EDITORIAL

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the publication of C.S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce*. Written in the aftermath of the Second World War, the bleak townscape in which the book begins readily evokes what I imagine to be the drab and grimy contours of post-war London.

The narrator of this fictional tour of the 'Valley of the Shadow of Life' (or is it 'Death'?) is Lewis himself, writing himself into the story. A bus ride out of the dismal town brings him to an expansive glade, filled with possibilities and impossibilities. There he witnesses a variety of conversations between his fellow passengers and those who have come to meet them. About halfway through the book, he acquires a 'guide'—for someone has come to meet him, too, none other than George MacDonald (1824–1905), the Scottish author and Congregational minister. In the story, they move off together, observing the choices made that take individuals either to 'heaven' or 'hell'. As the book finishes, Lewis follows MacDonald's instruction: 'Ye are only dreaming. And if ye come to tell of what ye have seen, make it plain that it was a dream. See ye make it very plain.'[1] (Worth noting in passing that the narrative ploy of employing a dream is one that Lewis shares with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* as well as Dante's *Divine Comedy*—of which, more below).

I'm quite sure the time span from the publication of *The Great Divorce* to my first reading it was significantly smaller than the period from that reading to today. However many times I've re-read it over those years, I find there is always more to appreciate. I remember being puzzled by the title itself, although Lewis did supply the clues fairly liberally. In the first place, there is the epigraph provided on the title page ascribed to George MacDonald, which runs in part: 'There is no heaven with a little of hell in it...'.[2] The quote comes from MacDonald's reflection on Matthew 5:26 which, in the Authorized Version, runs: 'Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.' It was a favourite of MacDonald's, capturing something of the severe mercies which God uses to drive the penitent to himself. There is no compatibility of light with darkness. While illuminating the title—and certainly signalling the main line of the narrative that follows—it stops short of explaining it.

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1 C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (Glasgow: Collins, 1972; first published by Geoffrey Bles, 1946), pp. 116-17.

2 George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons, Second Series* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1885), p. 124.

Lewis provides that explanation in the Preface: 'Blake wrote the Marriage of Heaven and Hell. If I have written of their Divorce, [this is because] … the attempt to make that marriage is perennial.' William Blake (1757–1827) produced his influential but obscure vision around the years 1790–1793, with the significance of its historical context in the upheavals of the Age of Revolution widely noted. Whatever Blake's obscurities, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* asserts that 'Without contraries there is no progression'. Truth and wisdom are found in hell, while angels and devils seem indistinguishable. Against this, Lewis pushes back.

There is yet another influence shaping *The Great Divorce*. It is signalled at various points, none so obvious as an epigraph or preface acknowledgement, but clear all the same. At the meeting of the narrator with his guide, there is a moment of 'autobiography'. As Lewis-the-narrator explains to MacDonald the deep significance his writings had in bringing Lewis to faith, he likens MacDonald's *Phantastes* to 'what the first sight of Beatrice had been to Dante: *Here begins the New Life*.' (p. 60) While referencing *La Vita Nuova*, the association also signals the relationship of *The Great Divorce* with the *Divine Comedy*, completed only towards the end of Dante's life (1265–1321). And one notices that the second conversation that Lewis overhears after disembarking from the bus, well before he meets MacDonald, involves a cleric and a bishop, which concludes with the latter returning to the bus—and to hell. Not unlike Dante's *Hell*, then, populated with its share of clerics, bishops, and even popes.

These echoes are not mere flourishes. Writing to William Kinter, an American professor of English Literature, in 1953, Lewis points out that

> the bus driver in the Divorce is certainly, and consciously, modelled on the angel at the gates of Dis [in Dante's *Inferno*], just as the meeting of the 'Tragedian' with his wife is consciously modelled on that of Dante & Beatrice at the end of the *Purgatorio*: i.e. it is the same predicament, only going wrong. I intended readers to spot these resemblances: so you may go to the top of the class![3]

I'm afraid my naïve reading falls far short of Kinter's perceptiveness, and a score in relation to Lewis's intention would leave me near the bottom of the class.

My marking this anniversary in this way isn't because *The Great Divorce* registers especially as a landmark in Christian literature. Rather, it is because it retains a strong relevance for the Western church and its embeddedness in the remnants of a cultural Christianity—a 'perennial'

[3] C.S. Lewis, *Collected Letters, Volume III: Narnia, Cambridge and Joy 1950–1963*, ed. by Walter Hooper (London: HarperCollins, 2006), pp. 313-14.

problem, as Lewis himself observes. In *The Great Divorce*, Lewis repeatedly reinforces the notion that Christian faith is deeply inimical to large swathes of modern popular culture. That conversation with the bishop mentioned earlier is telling: the 'free play of inquiry' has become an end in itself, in which speculation has replaced the gospel. Lewis sketches an impressive portrait of a form of godliness that denies its power. In different forms, this displacement of the Creator with creaturely fancies marks each of the scenarios along the way. Much as the characters in Lewis's 'dream' attempt to bring their favourite bit of hell into heaven, so too many of the world's fashions are welcomed into the life of the church, with their resultant distortions and perversions.

There is an added complexity here, one often raised when these themes are discussed. Christians are to be 'in' the world, but not 'of' the world (cf. John 17). The challenge in maintaining proximity without likeness is evident in the fervour of Jesus' prayer. One might see an irony (indeed, this is part of the aim) in outlining the (select!) range of influences and allusions touched on above. Obviously Lewis is deeply embedded in a literary world that informs the shape of, and lends force and depth to, his own writing. However, it's worth noting here that, almost without exception, the precursors Lewis is drawing on each had a 'moral', as is the case with *The Great Divorce* itself; they intended to serve a higher purpose of bringing gospel truth the strengthen those on the path of faith, and to warn those wandering away from it. In much of the Western church's aping of cultural expressions today, I doubt this is the case.

As Dorothy Sayers puts it in relation to Dante, this writing 'comes home poignantly to us who have so recently rediscovered the problem of evil, the problem of power, and the ease with which our most God-like imaginings are "betrayed by what is false within".[4] As the cultural pressures on the church to capitulate to social norms mounts, we do well with Lewis to remember MacDonald's words, that in heaven there 'is no plan to retain this or that of the devil in our hearts or our pockets. Out Satan must go, every hair and feather.'

[4] *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri the Florentine. Cantica I: Hell*, trans. by Dorothy L. Sayers (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1949), p. 10.

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Confident Faith and Today's Persecuted Church
Finlayson Memorial Lecture, 2015

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TRADITIONS OF TOLERANCE AND FREEDOM[1]

I want to begin with a story. A few years ago I was in Iran, and I had a meeting with some government officials. I was wondering what my opening gambit should be. I thought I'd start with Cyrus. And the reason was that at that time the British Museum had loaned the Cyrus Cylinder to the National Museum in Tehran. So I commented on this, and I began with my Iranian interlocutors by saying what a great tradition of tolerance the Iranian people had, going all the way back to Cyrus, who had of course enabled the Jewish people to return to their homeland, and so on. The chairman on the other side was looking at me rather impassively throughout this. When I'd finished he said, 'Bishop, we are not interested in the past. We are only interested in the future.' Well, I thought that was a great pity, because if people are not interested in their past, what can they say about their future? But it did alert me to the point that in so many different cultures and even religious traditions there are elements of freedom and of tolerance which are sometimes denied by these traditions, especially today.

In relationship to India, and the new kind of intolerance that is emerging there, I was reminded of the King Ashoka who was a great warrior king and the first to unite what we now know as India under his rule. But then he became a Buddhist, and he erected pillars all over India which are still there, proclaiming freedom of belief for the citizens of his kingdom. Well, there's another tradition. Coming closer to home, the so-called 'Edict of Milan'—which was neither an edict, nor had anything to do with Milan—is often taken in church history as a charter for tolerance for Christianity in the Roman Empire. But of course it was much more than that. It was actually an edict about freedom of belief, and for all the citizens of the Roman Empire, East and West, at that time.

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[1] Delivered on 13 April 2015 at St Silas Church, Glasgow. This version has been lightly revised for the sake of publication, but otherwise retains the informal style of presentation.

I sometimes in my conversations with Muslim friends remind them of what is called the Constitution of Medina. This is when the prophet of Islam arrived in Medina and became both a temporal ruler as well as a religious leader. He inaugurated this Consitution of Medina which gave equal rights to Jews, Muslims, and others in Medina. There were at that time very large Jewish communities in Medina, much older than the Muslim presence, and it is true that this arrangement did not last very long. The story of the Medinan Jews is a very tragic one. Nevertheless, you could say that this was the constitution of the first Islamic state. When people say to me in different parts of the world as they do, 'We are going to have an Islamic State', I say to them, 'Will it be like the first one? And if not, why not?' So at least there can be some discussion about what is the meaning of an Islamic state.

This year is the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, another delcaration of freedom and justic e for the people of England as it was then—I don't know what the Scottish equivalent would be, or whether Scotland ever accepted Magna Carta as a charter for itself. It would be interesting to know. And then of course the last century produced a plethora of declarations: the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, the European Convention, etc., all of which recognized not just freedom to believe, but freedom to manifest your belief, freedom to observe your belief in public and in private, and so on.

WHY THEY ARE DENIED

Now the point is, that with all of this background we still have a world where freedom to believe, freedom to manifest your belief, freedom to worship even, and freedom to witness—all of these are widely denied. So how do we square this particular circle?

And the reasons why these freedoms are denied also vary: they're not the same reason. So, for instance, there is still good old fashioned tyrrany. In a place like Eritrea, that is the reason for the wide-spread persecution of Christians in that country. It began with the persecution of evangelical Christians, and the Orthodox and the Catholics kept silent. Then the Orthodox patriarch disappeared. And then the persecution started with the Catholics as well. So there is a lesson there: that if one part of the communities being persecuted remains quiet for our own strategic reasons, that's not a very wise thing to do because it will come to us also. But Eritrea is a good example of just personal tyranny resulting in a denial of freedom for believers of different kinds.

There is still a persecution that arises out of ideology. So Marxism is more or less dead in Europe, but is not dead in China. China works on the

basis of a capitalist economic system, but its political and social system is still heavily governed by Marxism. Whilst some parts of the church, particularly the officially recognized parts of the church, have more freedom now, there is still harassment, exile, restrictions for the underground church, both in its evangelical and pentecostal forms, and in the Catholic church which still remains loyal to the Vatican. As a bishop, I developed a particular empathy for some Catholic bishops in China who have been imprisoned for the whole of their episcopate. That's difficult to imagine, but it's true. So ideology remains a reason for the denial of freedom of belief in some parts of the world. China is a very good example.

But we have now in the West also a secular totalitarianism—this is probably the right word for it. Yesterday we were being told in the Sunday papers here in Glasgow that anyone who does not agree with the homosexual agenda should have charitable status withdrawn from them. This is not an example of secular tolerance! Peter Hitchens—the brother of Christoper Hitchens, the very active atheist who died recently—is himself a Christian and a journalist, a very trenchant journalist, but he spent seventeen years in the Soviet Union as a journalist. He has said in his very interesting book, *The Rage against God*, that secularism leads to totalitarianism. There is no example of secularism leading to recognition of freedom for people who don't agree with its agenda. Whether we question that theoretically or not, practically this seems increasingly to be the case in the West, that the secular attempt to win equality or freedom for certain groups does not necessarily mean equality or freedom for groups of believers and respect for their conscience and religious accommodation for them at their place of work.

FREEDOM AND THE WORLD OF ISLAM TODAY

Having said all of that, Rehman Chishti, the Muslim MP for Gillingham which is in what used to be my diocese, has said that 80% of the persecution of Christians is happening in the Islamic world. That is a Muslim MP saying this, and I think when he says it, we have to take it seriously. What are the reasons for it? The reasons are very complex, and I can't go in to all of them. But just to take Sunni extremism that is becoming more and more widespread throughout the Islamic world, its agenda is actually quite simple. It is the restoration of the Caliphate, so what the Islamic State has done is simply a concretization of an aspiration amongst most Sunni people. It is the primacy of the Ummah, of the Islamic people worldwide, which is why young people born in Britain are going to fight in Syria. We will continue to experience this, because it is the Ummah

that is primary, and any loyalty to the nation-state must be quite a bit down the priority agenda for these people.

The imposition of Sharia in the way that Sunni extremism understands it, that is without reference historically to how Sharia actually developed, and the restrictions around it in the course of history by various kingdoms and rulers and even the Ottoman caliph—so it is strictly speaking a fundamentalist view of Sharia, which has very rarely in Islamic history actually been practiced. But out of that, then, comes an interpretation of the place of non-Muslims in an Islamic polity. So if you look at Sharia in that way, the only place that non-Muslims can have in such a polity is that of a *dhimmi*, of second-class citizens who have to pay tax. The choice is—I think Islamic State is right to follow its logic—either you pay the *jizya*, the tax, or you accept Islam, or you emigrate. Those are choices. And those choices strictly speaking in Sharia are only for Christians and Jews. So that was not the choice for the Yezidis in Iraq, for example. For them it was either accept Islam, emigrate, or face the consequences.

That's another point on the agenda, the fifth point is of course the recovery of lands lost to Islam. Now, which ones are they? The whole of the Iberian peninsula, for example. A very liberal Muslim friend of mine recently wrote an article bewailing the loss of the Cordoba mosque and its new persona as a cathedral, forgetting conveniently that it had been a church before it became a mosque! And this is someone certainly by no means extremist in her thinking. This is also of course the root of the Israeli-Palestinian question. Of course there are questions about justice for the Palestinian people, there are questions about how Jew and Arab, or Jew, Christian, and Muslim are to live together in the land—all of that. But the fundamental issue now is very much: here is a land that had been conquered by Muslims and is no longer Muslim. And until that question is addressed on every side there will not be any enduring solution to this problem.

So those are some of the reasons why Rehman Chishti's figure of 80% of the persecution of Christians taking place in the Islamic world has to be taken seriously.

A CONFIDENT FAITH?

If that is how it is, what are the issues that arise for us in terms of persecution? Now, the question of a 'confident faith' which is in our title—it's the theme for this conference and also for this lecture—well, the Evangelical Alliance report on the persecution of Christians says that the Christians who are persecuted are actually at varying places in their journey of faith. I think we have to recognize this. I do not wish in any way to idealize

these people, these Christians—brothers and sisters of ours—they are also human, they also have their own weaknesses, and these people are not angels!

However, if we think about 'confidence', clearly there are some wonderful examples of Christian confidence. Maryam and Marziyeh, the two Iranian young women who were arrested some years ago in Iran, and kept in the notorious Evin Prison, were brought in periodically to the courts and they were only asked one question. This reminds us of what happened to Christians in the Roman empire. There, the ony thing that the magistrate had to prove was that they were Christians: *propter nomen Christi* ['for the name of Christ']. If they said 'Yes', that they were Christians, that was enough to condemn them. Now this is exactly what happened to Maryam and Marziyeh. The only thing the judge was interested in was whether they would renounce the Christian faith. And each time they gave the same answer. They said the Holy Spirit had revealed to them that Jesus was the Messiah. So they were taken back to prison, brought in again, same question, same result, and so on. A wonderful example of constancy in witness by these two young women. We pray regularly for the pastor of a house church, Farshid Fathi, who was arrested for leading a house group. When Ahmadinejad was president, he said that Iran faced two threats: one was, of course, America; the other were the house churches. These are tiny groups of Christians meeting all over Iran. Anyway, Farshid Fathi was a leader of one of them. He was arrested and sentenced to seven years in prison. Lately, on trumped up charges, his sentence has been increased by another year. But he is a wonderful example of a confident faith. The communications that he gets out to us from prison show wonderful, confident faith in the face of adversity. I remember many years ago now visiting a Pakistani Christian in prison in the very, so-called, tolerant United Arab Emirates. He had been sentenced to six years in prison for giving a New Testament to an Arabic-speaking person—not a native of the UAE, but a Sudanese. I went to visit him, and I had never seen him before, so I was thinking to myself, how will I recognize him? And indeed, when we went in there were all these prisoners and their visitors milling around in the visiting room. But as soon as I saw him I knew who he was, because his face was shining. His name was Barkat Masik. We succeeded in getting his sentence reduced to two years—but he had to serve two years—and afterwards he became a great worker for the Lord in a very humble way in Pakistan.

So there are these wonderful examples of men and women of God, as I say, but it is not the case that all persecuted Christians are confident mature witnesses to the gospel. We had reference earlier this afternoon to the twenty-one Coptic Christians and one Chadian Christian, I think,

among them, who were martyred so cruelly on the beach in Libya. These young men were really workers, labourers, on building sites in Libya of which there are an indefinite number. We don't know where they were on their faith journey. We don't know how mature or well taught they were as Christians. But they did give their lives for Christ: that is the point.

I've just returned from Lahore, and I was there days after the suicide bombing of the two churches, the Catholic church and the Anglican church in a suburb of Lahore, at the very time that divine worship was coming to an end. So the bombers knew when they would optimize the casualties. Many people were killed and injured, but we do not know where each one of them was in his walk with the Lord. We don't know it: but it is enough for us to know that they suffered for the name. I think that is the point to take hold of.

So the degree of confidence varies, I think we have to accept that, and this will continue to be the case as we see and hear reports of what is happening in the world.

THE QUESTION OF EVIL

This raises the conundrum of the evil that is involved in the persecution of Christians, and indeed of others: why is God permitting this to happen, people ask, undestandably. I was asked this question repeatedly in the last few weeks. Particularly at this time of Easter—of course I cannot give you a complete theodicy of persecution tonight—but at this time of Easter we have to think of the cross as the place where the principalities and powers, as Paul says in Colossians, were unmasked, and he makes a public spectacle of them on the cross (Col. 2:13–15). So what is happening is that there is a cosmic battle, a cosmic war perhaps we should say, ever since the angelic and the human fall. This battle, this war, is raging over the whole universe and throughout the course of human history. The central point of this war is the cross. And the decisive battle, if you like, in the war, is the cross, and its consequence, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Roderick Finlayson says that we can be assured of the triumph of the good because this is the way the universe is structured. Every assumption about the universe, about human living, about human flourishing, is about the the triumph or the prevailing of the good over evil. Otherwise, we would all live in a counsel of despair, and no kind of creative human society would be possible. The cross and the resurrection—Peter's speech at Pentecost says that death and hell could not hold Jesus (Acts 2:24). Death could not hold its prey, that the goodness and the power of God triumphed over the worst that this cosmic evil could do, and its human agents.

That is what I say to persecuted Christians, that they are, we are, part of this battle, of this war that is going on. But the cross and the resurrection tell us who is going to win. It is not impossible, therefore, for us to know whose will be the victory. It is known already, however difficult the struggle. And I don't in any way want to minimize the difficulties of the struggle, and the cost that people are having to pay for their following of Christ.

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Then, thirdly, there is the question about civic expectation. Christians, when they are persecuted, must expect (and I'll come to this later as well) those in authority to protect them. Of course the fact remains that in many cases the civil authority cannot protect them or does not protect them, or is ineffective in protecting them. But the expectation should be there so when Christians demand that their places of worship should be secure, I think this is a reasonable demand, it's a reasonable expectation from them, and civil authority has a duty to respond to this demand. I've spent the last few weeks talking to civil authorities in Pakistan precisely about this question: how to secure places of worship—only that, not more than that—for Christians? And there are all sorts of issues connected with that in the light of recent events. But what if the civil authority proves ineffective? What happens then? What do the Christians do? Well, Archbishop Justin Welby in his Easter address talks about passive resistance. That is possible: Christians can peacefully demonstrate to make their demands. They can engage in advocacy, in campaigning, in all sorts of ways that are not in any way repaying violence with violence.

I think passive resistance is one of the ways, but it only works in certain situations and not in others. I often say that Gandhi succeeded in his passive resistance because of the oppressor he was resisting. English judges even as they were convicting him to prison would apologize to him: 'I'm sorry Mr Gandhi, but we have to send you to prison for six years.' It wouldn't work in Eritrea, I don't think, to take an example just at random.

THE POSSIBILITY OF FLIGHT

What else is there? Well, there is flight. Jesus himself said—and I've had to face this personally myself—if they don't accept the good news in one town or village, what should you do? Shake the dust off from your feet and go somewhere else. That is possible. That will be the case in many situations. The world has given asylum and refuge to all sorts of people for all sorts of reasons, but persecuted Christians have not been at the centre of

attention, let's put it like that. But they ought to be; I think this ought to change. Why, for instance, can Britain give refuge to indefinite numbers of Muslims from Somalia or North Africa, so many different countries, Egypt now, but refuse to treat Christians even with equity let alone generosity? This is no longer possible.

Of course there is another side to the story. When the situation in Iraq came to a head, there was a move by people in Iraq, and outside, to bring all of Iraqi Christians, or most of them, out of Iraq. I said at that time, that would be doing ISIS's work for it, and that wasn't something we should consider. Of course there will be people, there are people, Iraqi Christians and Yezidis and others, who need to be brought out, who cannot any longer stay in Iraq. But we have to find ways of ensuring that the majority of these people can have a viable life in Iraq, whether it is Christians or Yezidis or Mandaeans or whoever it may be. I'm glad that some recent atrocities have caused some Western governments to revise their policies about Christians: Canada and the Netherlands come to mind in this connection.

WHAT IS MARTYRDOM?

How are we to understand the spiritual state of those who are persecuted or even those who are martyred for the faith? I never thought, when I began my Christian journey, that I would meet anyone who would be martyred for the Christian faith. But that has not proved true. I can now recount to you about a dozen people whom I knew who have been martyred for their faith.

And what does martyrdom mean? What does persecution mean? Because martyrdom may not mean being killed, but certainly it may mean suffering for witnessing to your faith. That is actually what the word means, doesn't it. In the past, and in the classical definition of martyrdom, a martyr was someone who suffered because of what was known as *odium fidei*, hatred of the Christian faith. I mean, that was a qualification, so if you suffered for some other reason, then you were not really a martyr. It had to be hatred of the faith—*odium fidei*. But more recently, people have begun to think about this, whether this is enough, because there have been notable instances of people dying or suffering for reasons that might not be *odium fidei* in the old sense. For example, those in the concentration camps, or in the story that is recorded in *The Miracle on the River Kwai*, people who put themselves forward to be killed because they didn't want others to be killed. So Father Maximilian Kolbe, for instance, saving the lives of those who had families by putting himself forward for execution by the Nazis. Well, that's not *odium fidei* in the old sense: the

Nazis just wanted to kill whoever they wanted to kill. Similarly in the story in *The Miracle on the River Kwai*, those who put themselves forward to be shot by the Japanese instead of other prisoners who were more vulnerable. Well, what category does that fall into?

Then there is the question of those who are struggling for justice, or for freedom, and who are killed because of that. Increasing numbers of Christians who are witnessing to justice and freedom, struggling for justice and freedom for powerless groups of people: if they are killed, are they martyrs? Oscar Romero is clearly an example of such a struggle, but there are many others. So have we got to re-define this whole business of martyrdom, of not just being killed for the faith, but suffering for the faith, of standing for justice, of suffering on behalf of other people? Christians most of all should understand that idea of suffering on behalf of others.

DEFENDING THE WEAK

Then there is the question of response. What kind of response should Christians make when they are persecuted? We have been told repeatedly all day today that Jesus taught us to love our enemies, to pray for those who persecute us. And that continues, of course, to be the case. There is no opting out of that. He also told us to turn the other cheek, and again, there is no opting out of this. But what else is there? We've talked about passive resistance: there is that.

I arrived in a village in Nigeria near Jos on one occasion that had that week been burned down to the ground by Islamic extremists. The people said to me, 'Bishop, we have run out of cheeks to turn.' What do you say to them? After the bombings in the suburbs in Youhanabad in Lahore, there was some very ugly rioting by Christian young people, and the question is, what are we to make of it? What sense? Of course there was pent up anger, there had been incident after incident, causing deaths of numerous Christians in the most horrible way, and nobody had done anything. Well, perhaps this was the last straw. But what are we to say to Christians and to the authorities in such a situation. What I say is this: as far as I can tell there is no case for self-defence in the gospel. What Jesus says is radical, and it holds for us as Christians—the words in St Matthew's gospel not to resist evil, if someone strikes you on one cheek, turn the other, if they take your shirt, give them also your cloak, your coat, and so on. That is true of every believer.

But what am I to say to these villagers in Nigeria about their children who are being killed, about the pregnant women who were horribly stabbed to death, resulting not just in one murder, but two? What am I going to say about their old women and men, being dragged out and

murdered? What about their churches being burned down to the ground? And I am prepared to say there, that whilst we are told not to defend ourselves, we are not told that we should not defend the weak. I'm putting it in that way—that sometimes it may be a Christian duty to defend those who cannot defend themselves, who are oppressed, who are unarmed, who are incapacitated for some reason, who are very young or very old. Now I don't say this lightly. I am not a pacifist, I honour those who are and I can see how what they say springs out of the Christian tradition, but I think it is possible for Christians to engage justifiably in conflict, and we will find in fact in the course of history that we will have to take a view on non-conventional modes of conflict in the world that we now live in. If Christians cannot justify participation at least sometimes in conflict—for example, to prevent genocide, or terrorism—then we will have to accept responsibility for what happens.

REFUGEES AND PROVIDENCE

Thirdly, the question of refugees, those who are unable or unwilling to resist passively or actively—because I've now laid out a case both for passive and sometimes for active resistance, for the reasons I've mentioned—and leave: refugees. What happens to them? The more I go around in the world, the more refugees I see, of course. It's a part of the world scene now. But I have begun to realize that the huge number of refugee movments in our world today are part of God's plan. It is not only tragedy, of course it can be tragedy, it is not only bad news. But this is an opportunity for the good news of Jesus Christ. On a visit recently to Turkey I was able to baptise and to confirm large numbers of refugees from Iran, Iraq, Syria, who would never otherwise have come even into contact with the Christian faith. Since the Islamic Revolution, there are more Irani Christians than there have ever been, *ever* been in history. What does this have to do with providence, with God's purpose for the Iranian people? So I think refugees, the movements are within God's purposes and we have to decide as churches how we are to respond to what God is doing already among these people. Sometimes it is not as dramatic as what has happened to Iranians outside Iran, but the fact that there are now small believing communities in Afghanistan is the result, direct or indirect, of five million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. So we have to make sense of this.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE WEST

There is then the question of the return of persecution in the West. This has been mentioned in the course of our day today. There are some Chris-

tian leaders, very prominent Christian leaders, who say there is no persecution in Britain because look at, you know, real persecution that's going on in Iraq, or Iran, or Pakistan, whatever. Well it is true of course that people are not daily being murdered for their faith in this country. Praise the Lord for that. It is true on the whole that they're not being imprisoned, although I can give you examples of people who have been.

But persecution is not only murder, it is not only physical injury. In many cases, persecution begins with systemic discrimination, with exclusion from public life. And this is happening all over the place now in Britain. People are losing their jobs simply because they profess the Christian faith and therefore are unable to do everything their employer is asking of them. They are being struck off the registers of professional bodies because they have a conscience about some matter or the other. There has been the case of the midwives here in Scotland recently, but I am aware of about one hundred and fifty such cases. Street preachers are being arrested and spending time in the cells before Christian lawyers have the opportunity to get to them and have them released. So if you lose your job, and I know of one Christian family who lost their home because of their faith, that's not the same as being killed for your faith, or being physically injured, but it's not negligible either. Let's put it like this. So we have to think more and more about the suffering of Christians in our midst. We may not agree with everything they say or do, but they are suffering because of *odium fidei*, because of a hostility to the Christian faith and what it demands.

When I began my work—and this is why I stopped being the bishop of Rochester—it was in response to Christian leaders in different parts of the world saying, 'Help us to develop our leadership,' because it is the leadership that suffers first when a church is persecuted. I saw what the problem was: the leaders were being imprisoned, or exiled, or killed in some situations. But then Christians here began to say to me, that's fine, Bishop, that you are going and working with people in Iran, or Pakistan, or Egypt, or Iraq, or Sudan, but what about your own doorstep? What are you doing here? So I could not neglect what was happening on the doorstep, if I was with integrity to do something for people further away. I think we all have to consider this matter.

RENDERING TO CAESAR—ARE THERE LIMITS?

The default position for Christians is obedience to those who have been set to rule over us. That is St Paul's argument in Romans 13, also in 1 Peter 2, in 1 Timothy, that is the default position. But it assumes what you might call a godly magistrate, a ruler who is fulfilling God's purposes

for a particular society. But the question already in the New Testament is, how does a godly magistrate then turn into the evil beast of the Revelation? And what do you do then? What do you do when a Nero comes to the throne? I think in those situations, and actually in all situations, Christians will obey the powers that be except when they command us to do something which God forbids, or they forbid something that God commands. In those cases we have to say with the apostles, we must obey God rather than you.

I don't know about Scotland, but English Christians are not very good at saying this kind of thing. The spirit of compromise is everywhere, people don't want to raise their heads above parapets. It's dangerous business doing it of course, because it might be shot off. They don't want to lose their respectability in society—so many different reasons. But we have to be clear about this if we are ever going to be clear about our discipleship, whatever the cost, and not simply as inidividual believers but as churches. Fudging this question will mean the end of Christian faith in public life in this country. Now I'm not saying that we have to be extremist about this, or perhaps in the way that some people are, loud and offensive. But this can be done with graciousness, with love, and with a desire for the common good. That must be the ruling reason why we do this.

In England, anyway, this is probably true also of Scotland, the church has worked like salt, if we are going to use an evangelical metaphor. Salt is invisible, it does its work invisibly. If salt is visible, it means you've put in too much! It gives taste, it is a preservative, and it is also a nutrient. (This is a matter of debate between my wife and myself, whether salt is a nutrient or not—I think it is! Well, you try living without salt in a hot climate, and see what happens.) The point is, it does its work invisibly. And the churches in these islands have also been a bit like that. They have worked with the grain of society. The Church of England has been very good, no doubt the Church of Scotland as well, at hatching, matching, dispatching—the rites of passage that are important for every society. Nothing wrong with that: opportunities for mission. But the question is whether we have reached a stage in national life when we need to change the metaphor, from one evangelical metaphor to another, from salt to light. Now light is quite different from salt, because light works by being visible. There's no point in having light, as Jesus himself said—you don't light a candle and hide it under the table, but you put it where everyone can see it and be seen by it. So the question is are the churches going to be the light by which people can see the truth of the gospel, to adapt something that C.S. Lewis said a long time ago. If they're going to be that, then that of course means a reorientation from a pastoral paradigm to a missionary one. So it's no longer the paradigm of caring for people in times of

bereavement, times of joy, all of that. But to reorient ourselves to the world in such a way that we are being light in the darkness. And the darkness, of course, will increase as time goes on. We have to be prepared for that.

This is already the case in many other parts of the world where Christians see themselves as light in an encroaching darkness. And that is the reason why they attract people to themselves. In a country like Iran where all kinds of reasons can be given against people approaching Christians or the church, and yet the house churches are growing. The most remarkable people are coming to faith in Jesus Christ. They are being attracted by the light of the gospel that they see in Christians and also in churches. There are numerous stories that I can tell and others can tell about that.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

So then, finally, if we're thinking of confident faith, building up confident faith, in a world where the church is being persecuted in many different ways, what should our attitude be towards these Christians, whether they're near at hand, or further away? The first, of course, is praying: praying in an informed way for situations and peoples. I am so encouraged now that churches have more information about how to pray: Open Doors, Christian Solidarity, Release International, Aid to the Church in Need—so many people now are providing information. There is no excuse now for you not to pray as a church, in your personal prayers or family prayers, to pray in an informed way for Christians who are being persecuted. Secondly, giving. Again, it is good that we are so easily able to give to Christians, to help with their spiritual and material needs. Every church should have some priority for that, every Christian, this should be part of their tithing, their giving, however they organize it, but it should be a part of it intentionally. Thirdly, going. Not just giving from a distance, but getting invovled. This is the kind of *kenosis*, the incarnational model for Christian witness and Christian life that we were talking about earlier.

I am always amazed at how valued it is when Christians from somewhere else come to visit those who are under pressure. It means an incredible amount to them, perhaps beyond our comprehension. We may think, well, what will we do, what can we do? But simply that act of solidarity, and there are now tours that will take you to places where there is need. These are not easy places to visit. This is not tourism. But it is necessary. Some theological educators came to me a few years ago and said, Bishop, can you tell us where there is a need for theological education, we'd like to go and help. So I gave them a particular situation, and the chairman then came to me and he said, they're asking whether it's safe. And again, you

know, quoting C.S. Lewis, I had to say to them: it's not safe, but it's good. So we have to take risks for the sake of our fellow Christians, and for the strengthening of our own faith.

And then there is campaigning. I think it does make a difference to people on the spot if the world takes notice. So to American Christians, I'm always telling them to go to their Congressman. I think here we should go to our MPs, we should go to the Foreign Office, who are sometimes unaware of what is happening to Christians in a particular place. We should go to the Home Office where it's a question of asylum and refuge for Christians. International organizations—the United Nations Human Rights Council, is sitting at the moment in Geneva. I know of one Christian agency from this country that is present there at this time. I'm not sure if others are, but they should be, and we should be asking them to be. With foreign governments—we had a gathering of Christians in Parliament recently, and we invited the former Pakistani High Commissioner there to listen to what Christians were saying, and in the course of the meeting he said he was ashamed to hear what was being said about the way in which Christians were being treated in Pakistan. I think there is a process of conscientizing people about what is happening, and that may be Muslims. There are many Muslims who are well disposed: Reh Chishti, I mentioned him. He and I have worked together more than I have with any Christian on the blasphemy laws in Pakistan. So we should be finding such partners, but we will not if we don't campaign.

Just to finish with a story. I went with a Christian organization to pray outside the Pakistani High Commission. We were standing there praying, a posse of police in between us and the front door. Anyway, after a while the High Commissioner sent for me. So I went in, and he said, why are you demonstrating against us outside. So I said, we are not demonstrating, we are praying for you. So he said, Oh really, you're praying for us? I said, yes, that's what they're doing. So he immediately picked up his telephone, and asked his communications man to come. He said, these people are praying for us outside! Anyway, he then said, when this man arrived with his camera, Can I come and pray with them, to the consternation of the London police, who were trying of course to keep us apart. So we ended up on the pavement outside, with these people who had come with me, the Christians, praying for the High Commissioner and his government that he represented. That is how it should be.

Sovereignty and Free Will in the Accounts of Terah and Abraham

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Given the amount of space devoted to him, as well as how Paul uses him as *the* model of faith, especially in Romans, Abraham clearly seems to be the most significant character in the book of Genesis, if not in the entire Old Testament. Mathews hints at this when he asserts 'the Abraham narrative [is] the center unit of the book.'[1] As such, it is then indeed strange that in a book structured around the Hebrew term *tôlᵉdôt* (see below) that there is no *tôlᵉdôt* section for him.[2] Rather, he is included as part of the *tôlᵉdôt* of his father Terah. Terah is a rather shadowy figure whose entire existence is covered in the first nine verses of his extensive *tôlᵉdôt* section (Genesis 11:27-25:11) while the remaining thirteen and a half chapters focus on Abraham. Moreover, the accounts regarding these two and their relationship exhibit several tensions. For example, was Terah a polytheist or monotheist? Joshua 24:2 suggests that Terah and Nahor 'served other gods' when they lived 'beyond the river'[3] while Genesis 31:53 seems to maintain that Jacob, Abraham, and his father [Terah] served the same God.[4] Another tension point is the call to go from Ur of the Chaldeans

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1 Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26* (New American Commentary, 1B; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), p. 85.

2 For example, John Skinner states 'Many writers on Genesis have held that the editor marked the headings of the various sections by the formula אֵלֶּה תֹלְדוֹת[ו], which occurs eleven times in the book. . .'. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 2nd edn (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1930), p. lxvi.

3 Unless noted otherwise, all scripture quotations are from the NASB translation. This passage is difficult. Bratcher and Newman note that the normal translation sounds odd and suggest 'It may sound more natural to translate "This went on until the time of Terah".' Robert G. Bratcher and Barclay Moon Newman, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Joshua* (Helps for Translators; London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1983), p. 301.

4 This section is also difficult. While Mathews suggests that a plural interpretation is possible with respect to the God of Terah (their father; p. 535), it should be noted that the same wording describes the deity worshipped by all three. In this case, it seems that the NASB translation is best: 'The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father', although one might add a

to Canaan. The Genesis account presents Terah taking Abraham with him as they set out for Canaan (Genesis 11:31) while Stephen's recounting of the incident suggests that Abraham left Mesopotamia as a result of a vision from God (Acts 7:2).[5] Additional concerns derive from the fact that the group stopped at Haran 'and settled there' (Genesis 11:31), and there Terah died (Genesis 11:32). Subsequently, Genesis reports that Abraham finished the journey to Canaan as a result of God's promise to him, apparently made in Haran (Genesis 12:1-6). The tension here is whether Abraham left Haran while his father was still alive, or did he remain in Haran until his father had died, at which point God called him to leave? There are several uncertainties here including Terah's age at Abraham's birth.[6]

The purpose of this study is not to provide a definitive resolution to those tensions but to suggest that those issues demonstrate deeper theological tensions which the *tôlᵉdôt* structure of the book highlights. Drawing from this structure, it is suggested that this section of the Abrahamic narrative illustrates an intricate interweaving of God exercising sovereign control while allowing individuals within the account to exercise free will. To evaluate this, we will first look at the literary and historical context of this portion of the Abrahamic narrative.

THE *TÔLᵉDÔT* STRUCTURE OF GENESIS

It is now generally accepted that Genesis is organized around the Hebrew word *tôlᵉdôt*, which is often translated generations or account. Actually it is more accurate to say that it is organized around the phrase *ʾēlle tôlᵉdôt* (generally translated 'these are the generations of' or 'this is the account

'that is' after Nahor. Howard cites Genesis 31:19 and 35:2-4 as evidence of Terah's polytheism although that passage really addresses Nahor's descendants; David M. Howard, Jr, *Joshua* (New American Commentary, 5; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), p. 430.

5 Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles* (New Testament Commentary, 17; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), p. 240.

6 Since Genesis 11:32 states that Terah was 205 when he died and Genesis 12:4 states that Abraham was 75 when he left Haran, then Terah would have been about 130 at the birth of Abraham if Abraham departed Haran subsequent to Terah's death. However, Genesis 11:26 states that Terah was 70 when he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran, although that must be when the three began to be born (unless they were triplets). Even here, however, if Abraham was not the oldest, then his birth could have been any time in the next 60 years. For further discussion see Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26* (New American Commentary, 1A; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), p. 499.

of').[7] The phrase *'ēlle tôl^{e}dôt* is used eleven times in the book.[8] Our present text tends to obscure the role of this phrase, especially for the English reader. First, the chapter divisions of the book (both in the Hebrew and in English translations) do not take into account any apparent structural role of this phrase. For example, Genesis 1 breaks the opening creation account at the end of day six of the seven day structure. Genesis 2 picks up with the seventh day in verses 1-3, and then gives the first use of the phrase *'ēlle tôl^{e}dôt* in the next verse, Genesis 2:4. As Kidner observes, the use of this term in 2:4 introduces 'a new stage of the book.'[9] But because the chapter division separates the seventh 'day' of God's rest from the rest of the introductory creation account, it is easy to gloss over the significance of that transition.

Second, inconsistent English translations tend to hide the consistent use of this phrase. While the KJV does consistently translate the word *tôl^{e}dôt* as 'generations' (which is also the basic definition given by the Brown-Driver-Briggs lexicon),[10] this does not fit every context well. Consequently, modern translators generally use different words in different places. The reason is obvious–in most of the cases where *'ēlle tôl^{e}dôt* is used in Genesis the translation 'generations' is awkward at best. For example, in Genesis 6:9 the RSV and ESV both read 'These are the generations of Noah' (the same as the KJV). Here the NASB expands the text reading 'These are *the records* of the generations of Noah' (italics in original). In contrast, the NIV gives a more dynamic translation of 'This is the

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7 Cf. John Skinner's comment, above n. 2. Others who hold the same view include Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, revised edn (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), p. 70; Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), pp. 69-88; and Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, pp. 26-41.

8 The word *tôl^{e}dôt* is used by itself in Genesis 10:32 and 25:13. In both of these cases, it is used in a manner that would support the normal translation, 'generations.' In Genesis 10:32, the writer sums up the *tôl^{e}dôt* of Shem, Ham, and Japheth (see Gen. 10:1) with the statement that 'These *are* the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations….' (KJV, italics in original). Here, the word *tôl^{e}dôt* is the object of a *lamedh* preposition following the phrase 'these are the families….' Likewise, in Genesis 25:13, after starting the *tôl^{e}dôt* of Ishmael in v. 12, the writer amplifies his opening statement by noting, 'And these *are* the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations…' (KJV, italics in original). Again, the word *tôl^{e}dôt* is the object of a *lamedh* preposition.

9 Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1967), p. 59.

10 F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), s.v. תּוֹלְדוֹת (p. 410).

account of Noah.' The NRSV reads 'These are the descendants of Noah,' which is puzzling because the following material is not a list of descendants. Rather, the statement is followed by the observation of how righteous Noah was and then a simple declaration that 'Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.' The rest of this section is the rather extensive flood account which relates how corrupt the world was and the judgment that God was bringing on it. Not only does this section not include a genealogy of Noah, the next section presents what may be considered a genealogy of Noah (Gen. 10:1-11:9) although it is labelled the *'ēlle tôl^{e}dôt* of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, his three sons.

Consequently in recent years a number of scholars have proposed a different translation of the word. Ross explains it as follows: 'The *tôl^{e}dôt* heading announces the historical development from the ancestor (or beginning point) and could be translated paraphrastically "this is what became of _____" ...'[11] But of the thirteen uses of the term *tôl^{e}dôt* in Genesis, commentators are agreed that it is only the eleven occasions when it is used within the phrase *'ēlle tôl^{e}dôt* that this seems to be the concept of the term. If this is the case, then the controlling factor for viewing the term as a structural indicator would be its use in the phrase *'ēlle tôl^{e}dôt*. Following that conclusion, it would seem then that the book uses the following pattern: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth [which is then described as very good] ... and here is what became of the heavens and the earth [the fall of man demonstrated by the murder of Abel] ... and here is what became of Adam [a genealogy tracing the lineage down to Noah] ... and here is what became of Noah [the flood account] ... etc. This overall structure is laid out in Table 1.

[11] Ross, p. 72.

TABLE 1: USES OF *'ĒLLE TÔLᵉDÔT* IN GENESIS

	Text	Subject	Narrative
1	2:4-4:26	Heavens and Earth	Second creation account and the fall of man
2	5:1-6:8	Adam	Genealogy of Adam to Noah (plus intro of Noah)
3	6:9-9:29	Noah	Flood account
4	10:1-11:9	Shem/Ham/Japheth	Table of nations
5	11:10-11:26	Shem	Genealogy of Shem to Terah
6	11:27-25:11	Terah	Account of Abraham
7	25:12-25:18	Ishmael	Sons of Ishmael
8	25:19-35:29	Isaac	Account of Jacob and Esau
9/10	36:1-37:1	Esau	Double genealogy of Esau (1 in Canaan, 2 in Seir)[12]
11	37:2-50:26	Jacob	Joseph and his brothers

ABRAHAM'S BACKGROUND

When we are introduced to Abraham in the text of Genesis, it is with his birth name of Abram. It is not unusual for Biblical characters to have their names changed by God, especially in the early chapters of the Old Testament. In the case of Abraham, this had a lot to do with God's promise. The original name, Abram means 'exalted father,' and theologians suggest that it is a reflection on the role that his father had in the city of his birth.[13] On the other hand, Abraham means father of a multitude and it was given to him in conjunction with the Abrahamic covenant.[14]

He was born and lived as a young man in 'Ur of the Chaldeans,' the location of which is debated. Since Sir Leonard Woolley excavated Ur in Lower Mesopotamia, most scholars have identified that site with Abraham's Ur. However, other scholars have suggested that Ur refers to another site located north of Haran, generally either Urfa (or Edessa) or Ura. Hamilton explains the rationale and opts for the northern site suggesting that a city located closer to Haran would be more likely, although

[12] Genesis 36 tells what became of Esau, but is somewhat puzzling since the phrase *'ēlle tôlᵉdôt* is used twice–in 36:1 and 36:9.

[13] Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary, Genesis*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), p. 86. This study, like several others, is using the latter name, Abraham, throughout for the sake of consistency.

[14] Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, p. 500.

he notes that most scholars still accept the southern site.[15] In support of the southern site, Mathews argues that the descriptor 'of the Chadeans' was likely an explanatory addition.[16] This seems to be the more likely explanation in that a later audience in the Canaan region (whether from the time of Moses the traditional author, or later) would more likely have been familiar with an 'Ur' in north-western Mesopotamia and thus a more remote site might require a descriptor to differentiate it.

Following the traditional chronology, Abraham would have been born in 2166 BC.[17] That would have been a short time before the Gutians conquered Sumer and the city of Ur, which is dated to the collapse of the Old Akkadian Empire, conventionally dated to c. 2150 BC.[18] The Gutians are a little known people group who lived in the Zagros Mountains to the east of Mesopotamia (although the exact location is unsure).[19] They were viewed by the Sumerians as uncouth barbarians and historically they left 'very little mark upon Babylonian history.'[20] This period is very poorly documented, and it is not clear how long the Gutians ruled Sumer nor the exact nature of that dominance. Records indicate that the Gutians were expelled by Utu-khegal of Uruk. However, following a brief reign, he was replaced by Ur-Namma of Ur. After the Gutians were expelled, Ur enjoyed a period of prosperity which today is called Ur III or the Third Dynasty of Ur. The establishment of Ur III is normally dated to c. 2112 BC.[21] More recently several scholars have done a reappraisal of the second-millennium chronology and based on archaeological, textual, and astronomical data would move that date to 2018 BC, approximately 100 years later.[22] Saggs notes that the Sumerian King List suggests the Gutians

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15 Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 362-5. For example, Saggs presents cogent arguments against the evidence used to support a northern location: H.W.F. Saggs, 'Ur of the Chaldees: A Problem of Identification', *Iraq* 22 (1960), 200-209.

16 Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, p. 100.

17 Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), pp. 78-79.

18 Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000-330 BC*, Vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 44-6.

19 C. J. Gadd, 'The Dynasty of Agade and The Gutian Invasion', in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol 1, Part 2A, ed. by I.E.S. Edwards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 444.

20 Ibid., p. 457.

21 Gadd, p. 595; Marc Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BC* (Malden MA, Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 282.

22 H. Gasche, J.A. Armstrong, S. W. Cole, and V. G. Gurzadyan, *Dating the Fall of Babylon: A Reappraisal of Second-Millennium Chronology (A Joint Ghent-*

ruled 91 years, although there appears to be overlaps in the data we have of the various city-states suggesting the actual period of dominance may have been somewhat less.[23] Overall, however, the accounts we have indicate that this was a rather chaotic period. As Gadd expresses it, the domination of the Gutians was 'always partial and impermanent.'[24]

The departure of Abraham and family from Ur is another difficult issue. We are not told in Genesis why they left, nor are there any date indications. Given the conventional chronology, it is tempting to tie their departure to the Gutian incursions. In that case, however, the probable birth year of Abraham would suggest that he would have been in his mid-teens at that time. Further, the text indicates that Abraham married Sarah while still in Ur (Gen. 11:29). While it is feasible that he was young when he married, Sarah would have been maybe 5 or 6 at the time. This suggests that the departure from Ur was some time after the Gutian incursions began.

At the other end of the journey, Abraham was 75 when he went to Canaan (Gen. 12:4) which would have been about 2091 BC.[25] Given that this was after Terah settled in Haran, Abraham's journey to Canaan would probably have been at least 5 years or so after they left Ur. Thus it seems likely that we are looking at a window of about 25-30 years for the migration from Ur, that is, somewhere between 2125-2095 BC. Under the conventional dating, this would put it somewhere around the rise of the Ur III dynasty, while under the revised dating of Gasche, *et al*., it would be several decades in advance in it. Either case might suggest a divinely appointed pre-emptive removal of this family in anticipation of an increasing paganization of the local culture (see below).

Taking the matter from another approach, the text states that Terah was 70 when he gave birth to Abraham, Nahor, and Haran (Gen. 11:27) and then he died in Haran at the age of 205 (Gen. 11:32). But this also gives us problems. If Terah was 70 when Abraham was born and Abraham was 75 when he went to Canaan, then Abraham left Haran before his father died which many scholars accept.[26] However, while not explicit, the tex-

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Chicago-Harvard Project), (Ghent, Belgium: University of Ghent and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1998), p. 91.

23 H.W.F. Saggs, *Peoples of the Past: Babylonians* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), p. 83.

24 Gadd, p. 458.

25 This is based on developing the chronological date from an early date of the Exodus of approximately 1446 BC (Merrill, p. 35).

26 Sarna, p. 88; C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: The Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1976 = Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1885), vol. 1, p. 180; U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of*

tual sequence seems to suggest that Abraham remained in Haran until after his father's death at which point God called him, which is the view that Stephen presents in Acts 7:4.[27] This would mean that a good working date for Terah's death would be about 2093 BC which would allow time for Abram to bury his father and then to travel to Canaan arriving there in his 75th year. But that would mean Terah was about 130 when Abram was born. While this age seems high, the list of Terah's ancestors in Genesis 11:10-25 indicate that they had a number of children throughout their lives. This age would be within that range. While it seems unusual for that line that Terah apparently had only those three sons, the key anomaly would be that Terah did not father his first born until the age of 70.[28] Beginning with that figure, Genesis 11:26 should then be understood to indicate that Terah had his first son at the age of 70 and the other two came some time later.[29] Unless the sons were triplets, this would necessar-

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Genesis: Part II, From Noah to Abraham, Genesis VI 9-XI 32 (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1964), p. 283, among others. Hamilton notes how this perspective is difficult to maintain in light of Stephen's speech in Acts 7 and notes two other suggestions that harmonize the two passages in addition to the position taken here (pp. 367-8).

27 Polhill (and others suggest) Stephen may have been following either Philo or the Samaritan Pentateuch which give the age of Terah as 145, although it seems unlikely he would have used either (especially the Samaritan version); John B. Polhill, *Acts* (New American Commentary, 26; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), p. 190.

28 Waltke asserts that in this case 'there would be nothing exceptional in Abraham fathering Isaac at 100 years of age,' alluding to Abraham's statement in Genesis 17:17; Bruce K. Waltke, with Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), p. 201. Likewise this does not address the issue of Abraham being 86 when Ishmael was born (Gen. 16:16). Also, Abraham's ancestor Shem is recorded as being 100 years of age when he fathered Arpachshad, and he and the entire line down to Terah's father (Nahor), are recorded as having other sons and daughters after the first born. What is not given is the ages of the wives, and it would seem the greater problem in the Genesis 17:17 passage would be the age of Sarah, 90. Key there is that she was explicitly labeled post-menopausal (Gen. 18:11). It should also be noted that Terah had at least two wives since Sarah was Abraham's half-sister (Gen. 20:12).

29 A similar situation is evident in the case of Noah in Genesis 5:32 where the text states 'Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.' As Hamilton points out, '[t]he syntax of the sentence would allow for the birth of either three successive sons or triplets ....' (p. 259).

ily raise two questions, what was the sequence of sons, and what was the distance between them?

If the data above is correct, then Abraham was likely the youngest of the three brothers with a sixty year gap between the oldest and youngest.[30] It is then probable that Haran, who died in Ur before they left, was the oldest. When he died he was already married and had several children including Lot, Milcah, and Iscah who were adults. Milcah married Nahor (her uncle), and later she is seen as the grandmother of Rebekah.[31] Iscah (apparently a daughter) is not heard from again.[32] At the time of the emigration from Ur, Lot was apparently an adult who went with his grandfather Terah and uncle Abraham. It is then also possible that Lot was actually older than his uncle Abraham.

Sifting through all of this uncertainty, it seems likely that Terah, Abraham, and family departed Ur in the early part of that 2125-2095 BC window, and Abraham would have been about 40-45 at that point. In that case, Abraham remained in Haran about 30 years or so which would also suggest that he and Sarah had been married 35 years or more when they went to Canaan–clearly a long enough time for the conclusion that Sarah was barren (Genesis 11:30).[33]

GOD'S CALL TO TERAH AND ABRAHAM

The records indicate that Ur was a pagan city which was noted for worship of the moon god Sin, as was also the city of Haran.[34] However, as discussed above, Genesis 31:53 seems to maintain that Jacob, Abraham, and his father served the true God (see footnote 4). The suggestion then is that Abraham was one of the surviving worshipers of the true God in

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30 Hamilton suggests that Abraham is mentioned first because he is the most important (p. 367).

31 When Abraham sent his servant to get a wife for Isaac, he is sent to 'the city of Nahor' which in the region of Haran, although there is no mention of Nahor and his family moving (Cassuto, pp. 272-3).

32 Sarna, p. 87.

33 As Segal points out, it was also long enough for Abraham to acquire the possessions and persons cited in Genesis 12:5. He specifically maintains that the 318 retainers cited in Genesis 14:14 as being born in his house had to have been born prior to Canaan; M. H Segal, 'The Religion of Israel Before Sinai', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, n.s. 52 (1961), 61.

34 Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, p. 100.

a world that was turning increasingly pagan.[35] If so, then there would be several implications.

First, the Old Testament evidence of this family would mirror the pattern of the rest of mankind where they were beginning to incorporate elements of pagan worship into their belief system as shown by comparing Joshua 24:2 with Genesis 31:53.[36] In other words, what we see in the life of the patriarchs is a process of syncretism and compromise. One example that seems to support this is Laban. Laban was Nahor's grandson, thus he was the great grandson of Terah, the grand-nephew of Abraham, and Rebekah's brother. While in Genesis 31:53 he called on the God of his great uncle and cousins, at the same time he included *terraphim* in his home which were apparently religious items. While generally viewed as 'household idols,' (so NASB in Genesis 31:19),[37] Hoffner suggests that they were 'mantic devices employed for cultic inquiry.'[38] In any case, this is what Rachel, Laban's daughter and the wife of Abraham's grandson Jacob, subsequently stole.[39]

Second, it would then suggest that this encroaching idolatry was one reason (and perhaps the primary reason) why Abram and Terah left Ur. The suggestion here is that God's call to Abraham came to him while he was in Mesopotamia (as indicated in Acts), but that it was a collective call to the elements of the family who were still holding fast to the worship of

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35 Michael A. Harbin, *To Serve Other Gods* (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1994), p. 31. This is *contra* Segal who argues that Abraham rejected the worship of the moon god of his culture and became a monotheist. It is interesting that Segal maintains that the worship of YHWH may be traced back to Enosh in Genesis 4:26, but that Abraham's monotheism was new to him, to which he attached the name YHWH. Thus, he argues that 'Abraham and not Moses was the founder of Israel's monotheism' (Segal, pp. 41-9).

36 Michael A. Harbin, 'Melchizedek and the Name of Jesus,' paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California, November 2011.

37 Oswalt states that the meaning of the word itself is unknown, but they are viewed as 'household gods ranging from rather small (Gen 31:34, 35), to nearly life-sized (1 Sam 19:13, 16)'. He suggests that one function was divination. It is also noted that in Nuzi, an archaeological site whose records illuminate activities performed by the patriarchs, the possession of the teraphim was associated with headship of the household ;J. Oswalt, s.v. 'Teraphim', in *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. by Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), vol. 5, p. 677.

38 Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., 'Hittite *Tarpiš* and Hebrew *Terāphim*', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 27 (1968), 66.

39 Segal suggests that the purpose of this theft was to prevent her father from consulting the *teraphim* as an oracle (p. 63).

the true God in an increasingly pagan culture. As the father and head of the family, it was Terah who led the way which would explain the Genesis statement that 'Terah *took* Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan' (Gen. 11:31, italics added). This would also explain why this material is part of Terah's *'ēlle tôl^{e}dôt* section of the book.

Third, another reason for this call would be that it was a step in the process of God's preparing the way for the Messiah. This step would require a demonstration of faith on the part of the human figures involved which ran directly counter to the increasing paganism of the culture around them. Archaeological records suggest several things were happening in this region. There was a drying out process going on in the entire Mediterranean region, which had led to several social upheavals. The land of Canaan had apparently lost its population as a result and was temporarily empty.[40] There were tremendous social upheavals in Mesopotamia, which has been called the Ammonite invasion.[41] All of this put together would suggest that the time is right for Terah and Abram to occupy the land.

But, and here is where the issue of human choice comes in, Terah decided to remain in Haran even though Genesis 11:31 and 15:7 indicate that the goal from the beginning was Canaan. As such, it would seem that as a consequence he ended up being passed by while God's program advanced. This illustrates a pattern observed a number of times throughout the Old Testament. One example of this would be King Saul. In 1 Samuel 13:12-13, Saul is told that by not following Samuel's instructions, he lost the dynasty that would have been his.[42] There Samuel states 'the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever, but now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart.' One of the key messages of 1 Samuel is that because of this and other decisions Saul died a failure while the nation was delivered by David. A second example comes from the book of Esther where Mordecai tells his niece that Israel *would* be delivered (the inference is by God). The only question for her was whether she would have a

40 David Neev and K. O. Emery, *The Destruction of Sodom, Gomorrah, and Jericho* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 59-67.

41 William W. Hallo and William Kelly Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), pp. 71-7.

42 Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel* (New American Commentary, 7; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), pp. 150-1.

part in the program.[43] Overall, it is felt that this dichotomy explains why Stephen could correctly say that Abram was called out of Ur.

ABRAHAM OBEYS GOD

One more implication of the sequence that we have been following is that by the time Abraham did get to the land, he was able to dwell there, but was not able to possess it. This is the pattern that we see in chapters 12-15 which is formalized in Genesis 15 where God tells Abraham that his descendants would not have the land for several hundred years. In the meantime, Abraham himself would 'go to [his] fathers in peace.' It seems that there were two reasons for this deferment.

First, in a practical sense, it would appear that because Terah remained in Haran, by the time the members of the family who continued on to Canaan went, the family size was significantly reduced. We are not given numbers, and it does seem probable that even when they left Ur they were not what we might consider a large troop, but the evidence suggests that more were involved than just Terah, Lot, and Abraham and their wives. Genesis 14 indicates this when Abraham went to rescue his nephew Lot who had been kidnapped by the Chedorlaomer alliance. According to Genesis 14:14, in addition to several Amorite allies, Abraham had 318 trained men, 'born in his house.' It is to be granted that this was after his return from Egypt where he had acquired male servants (Genesis 12:16) and it would also include 'the persons they had acquired in Haran' (Genesis 12:5). Even so, it seems likely that the entourage that left Ur would have included several hundred at a minimum.[44]

Second, as a result of this delay while Abraham remained with Terah in Haran, other tribes began moving into the land that Terah and Abram were supposed to have occupied. This is indicated by several interesting comments by the narrator. Genesis 12:6 reports that Abraham moved through the land to Shechem, which is in the middle of the land promised. It also states that 'Now the Canaanite *was* then in the land' (italics in original). The word translated 'then' here is the adverb *ʾāz* which serves to provide emphasis.[45] This emphasis is highlighted in Genesis 13:7, when

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[43] Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (New American Commentary, 10; Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), p. 336.

[44] Westermann follows Zimmerli in asserting that 'Abraham therefore must have had a household of at least a thousand men' at the time of his rescue of Lot; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36: A Commentary*, trans. by John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), p. 201.

[45] Cassuto notes that the word can understood as indicating 'still,' or 'already.' He suggests that the purpose is to emphasize 'that the land was not empty,

after Abraham returned from Egypt we are told that 'Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land.' The situation climaxes in Genesis 15 where Abraham is told that actual possession will be deferred, and God tells him that his descendants will be given the tribes in the land which now includes 'the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite' (verses 19-21).

This last tribe occupied Salem or Jerusalem, and their king was Melchizedek. It appears that Melchizedek not only worshipped the same God Abraham served but was a priest to Him.[46] It is then suggested that not only was it grace on God's part that he did not destroy those groups who were moving into the land promised to Abraham, it was in recognition of the piety of at least some. Rather, Abraham is told in Genesis 15:16 that the iniquity of the Amorite (a collective name given to those tribes) was not yet complete–i.e., judgment would come at some point in the future.

THE INTERTWINING OF SOVEREIGNTY AND FREE WILL

Part of the tension between God's sovereignty and man's free will is that they seem mutually exclusive. If God is sovereign, then he ultimately controls everything that happens. This seems to preclude free will on the part of his created beings, e.g., humans. On the other hand, if humans have free will then God would seem not to be really in control.[47] And yet this seems to run counter to both our intuitive understanding and scripture.[48] This is an issue that countless have wrestled with, and this writer certainly does not pretend that he has a solution to it. However, he would point out several aspects of the tension that this section suggests.

First, the text tells us that Terah and his family settled in Haran although they had set out to enter Canaan (Genesis 11:31). We are not told why this decision was made, but given what we see of Terah's descendants in Haran later, it seems likely that they followed a process of syncretism as they began serving other gods. To point out the tension, the writer, staying within the same *ʾēlle tôlᵉdôt* section and immediately following the statement that Terah died, states that God now called Abraham to go

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and consequently Abraham was not able to take possession of it at once' (pp. 327-8).

46 Ross, pp. 293-4.

47 Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), vol. 1, pp. 238-41.

48 Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), p. 208.

the land of Canaan–the same land that Terah stopped short of.[49] If our understanding of that *ʾēlle tôlᵉdôt* phrase is correct, then 'what happened to' Terah was that Abraham took his place and thus received the promises which could have been Terah's although it does raise the question of whether Terah had a real option?

Second, although God promised the land to Abraham, when he got there he was not allowed to possess it.[50] Our suggestion is that this was a consequence of the failure for the family to continue on to the land after leaving Ur. Instead, the possession was deferred to Abraham's descendants. Even within this declaration, there is an intermingling of God's intervention into 'the affairs of men' and His knowledge of human nature and the outcome. God declared that the iniquity of the Amorite was 'not yet complete' (Genesis 15:16), indicating that a time would come when that iniquity would be complete, demanding judgment–and God foreknew it.[51] As Kidner points out the future conquest would be in response to the anticipated immorality and thus would be an act of justice, not aggression. He states: 'Until it was *right* to invade, God's people must wait (italics in original).'[52] What he does not address is why God would withhold intervention to prevent those tribes from moving into the territory which God had designated for someone else; a step we have suggested was a consequence of the actions of the various Canaanite groups. Instead, it would not be until centuries later and then God would directly intervene when he judged the nation that enslaved Abraham's descendants and bring them to this land. And thus, the land would be given as promised.

So the picture that develops is that in the tension between God's sovereignty and man's free will, both are involved—and intertwined in the mix is the inscrutable concept of God's foreknowledge. In this case, it would seem that God issued a call to Terah and his family to leave the increasingly pagan Ur. The purpose was to begin the Messianic line at this point in history. The option was Terah's in his role as the head of the family. While his line would produce the Messiah, he lost his position as the head by remaining in Haran (a decision which God would have foreknown). Rather, the call was then issued to Abraham who had been drawn out of Ur as part of the family, and now as the head he obeyed. But, at this time,

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[49] With respect to the tension, it does not matter whether Abraham left while Terah was still alive or after his death. The point is that Terah made the decision not to go into the land, and God then directed Abraham to do so, which he did (see also Hamilton, pp. 366-8).

[50] Cassuto, pp. 327-8.

[51] Sarna, p. 117.

[52] Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), p. 125.

the land was now occupied and God demonstrated His grace and mercy by not immediately rooting out the usurpers; and Abraham's possession of the land was deferred until judgment was demanded. In the process, however, God's plan was not thwarted, and the Messianic line was still developed through the seed of Abraham.

This might suggest that God's focus in the call to Terah was on the ultimate goal which is the Messianic line and the nation that was to produce it. As such, could Terah have had the very real option of obeying God and being the founder of the nation? Here it would be very tempting to speculate on what that nation might look like–but it would just be speculation. And, we would argue that in his foreknowledge, God knew which direction the story would go. Our struggle is that as we try to grasp the intricacies involved we tend to arrive at an either-or understanding. The reality seems to be that it is a both-and process where God allows men to make choices (even to the point of deliberate disobedience) while at the same time accomplishing his goals (Romans 8:28). Thus, instead of a matter of black and white, or even many shades of grey, it is a process so complex that a more fitting metaphor might be a full colour spectrum–including the shadings into the ultra-violet and infra-red hues that we are aware that are there, but cannot see.[53] It is at this point that all we can do is stop and reverently fall before a God who is truly Awesome and totally beyond comprehension.

[53] In a similar vein, Calvin states regarding predestination (an aspect of this issue): 'First, then, when they inquire into predestination, let them remember that they are penetrating into the recesses of the divine wisdom, where he who rushes forward securely and confidently, instead of satisfying his curiosity will enter in inextricable labyrinth. For it is not right that man should with impunity pry into things which the Lord has been pleased to conceal within himself, and scan that sublime eternal wisdom which it is his pleasure that we should not apprehend but adore, that therein also his perfections may appear'; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. by Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), III.xxi.1 (vol. 2, p. 204).

Diego Thomson in the Americas (1818-1844): Monitorial Schools, Nation-building, and the Kingdom of God

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1. EARLY YEARS[1]

James Thomson[2] was born on 1 Sep 1788 in Parish of Kirkmabreck, Ferrytown-on-Cree, Kirkcudbrightshire, in south-west Scotland, the third child of William Thomson and Janet Burnett. His father was the *dominie* and session clerk of the parish church. Apart from mentioning books he read as a boy, Thomson himself makes little reference to his early education, but given his home situation a link between Bible and education would have been very clear. In 1807 he began medical studies in Edinburgh, but after two years left these for theological studies[3] in the University of Glasgow.[4] Although he was later to work with James and Robert Haldane, it does not appear that he studied in their seminary in Edinburgh. The Haldanes closed it in December 1808 when they judged the Divinity faculties in Edinburgh and Glasgow to have become more acceptable to their own theological position.[5]

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1 Paper first presented at the 'Missions and Education' conference of the Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of the Missionary Movement and World Christianity, June 30 – July 2, 2011, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT.

2 Known as Diego Thomson in Latin America. For Thomson's letters, see <www.jamesdiegothomson.com>.

3 Thomson's *Union Liturgy*, published in 1837 but written during his travels in the previous ten years, and his *Family and Individual Prayers*, published in 1840 but written during his 1837 visit to Cuba, show remarkable theological and biblical acumen, as does his work on textual criticism, for example, on the sources of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible.

4 Girvan C. McKay, 'Growth and Eclipse of Presbyterian Missionary Outreach in Argentina' (Lic.Th. thesis., Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos, Buenos Aires, 1973), p. 21.

5 Alexander Haldane, *Memoirs of the Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey, and of his brother James Alexander Haldane* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1852), p. 330.

It is not known at what point Thomson changed his allegiance from Presbyterianism to the nascent churches of the Haldanes, but by 1815 he was working with James Haldane in Edinburgh's Leith Walk Tabernacle and providing pastoral care for French prisoners-of-war in Edinburgh Castle. In 1817 Thomson was having his daily devotions in French, in preparation for joining Robert Haldane in Montauben. This never transpired, for reasons that are not clear.[6] What did happen was that in 1818 he spent a few months in London at the Borough Road training college of the British and Foreign Schools Society (BFSS), and on the 12th July of that same year he sailed from Liverpool for Buenos Aires. The Leith Walk church financed his first year in South America.[7] The next twenty-five years were to make him one of the most widely travelled British missionaries in the Americas, representing both the BFSS and the British and Foreign Bible Societies (BFBS).[8]

2. MISSION AND EDUCATION: FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

Parish schools were part of the legacy of the Reformation in Scotland. John Knox's 1560 *First Book of Discipline* set out plans for a school in every parish. That did not happen immediately, but by 1700 most parishes in the Lowlands had a school, with the Bible, the catechism, Latin, and French being taught, and with the addition of logic, rhetoric and 'the tongues'[9] in some larger towns.[10] Above all, parish school education was designed to enable children to read the Bible for themselves—initially the Geneva Bible and later the 'Authorized Version' (but not a Bible in Scots or, at that time, in Gaelic![11]).

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6 In a letter to BFBS from Montauban (29 August 1848) Thomson states: '[Haldane] found however difficulties which hindered what he had in view, and the plan was given up'. It may also have been that Henry Drummond's arrival in Montauben at that time may have made Thomson's help unnecessary.

7 James Thomson. 'South America - VII', *Evangelical Christendom*, I (1847), 389.

8 Argentina (1818-1820), Chile (1821-22), Peru (1822-24), Ecuador (1824), Colombia (1825), Mexico (1827-1830), Canada (1831), Venezuela, Demerara, and the Caribbean countries (1832-38), Canada (1838-1842), Mexico and Yucatan (1842-44).

9 Greek and Hebrew.

10 James K. Cameron, *The First Book of Discipline* (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1972), pp. 130-4.

11 'Only a few events in the history of Scots language, literature and culture have been as much discussed as a non-event — the failure of the Reformation to produce a Bible in Scots'. Graham Tulloch, *A History of the Scots Bible* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), p. 1.

The intellectual climate of the Scotland of Thomson's early years had undergone profound changes due to the Scottish Enlightenment, and as a student he found himself in cities that were dynamic centres of change. New ideas, discoveries and inventions were the order of the day and involved a wide range of participants, with philosophers, doctors, lawyers, artists, religious leaders and the academic community all playing a part. Due to agricultural reforms, changes in land tenancy and use, and rural-urban migration in Scotland, as well as immigration from Ireland, these same cities also were struggling to cope with thousands of new arrivals, living in appallingly overcrowded and insanitary conditions in older neighbourhoods.

In the preceding decades the national Church of Scotland—the Kirk—had been the domain of the 'moderates', but as the nineteenth century began the rise of the evangelicals heralded change. The brothers James and Robert Haldane were part of that evangelical movement. They however left the Church of Scotland in the late 1790s and devoted themselves to evangelism, developing the 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at Home' and encouraging mission overseas. Their churches were initially congregational in nature, but as their views on baptism changed they broke from the Congregationalists and formed their own churches.

In 1809 they were involved with others in founding the Edinburgh Bible Society. In 1811 they joined with representatives of other denominations, most notably the Baptist leader Christopher Anderson, to begin the Edinburgh Gaelic Schools Society.[12] This was a rejection of the practice of the 'Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge'. The SSPCK had for almost a century followed official policy aimed at discouraging the use of the Gaelic language and used only English in their almost 300 Highland schools.[13] For the Edinburgh Society however Gaelic was the essential medium of instruction, and the object was 'to teach the inhabitants to read the Holy Scriptures in their native language'.[14] This was the path to promoting 'civilization and Christian knowledge' in the Highlands and Islands. Thomas Chalmers summed up the relationship of the Bible Society and the School Society: 'The two Societies move in concert. Each contributes an essential element in the business of enlight-

[12] Also the Glasgow Gaelic Schools Society (1812) and the Inverness Gaelic Schools Society (1818).

[13] Margaret Connell Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans: Indigenous Education in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), pp. 98-9.

[14] Murdo Macaulay, *Aspects of the Religious History of Lewis to the Disruption of 1843* (Stornoway: privately printed, 1980). The Scottish Gaelic New Testament was published in 1766 and the Old Testament in 1807.

ening the people. The one furnishes the book of knowledge and the other furnishes the key to it.'[15]

Thomson shared these views and promoted both societies. Years later he cited the success of the Gaelic schools on more than one occasion to encourage Scripture translation and the creation of schools using the indigenous languages.[16] He reflects the same commitment to home and foreign mission as the Haldanes. Not only that, their enthusiasm for the revolutionary happenings in France were paralleled by Thomson's support for the independence movements in South America.

Amidst the millennial hopes that prevailed in evangelical circles, the possibility of mission in South America was explored in journals then circulating in Edinburgh. Articles in the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor* spoke of the religious opportunity that was opening up there, especially for the Bible Society.[17] A wider framework for understanding Central and South American peoples had been provided by William Robertson's *The History of America*, first published in 1777 in Edinburgh and reprinted regularly thereafter.

From 1808 to 1825 the influential *Edinburgh Review* carried extensive reviews of publications on South America. The editor, Francis Jeffrey, and regular contributors Henry Brougham[18] and James Mill, held that Providence was 'calling a free world into being to redress the tyranny of the old'. The British were to be the chosen agents of change. Mill was emphatic on this subject: 'The inhabitants of the new world are holding out their arms to the inhabitants of the British Isles, craving their assistance in the hour of need—and offering to them, in return, the most unbounded prospects of advantage which it ever was in the power of one nation to hold out to another.'[19]

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15 Thomas Chalmers, *The Influence of the Bible Societies on the Temporal Necessities of the Poor* (Cupar: R. Tullis, 1814), p. 12. By the 'key', Chalmers meant literacy.

16 James Thomson, *Tour in Yucatan: Together with brief notices of travels in Buenos Ayres, Chile, Ecuador, N. Granada, Venezuela, Mexico, all the West Indian Islands, the United States, Canada, N. Brunswick and Nova Scotia* (Unpublished ms., Bible Society Collection, Cambridge University Library), p. 9.

17 E.g. the issue of May 1811.

18 Robertson's grand-nephew.

19 James Mill, 'Gutierrez Molina's Account of Chili', *Edinburgh Review* 14 (1809), 336.

3. MONITORIAL SCHOOLS AND SPANISH AMERICA

The monitorial system of education, developed by Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838) and Andrew Bell (1753-1832) at the turn of the nineteenth century, was arguably the first global model for elementary schooling of the modern period. Within very few years the method had been adopted by a variety of schools around the world. While the specific purposes of its promoters varied, there is no doubt that the spread of the monitorial system coincided with the expansion of the ideal of universal education, and was seen by many as the best way of achieving that purpose and of nation-building in the newly-founded republics.

The method was based on the abler pupils being used as helpers to the teacher, passing on the information they had learned to other students, hence the ideas of 'monitors' and 'mutual education'. It had an immediate appeal through the possibility of providing mass education, with a minimum of teachers, at low cost. Bell pioneered his methodology in the 1790s while an Anglican chaplain in Madras. Lancaster, a Quaker, opened a school in Borough Road, Southwark, London in 1798. A teacher training college was added in 1801. Lancaster came to wider public attention with the publication of his *Improvements in Education as it relates to the Industrious Classes of the Community* in 1803.

An audience with George III in 1805 led to royal approval and patronage of the system. The king 'having fully informed himself of the nature of the System, perceived its important bearings upon the whole mass of the poor population in favour of religion and morality. It was on this occasion that the King uttered those memorable words...: *"It is my wish that every poor child in my kingdom may be taught to read the Bible"*.'[20] The Borough Road School then became the 'Royal Free School'. Lancaster had no administrative ability and in 1808 had to be rescued by a number of benefactors who formed the 'Society for Promoting the Lancasterian

[20] 'BFSS Annual Report', *Edinburgh Christian Instructor*, XVIII.III (1819), 212. On 16 January 1823, Thomson, Francisco Navarrete, and Camilo Vergara presented a proposal to the Peruvian Congress to establish schools in Lima's San Lázaro parish where one third of the city's population then lived. In this Thomson cited George III's support for the school system and of children being able to read the Bible as evidence that nations then thought to be important had adopted the method. See Tomás J. Gutierrez Sánchez, 'Diego Thomson en el Perú: el factor protestante en los inicios de la República, 1822-1824', in *Ecos del Bicentenario: El protestantismo y las nuevas repúblicas latinoamericanos*, ed. by Carlos Mondragón (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Kairos, 2011), p. 159 = 'James Thomson in Peru: Protestant Influence in the Beginning of the Republic, 1822-1824', *Journal of Latin American Theology* 6 (2011), 131-57; see p. 147.

System for the Education of the Poor', with the support of evangelicals and non-conformists, including figures such as William Wilberforce. In 1814 the Society was renamed the 'British and Foreign School Society for the Education of the Labouring and Manufacturing Classes of Society of Every Religious Persuasion'.

On his return to Britain Bell's system was adopted by the Church of England and from 1811 was promoted by the 'National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Christian Church'. Two systems emerged in the country: the 'National Schools' of the Established Church and the 'British schools' supported by non-conformists.

Lancaster argued for the non-denominational nature of his system:

> The school is not established to promote the Religious Principles of any particular sect; but, setting aside all party distinctions, its object is to instruct Youth in useful Learning, in the leading and uncontroverted principles of Christianity, and to train them in the practice of moral habits, conducive to their future welfare, as virtuous men and useful members of society.[21]

The BFSS 1819 report to supporters and potential benefactors stressed this:

> Education, conducted on these enlightened principles, while it invariably inculcates the purest morality, and the most important points of religion from the unerring standard of Divine inspiration, excludes the peculiar tenets or catechisms which divide the opinions of good men—*the Bible in the authorized version, without note or comment*, being the only religious book taught in its schools: and thus all sects and parties may send their children to British Schools with the greatest confidence.[22]

An acrimonious debate later developed between Bell and Lancaster. Bell maintained that Lancaster's system would raise the poor above their station, create in them unrealistic expectations and unsettle the social hierarchy. While this did not concern Lancaster, the widespread support for his educational initiatives did reflect a fear on the part of many of subversion, both as a result of the social tensions of a rapidly industrializing society, and from the 'excesses' of the French revolution. 'Useful learning' would counteract such developments. Education for the 'lower classes' would improve their morals and manners, enable them to read the Bible,

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21 Joseph Lancaster, *Education as it respects the Industrious Classes of the Community*, 3rd edn. (New York: Collins and Perkins, 1803), p. 27.

22 'BFSS Annual Report', *Edinburgh Christian Instructor*, XVIII.III (1819), 211.

and make them better workers in an age of commerce and industry.[23] At the same time Lancaster's system did replace 'a pedagogy of subordination, piety, deference, and social estates with a pedagogy much more appropriate to a fluid class society organized around market relations and processes'.[24]

As the school movement developed and grew, it was adopted in Scotland not only by evangelicals like the Haldanes, but found wider support in society. In a speech to the Lancasterian Society of Glasgow in 1812, Robert Owen, of New Lanark fame, urged 'those who have weight and influence in the city' to support the Lancasterian system of education for the poor, 'until every child of that class shall find a place in one of the schools. There, in a manner peculiar to the system, they must learn the habits of obedience, order, regularity, industry and constant attention which are to them of more importance than merely learning to read, write and account.'[25]

The Lancasterian system not only found very important patrons in British society and politics, the Spanish American community in London also took an increasing interest. In the 1810s that community comprised diplomatic envoys, political exiles and deputies en route to the *Cortes* in Cadiz, Spain. Karen Racine states that 'between the years 1808 and 1830, over 70 independence era leaders of the first rank lived and worked together in London'.[26] For a number of years the Venezuelan revolutionary Francisco de Miranda's house in Grafton Street served as a centre for them. Meetings were held with people like Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, William Wilberforce, Humphrey Davy and Joseph Lancaster. The British system of government and a wide range of organizations, including the BFSS and the BFBS, attracted the interest of many of these leaders. 'The Spanish Americans leaders who went on to have the greatest impact in

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23 Eugenia Roldán, *The British Book Trade and Spanish American Independence: Education and Knowledge Transmission in Transcontinental Perspective* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), p. 84.

24 David Hogan. 'The Market Revolution and Disciplinary Power: Joseph Lancaster and the Psychology of the Early Classroom System', *History of Education Quarterly* 29 (1989), 405.

25 David Hamilton, 'Robert Owen and Education: A Reassessment', in *Scottish Culture and Scottish Education 1800-1980*, ed. by Walter M. Humes and Hamish M. Paterson (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1983), p. 9. Owen later broke with the monitorial system. He wanted an education system to develop character, not inculcate piety.

26 Karen Racine, '"This England and This Now": British Cultural and Intellectual Influence in the Spanish American Independence Era', *Hispanic American Historical Review* 90 (2010), 423.

reconstructing the institutions and cultures of their nations after independence were the same ones who actively traveled to, and solicited material support from, Great Britain over the course of nearly two decades.'[27]

In his years in the Americas, Thomson became part of this network and in the sphere of education was encouraged and supported by men like Lucas Alamán (Mexico), Andrés Bello (Venezuelan based in London), Simón Bolívar (Andean countries), Antonio José de Irisarri (Chile), Bernardo Monteagudo (Peru), José María Luis Mora (Mexico), Bernardo O'Higgins (Chile), Bernardino Rivadavia (Argentina), Vicente Rocafuerte (Mexico, Ecuador) and José de San Martín (Argentina, Peru).[28] The development of public education was key to nation building in the new republics.[29] For example, during his short visit to England in 1810 Bolívar visited the Borough Road School and decided to send prospective teachers from Venezuela to study there.[30] Lancaster himself would later spend time in Venezuela.

Vicente Rocafuerte, while in London as a representative of the Mexican government, developed strong links with BFSS and BFBS, as he had done earlier with the American Bible Society and the (Lancasterian) 'New York Free School Society'.[31] Eugenia Roldán sees support of BFBS by some of these leaders in terms of a 'liberal project aimed at reducing the power of the Catholic Church and promoting a change in the mentalities of the citizens of the new republics through a more direct and less mediated

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27 Ibid., p. 433.

28 It is significant that almost all of them were freemasons. To date I have found nothing to indicate that Thomson himself was a mason.

29 The Preamble to the Peruvian Congress decree of 6 July 1822 creating the public school system with Thomson as director begins: 'Without education, there is, properly speaking, no society; men may indeed live together without it, but they cannot know the extent of the duties and rights which bind them to one another, and it is in the knowledge of these duties and rights that the wellbeing of society exists.' Cited by Thomson in his letter to BFSS, 12 July 1822.

30 Karen Racine. 'Simón Bolivar, Englishman: Elite responsibility and Social Reform in Spanish American Independence,' in *Simón Bolivar: Essays on the Life and Legacy of the Liberator*, ed. by David Bushnell and Lester D. Langley (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), p. 58.

31 See his *Lecciones para las Escuelas de Primeras Letras sacadas de las Sagradas Escrituras siguiendo el texto literal de la Traducción del Padre Scío, sin notas ni comentarios* (New York: A. Paul, 1822). In the Dedicatoria—'A la Juventud Americana'—he recommends the development of Lancasterian schools and asks: '¿Qué mejor libro puede haber para la instrucción de la juventud que la Biblia, que el sagrado código de la moral evangélica?'

reading of the Scriptures'.[32] It was partly due to Rocafuerte that BFBS and BFSS formed the 'Society for Spanish Translations' in London to produce religious and educational works for Spanish speaking countries.[33] Thomson was involved with this group during his stay in England in1825-7 and arranged for the publication of extracts from Joaquin Lorenzo Villanueva's *De la Leccion de la Sagrada Escritura en Lenguas Vulgares* on the benefits of reading the Bible. It was a publication he distributed in Mexico (1827-30) to promote Bible reading.[34]

4. THOMSON IN THE AMERICAS

Thomson arrived in Argentina in 1818, a mere eight years after the 'May revolution' in Buenos Aires marked the beginning of Argentine independence. Under the leadership of Bernardo O'Higgins, Chile had won its independence in 1818, while in Peru full independence would not come until 9 December 1824.

In the emergent apparatus of state and government, relations between citizen and state were generated by a common objective—the re-establishment of law and order after a period of social and political turbulence that began with that May revolution in 1810. It was a time of change from traditional authoritarian ideals of subjects loyal to the Crown, to a progressive ideal of the participatory citizen. The Enlightenment had paved the way for this change, and education was seen as the medium by which to 'inspire in children the habit of order, the sentiments of honour, love of truth, the search for justice [and] respect for their peers'.[35] Mark Szuchman comments on the Lancasterian system: 'To the enlightened it carried the legitimacy born of its English origins; to the rational, it offered scientific design; to the liberal and anticlerical, it became positively identified with secularism; and to the authorities, always short of money, it promised economy'.[36]

When Thomson brought the system, it was hailed as the greatest and most efficient innovation in the field of pedagogy. The system was

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32 Roldán, op.cit., pp. 51-2.

33 Jaime E. Rodríguez, *The Emergence of Spanish America: Vicente Rocafuerte and Spanish Americanism 1808-1832* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 181-3. The aims of this Society are set out in Missionary Register, Vol 13, July 1825, 307-9.

34 James Thomson, *Spain, Its Position and Evangelization* (London: Partridge and Oakey, 1853), p. 13.

35 *El Censor*, 24 April 1817.

36 Mark Szuchman, *Order, Family, and Community in Buenos Aires 1810-1860* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 155.

embraced by almost all the liberal leadership as being of 'unquestionable public utility'. In 1821 the newspaper of Buenos Aires' utopian liberals recorded 'we have just happily seen in practice the Lancaster system, by which not only do children learn to read and write, but they also become accustomed to order'.[37]

Thomson found that the lesson materials then used in schools 'were not calculated to promote the objects which took him to those quarters.' They lacked what for him was the essential component—the Scriptures—therefore 'he set to work and extracted passages from the Old Testament, and from the New, such as he thought the most adapted for the instruction of children in the truths and the virtues of the Christian religion'. These were presented to the Government and 'an order was given to have them printed at the Government printing-office, at the public expense, and that forthwith they should be introduced into the schools'. He noted with gratitude the liberality shown by 'a Roman Catholic Government and community towards a Protestant and a foreigner'.[38] Wherever he went Thomson linked his interest in schools with his interest in distribution of the Scriptures, although he was not officially a BFBS agent until late in 1824.

Thomson's time in Argentina was not confined to Buenos Aires. He travelled to Montevideo in *la banda oriental* to develop schools there. In 1821 he moved to Chile invited by the O'Higgins government to develop schools there, and from there crossed east over the Andes to what were then the United Provinces of Argentina to set up schools in the interior.[39] In 1822 he travelled to Peru[40], invited by General San Martín to implement public education there. When Simon Bolivar replaced San Martín

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37 *El Argos de Buenos Ayres*, 25 August 1821.

38 James Thomson, 'South America - IV', *Evangelical Christendom*, I (1847), 287.

39 His visit to Mendoza at that time came through an invitation from the Edinburgh surgeon and botanist John Gillies—one indication of Thomson's links with the 'Scottish diaspora' in Spanish America.

40 Thomson's work in Chile drew the appreciative comment from another British expatriate: 'Yesterday a very interesting person sailed from hence for Lima, Mr. Thompson, one of those men whom real Christian philanthropy has led across the ocean and across the Andes to diffuse the benefits of education among his fellow-creatures. He had spent some time in Santiago, where, under the patronage of the supreme director, he has established a school of mutual instruction on the plan of Lancaster. He has been in Valparaiso some time superintending the formation of a similar school… Mr. Thompson has been solemnly declared a free citizen of Chile by the government.' (María Graham, *Journal of a Residence in Chile, during the year 1822, and a Voyage from Chile to Brazil in 1823*. London: John Murray, 1824; p.157).

as the leader of the pro-independence forces, he confirmed Thomson in this position. At the same time the role of the Scriptures in Thomson's approach to education and his realisation that over half of Peru's population did not speak Spanish, led him into the translation of the New Testament into the Quechua and Aymara languages.[41]

After leaving Peru in September 1824 Thomson continued to advocate for monitorial schools, advising city authorities and governments on education[42] and sending reports and recommendations to BFSS—as can be seen in the Tacubaya document (see below). With the exception of Jamaica,[43] he was no longer directly involved in implementing schools.

In his final visit to Yucatán in 1843-4 under the aegis of BFBS, Thomson presented educational proposals to the leaders of the then independent state and offered help to set up the system. He gave his views 'in favour of the general use of the Holy Scriptures as the grand basis and directory in right religion and true morality'. He stressed the importance of education for 'all classes of the community', including the large indigenous population: 'the only way which they could be successful in communicating education and all else to these people was by establishing schools among them on the plan of teaching them in their own tongue'.[44]

Thomson went further:

> Besides giving education to the Indians, I urged the duty of doing them justice in seeing that they had their due rights, and more were not oppressed by the large proprietors. I mentioned how much injustice was done to the Indians in Mexico; and concluded by saying that if care were not taken by their superiors to see them enjoy justice and fairness, that God himself would interpose for them, and that in the event of this they would find that the account would cost them more to settle it than now.[45]

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41 See Bill Mitchell. 1990. 'James Thomson and Bible Translation in Andean Languages', *Bible Translator* 41.3: 341-5.

42 In Ecuador, Colombia, Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada and Yucatán.

43 The clamant educational needs in Jamaica moved the Thomsons deeply. Although he was a "full-time" BFBS agent at the time, he did get involved in the West Indian School Society setting up schools in Spanish Town (Letter to BFBS, 27 November 1834). For a three-month period in 1836 he left BFBS employ to work for the Mico educational trust (Letter to BFBS, 22 February 1836).

44 James Thomson. *Tour in Yucatan: Together with brief notices of travels in Buenos Ayres, Chile, Ecuador, N. Granada, Venezuela, Mexico, all the West Indian Islands, the United States, Canada, N. Brunswick and Nova Scotia* (Unpublished ms. Bible Society Collection, Cambridge University Library), p. 86.

45 Ibid.

5. THOMSON AND THE TACUBAYA DOCUMENT

Thomson first went to Mexico in 1827 as an agent of BFBS, but had agreed with BFBS that he could initiate translation of the Bible into Mexican languages and pursue BFSS interests as opportunity presented itself. In fact, as well as transporting 48 cases of Bibles to Mexico, he also carried an important BFSS document which he and Vicente Rocafuerte had prepared,[46] to be presented to the delegates of the second Pan-American Conference[47] to be held that year in Tacubaya, Mexico. The conference did not, in fact, take place, but that did not deter Thomson.

He found that a Lancasterian society had already been formed in Mexico City, by voluntary subscription. 'The Government gave every encouragement to this institution, and made it, in fact, its board for extending education over the country.'[48] Shortly after arriving in Mexico City Thomson met with President Guadalupe Victoria and two of his ministers.[49] The President had facilitated the activities of the Lancasterian Society. Thomson was made a member of that board and in that role presented plans for extending the system. Two years later he met with President Vicente Guerrero and formally presented to him the BFSS document he and Rocafuerte had prepared: 'The writer had a long interview with him to explain the system of Infant Schools.'[50]

The document both congratulates the newly independent nations and offers help in implementing public education on the Lancasterian model as they forged their new identity and character. At the same time it reveals the philosophy and ethos that underpinned the BFSS. Education—'civil, moral and religious'—was the *sine qua non*. It would break the chains of the 'cruelest of tyrants': ignorance. Independence had been won, it promised progress, and was due to the workings of Providence ('that Supreme Power who orders everything regarding humanity and the universe'). The provision of education for all was the 'sacred duty' of leaders ('may your goal not be a *limited* education, nor the education of *just a few*, instead achieve *for everyone* the best you can').

They were to take comfort from the fact that the system was 'low cost'. Moreover, they stated that 'the habits of obedience and order that children acquire in these schools will prove very important for your new states'.

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46 See Appendix.

47 The first such conference—the Congress of Panama—was organized by Simon Bolivar and took place in Panama City in 1826 from 22 June to 15 July.

48 Thomson, op.cit., p. 288.

49 Letter to BFBS, 23 May 1827.

50 James Thomson, 'South America - VI', *Evangelical Christendom*, I (1847), 350.

Knowledge and liberty would go hand-in-hand and lead to 'enlightenment and happiness'. The new states were congratulated on their actions abolishing slavery. Their interests 'were not personal interests, but rather the noble cause of true freedom'. Something that Thomson sadly noted elsewhere was not true in the nation to the north of them.[51]

The signatories, who had 'complete confidence' in their friend Mr Thomson, pointed to another network of which Thomson was a part,[52] and to the overlapping interests of School Society, Bible Society and 'civilization'. The similarities between this document, the document signed by O'Higgins inaugurating the Chilean schools,[53] and the preamble to the Peruvian decree on public education,[54] suggest Thomson had a role in drafting all three.

Thomson's role in the drafting and presentation of the Tacubaya document confirms the conclusion that Eugenia Roldán draws from his earlier work in South America (1818-1825) —he saw the monitorial method in Spanish America as a 'tool for the expansion of universal education',[55] as opposed to being only for the instruction of the children of the poor—'the Labouring and Manufacturing Classes of Society', as it was in Britain. The way in which the monitorial method was appropriated and contextualised in Spanish America 'associated it to ideas of nation-building and the formation of citizenship' in a way that was not true elsewhere.[56] Might it also have been for Thomson the implementation of the insights of the Scottish Reformation and of Knox's vision of 'a school in every parish'?

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51 Nor was it true in British colonies!

52 Thomson elsewhere writes of them as the 'great and the good' of British society.

53 Thomson's letter from Santiago to BFSS, 30 January 1822.

54 See note 9 above.

55 Eugenia Roldán, 'Export as Import: James Thomson's Civilising Mission in South America, 1818-1825', in *Importing Modernity in Postcolonial State Formation: The Appropriation of Political, Educational, and Cultural Models in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, ed. by Eugenia Roldán Vera and Marcelo Caruso (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007), p. 259.

56 Roldan's groundbreaking study of the translation into Spanish and contextualisation to Spanish America of monitorial school educational materials underlines what she refers to as the 'peculiar appropriation' of the monitorial system in the Americas. See *The British Book Trade and Spanish American Independence: Education and Knowledge Transmission in Transcontinental Perspective.*

6. "....THY KINGDOM COME'

Throughout his years in Spanish America, Thomson lived through wars, turmoil and social upheavals. In an early letter to BFBS from Buenos Aires he noted:

> We are in the midst of political commotions here at present, and have been so for some time past. The Lord, however, is the security of his people, he is the Governor among the nations, and all these changes will, I trust, lead to the promoting of his kingdom. Let us join in the prayer, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven'.[57]

The Venezuelan émigré, Andrés Bello, then living in London, spoke of Thomson's 'simplicity and modesty' and recognised his contribution: 'the caring Christian spirit that characterises this distinguished philanthropist, his activity and truly apostolic zeal in promoting the work of the London society,[58] are known from one end of South America to another. It is impossible to speak highly enough of him.'[59] By contrast the British diplomat in Caracas, Sir Robert Ker Porter, was quite disdainful of him. He saw him as 'a *Spiritual bagman* travelling for the Bible Society... it has been such as *Monseñor Thompson* that have so frequently and of late aided in the present growing, restless and ruinous state of our Island colonies'.[60]

Sixty years later the Chilean historian Domingo Amunátegui was also deeply sceptical of Thomson, convinced a Protestant agenda was hidden behind his educational work. On the one hand he saw him as a latter-day Don Quixote, yet he also valued his political and social commentary which revealed 'a wise, discerning mind… In a word, when he's not talking about the Bible and ways to make it known, his observations are penetrating.'[61]

In recent years both BFSS and BFBS have been the focus of renewed research interest. Thomson has been interpreted in different ways. Karen

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57 5 June 1820.

58 i.e. BFSS.

59 Andrés Bello, 'Informe XXI de la Sociedad de escuelas británicas y extranjeras a la junta general celebrada en Londres el 15 de Mayo de 1826', *El Repertorio Americano* II (1827), 58-59.

60 Walter Dupouy (ed.), *Sir Robert Ker Porter's Caracas Diary 1825-1842: A British Diplomat in a Newborn Nation* (Caracas: Editorial Arte, 1966), LVIII, 18 June 1832. Ker's reference to the 'Island colonies' may be an allusion to Thomson's friend, the Baptist missionary William Knibb and the 1831 'Baptist revolt' in Jamaica.

61 Domingo Amunátegui Solar, *El Sistema de Lancaster en Chile y en otros países Sudamericanos* (Santiago: Imprenta Cervantes, 1895), p. 43.

Racine concludes that Thomson—the BFBS agent-evangelist-entrepreneur—and other Bible Society agents '...were not just disseminating religious texts, they were selling a wholesale shift in culture. There were many Spanish Americans who were anxious to buy it.'[62]

A network analysis of the school system in South America during Thomson's years there, looks more deeply at the effectiveness of Thomson's initiatives. In the fluidity of communication between the different 'nodes' and 'hubs' of educational initiatives, Thomson is identified as an important 'hub' in the network and the 'most connected actor'. Thomson received crucial support from the political leaders in power, but in that turbulent period change was the only constant. Those who adopted the monitorial system were 'clearly intertwined with the dominant political sphere, but once their parties were out of the political scene Thomson's position was weakened'.[63]

Thomson's departure from Peru in September 1824 is a clear indication of this and may have contributed to changes in his own approach to become that of an advocate and strategist for the monitorial system. On leaving he officially became a BFBS agent. At the same time the Tacubaya document and his work in Mexico (1827-1830), Jamaica (1834-1837) and in Yucatán (1843-1844) show his ongoing commitment to public education. For him it was taking place in a larger framework, that of another kingdom that was coming.

He had seen what he called the 'singular interposition of Providence on behalf of the cause of liberty'. For him the 'old tyranny and oppression' was ending, and a new day was dawning. In the battles for independence from Spain 'it was neither easy nor proper to remain indifferent as to the issue of the struggle'. For Thomson 'the day of God's merciful visitation had come'[64] and for him the development of public education, with the Bible at its heart, was central to the task of nation-building and civilization.

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[62] Karen Racine. 'Commercial Christianity: The British and Foreign Bible Society's Interest in Spanish America, 1805–1830', *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 27 (2008), 98.

[63] Eugenia Roldán and Thomas Schupp, 'Network Analysis in Comparative Social Sciences', *Comparative Education* 42 (2006), 421.

[64] Letter to BFBS from Lima, 15 July 1824.

APPENDIX

REPRESENTATION[65]

Of the British and Foreign Society of monitorial schools, to the Tacubaya Congress, presented on 7 June 1829 to the government of the United States of Mexico by the Society's business representative.

To the Representatives of the new American states meeting in Tacubaya,

Sirs:
As members together of the great human family, and as those who work with you for the progress of liberty and knowledge, we beg you to allow us to share with you some thoughts on the great objects which interest all of us.

Firstly, as English people born in a free country, we share your joy that you have removed a system of servitude, and we rejoice in seeing you take your place among the nations of the earth.

After a long struggle you have finally, and happily, become independent nations, thanks to the disposition of that Supreme Power who orders everything regarding humanity and the universe. In gratitude for the favours you have received, you will doubtless turn your attention to achieving a procedural system in the political steps you take, that contributes in the most effective way possible to the benevolent aims of Providence, with the enlightenment and happiness of the world in view.

The most important way to improve the human condition appears to be *education*. We use this word in its widest sense—civil, moral and religious. The basic elements of education and wisdom are reading, writing and arithmetic. Thus all nations have a fundamental duty to take effective measures to ensure that individuals have these important abilities and develop general knowledge as far as it can go. These are the keys to wisdom and happiness. In our view it is essential for each nation to ensure that the whole population learn these skills. A government which does not take appropriate measures to achieve such an important goal, truly fails in its most sacred duty.

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[65] The author's translation of the 1827 document prepared for BFSS by James Thomson and Vicente Rocafuerte: *Representación: De la Sociedad británica y estrangera de escuelas mútuas, dirigida al congreso de Tacubaya, y presentada el 7 de junio de 1829 al gobierno general de los Estados-Unidos Mexicanos por el encargado de los negocios de dicha sociedad*. British Library: 9770.bb.19.(19).

We have been delighted to learn from our friend Mr. Thomson, in whom we have complete confidence, that you have a deep desire to extend instruction to each and every person in your countries, irrespective of age, sex and situation. It is profoundly satisfying to know this is the case, for in your desire we see the seeds of your future greatness.

As members of the British and Foreign Schools Society (or the Society for setting up monitorial schools everywhere), we were very pleased to learn how quickly you adopted the monitorial or "mutual" system of education in your schools. The low cost with which a growing number of children can be educated by this system, gives you a great advantage in implementing your very patriotic plan to educate everyone in your domains. Moreover the habits of obedience and order that children acquire in these schools will prove very important for your new states. With these factors in mind we recommend that you make this system as widespread and effective as possible.

It often happens (such is our human frailty) that we begin a new work with great determination, and little by little we begin to tire or slack off in our efforts. We hope this will not happen with you in the great work of general education that you have begun. If you had not persevered in your struggle for liberty, and even redoubled your efforts, you would have still have been enslaved. Repeat that experience, breaking the chains of ignorance, the cruelest of all tyrants; if you do this, success is assured. We have been pleased to watch your first steps in this truly noble cause, and with all due respect we wish and earnestly urge you not to give up, but rather to persist in this with renewed vigour until your patriotic desire triumphs, until every last one of you enjoys the benefits of a good education.

We would be very happy to help in your praiseworthy endeavour through all the means at our disposal. We believe there are ways in which we cans serve you, providing good teachers, both men and women, to educate young people of both sexes. We can also provide you with the materials you need to equip the schools. Please feel completely free to approach us for help in any of these ways.

We cannot let this opportunity pass without praising you for your noble action regarding that unfortunate class of men and women, snatched from their homes and dragged from Africa to your shores. In breaking free from your yoke, you immediately and generously broke, as far as was possible, the yoke that oppressed this class of fellow human beings. By this you showed that the principles behind your own struggle in the war for independence were not personal interests, but rather the noble cause of true freedom. We are happy to see that you continue to give proof of your desire, that your nations be characterized by freedom for all who live there.

To return to the matter of education, as your colleagues we repeat our ardent and affectionate plea, that you would persist in carrying out such a noble undertaking. May your young people of both sexes be taught perfectly. May your goal not be a *limited* education, nor the education of *just a few*, instead achieve *for everyone* the best you can. Your lives as free men and women, your character among the nations, and your individual happiness, depend on the measures you adopt in this great undertaking.

Your beautiful region shows all nature's majesty: your vast plains, your majestic rivers, your lofty mountains, delight and amaze the traveler. We want to hasten the day when your prosperity will be as great as your plains, in which knowledge will abound amongst you and enrich your creativity, just as your huge rivers fertilize your lands, and in which you rise up to true greatness, like the high ranges of the Andes.

Sirs, we the undersigned are honoured to be your sincere friends and colleagues:

Signed: The Duke of Bedford, President of the Society. Lord Clarendon. Lord John Russell. Marquis Lansdowne. Henry Brougham, M.P. J. F. Buxton, M.P. William Allen, Treasurer. E. A. Schwabe, Secretary. J. M. Cramp, Secretary. J. Millar, Secretary.

London, 18 April 1827.

John Calvin and the Gospel Offer

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> 'the promises of the Gospel make offer of the grace of Christ equally to all; and God, by the external call (*externa voce*), invites (*invitet*) all who are willing to accept of salvation'.[1]
> Calvin to Melanchthon, 1552

The issue of 'gospel offers' has had a long and turbulent history in Reformed theology, not least in the disputes surrounding the theology of Jacobus Arminius. For instance William Den Boer notes in his study of Arminius that 'Unconditional predestination and irresistible grace ... according to the Remonstrants leads infallibly to the supposition that God is hypocritical in his offer of grace'.[2] Such debates over the gospel offer are not consigned to history. There is a current and persistent debate over the place of the gospel offer in Reformed theology in general, and the theology of John Calvin in particular.[3]

In an influential article Raymond Blacketer has argued that Calvin denied that God 'offers' the gospel to all who hear it preached, and that the external call for Calvin was in no way expressive of a 'common grace' to all.[4] Indeed when 'offer' (*offero*) is used by Calvin this is best understood as 'confronted' rather than 'offered'.[5] In this assertion he has been

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1 John Calvin, *Letters of John Calvin*, 4 vols; ed. by Jules Bonnet; trans. by David Constable (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1858), 2, pp. 379-80; *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*. (W. Baum et al. (ed.); 59 vols.; Braunschweig, 1863-1900), 14:417 [hereafter CO].

2 William den Boer, *God's Twofold Love: The Theology of Jacob Arminius* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), p. 250.

3 The focus here on Calvin is not to suggest that Calvin was the norm or the source of Reformed thought e.g. Richard Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 87.

4 Raymond A. Blacketer, 'The Three Points in Most Parts Reformed: A Reexamination of the So-Called Well-Meant Offer of Salvation', *Calvin Theological Journal* 35 (2000), 37-65.

5 Blacketer, 'Three Points', pp. 44-5.

followed by, amongst others, John Bolt and Patrick Baskwell.[6] However, others have challenged this interpretation. In particular Mark Beach has argued that Calvin clearly teaches that God 'offers' the gospel to all, and that this offer is expressive of divine grace and love.[7]

As the brief survey of secondary literature above indicates, the place and the definition of a 'gospel offer' in Calvin's though is disputed. For instance, is the 'offer' of the gospel, for Calvin, a presentation of the truths of the gospel, or is it more akin to an offer as it would be understood today, that is, a proffering of the gospel? Or, if it is an 'offer' how does this relate to the divine intention? For instance, is the 'offer' made in the genuine expectation that all who hear might actually respond positively?

With these questions in mind, this essay, in exploring Calvin's teaching on the 'gospel offer' will give careful attention to how Calvin defined offer, in order to illustrate in what manner he employed this term. Consideration will also be given to the way in which Calvin related the gospel offer to the will of God, and the explicit reasons he gave for a 'gospel offer', will also be considered to determine how he understood the gospel offer in relation to the divine purpose.[8]

In seeking to examine Calvin's position on these matters consideration will first be given to his certain important prolegomena, namely his doctrines of accommodation and the will of God. Attention will then be given to his teaching in *Institutes* and theological treatises, followed by that of his commentaries.

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6 John Bolt, 'Herman Hoeksema Was Right (On the three Points That Really Matter)', in *Biblical Interpretation and Doctrinal Formulation in the Reformed Tradition: Essays in Honor of James De Jong* , ed. by Arie C. Leder and Richard A. Muller (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), pp. 295-318; Patrick Baskwell, *Herman Hoeksema: A Theological Biography* (Manassas, VA: Full Bible Publications: 2009).

7 J. Mark Beach, 'Calvin's Treatment of the Offer of the Gospel and Divine Grace', *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 22 (2011), 55-76. See also A.C. De Jong, *The Well-Meant Gospel Offer: The Views of H. Hoeksema and K. Schilder* (Franker: T. Wever, 1954), pp. 123-7; Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994), pp. 5-7.

8 The debate surrounding Calvin and 'particular redemption' is beyond the scope of this article. For a recent treatment of Calvin on this see, Richard Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), pp. 70-106.

PROLEGOMENA

Before considering the gospel offer directly it is important to note that Calvin held to the *accommodated* nature of revelation. For instance, discussing scriptural representations of God as 'repenting' Calvin comments that the 'description of God that [is] given to us must be accommodated to us … the mode of accommodation is for him to represent himself to us not as he is himself (*non qualis in se est*), but as he seems to us (*sed qualis a nobis sentitur*)'.[9] This distinction between God 'in himself' and as he is 'to us' anticipates the explicit distinction in Reformed Orthodoxy between *theologia archetypa* and *theologia ectypa* and highlights the accommodated nature of revelation.[10]

This doctrine of accommodation is significant for Calvin's doctrine of the will of God. He, for instance, distinguished between the 'will of God … [which] has been set forth familiarly in the law' and 'another hidden will (*voluntatem absconditam*) which may be compared to a deep abyss'.[11] However, this acknowledgment of a hidden will and a revealed will did not mean that there were 'two wills' in God.[12] This distinction was simply a way of speaking which recognized human theology is finite in its comprehension: 'Even though his will is one and simple (*una et simplex*) in him, it appears manifold (*multiplex*) to us because, on account of our mental incapacity we do not grasp how in diverse ways (*diverso modo*) it wills and does not will something to take place … the light in which God dwells is not without reason called unapproachable.'[13] While the *voluntas*

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9 Calvin, *Institutes*, I.xvii.13 = *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, (ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford Lewis Battles; 2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 1:227 [hereafter Battles]; *CO*, 2:165-6). See also, Brian Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy: Protestant Scholasticism and Humanism in Seventeenth-Century France* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 35.

10 A number of works have examined Calvin's doctrine of the accommodated nature of revelation, e.g., Jon Balserak, *Divinity Compromised: A Study of Divine Accommodation in the Thought of John Calvin* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006); Arnold Huijgen, *Divine Accommodation in John Calvin's Theology: Analysis and Assessment* (Göttigen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

11 Calvin, *Institutes*, I.xvii.2. (Battles, 1:212-13; CO, 2:155). The importance of this for understanding Calvin on the free offer is acknowledged in De Yong, *The Well Meant Offer*, pp. 126-7.

12 See Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 113-120.

13 Calvin, *Institutes*, I.xviii.3. (Battles, 1:234; CO, 2:171). Therefore although 'some discrepancy may appear between his secret counsel (*arcanum eius consilium*) and what he requires of us' if the 'smallness of the human intellect (*mentis humanae*)' is acknowledged then it will be 'easily understood how

arcane is the 'ultimate' will of God by which he 'controls all things', in relation to human actions it is 'God's other will' (*alia Dei volunta* i.e. the *voluntas revelata*) that showed what was pleasing to God and which was the guide for life.[14]

These distinctions had important consequences for Calvin's theology as 'Logic is … subordinated to Scripture, and … is rejected as a device for understanding what is beyond the limits of the revealed mysteries'.[15] Calvin repeatedly denied that the 'incomprehensible counsel of God (*incomprehensibile Dei consilium*)' can be 'measured by the little measure of our senses'.[16] He regarded it as absurd that nothing could be regarded as true unless it had been measured by 'common sense (*sensum commune*)' and 'reason (*ratione*)'; rather, God 'commands us to marvel and to be astonished because when we come before the incomprehensible counsel of God (*incomprehensibile Dei consilium*) all our understanding is deficient'.[17] Indeed it would be a 'mad master' who attempted to instruct pupils who 'will have none of the mysteries (*mysteriis*) of God hidden and closed to them'.[18] Therefore, difficulties in reconciling a sovereign decree with a genuine gospel offer would not necessarily entail Calvin rejecting one or the other, if he found both taught in Scripture.

INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION (1559) AND THEOLOGICAL TREATISES

Moving then to Calvin's teaching on the gospel offer, it is clear from the *Institutes*, that he believed that 'There is the general call (*universalis vocatio*), by which God invites (*invitat*) all equally to himself through the outward preaching of the word', and that 'Christ is offered (*oblatus*) and held

God … always wills the one thing, though in different ways'. John Calvin, *The Secret Providence of God* (ed. Paul Helm; trans. Keith Goad; Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), p. 93 [hereafter *TSPG*]; *Calumniae nebulonis de occulta Providentia Dei cum responsione*, *CO*, 9:302. See further, John Calvin, *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God* (trans. J.K.S Reid; Repr., Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), pp. 182-5 [hereafter *CEPG*]; *De aeterna Dei praedestinatione* in *CO*, 8:364-6.

14 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xx.43 (Battles, 2:906; CO, 2:668). Thus the *voluntas revelata* cannot simply be disregarded as unimportant compared to the *voluntas arcane* for 'when he commands or forbids, God does not pretend (*simulat*), but his nature is sincerely (*sincere*) disclosed'. Calvin, *TSPG*, 95; *CO*, 9:303-4.

15 Battles, 1:234, fn. 6.

16 Calvin, *TSPG*, pp. 76-7; *CO*, 9:294.

17 Calvin, *TSPG*, p. 87; *CO*, 9:299-300. Specifically on the incomprehensibility of the fall, see Calvin, *CEPG*, 123; *CO*, 8:315.

18 Calvin, *CEPG*, p. 124; *CO*, 8:316.

forth (*propositus*) by the Father to all unto salvation, yet not all acknowledge and receive him'.[19] Thus, for Calvin, the general call and offer is equated with an invitation. Nevertheless, while the gospel invitation is to all, Calvin was clear that 'not all indiscriminately embrace … Christ … offered through the gospel (*per evangelium offertur*)'.[20]

What was the purpose, then, of offering of the gospel promises to all, even to those who reject them? Calvin offers various reasons in the *Institutes*. In particular Calvin held that, 'In his promises he in a sense calls them to witness how unworthy they are of his loving-kindness (*benignitate*)'.[21] Even for those who rejected the freely offered gospel promises, they remained a 'testimony of love (*dilectionis testimonium*)' in that 'the force and peculiar nature of the promises are never extinguished by our unfaithfulness and ingratitude … the Lord, by his promises, invites man (*hominem invitet*) not only to receive the fruits of his kindness but also … at the same time declares his love (*dilectionem*) to man'.[22] Therefore 'any promise whatsoever is a testimony of God's love (*dilectionis testificationem*) towards us'.[23] As a consequence to reject the gospel offer was to 'reject the testimony of God's love (*testimonium amoris Dei repudient*)'.[24] This clearly support's Beach's contention that the gospel offer expresses God's love to all.

Additionally the gospel offer was also 'grace' to all who heard it. Calvin himself did not, in general, restrict the concept of 'grace' to the elect. For instance, in so far as the fall was not allowed to entail the 'destruction of our whole nature' this was due to the 'general grace of God (*generalem Dei gratiam*)'.[25] Indeed amidst the ruin of fallen humanity there are those who have 'striven towards virtue', and this is to be attributed to 'God's grace (*gratiae Dei*)' which although 'not such grace as to cleanse' is

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19 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xxiv.8 (Battles, 2:974; *CO*, 2:718) and IV.xiv.7 (Battles, 2:1282; *CO*, 2:945-6). The 1560 French translation of the *Institutes* has 'vocation universelle' and 'invite' (*CO*, 4:516) and 'offert et presenté' (*CO*, 4:884). In both contexts Calvin notes the gospel offer ultimately condemns, or is a savour of death, to those who reject it. But, for Calvin, that does not prevent the gospel offer being *in itself* a good thing.

20 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.I.1 (Battles, 1:537; *CO*, 2:393).

21 Calvin, *Institutes*, II.v.10 (Battles, 1:328; *CO*, 2: 237-8). God does not 'cruelly delude' any he 'invites (*invitat*)' to him; ibid.

22 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.ii.32 (Battles, 1:579; *CO*, 2:424). The French equivalent of 'invites man' is 'invite et convie les hommes' (*CO*, 4:52).

23 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.ii.32 (Battles, 1:579; *CO*, 2:424).

24 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xxiv.2 (Battles, 2:967; *CO*, 2:713). The context here is addressing 'the wicked', i.e. not the elect.

25 Calvin, *Institutes*, II.ii.17 (Battles, 1:276; *CO*, 2:199).

still grace.[26] In specific connection with the gospel Calvin notes that God 'illumines wicked persons with some rays of his grace (*gratiae*), which he later allows to be quenched'.[27] Thus it does not seem an accurate summary of Calvin's teaching to posit that 'The universal call is … not grace for the reprobate'.[28] Rather Beach is correct to state that 'insofar as Calvin's theology evidences some conception of a general grace or favour of God towards all sinners, the offer of the gospel is a constituent of that conception'.[29]

As well as the gospel offer expressing 'love' and 'grace' Calvin also taught in the *Institutes* that those who rejected the gospel offer brought greater condemnation on themselves: 'Nothing prevents [the wicked], in habitually rejecting the promises intended (*destinatas*) for them, from thereby bringing upon themselves a greater vengeance.'[30] Thus the rejection of this testimony of love and grace brings greater condemnation to 'the wicked', and this is ordained of God. However, that does not expunge the loving nature of the testimony itself, for as Calvin said 'unfaithfulness' and 'ingratitude' cannot alter the nature of the promises.[31] Blacketer is therefore correct to say that for the reprobate ultimately 'the external call is a testimony of God's judgment', however, it is not warranted to deduce from this that 'the external call … [comes] not as an offer of actual salvation but … [as] a sign of his judgment upon human unbelief'.[32]

The function of the free offer, therefore, for the non-elect was, at least, threefold, namely, to testify of God's love even to those who rejected it, to render them inexcusable for their unbelief, and to increase their condemnation for sin.[33] These may appear mutually exclusive, but they are all present in Calvin's thought, and a full account of Calvin's teaching must encompass them all.[34]

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26 Calvin, *Institutes*, II.iii.3 (Battles, 1:292; *CO*, 2:211).

27 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.ii.12 (Battles, 1:556; *CO*, 2:407).

28 Blacketer, 'Three Points', p. 54.

29 Beach, 'Calvin's Treatment', 56.

30 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.ii.32 (Battles, 1:579; *CO*, 2:424).

31 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.ii.32 (Battles, 1:579; *CO*, 2:424). Calvin here also notes that God 'witnesses his benevolence' to the wicked in that they 'are plied with the huge and repeated benefits of God's bounty'.

32 Blacketer, 'Three Points', pp. 54-5.

33 On rendering the non-elect inexcusable, see Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xxiv.17 (Battles, 2:985; *CO*, 2:727).

34 There is an element of truth in Balserak's statement that 'Calvin's thought is one of contrasts, of extremes, of tensions and dichotomies; a theology which is difficult to assimilate whole'; Balserak, *Divinity Compromised*, p. 188.

Calvin in the *Institutes* also outlined the uses of the gospel offer for believers. The free offer of the gospel was essential for the 'pious' who accepted it, for without a general and indiscriminate offer of the gospel promises it would be impossible for anyone to come to faith.[35] He stated that God's mercy could not be embraced 'if he had not offered (*offerret*) it in his word'.[36] Calvin therefore closely related faith and the gospel offer, explicating the former by nothing that 'Faith embraces Christ as offered (*offertur*) to us by the Father (cf. John 6:29)'.[37]

The connection of faith to the free offer highlighted that the promises of the gospel were, for Calvin, from one perspective, conditional. The condition was faith: 'When we receive the promises in faith, we know that then and only then do they become effective in us. On the contrary, when faith is snuffed out, the promise is abolished at the same time.'[38] Scholarship on Calvin has not always recognized the importance of faith as a condition in his thought.[39] D.G. Mullan, however, correctly notes that 'it is important … not to create a straw man who somewhere, sometime, believed that the gospel could be proclaimed in absolute terms, without any suggestion of an appeal for faith and repentance on the part of the hearers'.[40] In the elect the condition is fulfilled by God's effectual grace, and they receive the gospel. In the reprobate the condition remains unfulfilled.

One final matter in the *Institutes* which related to the place of the free offer in Calvin's theology was its central role in assurance. Doubt was to be silenced by the truth that 'he willingly offers (*sponte offert*) himself as shepherd … let us therefore embrace Christ, who is graciously offered to us (*benigne nobis expositum*), and comes to meet us'.[41] Thus, Calvin's pastoral advice to those who lacked assurance was to look once again to the

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35 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.ii.29 (Battles, 1:575; *CO*, 2:421-2).

36 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.ii.7 (Battles, 1:550; *CO*, 2:403).

37 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.ii.8 (Battles, 1:552; *CO*, 2:404).

38 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xxiv.17 (Battles, 2:985; *CO*, 2:727). Archibald correctly notes that 'The 'free offer' is, in a sense, *conditional*': Paul Archibald, 'A Comparative Study of John Calvin and Theodore Beza on the Doctrine of the Extent of the Atonement' (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1998), p. 220.

39 E.g. R.T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 210.

40 David George Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism 1590-1638* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 179. See also Richard Muller, *Christ and the Decree, Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), p. 69.

41 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xxiv.6 (Battles 2:971-2; *CO*, 2:717).

mercies freely offered in the gospel, which, as noted above, provided the ground for faith to embrace Christ.

Moving to Calvin's theological treatises, the difficulty in simply equating 'offer' with 'present' becomes clear when the language used by Calvin in *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God* is examined. In this work Calvin is clear that the reprobate (*reprobos*) experience the same outward call as the elect do for 'God promiscuously (*promiscue*) invites (*invitat*) [them] to penitence and faith along with His own sons'.[42] He does not deny that 'the Gospel offers (*offerat*) salvation (*salutem*) to all' or that it is 'salvific (*salvificam*) for all'.[43] Therefore the question is not whether God 'offers' salvation to all in the gospel, but for what end, and with what purpose? And in this treatise Calvin is consistent with his teaching in the *Institutes*. He again constantly denies that God *intends* the salvation of all.[44] The Gospel invitation is a savour of death for the reprobate and though the 'mercy of God is offered equally to both kinds of men (*communiter offerri utrisque Dei misericordiam*)' the reprobate are simply 'rendered only inexcusable (*inexcusabiles*)'.[45] While the gospel offer is real and its promises 'invite all men to salvation (*ad salutem invitant*)' it does not 'simply and positively declare what God has decreed in His secret counsel (*arcano suo consilio*)'; it instead shows the revealed will of God.[46] This said, the 'external preaching of the Gospel' remains a 'merciful invitation (*quos benigne ad Christum invitat*)' to all who hear it.[47]

In another treatise dealing extensively with these matters, the *Secret Providence of God*, Calvin again states that 'God invites (*invitet*) all men

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42 Calvin, *CEPG*, 70; *CO*, 8:272.

43 Calvin, *CEPG*, 103; *CO*, 8:298. Also, 'reconciliation is offered to all (*offeratur omnibus reconciliatio*) through Him'; Calvin, *CEPG*, 149; *CO*, 8:336.

44 For example, 'no one unless deprived of sense and judgment can believe that salvation is ordained in the secret counsel of God (*arcano Deo consilio*) equally for all'. Calvin, *CEPG*, 109; *CO*, 8:303. See Blacketer, 'Three Points', pp. 55-6. However, this does not demonstrate *of itself* that Calvin denied God offered salvation to all to whom the gospel came.

45 Calvin, *CEPG*, p. 103; *CO*, 8:299.

46 Calvin, *CEPG*, p. 106; *CO*, 8:301. This should not be taken as entailing in itself that the gospel is not an offer, as Blacketer does. Blacketer, 'Three Points', p. 55. Blacketer highlights that Calvin's Latin statement 'though reconciliation is offered to all (*offeratur omnibus reconciliatio*)' is translated in the French as 'presented' (*presente*). Compare Calvin, *CEPG*, 149; *CO*, 8:336 with Blacketer, 'Three Points', p. 56. However, given the evidence from Calvin's French translation of the *Institutes* (where invite (*invite*) and offer (*offert*) are used) and his sermons on Deuteronomy, this example does not constitutes sufficient evidence to define Calvin's understanding of 'offer'.

47 Calvin, *CEPG*, p. 10; *CO*, 8:304.

to repentance'.[48] Echoing his commentary on Christ's lament over impenitent Jerusalem (Luke 13:34), Calvin holds that this reflects 'his public will (*aperta voluntate*)'.[49] This in turn flowed from the fact that God showed unbelieving (indeed reprobate) Israel 'great kindness (*tot beneficia*) … [which is] nothing other than God expanding his wings to protect them, if their untamed wildness had not dragged them off somewhere else'.[50] Calvin vigorously responds to the charge that this simply amounts to 'hypocrisy (*hypocritam*)'. That is, if Christ has a 'public' will which calls Jerusalem to him for salvation, and which shows Jerusalem 'kindness', while not decretively electing Jerusalem, Christ (considered here by Calvin as God) is inconsistent with himself. Calvin stated in response that to 'allure by voice and by offering benefits (*voce et beneficiis allicere*)' but to withhold the saving work of the Holy Spirit is not to act in a 'contradictory' way.[51] He explained that 'the mode of gathering that Christ mourns as fruitless and vain must differ from the efficacious call that he mentions elsewhere'.[52] The one is the revealed will, the other is the secret will of decree. Still, 'God gives no insincere (*ficte*) precepts but seriously (*serio*) reveals what he wills and commands'.[53] This seriousness does not consist in an intention to save the reprobate but does 'warn' them by an 'external word'.[54] God therefore 'invites (*invitans*) the whole crowd to himself' but only 'draws a few by his secret inspiration to obedience'.[55] Calvin sees no reason for this invitation to be regarded as a 'lie'.[56]

What is important is that in Calvin's response to the charge of 'hypocrisy' here (and elsewhere) he nowhere denies that God 'invites' and even 'allures' all. Nor does he deny that God shows 'kindness' to all. Rather, he simply insists this is not inconsistent with a sovereign election of only some. Whilst these two concepts may be difficult to hold together, Calvin in his writings does.[57] Thus, despite any difficulties it created, Calvin

48 Calvin, *TSPG*, p. 71; *CO*, 9:292.

49 Calvin, *TSPG*, p. 98; *CO*, 9:305.

50 Calvin, *TSPG*, p. 98; *CO*, 9:305.

51 Calvin, *TSPG*, p. 99; *CO*, 9:305.

52 Calvin, *TSPG*, p. 100; *CO*, 9:306.

53 Calvin, *TSPG*, p. 100; *CO*, 9:306. Calvin clearly denied that God *decretively* wills the salvation of all, e.g., Calvin, *TSPG*, p. 73; *CO*, 9:293.

54 Calvin, *TSPG*, p. 100; *CO*, 9:306.

55 Calvin, *TSPG*, p. 100; *CO*, 9:306. Compare also Calvin's later statement where he speaks of Christ 'inviting all to himself without exception (*ubi omnes sine exceptione externa voce ad se invitans*)'. Calvin, *TSPG*, p. 117; *CO*, 9:315.

56 Calvin, *TSPG*, p. 100; *CO*, 9:306.

57 See, e.g., Anthony Hoekema, 'The Covenant of Grace in Calvin's Teaching', *Calvin Theological Journal* 2 (1967), 135; *Saved by Grace*, 5-7.

maintained a doctrine of a free offer of the gospel, even to the extent of making it an expression of God's revealed will that all be saved.[58] As G. Michael Thomas notes, Calvin held together 'the apparent contradiction between a sincere universal promise and an unchangeable decree of particular election'.[59]

CALVIN'S COMMENTARIES

Calvin's comments on Ezekiel 18:23 go to the heart of his doctrine of the gospel offer. He here affirms 'that God desires nothing more earnestly (*nihil magis cupere*) than that those who were perishing and rushing to destruction should return into the way of safety'.[60] Thus there is clearly a sense in which Calvin maintains that God desires the repentance and salvation of the reprobate. This universal desire was even made the basis for the preaching of the gospel: 'And for this reason not only is the Gospel spread abroad in the world, but God wished to bear witness (*voluit Deus testatum*) through all ages how inclined he is to pity … In the Gospel we hear how familiarly he addresses us when he promises us pardon (Luke 1:78). And this is the knowledge of salvation, to embrace his mercy which he offers us in Christ (*quae nobis in Christo offertur*).'[61]

Calvin was aware of the tension here between this universal desire and the decree of election. He responded to this by noting first that 'the Prophet [Ezekiel] does not here speak of God's secret counsel (*arcano Dei consilio*)'.[62] He then outlined his distinction between the secret and

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58 *Pace* Blacketer, 'Three Points', p. 51.

59 G.M. Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement: A Dilemma for Reformed Theology from Calvin to the Consensus* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997), p. 20.

60 John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries* (22 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 12:246 [hereafter *CTS*]; *CO*, 40:445. This contradicts Baskwell's assertion that 'Calvin is emphatic that God does not desire the salvation of the reprobate … and the preaching of the Gospel is in no way 'grace' to all those that hear it'. Baskwell, *Herman Hoeksema*, pp. 244-5.

61 *CTS*, 12:246-7; *CO*, 40:445. Compare also Calvin's exposition of this verse elsewhere: 'God leaves nothing undone which would lead to people being led back into the way of salvation (*salutis viam*) if only they were in a healthy condition … So God wills that the dying should live (*Vult ergo Deus morientem vivere*) (so far as it is right for us to judge his will) in that he helps man by all [kinds of] support'. John Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will: A Defence of the Orthodox Doctrine of Human Choice against Pighius*, ed. by Anthony N. S. Lane; trans. by G. I. Davies (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), p. 199; *CO*, 6:371.

62 *CTS*, 12:247; *CO*, 40:445. See, Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, p. 223.

revealed will of God. This meant that God was not duplicitous, in that he willed and did not will the same thing in the same way, but rather he willed the same thing in 'a manner inscrutable to us (*et quidem nobis incognitis*)'.[63] Even though his will was one and simple (*simplex*), because of the finite nature of creatures, there had to be 'variety (*varietas*)' in the way it was understood and beheld.[64] This was not a contradiction, it was a confession of creatureliness, which meant that 'it is not surprising that our eyes should be blinded by intense light, so that we cannot certainly judge how God wishes all to be saved (*quomodo velit Deus omnes salvos fieri*), and yet has devoted all the reprobate to eternal destruction, and wishes them to perish (*et velit illos perire*)'.[65]

Thus Calvin's response fell back ultimately on the fact that humans are unable to go beyond *theologia ectypa* and therefore cannot expect to reconcile all truths with one another. Any who argued that God was guilty of deception in sincerely inviting all to partake of salvation while having decreed only a limited number will enjoy that salvation were, for Calvin, 'arguing foolishly', because they failed to make the distinction that he did between the revealed and hidden will.[66] Calvin was clear that in this passage God was taking on the character of his revealed will: 'we must remark that God puts on a twofold character (*duplicem personam induere*): for he here wishes to be taken (*aestimari*) at his word'.[67]

This willingness to let Ezekiel 18:23 speak on its own terms justifies Beach's conclusion that Calvin never resorts to 'deductavistic exegesis from the secret decree'.[68] Rather he 'lets the words of the text carry their own meaning, without trying to theologise his way out of a conundrum'.[69] Simply because Calvin believed in sovereign election did not give him *carte blanche* to use election to mitigate the teaching of Scripture. Instead, Calvin taught that 'God lovingly calls all people to himself' and that in some sense 'God desires or wills the salvation of all' and yet that they were not inconsistent with predestination.[70] Beach highlights that the former related to the revealed will of God, and the later the secret will, and so there was no contradiction.[71] Thus Calvin's teaching on the distinction in

63 *CTS*, 12:247; *CO*, 40:445.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 *CTS*, 12:248; *CO*, 40:446.
67 Ibid.
68 Beach, 'Calvin's Treatment', p. 68.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., p. 72.
71 Ibid., p. 73.

the one will of God explains his teaching on the gospel offer, rather than precludes it.

Calvin commented similarly on Christ's lament over Jerusalem in Matthew 23:37.[72] He highlighted that 'God's grace (*gratia*) had been rejected at Jerusalem' and that 'God's approach to the Jews had been to attract (*allicere*) them with gentleness and friendship (*comiter et blande*), and His kindness (*benignitate*) brought Him no success'.[73] To this people who 'had spurned kind gestures of more than a mother's love' Christ 'offered a wonderful and incomparable proof of love (*incomparabile amoris documentum*) that He did not mind coming down to endearments to win rebels to His service'.[74] Indeed whenever the 'Word of God' was put before Israel, 'He bares His breast to us with maternal kindness (*materna dulcedine*)… [and] the humble affection of a hen fostering her chicks'.[75] To this rebellious people God 'daily held out His hands to embrace (*amplexandum*) [them]' and yet he 'gained nothing'.[76] If this display of grace and kindness to (ultimately reprobate) Israel was not enough, 'to us today His invitation (*invitat*), through His Son, is far more familiar and kind (*familiarius et suavius*)'.[77] It was against a background of the rejection of gospel invitations expressive of love and grace that Christ lamented over a lost people.

Given that he spoke of the Jews experiencing God's grace, kindness and love, and that Christ lamented over the Jews rejection of these, Calvin knew he had to respond to the 'sophists' who used these verses to deny 'God's secret predestination (*arcanum Dei praedestinationem*)'.[78] He did not reply by stating that Christ here was simply speaking in his humanity; rather he acknowledged that 'Christ is speaking in the Person of God (*Christum loqui in Dei persona*) … these words really belong to his eternal Godhead'.[79] Given that God was speaking here, how did Calvin har-

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72 Compare also Beach, 'Calvin's Treatment', pp. 65-6.

73 John Calvin, *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries* (ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance; trans. by various; 12 vols.; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995) 3:68 [hereafter *CNTC*]; *CO*, 45:642.

74 *CNTC*, 3:68; *CO*, 45:642.

75 *CNTC*, 3:68; *CO*, 45:642.

76 *CNTC*, 3:68; *CO*, 45:643.

77 Ibid. It is precisely because of the loving, gracious, nature of the gospel invitation that its rejection entails 'dreadful vengeance'. Thus those who 'with deliberate malice reject the grace of Christ … suffer the heavier punishment'; Calvin, *CEPG*, 155-6; *CO*, 8:342.

78 *CNTC*, 3:69; *CO*, 45:643.

79 Ibid. Calvin held that the gospel invitation came ultimately not from the preacher, but from God himself: 'God then not only employs men to lead us to himself, but comes forth in a manner himself to meet us, and rises early

monize this verse with election and answer the 'sophists'? He, began by expounding his understanding of the free offer of the gospel and what this meant: 'in His Word he calls (*vocet*) all alike to salvation, and this is the object of preaching, that all should take refuge in His faith… it is right to say that He wishes all (*velle omnes*) to gather to him'.[80] Then he reverted to his standard exegetical techniques to safeguard his doctrine of election: 'here there is no description of the secret council of God (*arcanum Dei consilium*) – just his wishes (*sed voluntas*)'.[81] Calvin was aware that some believed that such a distinction between a revealed and hidden will was 'absurd (*absurde*)', and so he proceeded: 'I answer that this is exactly our belief, that His will is one and undivided (*unicam et simplicem*): but because our minds cannot plumb the profound depths of his secret election to suit our infirmity, the will of God (*Dei voluntatem*) is set before us as double (*bifariam*).'[82] Richard Muller comments: 'So, too, in Matthew 23:37, Calvin presses the distinction between the secret and revealed will of God, noting that the indiscriminate and universal call of the gospel expresses the revealed will of God that all ought to be saved, not the secret will or purpose of God to save his elect'.[83] That there was a revealed will for the salvation of all was important, in that it left those who did not come 'without excuse'.[84]

Calvin followed the same line of reasoning on 2 Peter 3:9.[85] He talked first of God's 'wondrous love towards the human race (*Mirus hie erga humanum genus amor*)' expressed in a 'desire that all men be saved (*quod omnes vult esse salvos*)'.[86] This reflected God's will 'as it is made known to us in the Gospel (*voluntate quae nobis in evangelio patefit*)' and not 'the secret decree of God (*arcano Dei consilio*) by which the wicked are doomed to their own ruin'.[87] Thus Calvin's standard distinction between the revealed and hidden will was again utilised to harmonise his comments with his understanding of election.

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as one solicitous for our salvation (*quia sollicitus est de salute nostra*)'. *CTS*, 9:403; *CO* 37:696.

80 *CNTC*, 3:69; *CO*, 45:643.

81 *CNTC*, 3:69; *CO*, 45:643-4.

82 *CNTC*, 3:69; *CO*, 45:644.

83 Muller, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:440.

84 'Deum velle omnes colligere, ut quicunque non veniunt sint inexcusabiles.' *CNTC*, 3:70; *CO*, 45:644.

85 Compare also Beach's comments on this verse, Beach, 'Calvin's Treatment', pp. 72-3.

86 *CNTC*, 12:364; *CO*, 55:475.

87 Ibid.; *CO*, 55:475-6.

The comments by Calvin on John 3:16-17 provide additional insight on his teaching regarding the gospel offer.[88] He believed that the general word 'whosoever' was used 'to invite (*invitet*) indiscriminately (*promiscue*) all to share in life and to cut off every excuse from unbelievers'.[89] By doing this God showed he 'is favourable [or propitious, *propitium*] to the whole world when He calls all without exception to the faith of Christ (*sine exceptione omnes ad fidem Christi vocat*)'.[90] However, while 'Christ is open to all and displayed to (*expositus*) all', it remains true that 'God opens the eyes of the elect only that they may seek Him by faith'.[91] A universal gospel invitation to all is therefore accompanied a sovereign election only of some. Moving to reflect on John 3:17, Calvin proceeded to expand on the relationship of Christ to the non-elect. While they experience greater condemnation for despising the grace of God, this is not due to the nature of the gospel itself for 'When elsewhere Christ says that He is come for judgment, when He is said to be set for the falling of many, it may be regarded as accidental (*accidentale*), or so to say foreign (*adventitium*). For those who reject the grace offered (*oblatam in eo gratiam*) in Him deserve to find Him the judge and avenger of such shocking contempt'.[92] In this context it is worth considering Calvin's understanding of the proclamation of the gospel as a 'savour of life' and as a 'savour of death'. Calvin is adamant that the gospel being a 'savour of death' still 'promotes God's glory by bringing to the reprobate a just condemnation'.[93] However, Calvin is equally insistent that the gospel is 'the ministry of life (*ministerium vitae*)' and that while for unbelievers 'it is an occasion of condemnation … it is they who make it so'.[94] Thus 'the proper (*proprium*) function of the Gospel is always to be distinguished from what we may call its accidental function (ab accidentali), which must be imputed to the depravity of men by which life is turned into death'.[95]

Similarly, while it is true in Calvin's thought that the gospel ultimately brings greater judgement on the reprobate, and further that this is decreed by God, to portray this as the only purpose and relation of the

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88 Compare also Beach's comments on these verses, Beach, 'Calvin's Treatment', pp. 64-5.

89 *CNTC*, 4:74; *CO*, 47:65.

90 Ibid. Compare Calvin's comments on Jeremiah 7:25-26, *CTS*, 9:403; *CO* 37:696. See Beach, 'Calvin's Treatment', p. 66.

91 *CNTC*, 4:75; *CO*, 47:65.

92 *CNTC*, 4:75-76; *CO*, 47:66.

93 *CNTC*, 10:35; *CO*, 50:34.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid. See also Calvin's exposition of 2 Corinthians 2:16, *CTS*, 20:161; *CO*, 50:34. See further, De Jong, *The Well-Meant Gospel Offer*, p. 124.

gospel to the reprobate does not reflect the full breadth of Calvin's teaching. In addition to Calvin's material surveyed above, in his sermons on Deuteronomy he observed 'that Saint John saith generally that he loved the world. And why? For Jesus Christ offereth himself to all men without exception to be their redeemer (*Car Iesus Christ s'est offert en general à tous sans exception, pour Redempteur*)'.[96] He developed this by speaking of 'three degrees of the love that God hath showed us in our Lord Jesus Christ (*trois degrez de l'amour que Dieu à monstré en nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ*)'. He stated that 'the first degree of love, which extendeth to all men (*à tous hommes*), inasmuch as Jesus Christ reacheth out his arms to call (*appeller*) and allure (*convier*) all men, both great and small, and to win them to him (*les gagner à soy*)'. Calvin noted a second degree of love, indeed 'special love (*amour special*)', which was evident towards those 'to whom the gospel is preached'. Both these degrees of love were distinguished from the love demonstrated in effectual calling, which is peculiar to those God gives the gift of the Holy Ghost.[97] In failing to note that, for Calvin, in some sense the gospel offer expressed a general love, Blacketer has left unacknowledged one facet of the Reformer's teaching. Indeed in his commentary on Romans 5:18 Calvin explicitly states that Christ is 'offered (*offertur*) by the goodness of God (*Dei benignitate*) without distinction to all men (*omnibus indifferenter*), yet not all receive Him'.[98] What is God's goodness to the undeserving, if it is not grace?

Calvin's commentaries are also instructive in demonstrating how Calvin defined 'offer', and in particular whether Calvin's use of *offere* should be translated as 'presented' rather than 'offered'. In examining the meaning of 'offer' Mark Beach focuses on Calvin's commentary on Romans 5:18 and the statement that Christ 'is offered [*offertur*] by the goodness of God (*Dei benignitate*) without distinction to all men, yet not all receive him'.[99] Beach argues that if Christ is merely 'displayed' of 'exhibited' the 'the question of *receiving* Christ is irrelevant, for there is nothing to be received in a mere display'.[100] He proceeds to note that Calvin's use of *offere* corresponds to 'the word receive (*apprehendere*), a term that means *to take hold of, to seize*'.[101] Therefore he concludes that 'to limit the word *offere* to the idea of a mere 'exhibit' or 'display' renders

96 John Calvin, *Sermons on Deuteronomy* (trans. Arthur Golding; 1583; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), p. 167; *CO*, 26:216.
97 Calvin, *Deuteronomy*, 167; *CO*, 26:216.
98 *CNTC*, 8:118; *CO*, 49:101.
99 Ibid.
100 Beach, 'Calvin's Treatment', pp. 63-4.
101 Ibid., p. 64.

Calvin's sentence meaningless'.[102] Beach buttresses his argument by considering a number of other texts. He notes Calvin's comments on Romans 1:16 that the 'gospel is indeed offered to all for their salvation (*Offertur quidem evangelium omnibus in salutem*), but its power is not universally manifest'.[103] This highlights that Calvin distinguished between the offer which is 'for their salvation' and the 'power' of the gospel which does not reach all to whom the gospel itself is offered.[104] This 'offer' was to be regarded as equivalent to an 'invitation'. In his commentary Calvin moves almost interchangeably from one term to the other: 'the Gospel invites (*invitet*) all to partake of salvation without any difference … For Christ is there offered (*offertur*), whose proper office is to save that which had been lost.'[105] The language of 'refusal' is also commented on by Beach, for Calvin spoke of 'those who refuse (*recusant*) to be saved'.[106] Beach concludes that the 'language of 'refusal' comports with the language of offer and invitation … Calvin's language is that a genuine invitation is given—a genuine offer, and a genuine refusal'.[107]

CONCLUSION

In view of Calvin's teaching in the *Institutes*, his various theological treatises and his commentaries, his doctrine on the free offer may be summarized as follows. First, there is an offer of the gospel, including its promises, to all. Second, this term 'offer' is equivalent to an invitation, and is not equivalent merely to a presentation or declaration of facts. Third, the free offer is an expression of God's love and grace.[108] Precisely because of this, those who reject it are (as decreed by God) subject to greater condemnation. Fourth, the free offer of the gospel is vital for any believer to come to faith and have assurance. Fifth, it is God's revealed will and desire that all accept his offer of salvation.[109] Sixth, as Beach recognises,

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[102] Ibid., p. 63.

[103] Ibid., p. 64. For the context of Calvin's comments, see *CNTC*, 8:27; *CO*, 49:19.

[104] Beach notes that Calvin explains though the gospel is the 'taste of death' to those who reject it this 'arises not so much from the nature of the Gospel itself (*non tam ab eius natura provenit*), as from their own wickedness'. Calvin, *CNTC*, 8:27; *CO*, 49:19-20.

[105] *CNTC*, 8:27; *CO*, 49:20.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Beach, 'Calvin's Treatment', p. 64.

[108] See also, Archibald, 'Calvin and Beza', p. 217.

[109] Rainbow states that 'Calvin clearly articulated a universal saving will of God that was conditional on faith'. Jonathan Rainbow, *The Will of God and the Cross: An Historical and Theological Study of John Calvin's Doctrine of Limited*

election and reprobation do not 'short-circuit' the gospel.[110] The decree does not reduce the gospel offer in Calvin's thought to 'sound and fury, signifying nothing'. Rather, it is true that 'Calvin is content to say that God wills the salvation of all'.[111]

Redemption (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1990), p. 149. See also, Archibald, 'Calvin and Beza', p. 316.

110 Beach, 'Calvin's Treatment', 75.

111 Ibid.

The Kirk, The Word, and the Text of Scripture: A Small Note on a Great Matter

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For better or for worse, the Church of Scotland has developed something of a reputation for theological liberalism. This has been confirmed by recent events, where the General Assembly has debated—and consistently voted—to move the Kirk toward the acceptance of ministers and deacons in civil partnerships, and, most recently, in civil same-sex marriages. Central to this trajectory is a distinction between the Word of God and the text of Scripture, which has enabled successive General Assemblies to concede the existence of Scriptural injunctions against same-sex sexual activity while, simultaneously, believing that God is calling the Church to a new understanding of this activity.

Given the importance of this distinction between Word and text, readers of this Bulletin might have assumed that it had been formally debated and adopted by the General Assembly. This, however, is not the case. This is because the distinction between the Word of God and the text of Scripture is viewed - almost universally - to be a foundational element of the constitution of the Church of Scotland. In spite of this near universal agreement, new evidence has been uncovered that points in a different direction, and casts doubt upon the received wisdom that the constitution of the Kirk recognises an operative distinction between Word and text.

In the article that follows, I will rehearse existing understandings of the relation between Word and text in the Kirk, before presenting the new evidence that has come to light. I will then conclude with some possible implications of this new evidence for the practice and self-understanding of the Church of Scotland. In writing this article, my intention is not to cast aspersions upon the Kirk as a whole, but only its reliance upon a theology of the Word that is both historically dubious and theologically untenable. It is my hope that when these problems are recognised a more adequate theology of the Word might be found.

RECEIVED WISDOM

The Christian Church has always recognised a distinction between Jesus Christ as the Word of God and the text of Holy Scripture. If it did not, then John 1:1-18 would refer to the pre-existence and incarnation of a

collection of ancient texts. Yet, within the Church of Scotland, this distinction has developed in a way largely unknown to earlier Church tradition. Within a number of Reports to the General Assembly, this *logical* distinction between Word and text has become an *operative* and *practical* distinction, so that the Word of God can communicate teachings that are different from—and even in direct conflict with - the written text of Scripture.[1] This has enabled the so-called 'revisionist' party in the Kirk to concede the presence of Scriptural injunctions against same-sex sexual activity while, simultaneously, believing that the Word of God is now teaching the Church something new.[2]

In spite of the difference between the contemporary and historic Church on this issue, it is taken as axiomatic by every authority that the *Declaratory Articles of the Church of Scotland* have recognised, since the Church Union of 1929, that the written text of Scripture is not only logically but operatively and practically distinct from the Word of God. Article I of the *Declaratory Articles* states:

> The Church of Scotland adheres to the Scottish Reformation; receives the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as its supreme rule of faith and life; and avows the fundamental doctrines of the Catholic faith founded thereupon.

Of the phrase 'the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments', James Weatherhead, former Principal Clerk and Moderator of the General Assembly, writes:

> Both in relation to the Scriptures and in relation to the *Westminster Confession*, the *Declaratory Articles* use the phrase 'contained in'. This is quite explicitly to recognise that the Scriptures are not *per se* the Word of God, but that the Word of God is contained in them…[3]

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1 See, e.g., 'Special Commission on Same-Sex Relationships and the Ministry, in *Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Church of Scotland, 2011), 23/26, 33; 'Theological Commission on Same-Sex Relationships and the Ministry', in *Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Church of Scotland, 2013), 20/33-5, 49, 57.

2 The 'revisionist' section of the 2011 Special Commission on Same-Sex Relationships and the Ministry accepted that Scripture as a whole, and Romans 1 in particular, intended to condemn same-sex sexual activity, but still argued in favour of committed same-sex relationships. See Church of Scotland, 'Special Commission', 23/33.

3 J.L. Weatherhead, *The Constitution and Laws of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Church of Scotland, 1997), IV.4.

From this observation, he draws the following implications for members and office-bearers:

> A member or office-bearer of the Church is free to believe that all the words in the Bible are together literally the Word of God, but that is not required of all members and office-bearers.[4]

The import of these comments is that, while an office-bearer is free to believe so, it is not the intention of Article I to make any identification between the Word of God and the text of Scripture. In agreement, another former Principal Clerk and Moderator of the General Assembly, Finlay Macdonald, writes:

> The Church does not hold that the words of the Bible constitute the infallible Word of God, though, being a broad church, any member of the Church is free to believe that. What they are not free to do is insist that everyone else believes the same![5]

This judgement is shared, and amplified, by others. Of Article I, Douglas Murray writes:

> It had been said that the supreme standard is the Word of God contained in the scriptures, not the scriptures themselves. It should be noted that an identification between the Word of God and the scriptures was not being made… It is interesting to note that the constitution of the Kirk thus does not identify the bible and the Word of God and therefore has a non-fundamentalist view of scripture.[6]

Weatherhead, Macdonald, and Murray's belief that the Church of Scotland has, since reunion, recognised an operative distinction between the Word of God and the text of Scripture, was challenged by the so-called 'traditionalist' section of the 2013 Theological Commission. It was pointed out there that the phrase 'contained in' had been used in a number of Scottish Church documents ever since the *Westminster Confession*, and that —in the absence of an explicit statement to the contrary—its presence in the *Articles Declaratory* should be understood in its traditional Reformed sense.[7] While this argument makes a good deal of sense, the 'tradition-

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4 Weatherhead, *Constitution and Laws*, IV.5.

5 Finlay A.J. Macdonald, *Confidence in a Changing Church* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 2004), p. 184.

6 Douglas Murray, *Freedom to Reform* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), p. 44.

7 Church of Scotland, 'Theological Commission', 20/67-8.

alist' section of the 2013 Theological Commission did not examine the drafting process that led to the framing of the *Articles Declaratory*, and, for that reason, it might still be reasonable to suppose that the framers of the *Articles Declaratory* had intended to use the phrase 'contained in' in a new way.

NEW EVIDENCE

When we examine the process that led to the drafting of the *Articles Declaratory*, however, it becomes clear that a serious misinterpretation of the Kirk's constitution has taken place. My curiosity in this issue was raised when I reflected on the anachronism so clearly visible in Murray's argument. He claims that the United Free Church and the Auld Kirk elected—*ten years* before the outbreak of the fundamentalist controversy in the United States—that a 'fundamentalist' understanding of the Bible should be rejected, and that an operative distinction should be made between Word and text. My curiosity was raised further when I realised that the basis for Murray's claim was a *single source*, the Minutes of the Joint Committee on Liberty in Relation to Creed, which met on 15th September 1910. Upon consulting the minutes of this meeting, however—which are held in the archives of New College, University of Edinburgh—all that was found in the minute was the following passage:

> The Rev. Professor Cooper, seconded by Mr Wotherspoon, moved that Clause I. [later Article I] read as follows: -
> "The supreme standard of faith and practice is the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments."
> On a vote being taken the First Motion [which would form the text of Article I] was carried by a large majority Professor Cooper dissented.[8]

Notable by its absence in this minute is any reference to fundamentalism, or any operative distinction between Word and text. Evidence that the issue discussed that day was not a distinction between Word and text is increased when we turn to consider Cooper's dissent, which was also supported by Wotherspoon. The dissent makes no mention of a distinction between the Word of God and the text of Scripture, and does not even make mention of the phrase 'contained in', which Murray claims was the chief target of the dissent. On the contrary, the dissent's reference to the *Confession of Faith Ratification Act 1690* makes it clear that its primary

[8] *Church of Scotland and United Free Church Conference Sub-Committee on Liberty in Relation to Creed*. New College Library, Papers of Alexander Martin, MSS MART 3.

interest was the *Westminster Confession*. Even in spite of this textual evidence, or lack thereof, there is still the basic issue of plausibility. Can it really be maintained that every one of the dozens of clergy and elders present that day, at the dawn of the twentieth century, really believed that the Bible and the Word of God were operatively distinct, potentially teaching completely different things, and that only *two delegates* disagreed?

Fearing that I was jumping to conclusions, I decided to investigate the other Reports, Interim Reports, and other Memoranda produced at the time. In these investigations, I uncovered *no evidence* of any operative distinction between Word and text. On the contrary, the formulae in these various documents, repeated over and over again, insist that the Holy Scriptures 'must be recognised as the unchangeable standard'[9] or that 'The supreme rule of faith, as of practice, must be the Holy Scriptures.'[10] In every document I consulted, the textual and historical context made it clear that a traditional understanding of Word and text was intended.

This is also the case for other historical documents making reference to the Word of God 'contained in' the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Apart from its similarity to Chapter I of the *Westminster Confession*, and the Answer to Question Two of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, the phrase 'contained in' is also found in Article I of the *Articles Forming the United Presbyterian Church* of 1847, and Paragraph 2 of the *United Free Church Act Anent Spiritual Independence of the Church* 1906. While doubts might be directed toward the construction of the phrase 'contained in' within Article I Declaratory, and perhaps the 1906 Act, they cannot reasonably be directed toward the 1847 *Articles*, promulgated, as they were, before the dawn of biblical criticism in Britain. We must therefore conclude that the phrase 'contained in', in and of itself, implies no operative distinction between the Word of God and the text of Scripture, and that the inclusion of this phrase in Article I was only intended to reference these earlier Articles and Acts.

Given that the historical and documentary evidence points to a traditional understanding of Scripture as the written Word of God, and that the only source cited for an operative distinction between Word and text in the *Articles Declaratory* says something quite different from what Weatherhead, Macdonald, and Murray claim, what is the reasonable conclusion

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[9] *Church of Scotland and United Free Church Conference Sub-Committee on Liberty in Relation to Creed*. New College Library, Papers of Alexander Martin, MSS MART 3.

[10] *Committee of Conference, Interim Report by Sub-Committee on Doctrinal Liberty in Relation to Creed*. New College Library, Papers of Alexander Martin, MSS MART 3.

to be drawn? I believe it is this: *Article I Declaratory was not intended to recognise an operative distinction between the Word of God and the text of the Old and New Testaments.* The prevailing interpretation of this Article—put upon it by Weatherhead, Macdonald, and Murray, and believed by thousands of Church of Scotland office-bearers—is, therefore, a wishful anachronism.

POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS

This conclusion has a number of possible implications for the self-understanding, theological basis, and legal position of the Kirk. If the drafters of Article I Declaratory on 15th September 1910 did not intend to frame an operative distinction between the Word of God and the text of Scripture, then the opinion of some of the most senior leaders of the Church of Scotland on this subject is incorrect, as is the majority opinion of most ministers and office-bearers of the Kirk. If, as Murray and many others believe, the traditional Reformed conception of Scripture is a 'fundamentalist' one, the Church of Scotland, rather than being a bastion of liberalism, is shown to be 'fundamentalist' to the core.

This leads to an obvious question: does the discovery of the Minutes of the Joint Committee on Liberty in Relation to Creed, which met on 15th September 1910, provide grounds for legal challenge against any Act that contradicts the literal sense of Scripture? Is it possible that the General Assembly - and, by extension, its Councils and Committees - have acted *ultra vires*, inasmuch as they have proposed and passed legislation that contradicts the literal sense of Scripture? While, *prima facie*, these questions might be answered in the affirmative, Article VIII of the *Articles Declaratory* gives the Kirk great discretion in interpreting its conformity with the first Article Declaratory, and this discretion is probably sufficient to protect the Church from judicial review by the civil courts. Nevertheless, familiarity with the preceding argument would help the Kirk to forestall any potential challenge.

CONCLUSION

Whatever the legal consequences of the argument presented in this article, it nevertheless presents—if nothing else—a strong historical argument against the current operative distinction between the Word of God and the text of Scripture prevalent within the Church of Scotland. It confirms that the drafters of the *Articles Declaratory* did not recognise such a distinction, and would most probably have rejected it. Whatever we may think of the aspiration to a 'broad Kirk', then, we should not pretend that

this aspiration was necessarily shared by those who were responsible for the Church Union of 1929. In addition to this historical argument, we might add a theological one. While an operative distinction between the Word of God and the text of Scripture affords the Church of Scotland latitude to alter its doctrine and practice in light of current experience, it raises a host of problems. Epistemically, in the absence of the literal sense of Scripture, what are the criteria for judging what is, and what is not, the Word of God? Ecclesiologically, how is one small denomination, on the edge of Europe, better placed to discern the Word of God than billions of Christians elsewhere in the world? Doctrinally, if the Word of God can teach the Kirk that its traditional understanding of sexuality is seriously misguided, what else might it come to teach? Are there any limits to the Word of God's potential supersession of Scripture? Time will tell.

Soteriology: The Application of the Merits of the Mediator by the Holy Spirit. By Geerhardus Vos. Volume 4 of Reformed Dogmatics. 5 volumes. Translated and edited by Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2015. ISBN: 978-1577996675. vii + 257 pp. £24.75.

Geerhardus Vos is most well-known for his masterful expositions of the history of redemption. Thanks to Richard Gaffin and the help of others, English-speakers now have access to Vos's early reflections on the order of salvation (*ordo salutis*). This volume on soteriology is the fourth instalment of Gaffin's translation of Vos's *Reformed Dogmatics*, originally published as a hand-written manuscript in Dutch.

Vos first provides a detailed discussion of the meaning, nature, and rationale of the *ordo salutis*. He then elucidates the acts of the *ordo* in turn: calling and regeneration, conversion, faith, justification, sanctification, and perseverance (briefly). According to Vos, it is appropriate to deal with these divine acts as a consecutive series. As Vos puts it, 'The subjective application of the salvation obtained by Christ does not occur at once' (p. 1). Rather, each act in the *ordo* has its fixed place, its own basis and result (p. 2). Hence, Scripture presents subjective salvation as 'an ordered sequence (e.g., Romans 8:28–30)' (p. 2). Vos addresses the acts of the *ordo* by noting the meaning of the relevant theological terms and their biblical cognates, exegeting relevant biblical passages, and interacting with relevant historical theological debates. Five questions drive Vos's engagement with each act: Is this act judicial (legal/forensic) or recreative (renovate/transformative)? Does this act lie below the consciousness or in the consciousness? Provided it is recreative, does this act remove our old nature or establish a new nature? Is this act the beginning of a long development or involved in a series of similar acts? Does God execute this act immediately or mediately? Vos uses these questions to properly orient his discussion and shepherd his readers away from theological error (see pp. 8–10).

Vos argues that we must distinguish between judicial acts and recreative acts, for example, because the former address the consciousness of man, while the latter take place below the consciousness of man (p. 139). Moreover, judicial acts provide the ground for all recreative acts (p. 6). Thus, while the unconscious change of our condition effected in regeneration precedes our conscious change of state effected in justification, regeneration logically takes place only in light of impending subjective justification: 'For God, justification in His view is the basis, regeneration the consequent' (p. 7). If we ignore this distinct connection between judi-

cial acts and recreative acts, then we risk reversing the relation, making our recreated nature a basis for the judicial benefits of redemption. This reversal inevitably leads in the direction of Rome, rejecting the totally alien nature of our righteousness before God (pp. 140–4). One can see here how Vos's questions aid his navigation of the relations between the various benefits of redemption.

In this volume Vos offers helpful – and often brilliant – insights into the order of salvation. For having written it in his late 20s/early 30s, he frequently displays a surprising theological maturity usually resident in older theologians. When discussing the nature of saving faith, for example, Vos engages the question of whether Scripture or Christ is the object of belief. Rather than insistently landing on either side of this dichotomy, Vos asserts that it is a false disjunction:

> The genuine believer takes the whole of Scripture as a living organism produced by the Holy Spirit to present Christ to him. On every page of Scripture, he finds traits and traces of the Mediator. He regards each declaration of God in this light. One should purpose to grasp this close connection vividly—that we recognize and know nothing of Christ other than through and from Scripture. Thus, there are not two objects of our faith standing independently next to each other. It is not Scripture plus Christ, but Christ in Scripture, and Scripture in its center, Christ. While on the one hand, for the eye of faith, the word of Scripture changes imperceptibly into the image of a person, on the other hand that person bears completely the traits of a word, for we do not yet behold Him in concrete form but know Him only from the Word. (p. 117)

To use the words of one of Vos's greatest students, Cornelius Van Til, the object of our faith is nothing less or more than *the self-attesting Christ of Scripture*.

While this volume is shot-through with theological and scriptural precision, Vos at a few points lands short of his characteristic exactness. His discussion of union with Christ is a good example. Vos identifies mystical union with Christ as the 'personal bond with the Mediator' effected by saving grace 'at its onset' that 'brings saving grace with it' and on which saving grace is dependent 'in its further realization' (pp. 20–1). Here, mystical union appears to be the redemptive channel that connects the sinner with all the graces available from Christ (see also p. 23). Later, however, Vos seems to set mystical union with Christ over against being judicially 'reckoned in Christ' (p. 23). He states: 'Concerning the legal relationship, being reckoned in Christ precedes, and only from that does being in the Mediator follow. The mystical union is not the basis on which I appear just before God but a gift that is extended to me from God's justification' (p. 22). In light of these statements, one might inquire of Vos: 'You say

saving grace comes from, and to that extent is dependent on, mystical union with Christ. How, then, can I be justified in Christ before I am mystically united to him? Is justification not a grace? Surely it is! You say so yourself!' (see p. 22) I am inclined to think that there is another way to read Vos that does not leave him open to this criticism, although I am unaware of such a reading as of yet. His discussion of union with Christ could at least use clarification, since it initially appears deeply conflicted.[1]

Richard Gaffin has granted the church an invaluable gift. His eminently readable translation of Vos's *Reformed Dogmatics* is indeed 'like a lost Shakespeare play recently discovered,' as Michael Horton has put it. In Volume Four, Vos concisely exposits a wide range of soteriological topics with biblical nuance, confessional fidelity and historical balance. It is not perfect, but, on the whole, it is well worth the investment of students of reformed theology.

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Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology. By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9612-9. xvii + 237 pp. £14.99.

Based largely on lectures given separately between 2010-2014, this collection of essays investigates various theological themes within the Fourth Gospel. As such, the volume as a whole functions as something of a sequel to the more historically focused essays in Bauckham's *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*. The essays in this volume provide fruitful and often insightful discussion of several themes, which lie at the heart of the Fourth Gospel, and consequently constitute a helpful introduction to the way the Gospel works and the way its author thinks.

Bauckham opens with a pair of essays that treat the themes of individualism and unity respectively. Following C. F. D. Moule, he observes that John places great emphasis on 'the relationship of the individual believer to Jesus Christ' (p. 1). This is reflected in the focus of many of Jesus' aphoristic sayings, the references to the mutual indwelling of Jesus and the believer, and the dialogues within the narrative between Jesus and various individuals. It is not the community of the Fourth Gospel, but Jesus himself who is the fundamental point of orientation for the individual believer. This is not to downplay the emphasis on community in

[1] [Review ed.: After reading Mr Baird's review I suggested he ask Professor Gaffin for comment on this paragraph. He responded to the author and 'completely agrees' with his critique. Mr Baird raises an important issue that would have to be addressed in any future study of Vos's doctrine of union with Christ.]

the Gospel. In the second essay, Bauckham addresses this issue by arguing that both the concepts of uniqueness and unity are combined in John's use of 'oneness' language to describe the relationships between Jesus and the Father, and his followers.

Two essays follow which focus on glory or glorification. In his essay titled 'Glory', Bauckham surveys 'glory' language in the Gospel, and argues that John draws on Exodus and Isaiah to present Jesus in his death as both glorified and the revelation of divine glory. The following essay ('Cross, Resurrection, and Exaltation') considers the Gospel's presentation of Jesus' death through the lens of the Johannine categories of love, life, glory, and truth. Jesus' death is the ultimate expression of love, the source of the life he offers, the visible manifestation of divine character, and the ultimate expression of God's faithfulness or 'truth.'

A series of unrelated essays follow. In 'Sacraments?', Bauckham responds to the diversity of scholarly opinion over whether John regards the rites of baptism and the Eucharist as sacraments (as in subsequent Roman Catholic tradition), or even whether he refers to these rites at all. He argues that John draws on the language of these institutions, not to highlight the importance of the sacraments themselves, but the faith in Jesus' death and participation in his life, which they symbolize. In his essay 'Dualisms', Bauckham brings clarity to a confused subject by identifying a variety of 'dualisms' between opposing polarities of good and evil as well as 'dualities' between two contrasting, but not opposing, realities. These dualisms and dualities are unified by John's soteriology: They provide a 'framework for portraying how the divine Son became mortal flesh in this world in order both to overcome the world and to save the world' (p. 126). The penultimate essay, 'Dimensions of meaning in the Gospel's first week', illustrates the multi-valency of meaning in John's writing, using John 1:19-2:11 as a test case. Bauckham discusses the double-meaning in the language of 'following' Jesus, 'remaining' with him, and questions regarding his origin. And he illustrates the meaning that is added to a surface reading when allusions to Old Testament passages are identified, such as the categories of 'Servant,' 'Lamb,' drawn from Genesis and Isaiah. He maintains, however, that the surface reading retains a 'realism' that should not be subsumed by symbolism and double-meanings.

Bauckham concludes the volume with an essay titled 'The Johannine Jesus and the Synoptic Jesus'. In contrast to the conflation of the Gospels represented by Tatian's *Diatessaron* on the one hand and the modern scholarly tendency to emphasize 'unharmonizable diversity' among the Gospels on the other (p. 186), Bauckham maintains that the selectivity and unique emphases which undergird John's distinctiveness reflect his

interpretation of the historical reality of the Jesus who lies beyond all the Gospels.

Some of the discussions in these essays will be familiar to those with some exposure to Johannine scholarship. The essay on 'glory' in particular does not engage with recent (2007) monographs on the subject by Nicole Chibici-Revneanu and Rainer Schwindt. However, Bauckham often brings a fresh approach to familiar topics—and the focus of his first essay in particular is a helpful corrective to an overemphasis within Johannine scholarship on the unity of believers in community. His attention to the detail of the text combined with his deep familiarity with the texts and traditions which make up the milieu in which the Fourth Gospel was produced result in model scholarship. Moreover, these essays are models of theological reflection on the text of John that seems to this reviewer to be of the sort John hoped for his readers (see John 1:14; 6:69; 20:28, 31). In particular, together they highlight the centrality and significance of Jesus' 'death-and-exaltation' for John's presentation of Jesus.

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Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives. Edited by R. Michael Allen. London: T&T Clark, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-567-42329-0. ix + 220 pp. £19.99.

This collection of essays begins by noting the 'on-going conversation' of theological interpretation as it relates to the 'attempts among the communion of saints to do justice to God's written word' (p. 1). Allen understands the essays to be 'ventures in theological commentary on the Bible for the sake of the church's worship, witness, and wisdom' (p. 1). As such, the purpose of the book is not only to offer commentary on the written word of God, but also to offer explicitly theological commentary on Scripture.

The first five chapters of theological commentary deal with passages in the Old Testament. Ryan Peterson begins the volume by considering Genesis 1. His primary argument, rooted in Genesis 1:26-27, is for an understanding of the *imago dei* that is paradigmatically revealed in humanity over the course of biblical revelation (p. 23). In the next chapter Michael Allen explores Exodus 3. Allen reflects upon the naming of God found specifically in verses 13-15, suggesting that this dual naming, 'I am who I am' and 'the God of your fathers,' points to various dogmatic implications about God's transcendence and immanence. In Chapter Four, Kelly Kapic comments on Psalm 22 regarding how Jesus appropriated this Psalm as the sin-bearing representative of humanity. In Kapic's words, Jesus 'adopted' the words, 'proclaimed' the words, and 'transformed' the

words of the Psalm (pp. 50-55). In Chapter Five, Daniel Treier considers Proverbs 8, concluding with christologically rich reflection on Jesus as the ultimate fulfilment of the wisdom of God. In Chapter Six, Kevin Vanhoozer leads the reader through an exegetically informed and theologically insightful study of Ezekiel 14 in light of the concept of deception and the nature of God. Vanhoozer describes God's 'deceptive' actions as not contrary to his character, but as actually a part of his 'communicative righteousness' (p. 98).

In Chapters Seven to Ten, the focus of the theological commentary turns to the New Testament. In Chapter Seven, Scott Swain undertakes an exegetically rich study of Mark 12 and Jesus appropriation of the title, 'son of David.' Additionally, Swain offers a helpful definition of theological commentary. He writes, 'Theological commentary concerns itself directly and specifically with the textual mediation of God's self-revelation in the sacred writings of his authorized emissaries, the prophets and apostles' (p. 100). In Chapter Eight, Henri Blocher comments on the use of the Christological titles found in John 1, specifically considering the logos and the 'Son of God' titles. In Chapter Nine, Michael Horton provides a somewhat meandering assessment of Ephesians 4:1-16. Horton suggests that most evangelical biblical scholars have misunderstood Ephesians 4 regarding Christ's gift-giving work in the church. In Chapter Ten, Andrew McGowan concludes the theological commentary section of this work by considering Colossians 3 and its implications for theological conversation on the concepts of deification, *theosis*, participation in Christ and union with Christ. McGowan encourages the reader with the fact that scholars in Scotland are meeting regularly to discuss these 'vital theological questions,' which reflects the communal element of theological interpretation.

The book concludes with two chapters from different perspectives on theological commentary. Walter Moberly writes the first of these two chapters. His primary concerns regard how theological commentary can serve alongside other methods of interpretation, specifically in the Old Testament. Moberly concludes, 'theological commentary should open up new ways of reintegrating the Old Testament with contemporary faith and life' (p. 186). Compared to the essay that follows, Moberly offers a more sympathetic reading of theological interpretation. D. A. Carson, on the other hand, takes theological interpretation (as it is broadly understood and practiced) to task on many of its various weaknesses. Carson mentions six propositions of theological interpretation of Scripture (TIS) that he believes must be nuanced and clarified if they will be deemed genuinely helpful. Of the six propositions, Carson strikes hardest at TIS's commitment to grant 'greater credibility to pre-critical exegesis than to contemporary exegesis' (pp. 196-202). In summary, though, Carson's con-

cern regarding TIS is that is seems to be somewhat half-baked. Carson admits that there are good things motivating the theory and practice of TIS, but the full implications of its mindset and method are yet to be fully explored. While acknowledging the potential for ground-breaking work in the present volume and admitting to having not read the contributions of the specific essays, Carson concludes, 'At this moment, however, I am inclined to think that what is most valuable in TIS (and much is), is not new; what is new in TIS varies from ambiguous to mistaken, depending in part on the theological location of the interpreter' (p. 207).

On the whole, this collection of theological commentary fulfils its intended purpose of furthering the conversation of theological interpretation among evangelicals. It provides several helpful models for those who might be interested in adopting such unashamedly theological readings of Scripture from an evangelical perspective. To be sure, some of these essays are exegetically more substantial and helpful than others. Yet, with TIS growing in popularity and influence, it is a benefit for the evangelical church and academy at large to possess a volume of essays that attempts to wrestle with the important aspects of TIS without acquiescing to the potential pitfalls that Carson outlines in his essay. This balanced work of theory and practice is to be commended to all students of God's word.

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Reformed Orthodoxy in Scotland: Essays on Scottish Theology 1560-1775. Edited by Aaron Clay Denlinger. London: Bloomsbury, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-56735141-6. 304 pp. £70.

In 1960, the quatercentenary of the establishing of Scottish Protestantism called forth a host of overdue examinations of origins. At that time, R. S. Wright compiled a most useful collection, *Fathers of the Kirk* (1960) accompanied in the same year by studies such as Stuart Louden's *The True Face of the Kirk* and G. B. Burnet's survey *The Holy Communion in the Reformed Church of Scotland*. Character studies were also generated such as that of Ian Dunlop on *William Carstares* (1964). In the same period, John Knox biographies were produced by Elizabeth Whitley (1960), J. S. McEwen (1962) and W. Stanford Reid (1974). That same quatercentenary also occasioned the authoring of diverse histories of the Scottish Reform itself. Depending on the interpreter, one could survey the events of 1560 from an Episcopalian perspective (Donaldson, 1960), or that of a medievalist friendlier to the Catholic tradition (Cowan, 1982).

In the decades which followed 1960, what one might have called the 'confessional' era of writing about the Scottish Reformation clearly gave way to one in which not ecclesiastical historians, but social and public

historians – working outside the various Scottish faculties of divinity – became the main interpretative voices. This was a situation by no means unique to Scotland. Elsewhere in Western Europe as well as in North America, the interpretation of the Reformation era increasingly became a-confessional; it was not even thought necessary to identify with Christianity to be a Reformation scholar. Of course works of great usefulness were still produced: one thinks of the labours of James K. Cameron of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews in the editing of the *First Book of Discipline* (1972) and Glasgow historian, James Kirk whose studies, *The Second Book of Discipline* (1980) and *Patterns of Reform* (2000) have proved so illuminating. Yet overall, two trends have dominated in the period since 1980.

First, the religious history and questions of the period have been made mere subdivisions of the social and political narrative of the era in question. One thinks of Wormald's *Court, Kirk and Community* (1981). Of course, ecclesiastical history left to itself, can easily divorce its study from historical context. But one sees larger trends here. The church is no longer master of its own past.

Second, and in a way uncannily mirroring political realities within the U.K. and the European Union, history writing of the Reformation era has moved *from* what was briefly an intensely *local* focus. One thinks of such works as Lynch's 1981 study, *Edinburgh and the Reformation*, and Bardgett's *Scotland Reformed: the Reformation in Angus and Mearns* (1989); these mirrored investigations of Zurich, of Strasburg and the 'Imperial Cities'. From that passing local focus, there came a shift to multi-national approaches to the Reformation. One sees the spread of this multi-national approach in such anthologies of essays as those edited by Pettegree, *The Early Reformation in Europe* (1992) and *The Reformation World* (2001) as well as that of Scribner & Porter, *The Reformation in National Context* (1994). One *could* find slim chapters on Scotland's Reformation era in such anthologies. Yet this approach could not unfairly be likened to 'rationing'. And in single-author works produced within the U.K. in this same era, the Scottish Reform was designedly treated as co-participant with its neighbouring territories in such treatments as Hazlett's *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (2003) or Heal's larger volume of identical name (2005).

One is entitled to ask 'in this trajectory of historical study since 1960 and its shift from ecclesiastical to social history, from nation-specific Reformation studies to pan-regional or pan-European studies, where remains *any* distinctive consideration of Scotland's Reform and its primary actors?' It is a question, asked from beyond Scotland as well as from within, which has been left waiting too long for an answer. Now the 2015 release of the volume under review holds out the prospect of a partial

redressing of this neglect. One can trust that the success of studies such as this volume edited by Denlinger can open the way to a different future.

The volume at hand has particular strengths deserving of mention. Not to be missed is a most helpful introduction by Carl Trueman showing how twentieth century estimations of Scotland's Reform and its leaders have been deeply influenced by a swinging pendulum which for decades blamed the generations which arose after 1560 for exchanging the primitive simplicity which characterized Reformation beginnings for an encrusted alternative named 'scholasticism' by the early decades of the following century. Trueman is able to show that this approach, which in effect drove a wedge between the earliest Reformers and their disciples, has now largely been discredited after substantial demonstrations of continuity of thought and emphasis.

The volume features fourteen studies of Protestant leaders in three eras: 1560-1640, 1640-1690, and beyond 1690. The best essays are those demonstrating methodological rigour, a preparedness to re-examine what has come to be considered the conventional wisdom, and openness to fresh ways of stating matters.

The greatest concentration of essays exhibiting these qualities, were, for this writer, located in the initial period, i.e. to 1640. Chapter Two (Holloway), portrays Andrew Melville's pioneering role as a Scottish Hebraist, and so placed this Reformed academic – faulted by James I for his 'overseas dreams' – in a completely different light for the reviewer. Chapter Three (Ellis) sheds light on an individual almost as elusive as Melville, Robert Rollock. Rollock's doctrine of election is shown to have been misrepresented as an example of a view which reduces Jesus Christ's role to that of the executor of a divine plan in which He had no formative role. Chapters Four (Thompson) and Five (Denlinger) had the effect of forcing this reviewer to consider whether he had not been unfairly prejudiced against the Aberdeen divines of the early Covenanting period. These 'Aberdeen doctors' may not have been Covenanting in sympathy, but they were most certainly in step with international Reformed conviction in their doctrinal writings in this same period.

In the period to 1690, especially notable is Chapter Ten (Gootjes), which shines light on the theological career in France of the Scots exile, John Cameron. The chapter's author is painstaking as he threads the proverbial needle in a discussion of Cameron's sympathy for schemes of hypothetical universalism.

In the final post-1690 period, Chapters Twelve (Helm, on Thomas Halyburton) and Thirteen (Muller, on Thomas Blackwell) also deserve special commendation. Here we have studies on that rarest of subjects: Reformed theology interacting with the literature of the early Enlighten-

ment and learning to state the orthodox faith with diminished reliance on the theological methods of the past. When one reflects on the strong nostalgic preference for pre-Enlightenment expressions of orthodoxy among conservative Protestants in our time, one is doubly grateful for essays which demonstrate the attempts at constructive theology in that time of considerable upheaval.

One volume of essays does not, of course, a revolution make. But if it will prove true that this volume is a stepping stone towards the recovery of Scottish Reformation studies for and by those who actually have a stake in Reformation resurgence, we will in hindsight be doubly grateful. Happily, the volume is now available in both cloth and paper covers.

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Postmodernity and Univocity: A Critical Account of Radical Orthodoxy and John Duns Scotus. By Daniel P. Horan, OFM. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-4514-6572-3. x + 219 pp. £19.99.

In recent years, John Duns Scotus has come under concerted attack from the Radical Orthodoxy school of theology. Until now, their treatment of the Subtle Doctor has met with surprisingly little resistance: those medievalists who know better have largely confined their critiques to specialist journals and have been ignored both by the proponents of Radical Orthodoxy and the wider theological world. However, in this little book the Franciscan Dan Horan offers a useful summary of both Radical Orthodoxy's Scotus myth and the critiques of Scotus scholars in the hope of setting the record straight.

The structure is straightforward: In the first two chapters, Horan summarizes the charges laid against Scotus by Radical Orthodoxy, then outlines the influence of their account of Scotus on contemporary theology and beyond. Chapter One, 'Radical Orthodoxy's Use of John Duns Scotus', traces the development of the Scotus myth from John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock to Conor Cunningham, Graham Ward, and Gavin Hyman. Horan clearly shows how Radical Orthodoxy presents Scotus as the antithesis of Thomas Aquinas. Since their appropriation of Thomism is at the heart of their anti-secular project, we thus find Scotus being identified as the key figure in the emergence of modernity (John Milbank), the father of nihilism (Conor Cunningham), and even denounced as a heretic (Gavin Hyman). In Chapter Two, Horan offers examples of the way in which Radical Orthodoxy's Scotus story has been adopted by a wide range of contemporary theologians and philosophers, including Stanley Hauerwas, Charles Taylor, and Terry Eagleton.

The remaining chapters set out the case for the defence. Chapter Three outlines the major critiques of Radical Orthodoxy's understanding of Scotus's theology. In summary, he argues that Milbank et al. have misunderstood Scotus's doctrine of univocity. By treating what is essentially a semantic theory as a metaphysical one, they create the false impression that Scotus has reduced the difference between God and creatures to a merely quantitative one, thus fatally distorting Western theology and enabling the emergence of the concept of the secular. Furthermore, he points out that their entire narrative is dependent on a narrow range of secondary sources and shows little evidence of engagement with Scotus himself (beyond a few well-known texts available in translation in introductory readers). Horan concludes the case for the defence in Chapter Four by offering a corrective to Radical Orthodoxy's reading of Scotus's doctrine of univocity. Finally, in a brief conclusion, he suggests that far from being the root of all postmodern evil, Scotus may in fact offer contemporary theologians a constructive way forward in engaging with postmodern culture.

The book is not without its flaws. In particular, I found it rather repetitive. Strangely, Horan chooses to leave his explanation of univocity (and other crucial Scotist concepts) until after his substantive critique of Radical Orthodoxy's view. As a result, he has to anticipate his explanation more than once while presenting his critique. The impression of repetitiveness is reinforced by his decision to structure his overview of Radical Orthodoxy via its key personalities rather than thematically. By contrast, his corrective explanation of Scotus felt rather compressed. It would also have been good for there to have been rather more in his conclusion about how Scotus might be used to develop an alternative to Radical Orthodoxy's eccentric neo-Thomist agenda.

However, those are minor caveats. Horan has done the wider theological community an important service by making accessible the reservations of leading Scotus scholars and thus raising important questions about the foundations of Radical Orthodoxy. This book should be required reading for anyone seeking a critical understanding of Radical Orthodoxy.

Lawrence Osborn, Glasgow

The Touch of the Sacred: The Practice, Theology, and Tradition of Christian Worship. By F. Gerrit Immink. Translated by Reinder Bruinsma. (Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Liturgical Studies Series). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6915-9. xi + 266 pp. £21.99.

This volume contributes a particularly Reformed but admirably accessible account of Christian worship from the perspective of a holistic practical theology. This is a rich work eluding simple précis and analysis. Nonetheless, how might we summarise its key components and signal emphases?

Chapter One, "Worship as Religious Praxis," concerns at least three things: (i) portrayal of the worship service as performative and communal act with analogues of 'agenda' and 'script'; (ii) the question of liturgical styles; (iii) a proposal regarding the distinctive feature of Protestantism's self-understanding, namely its pneumatological focus. If the entire worship service is a performative act (p. 24) then what does it seek to present? Answering this question seems to be the burden of the first three chapters. Immink's answer suggests that its elements contribute to *the active presentation of God's salvific action*. Accordingly Chapter Two, 'Sharing in Salvation', seeks to establish the role of salvation history in the service. At this point the title is illumined: 'The worship service is an event in which worshippers experience an inspiring and active power. The sacred touches the human' (pp. 38-9).

This focus on the worship service does not merely entail phenomenological or psychological description. Mindful that modern Protestantism tends to approach the reality of religion in reductively anthropological terms, Immink also engages in dogmatic depiction. There is a christological dimension, for 'The Christ in whom [worshippers] believe is the living Lord. Theology has the task of studying the essence of worship from the perspective of the mystery of faith' (p. 39). Chapter Two also develops the pneumatological understanding, highlighting *epiclesis*, identifying its 'invocative character' as a 'crucial element in the worship service' or even 'the core of Christian worship' (p. 52). Chapter Three, 'The Mystery of Christ', deepens this theological study of worship in soteriological terms, treating cross and resurrection.

Chapter Four, 'Backgrounds and Dilemmas', is especially insightful regarding the development of communion liturgies in various Reformed strands, drawing on a vast array of Dutch and to a lesser extent German and American sources, including a striking number retrieved from nineteenth and early-to-mid-twentieth centuries. Here as throughout, Immink sensitively surveys contemporary liturgy in both 'classical Reformed' and what he calls 'Protestant ecumenical' forms. Preaching, too, is considered

in historical purview and with helpful consideration of the relation of human eloquence and divine Word. The chapter concludes with the topic of baptism, including the question of infant baptism.

Informed by these historical forays, the book's second part refocuses on the praxis of the worship service in its discrete acts. Chapter Five treats the subject of 'Prayer'. In *The Touch of the Sacred* Immink repeatedly rehearses positions across a wide spectrum, from Pietist and liberal-Protestant to liturgical renewal movement. Most often, contrast is made between those who emphasise subjectivity and those who favour more orderly and pre-thought patterns, the author gleaning insights from both. The chapter on prayer displays his own non-competitive sensibility about these matters most succinctly: 'We should not play emotion and understanding off against each other; we should bring them together' (p. 149). Chapter Six considers the sermon from three perspectives, in terms of rhetoric, exegesis, and crucially in terms of listeners. Chapter Seven, finally, is a helpful study of the celebration of the Lord's Supper across Reformed traditions, exhibiting a characteristically keen sense for practices' exegetical and traditional provenance and enduring significance.

Overall, Immink commends established practices such as liturgical agendas and the Christian year as frameworks within which the sacred may touch us in our whole human selves; in and through these ecclesial actions we find communion with Christ in faith – Christian worship's aim.

I make two further observations in closing. Firstly, the frequency and sheer variety of quotations and occasionally digressive nature of the text sometimes leave the reader struggling to follow the particular thread of Immink's own argument—though perhaps this is also due to the infelicities of translated texts in general. At any rate, I suggest this work is perhaps best read as a *cumulative* argument, rather than a more tightly propositional one.

Secondly, as a resource this book may be classified neither as thoroughgoing doctrinal treatment of Christian worship or ethnographic study of a particular Christian community's act of worship, nor again a focused historical survey. Readers particularly at home in one of these disciplines may find themselves uneasy with Immink's integrative method. Nonetheless, it draws successfully on multiple approaches in rendering a rounded account of Reformed Christian worship; just so it fulfils the subtitle's promise of attention to 'practice, theology, and tradition'. In this sense, I recommend this book as an enriching practical-theological exer-

cise of attentiveness to what Reformed Christians do when they gather, and why they do it.

Samuel Tranter, Durham University

Gratitude: An Intellectual History. By Peter J. Leithart. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-60258-449-5. 340 pp. £43.50.

The action of giving thanks has long been recognised to be more than a matter of good manners. It raises in fact some rather interesting philosophical questions which have attracted the attention of many thinkers, both around what is an appropriate response to a gift or favour received and indeed what in the first place constitutes a gift. Peter Leithart's book addresses what he has perceived to be a significant gap in the literature, namely tracing how thinking in the West about gratitude has shifted since first attracting the interest of the Greek and Roman philosophers. His work demonstrates how the emergence of Christianity in particular caused a very sizeable rethink on the subject, a radical redefinition which has been widely influential, and yet not often in all its ramifications. The leads given by Jesus and Paul, drawing from Jewish tradition, have been for the most part only partly heeded. The conclusions in Leithart's book point to the shortcomings within such selective approaches. For the degree to which we are thankful, and thankful not simply to those particular human beings who have condescended to show us favour, is significant; it shapes how we live.

In Ancient Greece, the word *charis* did double duty, signifying both grace and gratitude, the gift and the response. Where one said, I have grace (*echo charis*, later *eucharistia*), it addressed the showing of gratitude, and the regular assumption then explored in moral and philosophical literature was that the response should match the gift. As the Romans were to put it, I give that you may give (*do ut des*). Ingratitude was a failure in this regard, not to return favour in adequate proportion to that received. Thus the classical world taught, in a way which has continued to prevail well into our own times, that one favour deserved another in return. All very well except that it meant in the ancient world there was no notion of corruption, since this was just the way the world worked. In order to gain favours, you had to dispense them. Those in power had a ready means of control. Those without the capacity to be generous were forever beholden.

Jews were educated differently. Their monotheistic teaching moved them out of a world in which even the gods dispensed favours at a price, and furthermore they were taught to be generous even to the poor who could not repay. And Jesus most certainly continued on this line, harsh indeed against those who lived life expecting certain privileges, and reso-

lute against public displays of prayer or almsgiving. Grace in Jesus was about giving without thought of return, or at least return in any this-worldly, costed manner. And Paul in his writings showed a similar spirit, thankful to God first and foremost, refusing to buy into any calculations of obligation. The Romans branded such thinking as ingratitude, socially disruptive as far as they were concerned. The young Christian Sebastian was sent to his death for not inclining to be sufficiently 'grateful' to his emperor Diocletian. The higher allegiance of service to God was literally life-threatening in a world where the notion was only to serve others to the extent that they could serve you. Here incidentally also were the seeds of a kind of individualism.

The service of God alas is forever undermined by the overzealous service of man, and historically it was the thought world of Seneca which kept on pushing back to the fore. Leithart's treatment is patient and extensive, tracing methodically through the Western tradition how thinking on gratitude was shaped. The sixteenth century reformation recaptured for a time the mode of Jesus and Paul, but then what were the questions Shakespeare was exploring via King Lear and in other plays? Leithart gives attention to many of the significant figures in western thought, demonstrating the variable extent to which theology has been permitted to contribute its insights to what in the end is a matter of social cohesion as well as faithfulness. There may be nothing quite so simple as a pure gift, that is, a gift offered absolutely without thought of return, but to whom then do we owe thanks, and in what terms? More than half of the book attends to modern and postmodern discussions of this. For there are obvious and agreed risks in people being ungrateful, overly asserting what they feel they deserve.

Leithart's conclusions are drawn on the back of his at times demanding but nevertheless clearly written exposé of the various shifts of thought. Christianity offers comprehensive gratitude to God and so dissolves the bind of gratitude obligations between human parties. Many thinkers since have taken up one or another fragment of this tradition, yet none of these fragments is coherent or realistic in itself. Giving thanks to God, it releases the giving of gifts and insists that the one debt owed within human circles is for us to love one another.

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A Commentary on the Psalms, Volume 2 (42 – 89). By Allen P. Ross. (Kregel Exegetical Library). Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-8254-2563-9. 841 pp. £29.54.

This is the second volume in a three-part commentary on the Psalms. When complete, the combined total will be 2,775 pages. There are 179 pages of introduction, including selected bibliography, in Volume One, but in this volume Ross launches straight away into his exposition of Psalm 42. Anyone requiring access to introductory material will also need access to Volume One.

Ross takes a conservative evangelical approach, and has a very high view of Scripture. The declared intention of this commentary is to help the reader understand the Psalms better by addressing textual issues, poetic language, grammar and syntax. It does all of this admirably, and more, providing a detailed though accessible exposition of each Psalm. For anyone new to Hebrew poetry, however, the best explanations are found in the introductory essay in Volume One (pp. 89-101).

He takes a consistent approach to each Psalm. The "Introduction" has three subheadings.

First, under 'Text and Textual Variants', he gives his own translation, with full notes on textual issues, including differences between the Masoretic and LXX. There is no transliteration of the Hebrew (or the Greek when quoted); he expects the reader to understand Hebrew grammatical concepts such as verb patterns, constructs and infinitive absolutes; he freely discusses syntactical and translation problems, and occasionally accepts emendations. For example, in Psalm 69:26 he accepts the difficult *'áttā* is a corrupt form of the object marker, and translates accordingly as 'those whom'. Others such as Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (Word Biblical Commentary, Nelson, 1990), p. 191, treat it as an anacoluthon. Ross has the rare ability of making these notes meaningful even to someone with minimal knowledge of Hebrew.

Secondly, there is 'Composition and Context'. This deals with form-critical matters, literary genre, date and composition questions, historical context. On the subject of which Psalms are Messianic, he takes a very conservative view, concluding, for example, that Psalm 69 is not Messianic. 'The psalm may have been applied frequently in the New Testament, especially to the suffering of Jesus, but it is not a Messianic psalm. The psalmist was indeed suffering without a cause in this case, but he acknowledged his folly and his sin' (p. 488). The distinction is possibly explained in the introductory essay "Theology of the Psalms" in Volume One, p. 168, 'There is a similarity that makes the application work, but

it is a general application of the text'. He sees both Psalms 45 and 72 as Messianic.

Third is 'Exegetical Analysis'. This consists of a 'Summary', which is usually a single sentence (though frequently a complex sentence), describing the Psalm in its Old Testament setting, followed by a detailed outline, typically down to three layers of indentation. Anyone preparing a sermon would find this particularly helpful.

The next major heading is 'Commentary in Expository Form'. This is the longest section for each Psalm, and provides a verse by verse commentary. Figures of speech are identified in some detail, not just 'metonymy', but 'metonymy of adjunct', 'metonymy of effect', 'metonymy of cause', etc. He interacts with other commentators, though at a fairly superficial level, and mainly with other conservative writers. Opinions may vary over this – some will be glad that the commentary is not crowded out with footnotes. Others may have preferred more exposure to different points of view. Hebrew words and phrases are again translated but not transliterated. This commentary is detailed and thorough.

The final major heading is 'Message and Application'. This is inevitably more subjective. However, Ross has set every preacher an excellent example of attending to translation, exegesis and exposition in detail, before addressing application. This section is kept brief, and Ross provides in italics within his text a one sentence summary of the main message of the Psalm as he has found it, for today. He also provides a link to the New Testament, commenting on the explicit use of the Psalm in the New Testament where appropriate, or provides other references to give a New Testament perspective.

Overall, this is a very helpful commentary with excellent material that will assist in Bible study and in sermon preparation. It is thorough but at the same time readable. Ross roots everything he says in the text, and if there are specifics where you may not agree with his conclusion, you can see why he thinks the way he does.

There are, however, some things I missed. There are a number of topics in the Psalms which require an excursus to provide a cohesive view. Examples abound, such as the view of death in the Psalms, imprecations, Zion theology, kingship, names of God. If you know the references, you can go to each Psalm, but an overview of such topics would be a great boon.

Secondly, Ross makes very little attempt to see the book of Psalms as a cohesive whole. In an introductory essay in Volume One, Ross describes the formation of the collection into five books, and the smaller collections that make up these books. He affirms there is evidence for the final arrangement that involves the messages of the Psalms, but throughout

his commentary he makes almost no attempt to develop this concept. Not all proposals regarding the canonical arrangement of the Psalms are convincing, but there are many instances where consecutive Psalms are linked thematically. To give just two examples, the common sacrificial theology of Psalms 50 and 51: 'What the God of the theophany in Psalm 50 demands, the person praying the following Psalm 51 promises' (Frank-Lothar Hossfield and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2* (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 2005), p. 24). Secondly, Psalms 68 and 69 both have a strong theology of the poor. However, themes such as these in consecutive Psalms are not explored by Ross. Whilst the message of each Psalm is developed, there is an overall lack in developing the message of the Psalter.

In conclusion, Ross's in depth engagement with the text make this an excellent addition to the evangelical commentaries on the Psalms, but it would need to be complemented by others to make up for what is missing.

Iain Gibb, Edinburgh Theological Seminary

Holy Trinity: Holy People: The Theology of Christian Perfecting. By T. A. Noble. Cambridge: James Clarke and Co., 2013. ISBN: 978-0-227-174135. xvi + 242 pp. £19.50.

Professor Tom Noble of the Nazarene College in Kansas, Missouri formerly taught at the Nazarene College in Manchester, where he remains a senior research fellow. While in Manchester, he helped to inaugurate the annual lecture series called the 'Didsbury Lectures'. It is, therefore, highly appropriate that he should be invited to give the 34th series of these lectures. It is even more appropriate that, as a theologian in the Wesleyan tradition, he should address the subject of Christian perfecting, or sanctification.

'The purpose of this book is to look particularly at the historic Christian teaching on Christian holiness as it was formulated by John Wesley' (p. 2). Others have investigated the subject in the context of moral theology but Noble approaches it from the standpoint of dogmatic theology. Indeed, he sets the whole subject in the context of the Trinity and almost sketches out a complete systematic theology, with holiness as the guiding principle.

Noble is conscious of the fact that Wesley has been often quoted but equally often misunderstood. Wesley's language has been taken in a simplistic way and the breadth of his own theological vision has not been properly captured. He has been dismissed as someone who believed in 'Christian perfection' which has been taken to mean that one could (in theory at least) be wholly sanctified while still on this earth. Throughout this book, Noble dismisses such simplistic and surface interpreta-

tions and delves deeply into Wesley's thought, so as to show the riches of understanding. In passing, he also demonstrates that there is much more common ground than many think between all the heirs of the Reformation, whether Lutheran, Calvinistic or Wesleyan.

In what he calls the 'Preliminaries', Noble discusses the traditional Wesleyan 'quadrilateral' as a means of reaching doctrinal conclusions but offers his own take on the subject by saying that the four axioms on which we build our theology are first, Holy Scripture ('the only source of Christian doctrine is the biblical revelation', p.6); second, tradition ('It is essential that the church should formulate its doctrines in doctrinal statements, creeds, and articles of faith, and hand these on in its tradition from one generation to another', p. 9); third, rational spiritual experience ('the phrase is intended to bring "reason" and "experience" which have been misleadingly separated, and to qualify the rational experience we are talking about as "spiritual" or "relational"', p. 12); and fourth, the Trinitarian, Christocentric shape of Christian theology (Christian theology 'is an organic whole in which the doctrines of Christ… are central and the doctrine of God the Holy Trinity revealed in Christ provides the overall shape and contours', p. 18).

Chapter Two involves a study of sanctification in the Scriptures. This provides a solid examination of the subject through each of the genres but also an interesting analysis of some controverted points. For example, Romans 7 is taken to describe the pre-Christian experience. Emphases on the communal holy life of the church (p. 31) and on union with Christ as the key to sanctification (p. 34) are very helpful. There is much here to stimulate interest. [In passing we should note that, through some printing error, page 28 is almost blank!]

Chapter Three looks at the historical development of the doctrine of sanctification. In this chapter Noble begins with the Fathers of the Church, as a good Patristic scholar and on through the medieval period before looking at Luther and the Reformation. By the time he comes to Wesley in Chapter Four, Noble is able to demonstrate that Wesley stands firmly in the mainstream of Christian theology in respect of sanctification. Contrary to the popular view, the only 'Christian perfection' which is possible, is to be perfect in love. When Noble seeks to argue that Wesley understood sanctification as being 'in Christ' and not in the believer, someone who knows Wesley better than this reviewer will have to judge whether this is accurate, or whether Noble is reading back into Wesley what he learned at the feet of T. F. Torrance!

In Chapter Five, we see an exploration of how Wesley's doctrine can be taken up and reformulated today. There is a clear resistance to simplistic ideas of 'entire sanctification' or Christian perfectionism while at the

same time a determination to hold on firmly to those passages of Scripture which speak of these things. The solution advocated is to distinguish between one's ontological condition and one's human, moral condition. This sounds a bit like the view of one of Noble's other teachers, J. B. Torrance, who argued that sanctification involves becoming in ourselves what we already are in Christ.

In Chapters Six and Seven the subject is further explored through an exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity, particularly the economic Trinity. Chapter Six deals with the atonement and Chapter Seven deals with the Incarnation. This reversing of the normal order of the Person of the Son before the Work of the Son is actually quite fruitful, not least the way in which these doctrines are opened up from that Trinitarian perspective. In the chapter on the Incarnation we see again some familiar themes, not least the idea of Christ sanctifying our humanity by crucifying it. All of this is echoed in Chapter Eight as Noble helps us to see 'the gospel story, the story of salvation in Christ, as the story of God the Holy Trinity' (p. 199). In the final chapter, all of this is anchored in the life of faith and in the call to live holy lives by reflecting the life of the Trinity.

Anyone with an interest in the doctrine of the Trinity or the doctrine of sanctification (which should be all of us) will find benefit and challenge in this book. Noble is not simply a theologian but has a pastor's heart and this is reflected in his desire for Christians to become holy and so to serve the living God.

A. T. B. McGowan, University of the Highlands and Islands

Interpreting Prophetic Literature: Historical and Exegetical Tools for Reading the Prophets. By James D. Nogalski. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2015. ISBN: 978-0664261207. xi + 130 pp. £22.94.

Nogalski offers an exegetical guidebook on the Prophets designed for beginning students who lack training in the Hebrew language. The book addresses matters such as textual boundaries, keywords, literary genre, rhetorical issues, contextual factors, prominent themes, and hermeneutical approach. Two dozen charts pepper the pages, while endnotes and a Scripture index round out the volume. Because most primers on OT exegetical methodology concentrate on narrative literature, an introduction to the prophetic genre enriches the stacks. This little volume stands out as more concise and basic than Gary Smith's *Interpreting the Prophetic Books: An Exegetical Handbook* (Handbooks for OT Exegesis, Kregel, 2014). Nogalski's critical outlook colours the discussion.

In this manual, students will learn the benefit of reading multiple English Bible translations in their study of a textual unit. They discover

a valuable lesson concerning the nature of Bible translation: 'All translations involve some level of interpretation' (p. 11).

Syntactical and literary features of the Hebrew Bible come to the fore. Nogalski rightly warns readers about the debates concerning the function of syntactical connectors (p. 81). He expounds staircase parallelism (pp. 41–42) and points out puns. For instance, in Amos 8:2, the 'summer fruit' (*qayiṣ*) signals that the 'end' (*qēṣ*) draws near (p. 86). 'Almond' (*šāqēḏ*) plays with 'watch over' (*šōqēd*), and the Hebrew of 'boiling' (*npḥ*) rhymes with 'break out' (*tipāṯaḥ*) in Jeremiah 1:11–14 (p. 71). The author calls attention to reversals (or contrasts) in the book of Joel: dry streambeds (1:20) eventually flow with water (3:18); a lack of wine (1:5) becomes wine overflowing (3:18); and, distress and threats become peace and rest (p. 83). Fifteen pages discuss the ever-important issue of identifying the speaker of a prophetic utterance (pp. 24–39).

On the other hand, some literary techniques go undeveloped, such as inclusio, anadiplosis, and merism. The explanation of chiastic parallelism fails to identify the exegetical significance of the device (pp. 42–43). In discussing the participle of the imminent future, Nogalski gives the impression that imminent action transpires only in the near future rather than the eschatological future (p. 24).

Not everyone will concur with the treatment of Bible places. The author regards Wadi Shittim in Joel 3:18 as symbolic, and assures readers that the valley of Jehoshaphat in Joel 3 constitutes an 'imaginary valley' (pp. 49, 55). Hyperbole marks the size of Nineveh in the book of Jonah, as it does the fertility of the land in Amos 9:13 (pp. 49–50, 89).

Interpretive conclusions remain unsubstantiated at times. For example, redaction played a major role in the formation of the prophetic corpus: 'the collections have been shaped with an eye toward their transmission for and reflection by later generations' (p. 4). Moreover, Obadiah's oracle describes the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians in the sixth century (p. 104).

The author sees fewer predictions in the prophetic corpus than some scholars. He states, 'prophetic literature is not primarily predictive in nature. Rather, prophetic literature functions primarily as interpretive theological literature' (p. 14). Such a perspective coincides with the recognition of fewer messianic statements: 'Unfortunately, many churches and religious traditions have perpetuated a view that the primary purpose of the prophets was to foretell the coming of the Messiah' (p. 74).

Nogalski defines hermeneutics as 'The art of applying biblical texts to modern life' (p. 117). The chapter devoted to hermeneutics comes at the end of the book, suggesting that hermeneutics follows interpretation in the exegetical process. By contrast, other Bible readers distinguish herme-

neutics and application, and allow hermeneutics to inform their interpretation of a biblical excerpt.

Mark A. Hassler, The Master's Seminary, USA

The Election of Grace: A Riddle without a Resolution? By Stephen N. Williams. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8028-3780-6. 229 pp. £17.99.

This volume began life as the Kantzer Lectures in Revealed Theology, sponsored by the Carl F. H. Henry Center for Theological Understanding at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. The Kantzer Lectures in revealed theology 'are intended to be the evangelical equivalent of the celebrated Gifford Lectures in natural theology' (p. vi). They are also intended to address theological issues in a way that is beneficial to the church and not simply to the academy. In this volume, Professor Stephen Williams of Union Theological College in Belfast addresses the complex and often disputed issue of divine election. As both a highly respected theologian and also a man of the church, Williams was an ideal choice to deliver the Kantzer Lectures.

One might imagine that everything has been said about the subject of election and that the various positions are, by now, set in stone. The great value of this book, however, is that Williams does not simply mount a defence of one of these existing positions but rather genuinely seeks to review the doctrine, biblically and theologically, in order to offer new insights and proposals.

Williams believes that the impasse between the Calvinist and the Arminian positions in respect of election may be partly because of the way in which the cluster of questions at the centre of the dogmatic discussion are set up and the way in which Scripture is handled. He sets off boldly, insisting 'Scripture is my authority and exegesis my guide' (p. 6) and he does so with considerable humour, as well as with significant doctrinal expertise and historical awareness.

Williams begins by considering election as found in the Old Testament. He makes the point that the election of Israel, so often seen as divisive and exclusive, has as its purpose the coming of the Christ. He writes, 'There is no hope for the world if the Messiah does not grace it with his presence, and no possibility of his coming into it without the prepared and particular connection of nation and history' (p. 26). He also argues that the doctrine of election as found in the Old Testament has primarily to do with communion with God, rather than addressing the postmortem fate of individuals. As he says, 'Personal communion subsists in a relationship enabled by privileged election' (p. 42). This election is (as the title

of the book says) 'the election of grace', which is very important. Indeed, in passing, he makes the valuable comment that in many churches activism is seen as the evidence of faith, thus crushing in spirit those who cannot be active, whereas 'the election of grace puts paid to the notion that the value of the elect is dependent on their physical or mental capacities' (p. 44 n.107). He also insists on the relationship between election and mission, using both Isaiah and Leslie Newbiggin.

The second chapter is on "New Testament Election". A key element of this chapter is the attempt to understand the relation between election and predestination, beginning with Acts 13:48. Williams looks at the various ways of interpreting this text, including Augustinian and Arminian approaches. On the basis of exegesis, he favours the Augustinian view but with one very significant qualification: he advocates a single rather than a 'double' predestination. That is to say, he rejects the notion of a decree of reprobation. He summarises his exegetical conclusions in this way: 'God determines that unbelief will be the destiny of the disobedient. The metaphor which will inform our discussion is this: if God locks the door, it is because it has already been shut firm from the inside by those not wanting or willing to abandon unbelief and enter into the obedience of faith. God decides to ratify human decision' (p. 83). Similarly, 'The reason a person cannot leave the room is that the door has been locked, but the reason the door has been locked is that the person does not want to leave the room' (p. 84).

When Williams considers election as found in Revelation he comes to another striking conclusion, namely, that 'temporal' election, of Israel or the Church, may not necessarily be aligned with eschatological salvation. That is to say, those who will 'reign' with Christ may be a more limited group than those who are 'saved' by Christ. He admits that he has yet to put flesh on the bones of this proposal but offers it as a possible exegesis of the book of Revelation and as another qualifier of the Augustinian position which he is advocating. He writes,

> If those who are not classified in the NT as elect or predestined may yet be saved, some will find that this demurral from the Augustinian tradition will help to reconcile them to that component in Augustinian doctrine which I have sought to retain. If those who are not classified in the NT as elect or predestined may yet be saved, but may not reign, others will judge that the grounds for their demurral from Augustinianism remain firm. It should go without saying that those who partake of eschatological salvation, but not of temporal election, have not entered the city of God by some other means than the efficacy of atonement and the pardon of grace (pp. 101-2).

In the next chapter Williams turns his attention to the "Dogmatic Limits" of the subject. That is to say, how do his exegetical explorations fare in the cold, hard world of dogmatic theology? In particular, how is he to address the question of logic in relation to a single or double decree of predestination? Is not the one implied by the other? Williams quite rightly insists that logical processes must take second place to exegetical considerations. In other words, to set up some kind of logical argument, whereby several premises are shown to lead to the conclusion of double predestination, even where that is not clearly taught in Scripture, must be rejected. Such a propositional approach can undermine the teaching of Scripture and implies that God and his actions can always be scrutinised and explained by human logic. To put this another way, it undermines the place of mystery and the incomprehensible nature of God.

In this context, Williams introduces Charles Simeon (1759-1836). Simeon had pointed out that there are passages in Scripture which the Calvinist would happily remove and other passages that the Arminian would happily remove! Neither can get all of Scripture to agree with their position. Hence, Williams calls us to resist the 'urge to system' and implores humility on the part of the dogmatic theologian, to say nothing of the preacher. Where Scripture clearly affirms things which appear to the human mind to contradict one another we must not try to force them to fit together, rather we must accept that we are faced with complexity and seek further light to be shed by the Holy Spirit on the Scriptures. Being the philosophical theologian that he is, Williams also brings Kierkegaard and Kant to the table, to assist in making this case.

The final chapter is entitled 'Dogmatic Difficulties', and explores some of the problems associated with the proposals expressed in earlier chapters and anticipates some of the critique which might be forthcoming. Above all, Williams, quoting Martin Luther, wants to argue that our primary concern must be with 'the published offer of God's mercy, not of the dreadful hidden will of God' (p. 151). To put this another way, we must be willing to accept paradox and deal with what Scripture says about God's grace and election rather than what we think we can logically deduce from what is found in Scripture. He then shows the significance of this for discussion of assurance and perseverance. Having employed Kant and Kierkegaard previously, Williams drives his argument home with more Simeon and some Wittgenstein. He concludes the chapter (and the entire analysis) by reaffirming the modified Augustinianism which he has advocated throughout the book.

The book concludes with an appendix entitled 'Karl Barth on Election'. The appendix begins with what is probably the best quotation in the book, from Flannery O'Connor, 'I distrust folks who have ugly things to

say about Karl Barth. I like old Barth. He throws the furniture around' (p. 179). As Williams notes, the problem with Barth's doctrine of election is that, while it is at the centre of his thinking, it has been subject to diverse explanatory accounts. To that end, Williams mentions in brief compass the debate between Bruce McCormack on the one side and Paul Molnar and George Hunsinger on the other, as to whether the decree of election effectively constituted God's being as Trinity, that is to say, whether Barth offered an actualist rather than an essentialist account of God's being.

Williams, however, is not persuaded by Barth's doctrine of election. Speaking of Barth's view that election is universal 'in Christ', Williams responds, 'The plain reason for disagreeing with him is that to speak of universal election in Christ in to speak of election in a way not only different from but contrary to the way Scripture speaks of it' (p. 187) and again, 'Election, however we interpret its detailed theological content, is always discriminate in Scripture. Israel or the church or particular individuals are elected' (p. 187). This concern to be centred upon Scripture extends to Williams' critique of the way Barth uses biblical words but 'recasts the biblical witness… in a way that effectively undoes concepts which lie at its heart' (p. 201). He writes, 'Jesus Christ as the electing God and Jesus Christ as the elect man do not add up to universal election in Christ. They do not add up, either, to the belief that only the church is elect in Christ. If nothing else is factored in, they actually do not add up to anything with respect to election' (p. 201).

This is a stimulating and thought-provoking book which helps to break through centuries of debate, by insisting that the various positions which, as noted earlier, seemed fixed in stone, requiring us to choose one or the other, are not the only ways to approach this subject. All who are interested in a biblical and evangelical approach to the doctrine of election need to read this book.

A. T. B. McGowan, University of the Highlands and Islands

The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture: What the Early Church Can Teach Us. By Michael Graves. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6963-0. viii. + 201 pp. £17.99.

The field of early Christian studies has fully woken up to the reality that the writings of the Church Fathers are saturated with Scripture, and a key to understanding their theology is discerning how they *viewed* and how they *used* Scripture (e.g., Lewis Ayres' *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), pp. 31-40). Michael Graves has given aid to this understanding by writing a highly synthetic work, *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture*, which aims at bring-

ing together the 'network of ideas' on the inspiration of Scripture reflected in the writings of the Christians in the first five centuries of the church (p. 3). As a succinct summary of the sometimes diverse views of the Bible in the early church, this book largely succeeds. But how these early Christians *viewed* Scripture is only half the story. Their views on inspiration had entailments for how they interpreted Scripture. At the forefront of their interpretive concerns was what the text said to the Christian reading it. Graves would like to bring this concern for contemporary meaning to the question of the early church's interpretation of Scripture. That is to say, he sees interpretive wisdom in the writers of the early church that can be applied in the church today, though in the opinion of this reviewer the criteria provided by the author for what he finds meaningful are overly subjective.

Graves completes his argument in just under one-hundred and fifty pages. The appearance of brevity, however, is a result of the choice to use endnotes instead of footnotes. This is too bad, because his thirty-three pages of notes often contain insightful comments on the original sources. Checking up on these proved quite cumbersome. In addition to indices containing Scripture references and modern authors, the book has a very helpful index of ancient authors, works, and figures. Unfortunately, there is no bibliography.

A real strength of Graves's book is its clarity, which is on display in its organizational structure. In addition to introductory and concluding chapters, there are five chapters that serve as headings under which he organizes a total of twenty summary points on the early church's understanding of inspiration and its entailments.

Chapter Two is on Scripture's 'Usefulness': (1) Scripture is Useful for Instruction; (2) Every Detail of Scripture Is Meaningful; (3) Scripture Solves Every Problem That We Might Put to It; (4) Biblical Characters Are Examples for Us to Follow; (5) Scripture is the Supreme Authority in Christian Belief and Practice.

Chapter Three is on 'The Spiritual and Supernatural Dimension': (6) Divine Illumination Is Required for Biblical Interpretation; (7) Scripture Has Multiple Senses; (8) Scripture Accurately Predicted the Future, Especially about Jesus.

Chapter Four is on Scripture's 'Mode of Expression': (9) Scripture Speaks in Riddles and Enigmas; (10) The Etymologies of Words in Scripture Convey Meaning; (11) God is Directly and Timelessly the Speaker in Scripture; (12) The Scriptures Represent Stylistically Fine Literature.

Chapter Five is on Scripture's 'Historicity and Factuality': (13) Events Narrated in the Bible Actually Happened; (14) Scripture Does Not Have

Any Errors in Its Facts; (15) Scripture is Not in Conflict with "Pagan" Learning; (16) The Original Text of Scripture Is Authoritative.

And Chapter Six is on Scripture's 'Agreement with Truth': (17) Scripture's Teaching Is Internally Consistent; (18) Scripture Does Not Deceive; (19) Scripture's Teaching Agrees with a Recognized External Authority; (20) Scripture's Teaching Must Be Worthy of God.

A structure organized around summary points is helpful for using *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture* as a reference when one has questions on those particular points. Though I wish he would have given deeper attention to such consequential authors as Athanasius of Alexandria and Gregory of Nazianzus, Graves largely succeeds in substantiating his points with illuminating references from the daunting ocean of original sources. A minor weakness, however, is when he wields old dichotomies to categorize those sources. More than once he refers to an author being 'Alexandrian' or 'Antiochene' in his exegesis (e.g., pp. 15, 49, 73). Patristic scholarship since the 1970s has been questioning the accuracy and helpfulness of these divisions (for an excellent summary of this scholarship, see Donald Fairbairn's 'Patristic Exegesis and Theology: The Cart and the Horse', *WTJ* 69 (2007), 1-19).

A more significant weakness of this book is one sprinkled throughout its summary points, only to reach full flower in the conclusion. Graves comments at the close of each of his twenty points on whether the emphasis in question provides wisdom for Christians today. His judgment on the benefit of the early church view appears tied to what he considers plausible from a modern standpoint (without putting to question the very plausibility structures of Modernism). While Graves is willing to throw out ancient views as 'not workable' given modern assumptions, he is more than ready to accept the legitimacy of modern views so long as they are described as 'Christian'. What is revealed in his conclusion is that he thinks the final locus for interpretive authority rests in an individual's relationship with God (p. 141). Therefore, Graves has no room for subordinate authorities – such as creeds and confessions—that might provide boundaries for the Christian interpreter. He encourages his readers to submit to the descriptive reality of plurality in modern Christian interpretation as prescriptive for always 'listening' and never 'suppressing' the views of others in the 'Christian community' (pp. 143-5). I am afraid such subjectivity leads this reviewer to recommend the descriptive dimensions of *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture* while considering its prescriptive elements as all-too modern.

D. Blair Smith, Durham University

Thomas F. Torrance and the Church Fathers: A Reformed, Evangelical, and Ecumenical Reconstruction of the Patristic Tradition. By Jason Robert Radcliff. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-62564-603-3. xx + 228 pp. £18.00.

Jason Robert Radcliff's book, a revision of his Ph.D. thesis, fills a big gap. On the one hand, increasing attention is being given through articles, dissertations, and monographs to themes found in the consequential twentieth-century Scottish theologian, Thomas F. Torrance (TFT). And, on the other hand, Protestant Evangelicalism has been experiencing a 'patristic revival' for several decades now. Given that the Fathers were constant sources for TFT's theology, critical attention to this aspect of his work has been sorely needed – both for evaluating TFT and the potential he holds as a model for faithfully retrieving the Fathers today. Radcliff was a student of one of TFT's most notable students working in patristics, George Dragas; and his doctoral work was completed at the University of Edinburgh, where TFT spent his academic career. Thus, he is positioned to provide insight on the *consensus patrum* advocated by TFT and what guidance he might provide for those seeking to appropriate the Fathers today. And insight he indeed provides on a number of key questions surrounding TFT's use of the Fathers, though it seems Radcliff's deep appreciation for Torrance at times overwhelms his ability to provide the level of criticism that is needed.

Thomas F. Torrance and Church Fathers has all the markings of a revised thesis. There are copious footnotes, which feature helpful background discussion. In the text, he is fastidious in displaying the overall structure of his argument and where the reader stands in any given section. On the downside, this makes for a fair amount of repetition. Positively, though, Radcliff's prose is remarkably clear and free of academic jargon. In addition to a bibliography and index of patristic writers, the book includes an illuminating appendix recording every Father's work cited in TFT's most patristic-saturated book, *Trinitarian Faith*.

Radcliff organizes his thoughts around TFT's sense of the *consensus patrum*, that is, what he judged as theologically accurate and fruitful in the Fathers. In Chapter One Radcliff gives an historical overview of the *consensus patrum* according to the three branches of Christianity. After brief summaries of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox approaches to the study of the Fathers, he provides a nuanced understanding of Protestant approaches in which he correctly sees the current interest as a return to early Protestantism. The conditions contributing to this 'return' were the opposing viewpoints that dominated the Evangelical and Reformed traditions in the early twentieth-century: 'a liberal

denial of the importance of the Fathers or the Biblicist avoidance of The Fathers' (p. 22). In the resulting wasteland grew a wild and inchoate interest in the Early Church. It is in this landscape, which is still among us, that Radcliff believes TFT's perspective can be of immense help. Radcliff uses Chapter Two to drill down further into 'discoveries' of the Fathers since the middle of the twentieth-century, especially within the Evangelical world. He helpfully delineates between those who 'discover' and then convert to another branch of Christianity, those who are guided by a subjective postmodern framework, and those, such as Robert Webber, Thomas Oden, and D. H. Williams, who have a more objective sense of appropriating the Fathers according to theological criteria. TFT has most in common with this third group, yet Radcliff spends Chapters Three and Four detailing how he clearly stands apart in his approach. In his opinion, 'Torrance stands unique as objectively Christocentric, faithful to his own [Reformed] tradition, and seeing both the interrelation between The Fathers and his tradition as dynamic enough to allow them to be mutually informative' (p. 53).

Chapter Three details the themes presented in TFT's *Trinitarian Faith*, a work that is neither 'a work of patrology' nor 'a systematic theology text'; rather, it seeks to draw out the 'inner theological connections that give coherent structure to…classical theology' (p. 58). For TFT, these connections begin and end with Athanasius and his interpretation of the implications of the *homoousion*. The most helpful emphases in this chapter are TFT's concern to illuminate from the Fathers the objective nature of theology as dependent upon receiving and conforming to God's initiative in revelation, and the necessity of approaching divine matters in the posture of prayer and worship. Regrettably, in what Radcliff considers as perhaps TFT's 'greatest contribution to patristic and theological scholarship' (p. 92), the vicarious humanity of Christ, he uncritically affirms (here and elsewhere in the book) the Torrancian division between Calvin and the Reformed heritage after him, particularly the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Within this contested narrative, the Reformed tradition fell into 'hyper-Calvinism' (quite a misnomer) by stressing God's decrees over the person of Christ (p. 52 passim). Interestingly, in analyzing TFT's doctrine of the fallen humanity of Christ, Radcliff never references the incisive theological critique it received in Duncan Rankin's 1997 University of Edinburgh Ph.D. thesis (though Radcliff refers to Rankin's work on an unrelated matter).

Radcliff repeatedly highlights TFT as distinctive voice, because he is a Western theologian whose primary interest is in the *Eastern* Fathers. Chapter Five describes how this has established a theological rapport with the Orthodox, concluding that his 'evangelical, Christological, and

Trinitarian method of patristic appropriation' has produced a theological dynamism that, as opposed to more 'legalist' conceptions of what it means to be Reformed, enables fruitful dialogue with other traditions (p. 180). Whatever may be the merits of this conclusion, Chapters Four and Six throw into question TFT's tendency to pit the Western Fathers—particularly Augustine—against the Eastern, with the latter coming out the winners. Chapter Four establishes these various, often diverging, theological 'streams' that TFT discerns in the history of theology. In addition to separating Augustine as too 'dualistic' from his *consensus patrum*, Radcliff raises the issue of whether TFT's 'golden thread' approach to historical theology is overly simplistic (p. 145); and, in the case of dividing the Cappadocian Fathers from one another in their basic Trinitarian theology, whether his method is more informed by the Trinitarian debates he was facing in the 1980s with John Zizioulas than what was true in the 380s.

Radcliff answers these questions in Chapter Six, his conclusion, by situating TFT's approach to the Fathers within his overall theological vision, which, he admits, is hard to separate from TFT's interpretation of the *consensus patrum*. That is to say, Radcliff allows that TFT 'sometimes amalgamates modern and patristic theology and, even more so, Torrancian/Barthian and patristic theology in ways that can be unfair to The Fathers' (p. 193). Yet, Radcliff quickly pivots away from such a judgment to say, 'Torrance approaches the Fathers essentially on their own terms' (p. 196). He is only able to reach this conclusion through charging with oversimplification recent scholarship that questions an entrenched East/West divide in patristic theology. I'm not convinced Radcliff has sufficiently listened to the claims of such scholarship (scant interaction can be found on p. 197) and this results in an overly positive view of TFT as a faithful reader of the Fathers. Be that as it may, TFT's value—one which Radcliff ably draws out, contributing to the usefulness of this book—is in providing theological categories through which to appropriate the riches of the Fathers. Instead of being confronted in the study of the Fathers with a bewildering forest of names, dates, and places, one is invited to portals through which to study the Trinity, Christology, grace, and other biblical doctrines that renew our faith. And perhaps if one even 'crosses the streams', studying, say, the Trinitarian theology of an Augustine or a Basil, one will find these streams more often than not descend from common biblical headwaters.

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Divine Covenants and Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law. By David VanDrunen. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7094-0. xii + 582 pp. £32.99.

What we have is a big book in more ways than the obvious (its 582 pages). Just as James Barr once said that there was a Natural *Theology* to be found in the Bible, even though other theologies were also available, David VanDrunen sees 'Natural Law' as something biblical, even essential to the Bible's message. As he states it near the beginning (p.15): 'Natural Law consists in the obligations and consequences incumbent upon and known by human beings as image-bearers of God and participants in the protological moral order.' This does not mean a complete ethical system… 'But the natural moral order itself is divine revelation and precedes special revelation insofar as God always delivers the latter to human beings whom he created as participants in the natural order and designed by nature to respond to God in certain ways.' In this he foregrounds the importance of the Noahic covenant, 'a universal covenant by which God preserves the natural order and human society' (p. 13).

It is important for the book's thesis that the Natural Law or what he calls 'the protological' order and at times 'the penultimate' be distinguished and at times unraveled from what he calls 'the eschatological' (or the soteriological). In all this the author positions himself in regard to contemporaries such as David Novak's Jewish account and Thomas White's re-pristination of Thomist theory. The latter he dislikes for what nature/grace omits – the historical dimension into which grace appears, although one could argue that Thomist teleology requires a history before any *telos* can be reached; there seems to be some awareness of this in his praise of R. Hittinger in one of the book's appendices. The book did not need to be a longer one, but a page or two more to show that the Catholic and Jewish positions have been assimilated would have been welcome.

To turn to the book's substance: Adam and Eve as image bearers got off to a bad start by failing to exercise God-given dominion over the serpent. By nature they had been equipped to gain a participation in the Sabbath rest of the Lord. There is also a claim that the Reformed doctors were not wrong to claim that there was a covenant made in the Garden of Eden, even if a lot rests on the intertext of Hosea 6:7 ('like Adam they transgressed the covenant'). The author asserts: 'the creation of human beings in God's image *as itself* an act of covenant establishment' (p. 85). Perhaps. He seems on surer ground with the establishment *post-lapsum* of a covenant in Genesis 8-9. Just as Jon Levenson had blazed a trail for Michael Horton, again the Auld Alliance of Jewish and Reformed comes to the fore: Daniel J. Elazar was 'one of the few' to get the importance of Genesis

8-9 along with Meredith Kline's *Kingdom Prologue* (p. 98). One can appreciate the theological sense and soundness of giving a place to common grace: 'Thus, though its focus is upon preservation of human society, the natural law of the Noahic covenant also hints at a broader moral order and at a limited and penultimate human flourishing that God allows his image-bearers to attain, to some degree, through the blessing of common grace' (p. 129).

However what is slightly problematic in the attempt to distinguish protological and eschatological is revealed in his comment on Genesis 8:21, 'The Noahic covenant, therefore, reveals him as a God of *justice, tempered by forbearance*' (p. 122). But how different is forbearance from mercy? Is the point that God is simply allowing the tally of sins to add up for a reckoning at the Last Judgement? Second, to admit that Natural Law is quite abstract, so that different societies can fill it out in their particular application (p. 130) is perhaps a euphemistic way of saying that Genesis 9 is minimalist to the point of having little content, apart from a prohibition of violence. (Acts 15 expands on it.) Can the Noahic covenant really do the work that the author expects of it?

In any case, seeing the incidents of Genesis 18 (Sodom) and 20 (Gerar) as illustrative examples of communities that fail and manage to live up to the natural law respectively is very well done and full of insight into the meaning of these otherwise mysterious passages. The chapter on the Natural Law in the prophets is also largely effective. With a nod to John Barton, he contends that Isaiah 1:2 means that people not knowing the natural moral law leads to de-creation as consequence. Something perhaps needs to be said about why Israel of that day would not have been judged by a revealed law, but perhaps that would have necessitated diving into the muddy waters of the historical sequence of the Law and the Prophets. The author rightly observes the note of poetic justice when royal arrogance that persists in acting as God and perverting the idea of 'the image' is brought to shame, and laid low. Now it could be that it is the Noahic covenant that is the 'everlasting covenant' that is said to be broken in Isaiah 24:6, even if 'laws and statutes' language is Deuteronomic (p. 193). This 'apocalypse' is about universal desolation then a re-building project; Isaiah 26:20 relates back to shutting Noah in the ark (Genesis 7:16), and not to Passover. Likewise bloodshed is the issue (Isaiah 26:21). Although the Noahic covenant was unilateral it could still be broken by both parties and there was in Genesis 8:22 the condition 'while the earth remains'. I enjoyed and benefitted from this 'OT' section.

He then argues that Paul's strategy in Romans 1-2 echoes that of Amos 1-2, starting with the nations, before turning to Israel. The Natural Law cannot save but it can condemn. 'Therefore, when Paul begins 1:18 with

"for" he likely does not indicate that the wrath of God is an aspect of "the righteousness of God" but that he is beginning an exposition of essential background material for understanding what this righteousness is and why his gospel announces it as good news' (p. 213). To march into 'the righteousness of God' debate probably requires more attention to securing one's lines of supply. When he repeats: 'natural law continues to exist, but not in order to save or even to provide preparatory aids along the way to salvation' (p. 214), one wonders really how Mosaic Law can be said to be very much different from common or garden Natural Law, given what Paul says to his Jewish reader in Romans 2. The author could well be right that when Paul mentions non-Jews here he is speaking of pagans, and not of Christian Gentiles—despite Augustine (but not Aquinas), Gathercole and Wright (p. 232). Nevertheless hand-to-hand combat of exegesis is required, and that includes a sensitivity to the whole sweep of Romans.

It was at this point, as the discussion moved on to the NT, in order to shine light on the OT that this reader became less convinced. The point that Lot was saved while the people of Gerar were simply blessed because the former was a party to the covenant of grace seemed more asserted than it was demonstrated. 'Yet read in larger biblical perspective the rescue of Lot from Sodom was not a manifestation of God's forbearance through *postponement* of final judgment for him, but a picture of *deliverance from* final judgment' (p. 278). Lot's rescue foreshadows eschatological salvation of the godly mentioned in 2 Peter 2:5-9. Perhaps, but some exegesis of this NT passage and a consideration of its hermeneutical stance could have helped.

The author holds Mosaic Law to be protological too, but in displaying an ultimate negative outcome, it is 'a way of preparing God's people for their coming Messiah' (p. 283). It is a code with restraining effects from which the redemptive grace of Christ provides liberation (Galatians 3:19*ff.*). He concludes that Mosaic Law served to highlight the miserable state of humanity. 'God intended life under the Mosaic covenant, in part, to mimic the experience of the First Adam (p. 353). But simply relying on Galatians here makes the Mosaic Law appear to be deficient in the life-giving qualities of the Natural Law. How can such a law be 'holy' (Romans 7:12)? It is as if the 'New Perspective on Paul' never happened.

The last part of the book, from p. 431 onwards launches into 'the justification debate'. One feels that was probably not necessary or even a particularly good idea. The treatment of Romans 4-5 is not particularly well done. Also, when discussing 'New Creation' the secondary literature is dealt with in large footnotes rather than taken on in the main text. The claim that Jesus did not come to launch a theocracy, but something of

a less visible order, with its target of Neocalvinism is not without merit but needs more than writing that Christians have a new creation rule, with faith working through love and new *stoicheia* (Galatians 6:14; p. 444). Since under the New Covenant of Grace there will now be forgiveness, therefore in Matthew 5:38 Jesus commands are not a clarification of the law. He is giving something else while leaving law alone (p. 454). Our Lord's statements about divorce presupposed there would be no death penalty for adultery, so it 'cannot be an elaboration of the OT law' (p. 455). Christ brought the commandments to eschatological fulfilment by his words and deeds. This is a plausible case, but just what this means isn't totally clear.

The summary-like conclusion does not add very much. The index is a little odd: e.g., W. J. Lyons' book *Canon and Exegesis* is mentioned a few times in the text, but is absent from the index. Yet, notwithstanding that the first half of the book seems more successful than the second, the work as a whole is a major intellectual and spiritual achievement. Here we have a Christian thinker who can combine biblical studies, classical and Reformed theology with the history of political thought, and do it with some style.

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William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England. By W. B. Patterson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-19-968152-5. ix + 265 pp. £65.

W. B. Patterson's *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England* is an engaging, thematic study of one of the most influential theologians in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Britain. This is not a linear, biographical account of William Perkins (1558–1602), but a close examination of the various roles that he fulfilled. Perkins is held up like a prized jewel and the reader is brought in to appreciate his life and thought from various angles, at each point having opportunity to consider the unique contribution that he made to English Protestantism.

The introduction and first chapter set the scene for the rest of the book. Patterson offers a brief overview of William Perkins's life in the introduction and the first chapter fleshes out the context for Perkins's life and ministry by providing an overview of the church during the reign of Elizabeth I. Patterson draws attention to the various flashpoints that occurred between conformists and Puritans, such as the vestiarian controversy of the mid-1560s, noting the unsettled, polemical and stormy nature of the church during this period.

The following five chapters examine William Perkins in a series of roles that he filled throughout his life: apologist, theologian, pastor, preacher and social reformer. In Chapter Two, Perkins's role as an apologist for the Church of England is given due consideration. Patterson argues that Perkins's *A Reformed Catholike* (1597) was written both to show those within the Church of England that where Protestant doctrine differed from Catholic teaching it did so because it had been reformed in light of Scripture and to win over those outside the church. Likewise, he argues that *A Warning against the Idolatrie of the Last Times and an Instruction Touching Religious or Divine Worship* (1601) was written to defend the Church of England's worship. This portrayal of Perkins as an apologist for the Church of England, and not only as one of its leading theologians, is perhaps one of the most important contributions of the book. Chapter Three assesses Perkins's soteriology, with particular reference to his doctrine of predestination. Patterson argues for the consistency of Perkins's doctrine of salvation with that of the Thirty-Nine Articles and demonstrates the influence of Perkins's publications on the Continent, especially in the lead up to the Synod of Dort. In Chapter Four, Patterson considers Perkins's practical divinity, claiming that Perkins was the 'founder of English Protestant casuistry' (p. 113) and that his teachings on conscience were of great importance in his own day. In Chapter Five, Perkins's instructions on preaching, as found in *The Arte of Prophecying* (1607), are considered. For Perkins the key aim of preaching was to deliver (by heart) the key meaning, doctrines and applications of the passage being expounded. Perkins was not the only person calling for clearer and more direct language in English preaching, but Patterson claims that his voice was important nonetheless. In Chapter Six, Patterson proceeds to consider Perkins's social ethics. He challenges Christopher Hill's selective reading of Perkins and instead argues that Perkins sought to further 'the common good' (p. 161). Patterson argues that the focal point for this social vision was the parish, which had gained increased importance in the sixteenth century.

The final two chapters focus on Perkins's legacy. In Chapter Seven, Patterson examines William Bishop's responses to *A Reformed Catholike*, which were published in 1604 and 1607 (after Perkins's death in 1602). As Perkins could not respond to these critiques, Robert Abbot and Anthony Wotton defended his arguments. Patterson argues that this dispute over Perkins's work highlights the on-going significance of his publications for the English Church. Chapter Eight provides a more wide-ranging survey of Perkins's legacy. Amongst other things, Patterson notes the widespread publication of Perkins's works; his influence on key individuals, such as

William Ames; and the importance of his works in theological disputes, such as those at the Synod of Dort.

Though Patterson offers an overwhelmingly positive account of Perkins, one of the central arguments of the book is likely to divide opinion. Patterson repeatedly insists that Perkins was not a Puritan. In his conclusion, Patterson offers his most explicit statement on the issue: 'Perkins was not a Puritan or even a moderate Puritan, terms that suggest opposition to the established Church' (p. 218). Whether one agrees with this argument or not depends on how one defines a Puritan. By his own terms, Patterson is of course right. Perkins cannot be regarded as a Puritan on the basis of opposition to the established Church of England, as he was a leading thinker within it. However, those that are inclined to think of the relationship between conformists and Puritans more in terms of a continuum, understanding Puritans as 'the hotter sort of Protestants', are less likely to be convinced by this in-out dichotomy. By Patterson's own admission, while Perkins did not identify as a Puritan 'he did not dismiss their efforts to achieve an inward purity, either' (p. 49). Perkins's strict Calvinist theology and Reformed piety might also be viewed as suggestive of a more Puritan spirit. Furthermore, Perkins's writings did exercise a great level influence on later Puritans. As such, the debate as to how closely Perkins should be aligned with the Puritan movement is likely to continue.

Though some readers will no doubt have misgivings over this line of argumentation, they will still find much to appreciate in this sympathetic study of Perkins. Patterson emphasises Perkins's leading role within the Elizabethan Church and reveals how he influenced English Protestantism in more ways than is usually appreciated. This is a highly readable study of a hugely important figure. It will no doubt be an important point of reference for those interested in William Perkins for the foreseeable future.

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Neo-Calvinism and the French Revolution. Edited by James Eglinton and George Harinck. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-567-65663-6. xii + 210 pp. £65.00.

This collection of essays addresses the Dutch 19th and 20th century theological movement called Neo-Calvinism and its relationship to the French Revolution. This publication is the result of the European Neo-Calvinism Conference, held in Paris in 2012 with the same title. As with most other 19th century movements, the French Revolution functions as an important intellectual point of reference for Neo-Calvinism. Its eleven chapters by a Dutch-American-Scottish group of authors put this relationship in

both historical and theological perspective. In both fields the book makes significant contributions and its relevance pertains to both the academy and the vicarage. For the latter, however, the historical chapters will be of less interest.

Five chapters concern the historical core of the encounter of Neo-Calvinism with the French Revolution. Interestingly, in all these chapters the classic view on Neo-Calvinism as an anti-revolutionary movement is nuanced significantly. James Bratt demonstrates in a highly informative chapter that Abraham Kuyper's views on the revolution are far from uniquely negative, but have different layers. While criticising its unbelief, Kuyper hailed its strive for freedom. George Harinck demonstrates that for Bavinck the Revolution was not really an important issue. The occasions Bavinck does address the issue, he has a much more historical approach different from Kuyper's and Groen's rhetoric. In a broad overview, Mark Elliot puts the Neo-Calvinist response in the context of the manifold 19th century reactions to the Revolution, with a particular focus on the work of François-René de Chateaubriand. In this very dense chapter he concludes that Chateaubriand's emphasis on providence could be of benefit to the Neo-Calvinist account of the Revolution. Furthermore, Hugo Den Boer argues that, unlike what is commonly claimed, the Neo-Calvinism should not be explained as a reaction to the French Revolution, but rather as rooted in what Den Boer terms the historical revolution: the slow and gradual birth of historical consciousness. Covolo's chapter has a different aim. He interestingly attempts to provide a thick account of the Revolution by looking not only at its ideas but at the bottom-up cultural practice of fashion. In doing so Covolo complements the focus on ideas as evidenced by Groen revealing both overlap and differences. Klei's chapter is also historical, but has a reception-historical focus. It reveals how Groen van Prinsterer's anti-revolutionary legacy has operated in Dutch Christian politics until the present day.

The remaining chapters have a more cultural-theological focus and understand Neo-Calvinism not as a mere historical phenomenon but as a theological tradition with contemporary relevance. James Eglinton's relatively lengthy but very interesting chapter deals with the issue of multilingualism. In line with the historical chapters, he shows Kuyper to be ambiguous towards the Revolution's strive towards monolingualism. Bavinck provides Eglinton with the tools to balance the negative view of many Protestants on multilingualism: 'God is found to be glorious in every language' (p. 60). Of great interest and relevance is also the chapter by Matthew Kaemingk. He creatively uses the way Neo-Calvinism identifies the French Revolution as a religion and applies it afresh to the contemporary French concept of *laïcité*. Using the ban on headscarves issued

by the French government in 2004 as a case study, Kaemingk convincingly demonstrates that *laïcité* has indeed all the characteristics of a religion, and what is more: a very dogmatic and proselytising one. The same relevance of this Neo-Calvinist analysis is shown by Alissa Wilkinson in a fascinating comparison as she sees Kuyper's criticism on the Revolution mirrored in Krzysztof Kieślowksi's *Three Colours* film trilogy. On entirely different note, Hans Burger deals with Kuyper's doctrine of Scripture. He points out that Kuyper's view on Scripture is ultimately unable to escape the quest for absolute certainty of modern foundationalism and is as such not sufficiently anti-revolutionary. In a beautiful chapter, Wolter Huttinga puts forward Bavinck's defence of theology as queen of the sciences. He argues that, in line with Bavinck, we can continue to see theology as queen of the sciences, albeit 'not as a ruler, but more as the *eschaton* of the sciences, as 'a mystical vision' (p. 154).

While the chapters in this collection of essays are of high quality, there are some weaknesses. The density of the chapters of Elliot and Den Boer is a hindrance to the reader. Unlike the other chapters, Klei's article lacks accuracy in English, spelling and references. One also wonders about the absence of a logical sequence of the chapters. More importantly, some chapters seem at odds with the overall theme of the book. The essays of Klei and Covolo do not deal with Neo-Calvinism, but with anti-revolutionary politics: an associated but distinct movement. To be clear, Groen was not a Neo-Calvinist, something which unfortunately remains unclear throughout the book. The other way around, the chapters by Burger and Huttinga, do not really cover the French Revolution. Instead, they are dogmatic essay on the theology of Neo-Calvinism. Consequently, the chapters of, for example, Klei and Burger are deprived of common ground. This endangers the focus and the unity of the book. Notwithstanding these critical remarks, this book deserves praise for its considerable contribution to the study of the history of Reformed thought and for demonstrating the lasting relevance of the Neo-Calvinist tradition.

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For a Continuing Church: The Roots of the Presbyterian Church in America. By Sean Michael Lucas. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-62995-106-5. 368 pp. £13.71.

As a prominent leader within conservative American Presbyterianism, Sean Michael Lucas's irenic efforts to expose the controversial history of Southern Presbyterianism are well known and greatly respected. This time he has given us a timely history of twentieth century Southern Presbyterianism in the midst of what may be a cultural shift in its conserva-

tive successor, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Though not the first history of the PCA, Lucas's account stands apart from previous works in many ways. Indeed, most readers of Lucas's well-researched account will find very few issues to contend with. However, those few issues are very important if the purpose of this volume is to be honest about the PCA's roots and if further progress in the PCA is to be made.

Lucas begins with an overview of the entire volume by defining important dates, people, organizations, etc. and how the plurality of theological voices in conservative Southern Presbyterianism has contributed to an identity crisis that the PCA is still wrestling with to this day. Nonetheless, what continues to unite the continuing church, the PCA, and the previous conservative elements of the PCUS is the inerrancy of Scripture, the Reformed faith, and the Great Commission.

As with several other mainline Protestant denominations, the seeds for Protestant liberalism began to be sown in the late 19th century. With few initially expressing concern, several prominent ministers within the PCUS began spreading their progressive ideas through the existing pedagogical infrastructure – sermons, journals, and seminaries. The spread of their influence was so swift that conservatives were ill-equipped organizationally to confront this progressive wing within the PCUS. By the late 1920s, the doctrine of the spirituality of the church and full subscription to the Westminster Standards as the doctrinal standard of the PCUS came under attack at the General Assembly level. By 1940, conservative voices no longer were heard and historic doctrinal stances no longer defended.

The conservative response to these changes was slow and their attempts to win back the PCUS were ill-fated. Through several organizational efforts, they devoted the several decades to turn the tide in their favour. Their efforts culminated in the establishment of the *Southern Presbyterian Journal* in 1941 followed by several other organizations including Concerned Presbyterians (1964), Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship (1964), Reformed Theological Seminary (1966), Presbyterian Churchmen United (1969) and the Executive Committee for Overseas Evangelism (1970). However, the writing on the wall became clearer in later years and many within the conservative ranks began seriously entertaining the idea of departure from the PCUS. By 1971, representatives from organizations listed above were appointed to serve on the newly formed Continuing Church Steering Committee 'for the continuation of a Presbyterian Church loyal to the Scriptures and the Reformed faith' and by the end of 1973, the PCA was founded. Notably, conservatives did not universally embrace this endeavour and several prominent conservative leaders chose to stay within the PCUS to continue their efforts to reform from the inside.

In one of Lucas's most compelling arguments embedded throughout the narrative, he is able to demonstrate how both liberals and conservatives within the PCUS espoused social reform at different points in history despite the conservatives' doctrine of the spirituality of the church. Indeed, such engagement with the broader American society is one of the reasons why conservatives sought to maintain their status as a mainline Presbyterian denomination. To varying degrees, liberal Protestantism in the National Council of Churches, of which the PCUS was a member at the protest of conservatives, had indicated support for communism, centralization, and integration. In contrast, most conservatives within the PCUS advocated outright rejection of those positions and supported free market capitalism, decentralization, and segregation. But more than their positions, the real difference between the two tribes was *how* the reform was to be carried out – liberals pursued social reform often at the expense of personal salvation while conservatives pursued personal salvation and anticipated social reform as a consequence of the former. A commitment to this biblical imperative was exactly why conservatives had fought for confessional integrity and why segregation eventually took a back seat amongst conservatives.

Overall, *For a Continuing Church* provides a helpful and engaging history of the PCUS and the PCA. Yet, there are some issues in Lucas's historical narrative that remain unresolved. Though some might argue this particular issue is outside the scope of the author's intent, Lucas's disregard for any mention of the Korean Language Presbyteries in the PCA and how it was that such an entity could come into existence soon after the PCA's founding leaves us wanting. After all, if segregation was initially one of the major flaws, if not the only one, in the motivational axis for reform in the PCUS, it seems as though a thorough discussion is warranted for the creation of presbyteries dominated by a single ethnic minority that currently comprises roughly 12% of the PCA. At least a short discussion on how the founding narrative of the PCA could allow for such an entity to exist seems necessary. Similarly, we also wonder why such a significant minority (or any minority for that matter) is not represented in the ten endorsements listed in the first pages of the volume.

Secondly, and more importantly, the broader narrative of the conservative wing of the PCUS seems to warrant a discussion on the possibility of the vestiges of racism carrying over into the PCA during its early years and how that may have contributed to its current climate. Though Lucas mentions how the Continuing Church Steering Committee of 1971 officially reiterated its determination for racial inclusivity, we are left wondering how effectively this was actually carried out. Despite the fact that the majority of conservatives within the PCUS were advo-

cates for segregation in the decades prior to the PCA's founding, we are not provided with sufficient information regarding their views after they joined the PCA. We are given the impression that those particular PCA founders who had previously advocated segregation had a sudden change of heart when in fact several insiders and prominent founders who wrote the PCA's earlier histories continued to demonstrate indifference toward segregation and were vocal supporters of segregation leading up the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

History has shown us that ethnic/racial tensions can only be resolved at the satisfaction of the victims, not the perpetrators. Continued silence concerning the founding generation's ethnocentric tendencies and the climate they helped to create may actually hurt the PCA's ability to fulfil the Great Commission and its desire to be a mainline denomination. Analogically, attempts by the Japanese government to close the chapter on Imperial Japan's involvement in trafficking women for the pleasure of its soldiers by paying off these former victims have encountered great resistance and disappointment by historians, human rights groups, and the women themselves. With the current Japanese government continuing to whitewash history by failing to mention Imperial Japan's role in human trafficking and enshrining those who oversaw trafficking operations, the international community continues to rally around these women as the issue is clearly far from resolved. Though not similar in magnitude, similar failure to fully address the possibility of racism carrying over into the early years of the PCA may unnecessarily perpetuate a cynical attitude of unbelief by external observers in the progress that has already been made. Indeed, what is going to impress outside observers, particularly non-Christians, is not the precision of the PCA's Calvinism or Presbyterianism but the power of the gospel demonstrated through a love that transcends race, class, age, and culture.

Overall, Lucas has given us an impressive account of Southern Presbyterianism leading up to the founding of the PCA. The footnotes and bibliography alone will prove to be an excellent resource for further research. As questions of race and multi-ethnicity in the future of the PCA have recently come to the forefront, a thorough analysis of the historical context of Southern Presbyterianism can indeed be a useful aid to understanding the PCA's current situation and how the PCA can move forward. And yet, without undermining what has already been accomplished by the PCA's current leaders, this highly anticipated volume leaves us with some unresolved questions about the ethnocentric baggage of the PCA's founding generation and the culture they helped to initially create.

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