–Nov	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 22.*
	• 25–Nov	*Unknown? Sermons 17–42.*
	2–Dec	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 23.*
	9–Dec	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 24.*
	16–Dec	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 25.*
	23–Dec	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 26.*
	• 30–Dec	*Unknown?.*
1656	6–Jan	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 27.*
	13–Jan	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 28.*
	20–Jan	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 29.*
	27–Jan	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 30.*
	• 3–Feb	*Unknown?* Andrew Gray died on February 8, 1656.
	10–Feb	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 31.*
	17–Feb	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 32.*
	24–Feb	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 33.*
	2–Mar	*Unknown? (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 34.*
	• 9–Mar	*Unknown?*

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
1656	16–Mar	(AM) Sermon 1: Isaiah 53:1. *(LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 35.* MS GEN 230 dates sermon 1 to March 15 which could be a misread or scribal error for 16. Another MS says sermon 1 was on March 6, which may also be a misread for 16. MS. Add. A. 90 Bodleian. March 16 aligns with sermon 7 which is dated by MS GEN 230 to April 27. Only seven of the seventy-two sermons are dated in MS GEN 230. After sermon 15, the remaining 57 sermons, if no further weeks were skipped other than those for communion, are estimated to have been completed in August of 1657.
	23–Mar	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 2. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 36.*
	30–Mar	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 3. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 37.*
	6–Apr	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 4. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 38.*
•	13–Apr	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 5.*
	20–Apr	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 2. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 39.*
	27–Apr	(AM) Sermon 7: Isaiah 53:1. *(LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 40.* MS GEN 230 dates Sermon 7 to this date.
	4–May	(AM) Sermon 8: Isaiah 53:1. *(LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 41.* MS GEN 230 dates Sermon 8 to this date.
	11–May	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 9. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 42.*
•	18–May	(AM) Sermon 10: Isaiah 53:1. MS GEN 230 dates Sermon 10 to this date.
	25–May	(AM) Sermon 11: Isaiah 53:1. *(LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 43.* MS GEN 230 dates Sermon 11 to this date.
	1–Jun	*Unknown. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 44.*
	8–Jun	*Unknown. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 45.* MS GEN 230 puts two weeks between Sermon 11 and Sermon 12. There was no General Assembly meeting, and these gaps are not easily explained. Baillie complains Durham's health was poor given his preparing the Revelation lectures for the press and for having to cover duties for both Patrick Gillespie and Robert MacWard for a year. Baillie, 3.368. It may be Carstares was taking full duties at times for the Inner-Kirk. For our purposes, the lecture is assumed to have been given and the sermon on some other topic.
	15–Jun	(AM) Sermon 12: Isaiah 53:1. *(LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 46.* MS GEN 230 dates Sermon 12 to this date.
•	22–Jun	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 13.*
	29–Jun	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 14. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 47.*
	6–Jul	(AM) Sermon 15: Isaiah 53:1. *(LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 48.* MS GEN 230 dates Sermon 15 to this date.
	13–Jul	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 16. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 49.*
	20–Jul	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 17. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 50.*
•	27–Jul	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 18.*
	3–Aug	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 19. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 51.*
	10–Aug	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 20. (LS) Ten Commandments, Lecture 52.* There were possibly more or less lectures than 52. The second table lectures are relatively brief. The first four commandments would have had a considerable series of lectures on each, while some of the second table commands possibly only one or two. The published lectures have had any clear divisions removed. Durham was said to have closely watched his hourglass, so the amount of material per lecture should be roughly the same, favoring the estimated 52 or so lectures, judging on the length of some of the manuscript lectures on Revelation.

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
1656	17–Aug	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 21. (LS) Canticles Lecture 1.* For the reasons already noted (see May 20, 1655), the lectures on Canticles are placed here immediately following those on the commandments. Again using some of the Revelation manuscript lectures as an average length, would make the Canticles material into about 52 lectures. As with those on the commandments, the divisions as discrete lectures are no longer present in the published lectures.
	24–Aug	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 22. (LS) Canticles Lecture 2.*
•	31–Aug	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 23.*
	7–Sep	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 24. (LS) Canticles Lecture 3.*
	14–Sep	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 25. (LS) Canticles Lecture 4.*
	21–Sep	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 26. (LS) Canticles Lecture 5.*
	28–Sep	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 27. (LS) Canticles Lecture 6.*
•	5–Oct	*(CS) Unknown communion sermon(s).* This is the second of three communions held during Durham's ministry. It is likely some material in *Unsearchable Riches of Christ* dates to this communion (6–7?). Sermon 4 may have been 1655 or 1656.
	12–Oct	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 28. (LS) Canticles Lecture 7.*
	19–Oct	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 29. (LS) Canticles Lecture 8.*
	26–Oct	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 30. (LS) Canticles Lecture 9.*
	2–Nov	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 31. (LS) Canticles Lecture 10.*
•	9–Nov	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 32.*
	16–Nov	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 33. (LS) Canticles Lecture 11.*
	23–Nov	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 34. (LS) Canticles Lecture 12.*
	30–Nov	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 35. (LS) Canticles Lecture 13.*
	7–Dec	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 36. (LS) Canticles Lecture 14.*
•	14–Dec	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 37.*
	21–Dec	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 38. (LS) Canticles Lecture 15.*
	28–Dec	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 39. (LS) Canticles Lecture 16.*
1657	4–Jan	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 40. (LS) Canticles Lecture 17.* The year 1657 may have been a year of declining health for James Durham. Andrew Gray, who served in the outer kirk, had died in February 1656, and Robert MacWard was not ordained to the Outer Kirk in replacement until September 1656. Baillie in retrospect likely referring at least to the year 1657, writes to Spang about the time of Durham's death, that Patrick Gillespie had been in London a year and MacWard sick also for a time in London, and their preaching duties had fallen on Durham, or at least those that did not require him in two places at once. Baillie, 3.368.
	11–Jan	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 41. (LS) Canticles Lecture 18.*
•	18–Jan	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 42.*
	25–Jan	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 43. (LS) Canticles Lecture 19.*
	1–Feb	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 44. (LS) Canticles Lecture 20.*
	8–Feb	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 45. (LS) Canticles Lecture 21.*
	15–Feb	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 46. (LS) Canticles Lecture 22.*
•	22–Feb	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 47.*
	1–Mar	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 48. (LS) Canticles Lecture 23.*
	8–Mar	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 49. (LS) Canticles Lecture 24.*
	15–Mar	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 50. (LS) Canticles Lecture 25.*
	22–Mar	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 51. (LS) Canticles Lecture 26.*
•	29–Mar	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 52.*
	5–Apr	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 53. (LS) Canticles Lecture 27.*
Tuesday	7–Apr	*Sermon 1 on Jeremiah 50:4–5. In preparation for the communion.* See below, Tuesday, April 14.

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
Thursday	9–Apr	*Sermon 2 on Jeremiah 50:4–5. In preparation for the communion.*
1657		See below, Tuesday, April 14.
	12–Apr	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 54. (LS) Canticles Lecture 28.*
Tuesday	14–Apr	Sermon 3 on Jeremiah 50:4–5. In preparation for the communion.
		MS Murray 38 records an April 14, 1657 sermon 3 on Jeremiah 50:4–5. The volume begins with a prior undated sermon 2 on the same verses. The first two sermons may have been preached on some day prior or on a prior Tuesday, Durham's regular weekday for preaching. These have been placed above during the prior week on Tuesday and Thursday. Because communions were so infrequent in Glasgow, and because this was also a two week observance on each Lord's Day, this may have called for a longer lead up of preparation prior to the week before the first observance on April 14.
Thursday	16–Apr	*A Thursday Preparation sermon before the coming communion on Matthew 22:11.*
		This was a Thursday fast in preparation for the communion, which had been appointed for two Lord's Days. A collection was also ordered in support of Saint Andrews on the fast day (*Extracts from the Records of The Burgh of Glasgow, 1630–1662* [1881], p. 361). The reason for the collection is not stated, but it was likely some local charitable need and not the burdens of the Cromwellian occupation, which all were under. MS Murray 38 contains this sermon, which is not dated but for the day, and because of the other sermons in the volume may have been from this communion occasion, either here on April 16, or it may have been preached on Thursday April 23, before the second communion on April 26. It is possible it belongs to one of the two other communions in 1655 or 1656.
	19–Apr	(CS) Sermon 4 on Jeremiah 50:4–5, The Perpetual Covenant. *(L) Canticles Lecture 29.*
		MS NRA(S)3822, Dundee Central Library, has the five undated sermons on Jeremiah 50. Sermons 1–3 were prior to the first communion service, sermon 4 at the service on the Lord's Day, and the fifth and final sermon on the Monday after the communion service.
Monday	20–Apr	Sermon 5 on Jeremiah 50:4–5.
	26–Apr	(CS) Matthew 26:28–29: The New Home in the Kingdom. *(L) Canticles Lecture 30.*
		MS NRA(S)3822 notes there is a sermon on Matthew 26:29 preached on the second Communion Sabbath. This is noted in *Unsearchable Riches of Christ* as on verses 28 and 29, with a Monday sermon on verse 29. The 1657 communion was the only one of the three seasons spread over two Lord's Days. It is assumed for our purposes that the lecture on Canticles still took place.
Monday	27–Apr	Sermon on Matthew 26:29.
		Unsearchable Riches of Christ, which generally does not contain dates, notes this sermon as preached on the Monday after the communion.
	• 3–May	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 55.*
	10–May	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 56. (LS) Canticles Lecture 31.*
	17–May	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 57. (LS) Canticles Lecture 32.*
	24–May	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 58. (LS) Canticles Lecture 33.*
	31–May	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 59. (LS) Canticles Lecture 34.*
	• 7–Jun	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 60.*
	14–Jun	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 61. (LS) Canticles Lecture 35.*
	21–Jun	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 62. (LS) Canticles Lecture 36.*
	28–Jun	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 63. (LS) Canticles Lecture 37.*
	5–Jul	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 64. (LS) Canticles Lecture 38.*
	• 12–Jul	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 65.*
	19–Jul	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 66. (LS) Canticles Lecture 39.*
	26–Jul	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 67. (LS) Canticles Lecture 40.*
	2–Aug	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 68. (LS) Canticles Lecture 41.*
	9–Aug	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 69. (LS) Canticles Lecture 42.*

Year/Day	Date	Sermon, Communion (CS), Lecture (L), Undated Lecture Series (LS), Notes and Sources
	• 16–Aug	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 70.*
1657	23–Aug	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 71. (LS) Canticles Lecture 43.*
	30–Aug	*(AM) Isaiah 53, Sermon 72. (LS) Canticles Lecture 44.*
	6–Sept	*(AM) Luke 10:41–42, Sermon 1. (LS) Canticles Lecture 45.* It is said after finishing Isaiah 53, that Durham could not get a text to mind other than Luke 10:41–42, "Martha, Martha." It is known that he preached a series on this text on the one thing needful. *Analecta*, 1.167–168. Howie lists that there were eight sermons in the series (John Howie, *Lives of the Scottish Covenanters* [rpr. Greenville, SC: A Press, 1981], p. 216). If there continued to be skipped weeks these could have finished out the year. However, since by February he was very sick and confined to his room, it may be he was no longer preaching by December 1657 or certainly by January 1658. He spent the next months completing the Revelation lectures for publication and writing a manuscript for the *Dying Man's Testament or A Treatise Concerning Scandal*.
	13–Sep	*(AM) Luke 10:41–42, Sermon 2. (LS) Canticles Lecture 46.*
	• 20–Sep	*(AM) Luke 10:41–42, Sermon 3.*
	27–Sep	*(AM) Luke 10:41–42, Sermon 4. (LS) Canticles Lecture 47.*
	4–Oct	*(AM) Luke 10:41–42, Sermon 5. (LS) Canticles Lecture 48.*
	11–Oct	*(AM) Luke 10:41–42, Sermon 6. (LS) Canticles Lecture 49.*
	18–Oct	*(AM) Luke 10:41–42, Sermon 7. (LS) Canticles Lecture 50.*
	• 25–Oct	*(AM) Luke 10:41–42, Sermon 8.*
	1–Nov	*(AM) Unknown. (LS) Canticles Lecture 51.*
	8–Nov	*(AM) Unknown. (LS) Canticles Lecture 52.*
Wednesday	23–Dec	On this date, a call was issued to Durham to serve the university in Aberdeen, but it appears the matter was rendered moot by his illness. By this point, he had already decided and told his wife Margaret, that he believed he could do no more work in Glasgow. Wodrow, *Analecta*, 2.140.
1658 Monday	15–Feb	On this date, James Durham wrote a letter to David Dickson asking for advice about the Aberdeen call, though he was not sure he had any more life left. Durham was confined to his bedchamber at this point (Baillie, 3.368).
Tuesday	15–Jun	On this date Samuel Rutherford wrote a letter to James Durham, which he presumably received before his death. "Sir, I would ere now have written to you, had I not known that your health, weaker and weaker, could scarce permit you to hear or read. I need not speak much. The Way ye know, and have preached to others the skill of the Guide, and the glory of the home beyond death. And when He saith, 'Come and see,' it will be your gain to obey, and go out and meet the Bridegroom. What accession is made to the higher house of His kingdom should not be our loss, though it be real loss to the church of God. But we count one way, and the Lord counteth another way. He is infallible, and the only wise God, and needeth none of us. Had he needed the staying in body of Moses and the prophets, He could have taken another way. Who dare bid you cast your thoughts back on wife or children, when He hath said, 'Leave them to Me, and come up hither'? Or who can persuade you to die or live, as if that were arbitrary to us, and not His alone who hath determined the number of your months? If so it seem good to Him, follow your Forerunner and Guide. It is an unknown land to you, who were never there before; but the land is good, and the company before the throne desirable, and He who sitteth on the throne is His lone a sufficient heaven."
Friday	25–Jun	On this date after his long decline from Consumption (Tuberculosis), James Durham died, age thirty-six. Wodrow records that Durham told someone that if he had ten years longer to live, he would study for 9 years to preach the tenth. *Analecta*, 1.p. 168.

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British Library. Add MS 43785. Sermons by Congregationalist Preachers. Occasion not identified; Preached at his "own house." Circa ca. March 25, 1660–March 24, 1661. "Sermon on Hosea 14:8," ff. 48r-58v. The GEMMS researcher notes "The preacher seems most likely to have been the James Durham who preached at St. Mungo's, Glasgow; however, as he died in 1658, this would mean that [William] Durant [the note taker] was copying a sermon he had heard or received several years earlier." This MS requires examination to determine if it is possibly Durham's or someone else's.

Dundee Central Library. MS Sermons of James Durham. NRA(S)3822. National Register of Archives catalogue reference: NRA 42626. Five Sermons on Jeremiah 50:4, 5. Seven Sermons on Revelation 14:13.

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_____. MS 16475. 92 folios. "Notebook containing notes in an unidentified hand of lectures on scripture given apparently by Samuel Rutherford, Principal of Saint Andrews followed by sermons on various texts with an index." The first part of this volume contains lectures on various texts of Scripture by Samuel Rutherford from 1653–1654. The second part contains sermons presumably from the same period but the preachers are mostly not identified. One is clearly identified as Durham's Glasgow Synod sermon, and the first text of Matthew 16:24 is a known Durham text.

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Editorial. **Continued from Page 2.**

With that by way of preface, we are pleased to present in this eighteenth issue of *The Confessional Presbyterian* a fine collection of articles on the life, theology, and influence of R L. Dabney. These cover the areas of Dogmatic & Polemical Theology (Scott Cook on the Doctrine of God, Nick Willborn on Imputation/Original Sin, and Frank J. Smith on "Sensualism"), Historical Theology (Sean Morris on Dabney as Historian) and Personal Piety & Applied Theology (Peter Sanlon on Meditation, Russell St. John on Preaching, and Zachary Garris on Education).

However, in addition, not all of the material in this issue pertains to Robert Lewis Dabney, as the table of contents shows. The selection of reviews and articles is, as always, more wide-ranging than the main cover might suggest. We also encourage readers to look at our regular features at the back of the issue, including a new Psalm setting by Todd Ruddell, and a fresh translation of William Ames' *Prolegomenon in Psalmum Secundum* by Michael Hunter.

Notwithstanding this diversity of content, this issue is primarily devoted to considering Dabney. To ignore Dabney would be to ignore history, especially the history of American Presbyterianism, in which he played such an outsized role. Peter Sanlon, while acknowledging Dabney's faults, writes this: "We seek to read with discernment and grace, recognizing that in centuries to come, our own views on significant areas of life and theology may become repugnant to our progeny. We, too, are men of our times and cannot be sure we have escaped and refuted all errors present in our generation." Let us bear this in mind as we look to a man who, as one apostolic historian said of David, "after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption" (Acts 13:36).

Jonathan Lair Master (on behalf of the editors)▪

Whither Robert Lewis Dabney. **Continued from Page 10.**

his dramas routinely display this conflictedness. The literary person therefore recognizes the imperfections of others as similar to his own in some respects, and the literary person recognizes also the remaining reflections of God's image in others, as he also does in himself. The non-literary person "cancels" those in whom he finds flaws, and refuses to benefit from his virtues. Ironically, however, cancellers end up cancelling themselves, by reducing the fullness of human experience to discourse and fellowship only with those who are identical to us; a culture that cancels Robert Lewis Dabney cancels itself, by robbing itself of sympathetic knowledge of such a remarkable person.

One blind spot of our present cultural moment for which Dabney might be a partial remedy is our expectation of specialization, whether in ourselves or others. To encounter Robert Lewis Dabney via his own writings is to encounter a person with surprising knowledge in a variety of disciplines, an individual capable of interacting intelligently with a broad range of human experience and concern. Yet he also had sophisticated knowledge of many specialized fields, even publishing penetrating studies of text-critical matters. Hardly any sphere of important human activity escaped his intelligent appraisal, and perhaps that breadth of vision, rather than any specific excellence in any particular field, could be—if we would permit it—Dabney's greatest legacy for us.▪

R.L. Dabney as Churchman and Ecclesial Historian. **Continued from Page 102.**

(deacon and pastor-elder), where every elder is functionally identical in his service within the congregation. For Dabney, the existence of the role of ruling elder is assumed and is not up for question, but rather what is discussed is what the nature of his office should be.[87] Dabney, in agreement with Thornwell, believes that both preachers and elders are presbyters,[88] but observes a distinction in function between the preaching elders and the ruling elders.[89] Dabney speaks of three functions of church officers: preaching, inspection, and deaconship, and, along with that, proffers three distinct names for office-bearers in the church: preaching elder, ruling elder, and deacons.[90] Brown notes how Dabney writes about "the official execution of these three great functions "preacher, inspector, and deacon."[91] Brown goes on to allege that George Knight attempts to artificially "squeeze" Dabney into a two-office view when, in fact, what Dabney articulates in his "Theories" essay is essentially a three-office classification of church office: two orders of presbyters,[92] such that preaching and ruling are two distinct offices,[93] not two orders within the same office.[94]

Whether Brown is correct in his assessment is beyond the purview of this particular article, though his thesis might be worth some follow-up research, evaluation, and possible rebuttal. As a passing observation, this author has reason to question the conclusiveness of the argument given the way that Dabney takes the time to defend Thornwell's view (whose convictions on the matter are widely regarded as the classic two-office articulation), even minorly rearranging Thornwell's word-choice in order to demonstrate the trivial

87. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.134.
88. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.150.
89. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.122, 133.
90. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.123.
91. This argument made by Brown, *Order in the Offices*, 285, citing Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.154.
92. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.133.
93. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.122, 154.
94. Brown, *Order in the Offices*, p. 285.

nature of the Repertory's disparagement of Thornwell's view. Over against the Repertory, Dabney invokes a Thornwellian defense, incorporating both the ruling elder and the preaching elder as both members of the same office: "Well, then, let us state it thus: 'There is one class of presbyters embracing two orders, the preaching elder and the ruling elder.' Where, now, is the objection? This supposition shows that, even if it had any correctness, it would be merely a verbal quibble."[95] To this author, Dabney seems firmly within the camp of the two-office proponents. If he is, as Brown intimates, actually advocating a three-office view, he would seem to be doing so unintentionally or non-consciously.

In any event, Brown's argument is a line of thought in Dabney scholarship that is relevant and warrants the attention of readers and those with more than a passing interest in Dabney, Presbyterian church polity, and the distinctives of Southern Presbyterianism.

Conclusion

There can be little doubt that Dabney is widely regarded for his towering intellect, incisive analysis, and thorough-going loyalty to confessional Reformed and Presbyterian theological commitments. He is admired for his contributions to nineteenth century dogmatics. His Systematic Theology, while being largely the work of transcription thanks to the efforts of diligent students, is still widely read, its insights availed by many. His works on education (and theological education in particular) continue to enjoy extensive readership and appreciation. But his tenure as a professor of dogmatics reflects only the latter portion of his service at Union Seminary. His earlier years in service as a professor of Church History and Polity were not unremarkable, and his published writings on these subjects continue to serve the church with their tightly-reasoned arguments, biblical rationale, and thoughtful analysis. Surely this is why many of his writings continue to enjoy widespread consultation and have ongoing relevance to the church some 125 years after his death. Dabney's view that ecclesiastical history is the "crown jewel" of theological studies and in a seminary's curriculum is a view not likely shared by many in our day, but one which is worth serious consideration. And in the ongoing debates regarding the nature of church office and the way churchly office is expressed in the life of Reformed and Presbyterian churches, Dabney's thought continues to be relevant. It is not ground-breaking scholarship or fresh new theological insights which make Dabney's writings in these two subjects so useful, but rather his prowess of mind and pen: the thorough nature of his consideration (including the views of his opponents), the logic of his reasoning, and the unexpectedly succinct manner by which he is able to give treatment to such a vast topic in a way that is surprisingly accessible, comprehensive, and, at the same time, intellectually formidable.

One can hope that Dabney's writings on church history and polity will continue to inspire future generations to take up the noble cause of serious attention to biblical church government, and, perhaps not a few might come to see the great dividends that are rendered when one views historical theology as that "crown jewel" of theological studies!▪

Mandate or Warrant? **Continued from Page 156.**

according to the law of our fathers." Under the famous Jewish rabbinical doctor Gamaliel, Paul studied, learned, practiced, and championed the teaching of the sect of the Pharisees and their scribes. In the following chapter, recording the next day's proceedings of Paul's trial before the Sanhedrin, he proclaimed, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees" (Acts 23:6b). Likewise, he wrote to the Church in Philippi, "If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless" (Phil. 3:4b–6). The profile of himself that Paul reported is characterized by fervent zeal for his "school." Prior to his conversion on the road to Damascus recorded in Acts 9, Paul was a model student and alumnus of the school of Gamaliel. However, like the many relationships which existed within the band of disciples who followed Jesus, the example of Paul's relationship to Gamaliel is a far cry from modern-day grade schools, being more akin to seminaries, internship experiences, apprenticeships, or perhaps certain types of undergraduate education.[66] As intimated above in the observations of Dabney, Machen, and others, the home is the only setting biblically mandated for the education of children. However, the absence of a biblical mandate for extrafamilial schools does not entail a prohibition against Christian schools. On the contrary, prudential considerations may warrant the family's enlistment of assistance from Christian schools to fulfill the biblical mandate for Christian education.

Conclusion

As stated at the outset of this essay, there is no explicit or inferential biblical mandate for Christian schooling. However, there is a clear biblical mandate for Christian education ensured by and radiating out from the Christian home. Parents have the option of taking on the challenging—but rewarding—task of providing formal education to their children in the setting of the home. There are more resources and "helps"

95. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," *Discussions*, 2.133.

66. See Clark, *A Christian Philosophy of Education*, p. 200.

today than ever before for the homeschooling father or mother. Alternatively, there is a prudential warrant for the creation and employment of Christian schools as defined above, in collaboration with the church and other Christian families. This prudential warrant is informed by biblical wisdom and established on the grounds of what might rightly be termed "natural theology" or "the light of nature" in connection with concerns of educational efficiency and effectiveness. Though there may be no biblical mandate as-such for Christian schools, it is foolhardy to deny the prudential warrant that exists for taking advantage of Christian schools in many situations.

One option that parents seeking to be faithful to Scripture must avoid at all costs is the relinquishing of children to any school—public or private—that seeks to be non-sectarian (i.e., non-Christian) except under the most extenuating of circumstances.[67] The counsel of God is clear. The central concern of a covenant child's education is the cultivation of Christian character and spirituality through loving discipline, instruction, and nurture. The family is God's appointed society for the nurture of children, and the church is God's appointed society for the guidance and assistance of the family in said nurture. The family may receive help from extrafamilial educational societies (i.e., Christian schools). However, pastors and other leaders in the church must be careful not to suggest that there is a biblical mandate for Christian schooling. To do so would be to infringe upon Christian liberty and to insinuate that home-based private education is somehow sub-Christian. On the other hand, proponents of homeschooling must recognize that faithful Christian schools provide an allowable and desirable alternative to public schools, especially when homeschooling is not an option for one reason or another. To echo the language of a document with which all American schoolchildren should be familiar, prudence, indeed, may dictate that Christian parents should not reject Christian schooling "for light and transient causes."▪

Our Visionary Architecture for Foreign Missions **Continued from Page 170.**

> We believe that fulfillment of this mission is based on harmony, mutual trust and effective, creative cooperation between the MTW committee and the churches and presbyteries of our denomination.

If our missions work is not well-aligned, how can we expect to build orderly Presbyterian churches? Clearly, the intent of the Manual is that a well-coordinated missions effort (internally) is necessary for orderly relationships with other churches (externally), including those we participate in planting. Hence the leader of MTW is not a "director" but a "coordinator." Biblically-ordered mission work is objectively the most effective and the most efficient. Many of the most critical missiological issues that we face today are resolved in this form of "government we humbly believe to be according to the pattern shown in the Mount."

The Manual ended with an even stronger and broader affirmation of alignment:

> This program can maintain the peace and purity of our church and it can unite us in the great work of world missions.[26]

I would take this a giant step further to say that presbyterian missions will perfect the peace and purity of the churches we plant and strengthen, uniting the PCA with them in "the great work of world missions."

Summary

To close, I will summarize the principal points of the Manual's philosophy of ministry and relate them to issues that many PCA churches and presbyteries are facing today. The Manual:

1. Establishes MTW's identity in the PCA's Constitution and history (over against para-church models and current "best practices"). The missions program of every PCA church would benefit from articulating similar connections to our Constitution and history to provide a unifying grounding.

2. Fosters a zealous commitment to a deeply theological approach to missions (over against prevailing pragmatism, ecumenism, and doctrinal casualness). This is a useful reference for the missions programs of local churches.

3. Promotes a strong emphasis on what is completely unique about MTW—the authority by which its missions work is done (the church rather than agencies). Recognizing that the church is an organic whole with Christ as head, leads to a distinct view of power and accountability for ministry. Presbyterian goals can only be accomplished by this Presbyterian means. Organism cannot be produced by machinery. This is the operational core of any missions program. Surely a greater awareness that the whole church "is inherently the missionary community" would stoke the missionary fire of every local church and presbytery.

67. In the context of twenty-first century America, such circumstances may include a child having severe handicaps or disabilities for which there is no possibility of accommodation in either the home or available Christian schools.

26. This sentence is not in the current version of the Manual.

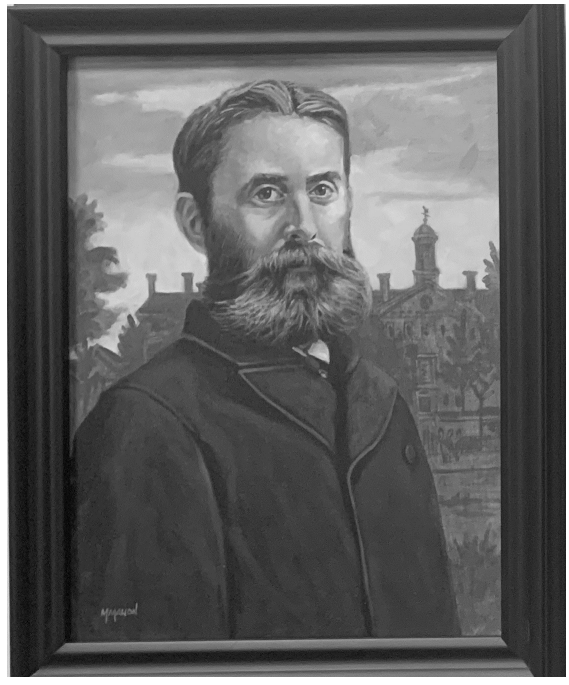
4. Confines the authority of MTW to a coordinating authority (over against parachurch or secular top-down models). Though limited, this coordinating authority is crucial. These principles are useful for local churches as they consider how to collaborate with other churches and what their role is vis-à-vis that of MTW (or a parachurch sending agency).

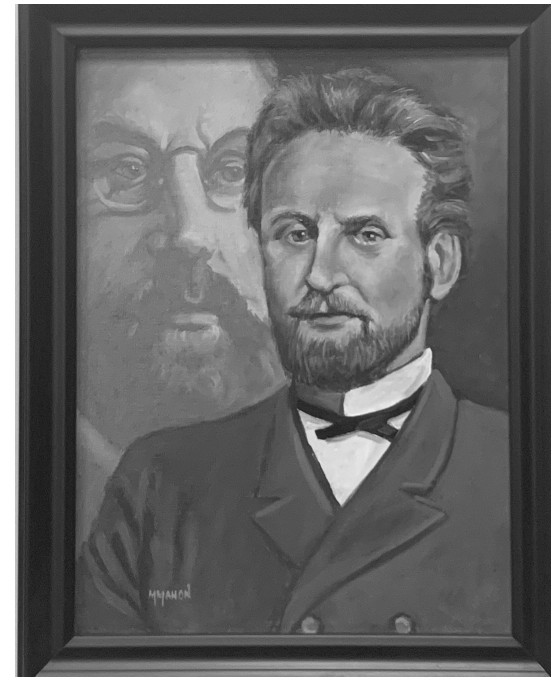
5. Presses the urgent planting and strengthening of (specifically) Presbyterian churches as the missiological priority and singular sharp focus for all of MTW's work. Every Presbyterian church and presbytery struggles with how to express their Presbyterianism in their missions program. The Manual offers some compelling arguments and useful language.

6. Streamlines sending missionaries by empowering presbyteries and local churches to do what only they can do effectively. Just as the solution to bad parenting is not the State, so too the solution for slow progress in missions is not the agency. The Manual is a (proleptic) sounding of the trumpet in every presbytery and church to rise to the challenge.

The Manual is brief, non-technical, readable, and practical. It was clearly intended to be absorbed not only by GA commissioners, but by missionaries and sending bodies alike. If you are in search of a concise Presbyterian missiology, this is it. If you are a PCA member and sense a call to missions or to serving on a missions committee, this is a necessary unifying resource. If you are recovering from a distasteful missions experience, you will identify with this document that set out to answer the questions, "what has gone wrong in missions and what must we do to get back on the right track?" We owe a great debt to those who drafted and crafted a unique and effective architectural vision for the PCA's foreign missions. ▪

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Most of the portraits painted by Mike Mahon that have appeared on the covers of *The Confessional Presbyterian* now reside as a collection in the Van Voorhis Board Room at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. "The Van Voorhis Board Room houses a special collection of historic books, periodicals, original artwork (featured on the covers of The Confessional Presbyterian Journal and books published by Naphtali Press), and American Presbyterian denominational records." Back issues of the journal that remain in print for issues 16 and prior may be ordered from www.cpjournal.com, and issues 17 forward at https://gpts.edu/cpjournal/

The Editors

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Wayne Sparkman, Th.M. Mr. Sparkman is director of the The Historical Center of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) which serves as the archives of record for four conservative Presbyterian denominations: (1) the Presbyterian Church in America [1973–ongoing]; (2) the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod [1965–1982]; (3) the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (General Synod or New Light) [1833–1965]; and (4) the Bible Presbyterian Church, Columbus Synod/Evangelical Presbyterian Church [1956–1965].

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Editorial Assistance: The editors thank for assistance with this eighteenth issue, Carl Betsch for Psallo and Reuben Sheneni for proofreading.

Errata for Previous Issues

Issue 16 (2020): The reader will kindly note the following correction to page 60: At "To these Knight adds three more," points 1, 2, 3, should read 6, 7, 8.

Issue 17 (2021): Correct footnote 58 on page 147 to read: See the response to the seventh Frequently Asked Question here: "Who We Are," Liberti, accessed August 19, 2021, https://liberti.org/who-we-are.▪



Top photograph: New Providence Presbyterian Church, Brownsburg, Rockbridge County, Virginia, built in 1859. A Greek Revival style brick building, it looks similar to the churches noted previously in this issue (pp. 54, 90), and is thought to have also been designed by Dabney. It is also in the National Register of Historic Places. Public domain photograph. Bottom photograph, the "Dabney House," in Westmerton, a house of Italianate design built in 1856 (National Register of Historic Places, part of Hampden-Sydney College Historic District). Photograph by David Hoffman (https://www.flickr.com/photos/universalpops/6565423309), reproduced here under a Creative Commons license (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/). The photograph originally was in color and has been cropped in order to fit this space. "In 1856, the election of an additional professor required the building of another house. Dr. Dabney was made chairman of the building committee. He gave the Seminary, as a free gift, eight acres of land on which the house was built: he drew all the plans, and superintended the building of this, the fourth residence" [for professors]. Johnson, *Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, p. 144.