Editorial

I found it a valuable experience recently to preach simultaneously through the book of Exodus and the Sermon on the Mount. Readings at church from the laws of Exodus 20-24 in the morning services were complemented in the evening by Jesus' teaching on the law in Matthew 5:17-6:6. Christ's sermon is most helpful for viewing God's grace to us in Christ. I offer the following observations which I understand follow from his teaching.

God's Law is a central theme in the Sermon on the Mount. In preaching the gospel, Christ doesn't avoid the subject of law, or suppress the law, nor does he overthrow the law. Christ addresses the subject plainly, directly and unashamedly. The crowds were 'astonished' when Jesus finished these sayings. In his hands the Law isn't a recipe for boredom!

God's Law is his holy standard for all time. Christ distinguishes between fulfilling the law and abolishing it. He came to accomplish the former, not the latter. Therefore he applies and does not repeal the commands 'You shall not murder' (the sixth command), 'You shall not commit adultery' (the seventh command) and 'You shall love your neighbour' (the summary of the law; Matt. 22:36-40; Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14).

Christ faithfully applies God's Law. He doesn't strengthen or ease the law. He doesn't add commands or omit them. He faithfully applies God's laws with a view to their true end – each and every part of a person's life. The law has reference to the whole of human life. Accordingly, an application of the sixth command is that hatred towards a brother is murder (Matt. 5:21-22; 1 John 3:15); an application of the seventh command is 'lustful intent' is adultery (Matt. 5:28) and with respect to the whole law, loving your neighbour means, not hating your enemies but loving them and praying for those who persecute you. Christ thereby teaches that obedience to God's law requires heart, soul, mind and strength (Deut. 6:5). These applications of the law are not new interpretations or new directions for the law, nor are they new laws. Simply put, they are the law.

Jesus' sermon raises the question, 'Who can do this?' Jesus addresses a series of glosses customarily made to the law that mask the impossibility of fallen humans keeping it. Christ, unmasking his hearers, brings to recollection the questions, 'Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?' The corresponding answer is, 'He who has clean hands and a pure heart' (Ps. 24:3-4). He is the 'end (*telos*; the goal toward which a movement is directed) of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes' (Rom. 10:4). 'Who can do this?' was a common question raised upon hearing Jesus' ministry (Mk. 2:7; 10:26; John 6:60). Jesus'

message was not 'You can do this!' but 'Who can do this?' The answer to the question is Jesus. The ointment for law-breaking is not law-easing, but the grace of Jesus Christ.

Since the goal of the law is Christ, the law is an instrument of his mercy. The law directs us to God's mercy in Christ for its fulfilment. The principles Jesus teaches regarding God's Law are later applied again in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the story of the rich young man and the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. The man who wishes to justify himself goes home disappointed while the man convicted by the law of his transgressions and who calls upon God's mercy in Christ goes home justified.

God's mercy to us in Christ means a new disposition towards the law. A Christian is justified, no longer a sinner only but a justified sinner. It is through Christ's justification that the law is fulfilled – not abolished – in a Christian's life. Now it is a means of honouring and loving God. Expressions of wonder, love and praise (Ps. 119:18; 119:97 and 119:64) abound to God for his law. We may join with the Psalmist in praise to God for his law, 'I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight' (Ps. 119:174).

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Rev Andrew Rollinson's paper along with replies from Mrs Jenny Stirling and Rev Dr Alasdair Black were delivered at an online meeting of the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society on Monday 2nd November 2020.

In whose image are our congregations being shaped? Leadership, power and Christian nurture

Andrew Rollinson

The prayerful ambition of every godly Christian leader is to see their congregation shaped, under God, into a truly Gospel community; that is a community 'being transformed into Christ's likeness with ever-increasing glory' (2 Cor. 3:16). The aspiration is to see a local gathering of God's people grow in their knowledge and experience of Christ's truth, his cruciform love, his resurrection power and his heart for a lost world. Paul speaks for all pastoral leaders when he talks vividly of the 'pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you' (Gal. 4:19). That is the theory; that is what we are all signed up for.

The empirical reality, however, is often somewhat different. All too easily the image of Christ in our congregations can be seriously distorted, not just by superficial discipleship and immature and sinful relationships but by our own leadership. Instead of encountering communities marked by the love, truth, freedom and joy of the Gospel, the image of *ourselves* is a little too plain to see. Far too often our own doctrinal and hermeneutical bias, our personality preferences, our limited experience and personal insecurities, our 'niche ecclesiologies'[1] – and our insufficient self-awareness over all these matters – have become seriously distorting factors. The oft-commented 'tribalism' within the contemporary Scottish evangelical scene is sad evidence of this reality. Another tragic expression is the way some emerging leaders in the developing world (where honour-shame cultures prevail) demand congregational patronage, failing to 'reconfigure honour' by the Gospel.[2]

The aim of this paper is to explore the extent to which such deformation can be mitigated, given that God graciously uses our very different personalities and denominational charisms, and given the inevitable fallibility of all human agency. How can we better allow God's Word and

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1 A term used by James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World. The Irony, Tragedy and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 283. By it he means 'designer churches', churches aiming to meet certain needs and interests.

2 This is brilliantly explored in Julyan Lidstone, *Give Up the Purple. A Call to Servant Leadership in Hierarchical Cultures* (Carlisle: Langham Global Library, 2019), p. 80.

Spirit to do its own work, producing congregations where something of the fullness and fruitfulness of Christ's image becomes a reality? This is a huge theme. The particular focus of this paper is on the ways in which issues of power are significant. I concur with Martyn Percy when he comments, 'In ecclesiology, and perhaps to a lesser extent theology, power has been a neglected, even despised concept. The common error of oversimply equating power with coercion has meant that theology has been reluctant to find a legitimate place for it in its doctrine.'[3]

1. CHRIST-LIKE FORMATION – OUR HIGH CALLING

Scripture offers an enthralling vista of what true Christian formation looks like. It is the Triune God alone who is the Potter. The Father's 'two hands' (to use Irenaeus's famous image), his Redeeming Son and his Sanctifying Spirit,[4] are slowly refashioning our lives. The divine image, so badly marred by our fallen state, is slowly being 'renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator' (Colossians 3:10, where the context is the church, not the individual).

More specifically, the New Testament identifies the key transforming practices that allow the Word and Spirit to do their divine shaping and transforming.[5] They operate in a number of key contexts; family life, congregational life and service in the world. In a culture that so easily moulds us by its own values there is an urgent need to 'enact counter-formation by counter-disciplines'.[6] First, and pre-eminently, disciples of Jesus are shaped through parental instruction (if so blessed, cf. Prov. 4:3-4; 2 Tim. 1:5), certainly the preaching and teaching of the church; and central to this 'pattern of teaching' (Rom. 6:17) is the Word of the cross (1 Cor. 1:17) and the power of the resurrection (2 Cor. 4:10). Christian identity formation fundamentally involves our personal stories being radically re-orientated by

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3 Martyn Percy, *Power and the Church. Ecclesiology in an Age of Transition* (London and Washington: Cassell, 1998), p. 75. Percy's antagonism towards evangelicalism is thinly veiled but he has some sharp and uncomfortable observations to make about power and the evangelical church.

4 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.1.3 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1885), I, 527.

5 A good summary is found in Evan B. Howard, *A Guide to Christian Spiritual Formation. How Scripture, Spirit, Community and Mission Shape our Souls* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2018).

6 James K. A. Smith. *Who's Afraid of Post-Modernism?* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2006), p. 23.

God's story.[7] Second, the worship of the church is deeply formative. The worship of heaven, shared in part here on earth through the eschatological Spirit, with a particular focus on the sacraments, affirms our identity in Christ and allows us to refocus on what is truly real in a world of illusion. Third, the repeated witness of the New Testament is that the godly example of leaders, themselves imitating Christ, has a powerful impact (e.g. 1 Cor. 5:15-16; Phil. 3:17). More generally, the relational interaction of God's people is hugely formative; a culture of love, forgiveness, hospitality, accountability and encouragement being indispensable for all Christian nurture (e.g. Col. 3:12-14). Finally, it is our faithful witness to Christ, and the frequent opposition and suffering that comes with it, which has significant formative power (e.g. 2 Cor. 1:8-9).

2. THE PLACE OF POWER IN CHRISTIAN FORMATION

What is singularly missing from most considerations of Christian formation, however, is an account of the subtle interplay of human and divine *power*. It is deeply misguided to somehow imagine that the church is a power-free-zone and particularly this is the case when it comes to considering the influences that shape our lives.[8] Indeed total powerlessness is a myth, power being intrinsic to our very human experience.[9] In Scripture the notion of power, that is the ability to effect change,[10] is both celebrated and cautioned against. All power belongs to God and is life-giving, love-creating, redeeming and eternal. God made the world and rules the world in his power and through the power of his risen Son is making all things new. In his providence God delegates power to humanity and a key part of our human dignity, as those made in God's image, is to steward power wisely. Power is inevitably abused when it is used for our own ends and

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7 S. Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom. A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983) 'to be a Christian is not principally to obey certain commands or rules but to learn to grow into the story of Jesus as the form of God's Kingdom', p. 30.

8 For example, Marilyn Peterson in her book *At Personal Risk* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1992) talks of the huge danger of boundary violations where the power differential between a professional and client relationship is denied. 'Boundary violations grow out of our struggles with power *and our negation of its significance*' (my italics) p. 70.

9 See the very helpful chapter in James Davison Hunter, 'Rethinking Power: theological reflections' in *To Change the World*, pp. 176-93.

10 Power is the 'ability to act or effect something strongly.' *Shorter English Oxford Dictionary*. In the social sciences power is a contested issue. A 'thicker' definition would include, at the least, the ability to resist and prevent change.

ambitions. Christ, in his incarnate life, has definitively modelled a right use of power, a power that does not grasp but gives (Phil. 2:6), a power that has as its *telos* the shalom of others and God's world. These familiar themes, however, somehow become worryingly forgotten when it comes to Christian formation. It is my contention that it is often an unawareness by leaders of the dynamics of power that is at the root of much communal malformation.

Few have explored this theme of power and formation more penetratingly than the French cultural historian and philosopher, Michel Foucault (1926-84) and a brief excursus into his thinking will aid our exploration.[11] For sure, Foucault was hardly a Christian in his convictions and lifestyle and certainly he never considered the issue of *Christian* formation but his general insights are as pertinent as they are uncomfortable.[12] For central to Foucault's work on power was a restless quest to both understand and fashion the human self. Power is not for Foucault all negative. It is the creative tension between our experience of power relations and our resistance to them that makes us who we are. Clearly Foucault's understanding of self is fundamentally divergent from a biblical one, seeing our essence as a social construct rather than a divine creation and assuming the possibility of self-transformation,[13] but his acute perceptions on the way power shapes the self makes him a sobering dialogue partner.

Foucault's approach was to analyse key discourses throughout history, themes as varied as the penal system, psychiatric care and human sexuality, and by so doing expose how issues of power profoundly shape our assumptions, expectations and self-understandings (what he called 'epistemes'). Indeed one of Foucault's key assertions is the sheer ubiquity of power. Power, for Foucault, is not a separate concept but intimately related to, and shaping of, all relationships, so much so that he habitually talks of 'power-relations'. Foucault helpfully identifies different sorts of

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[11] I am grateful to Roy Kearsley whose book *Church, Community and Power* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2008) first introduced me to the importance of Foucault for the church.

[12] For a very helpful overview from a Christian and Reformed perspective see Christopher Watkin, *Michel Foucault*, Great Thinkers (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishers, 2018). Watkin comments, 'Foucault and the Bible are fundamentally at variance in their assumptions, yet have a great deal in common', xxii.

[13] Foucault conceived the possibility of self-creation as 'a work of art'. This image is, interestingly, similar to Gregory of Nyssa's description of spiritual formation as paintings created by apprentices to a master. For Foucault, self-creation comes about by the ecstasy of transgressing boundaries ('limit experience' as he called it); for Gregory of Nyssa, of course, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

power; for example 'sovereign power' – power that is obvious, directional and unquestioned; 'disciplinary power' where institutions more subtly impose conformity; and 'micro-power', the complex power dynamics of small communities where the interplay is complex, unpredictable and often unnoticed.[14] Power, he argues, can creep into a community with a sort of 'capillary effect'; it is 'the microphysics of power'.[15] Once named, all these categories of power are not difficult to identify in the Christian community yet, as Foucault warns, 'relations of power are perhaps among the best hidden things in the social body.' [16]

Equally salutary is Foucault's insistence on the intimate connection between power and knowledge.[17] He is deeply suspicious of the Enlightenment claim that knowledge is neutral and objective. Rather, through his 'genealogy' of power relations, searching into how acceptable social norms have changed over time, he concludes that although power and truth are distinct, they are also profoundly interrelated. For example, in his perhaps best-known book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, he vigorously challenges the perception that the reforms of the penal system represent a growing awareness of what is humane and restorative. Rather, he argues that though contemporary mechanisms of criminal justice may appear less barbarous than in previous centuries, the technology of power through prison educationalists, psychologists and psychiatrists is actually just as oppressive, 'punishment now strikes the soul rather than the body'.[18] Though perhaps overstating his case, there is again cause for reflection. It has long been accepted in hermeneutics that no biblical interpretation is immune from issues of power; equal acceptance has often been slow in the area of spiritual formation. For very good reasons Paul wrote, 'We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the Word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly, we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God' (2 Cor. 4:2).

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14 These distinctions are first introduced in his *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1977).

15 M. Foucault, ibid., p. 26.

16 M. Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings* 1977-1984 (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 118, quoted in Watkin, *Foucault*, p. 36.

17 M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*; 'there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presume and constitute at the same time power relations.' p. 27.

18 Ibid., p. 16.

Related to this theme is Foucault's concept of 'normalisation', the subtle power that encourages behavioural norms though hierarchical observation, normalising judgment and examination.[19] Often such normalisation is healthy, as in society's expectation that we respect the rights of the other, but the danger is that such subtle power can overreach itself. The somewhat vivid image Foucault uses to illustrate this is Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon*, a prison design where a tower at the centre of a circle of prison cells allows a supervising warder to look into each cell, intimidating and inducing self-regulation among the inmates. Again Foucault deliberately overstates to make his point. Institutions, including the church, he argues, in the name of good governance, can far too easily exercise undue power. It raises the uncomfortable question as to what exactly distinguishes the important process of Christian re-socialising from an unhealthy normalisation. **Does the homogeneity of some congregational life point**, worryingly, more to the latter than the former?

As a final comment on Foucault, the one place where he does directly connect with Christian formation is, from his French Catholic background, in his fascination with the practice of confession – 'pastoral power' as he calls it.[20] He sees the importance of the **confessional** not only as a way individuals grow in self-understanding but as the way they are shaped by the declarations offered and the renunciations made. For Foucault the 'complete subordination' of the confessor to the pastor is deeply problematic.

So much more could be said but what is important in all this is Foucault's almost uncanny alertness to the many factors that shape the self, that complex interplay of reason, desire, passion, and volition, and how very *vulnerable* we are to issues of power in all this.

3. DEVELOPING A 'POWER AWARE' THEOLOGICAL MIND-SET

The ecclesial culture, determinative for so much in Christian formation, is deeply shaped by underlying theological convictions. What is vital is to assess the extent to which these convictions, and the mind-set they create, adequately resource both a resistance to the sort of unseen power Foucault alerts us to and an embracing of the life-giving, transforming power of the Gospel. Without such, our congregations will be vulnerable to being shaped too much in the image of their leaders and not of our Lord Jesus. At least two inter-related issues are involved here.

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19 C. Watkin, *Foucault*, p. 156.

20 M. Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Vol. 1 Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. by Paul Rabinow and James D. Faubion (New York: New Press 1997), p. 242 quoted in Christopher Watkin, *Foucault*, p. 43.

First, in assessing the value of current evangelical theological trends, there is an urgent need to be alert not only to their biblical veracity but to their pastoral power implications. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is profoundly subversive when it comes to issues of power and most of us, in theory at least, are deeply aware of this. Christ's whole life was an incarnation of the self-giving love of God, expressed in a constant renunciation of worldly power and an embracing of divine power in human weakness. The famous hymn of Philippians 2:5-11 is not the narrative of a Christ who temporarily relinquished power on the cross only to take it up again in resurrection, but rather the revelation of a whole new understanding of power.[21] It is precisely in choosing to sacrifice for others that God's resurrection power is realised. It is thus far more radical than Foucault's understanding of successive epistemes where *expressions* of power change with time.[22] In the Gospel the *very nature* of power is totally subverted; a whole new, qualitatively different sort of power is revealed through Christ (1 Cor. 1:23-25).

Given such revolutionary Good News it follows that this Gospel and its understanding of power must not only be the very centre of all evangelical theology but also a key touchstone by which other evangelical truths are assessed. Thus, for example, when articulations of eternal subordination within the Trinity are used to justify subordination<u>ism</u>[23] or when doctrines of Scriptural revelation posit 'sufficiency' as synonymous with 'completeness', permitting no mystery or debate, they point in a direction alien to the Gospel's view of power. In handling such contentious issues as women in church leadership, power-awareness must be part of the lens through which we interpret Scripture.

Second, in our understanding of pastoral leadership, great care must be taken to make the vital distinction between divine and human agency.

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21 Because Paul's words in Phil. 2:10 are an exact borrowing of language from Isa. 45:23, it indicates not only the closest possible identity of Jesus with Yahweh but that the non-grasping nature of Jesus power reveals the very character of Yahweh. Gordon D. Fee, 'God is not a grasping, self-centred being but is most truly known through the one who, himself in the form of God and thus equal with God, poured himself out in sacrificial love'. *Paul's Letter to the Philippians, The New International Commentary on the N.T.* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 227.

22 This is very well expounded in C. Watkin, *Foucault*, Chapter 5.

23 There is indeed a vital distinction to be made between the clear biblical witness to eternal subordination within the Trinity (1 Cor. 8:6) and subordination*<u>ism</u>*. Different modes of origination do not necessary imply a hierarchy of status of persons. What is more, drawing direct non-analogical lines between God's inner life and our social life is deeply problematic.

Clearly this is not an easy issue for both are deeply related as well as distinct; there is tension and complexity here. All ministry is inevitably both mediated and incarnational, our embodied struggling but 'with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me' (Col. 1:29). 'How is it possible', asks Martyn Percy, 'to embody and preach a Gospel of power in a form of powerlessness?' [24] It is a key question – for we talk of preaching as 'truth through personality'[25] and God clearly uses our natural as well as spiritual gifts to aid his ministry. This paper is certainly not implying that 'big personalities' cannot be effective in God's purposes. Neither is it saying that commanding or confrontational leadership is never appropriate; in the face of injustice it is vital.[26] Rather, it is when the distinction between *opus Dei* and *opus hominum* is blurred that power abuse becomes possible.[27] Colourful leaders are not the problem, collapsed distinctions are the concern. Strong leadership is not the issue, pride, hubris and a lack of self-awareness about power are the issues. It is precisely when an understanding of human agency and divine agency are conflated that, for example, the 'anointed' preacher becomes the unquestioned mouthpiece of God and the exhortations of the worship leader become *automatically* endued with prophetic authority. It is when there is no room for diversity of view and when a non-dialogical culture has taken hold that one needs to ask whether this conflation has come to roost. At heart, unless an intentional asymmetry is established between divine and human agency, then power issues will inevitably distort true spiritual formation.

Before moving on, it is important to emphasise that what is connoted by 'human agency' is complex. There is, for example, the issue of 'author-

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24 Martyn Percy, *Power and the Church*, p. 41.

25 See Charles W. Fuller *'The Trouble with "Truth through Personality": Philip Brooks, Incarnation and the Evangelical Boundaries of Preaching* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010). The argument here is that Brookes, in his evangelical romanticism, significantly tilts the human/divine asymmetry in the wrong direction, underplaying the objective power of the Gospel. This may well be true but it is not the main problem with evangelicalism today. Brook's attention to the holiness, humanity and humility of the preacher is welcome.

26 See the very helpful trilogy by Simon P. Walker, *The Undefended Leader*. In his second volume, *Leadership with Nothing to Lose* (Carlisle: Piquant Editions, 2007) he very helpfully outlines eight different leadership strategies, relating each to issues of power, distinguishing what he calls 'strong force' and 'weak force' (the latter when a leader is most effective by admitting vulnerability).

27 This is a criticism Martyn Percy makes of fundamentalism but is, in my view, more generally applicable to evangelicalism; *Power and the Church*, p. 72. I am grateful to Percy for this paragraph.

ity', that is power legitimised by a community. Such regulated power is essential for any healthy community. Further, the power of human agency is multi-dimensional. Steven Lukes, an influential British sociologist, talks of three dimensions to power; decision-making power, non-decision-making power (the power that frames the agenda), and the ideological power that shapes peoples' very wishes and thoughts.[28] For example, in a church where the pastoral staff sense an urgent need for a church plant, it is not unknown for a powerful lobby to ensure the issue never quite makes it on the agenda and/or a prevailing belief that large numbers signifies Kingdom 'success'. In addition, there is, of course, an extensive and lively debate over the extent to which 'structures', the formal shape of a community or organisation, create bias and wield hidden influence.[29] In an ecclesial context, the way a congregation is governed, its practices and key stakeholders all have the potential to distort the power of the Gospel.[30] There is much that could be explored here.

4. A CONSTRUCTIVE SUBVERSION OF POWER – FINDING THE APPROPRIATE ASYMMETRY

I wish to conclude, however, by offering *four proposals* for finding an appropriate asymmetry of agency, all of which stand at the heart of the Gospel and connect back in some way to Foucault's observations, addressing them and critiquing them. I am persuaded each is indispensable for a true shaping of our congregations into Christ-likeness.

First, is the need for self-less and self-aware servant leaders.

Part of my intention in dialoguing with someone as unlikely as Foucault has been to counter our over-familiarity with this theme. Foucault's insistence on the ubiquity of power, affecting all relationships, renders servant-leadership language more problematic than we often assume.[31] The influence of worldly power is far more subtle than we routinely admit. For example, James Davison Hunter in his book *How to Change the World*, reflecting on Christian leadership in the public sphere, offers a devastat-

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28 S. Lukes, *Power, A Radical View* (London: Macmillan, 1974)

29 For a full exploration of this see Stewart R. Clegg, *Frameworks of Power* (London: Sage Publications, 1989).

30 A culture of non-transparency between a church leadership and a congregation is just one of a multitude of painful examples.

31 Roger Preece, *Understanding and Using Power. Leadership without Corrupting your Soul*, (Grove Booklet, Ridley Hall, Cambridge, 2011) 'There is much to commend servant leadership, but it does not address all the complexities of power at work in individuals and organisations.'

ing critique on how leaders of both the American Christian 'right' and 'left' have, in their quest for political dominance, become complicit with the very understanding of power the Gospel seeks to subvert.[32] At the heart of the Gospel is the promise that, through Christ, power can be transformed. The key issue is not an embracing of weakness over power [33] (weakness is not an end in itself) but whether the power entrusted to us is deployed entirely for the health, growth, and Christ-likeness of those we serve. [34] It is 'the freedom to lead with nothing to lose'.[35] Such self-emptying leadership requires both vigilant self-awareness and robust community accountability.[36]

A second factor of critical importance is the need for leaders to create a culture where* space *for God's Spirit and Word to do their own work is guarded.

What distinguishes Foucault's 'normalisation' from Christian re-socialising is that the former is subtle, often unintentional and ultimately restricting whereas Christian formation is transparent, intentional and freeing; and a determinative factor in all this is the issue of space. Jesus always gave space for reaction and even rejection. He allowed the rich young ruler to leave (Luke 18:23) whilst pressing for hospitality from the equally rich Zacchaeus (Luke 19:5). Those church cultures where there is no safe space to ask basic questions,[37] where there is no room for multi-

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[32] James D. Hunter, *To Change the World*, 'The proclivity towards domination and towards the politicization of everything leads Christianity today to bizarre turns; turns that, in my view, transform much of the Christian public witness into the very opposite of the witness Christianity is supposed to offer', p. 280.

[33] Simon P. Walker, *The Undefended Leader, Leadership with Nothing to Lose*, (Piquant Editions, 2007) pp. 17-21 well shows how weakness (deliberately stepping back and allowing others to take control can be a very effective form of leadership.

[34] For example, the attitude of John the Baptist whose self-identity was simply 'a voice' calling attention to the presence of the Messiah, 'He must become greater, I must become less' (John 3:30).

[35] Simon P. Walker, *Leadership*, p. 148.

[36] It is salutary indeed that two of the most eloquent recent exponents of power issues in the church, John Howard Yoder and Jean Vanier, have been exposed as serious abusers.

[37] L. J. Francis and P. Richter, indicate that in their interviews with church-leavers in England and Wales, 25% commented that their church did not allow disagreement and 29% said questions were not welcome. *Gone for Good? Church Leaving and Returning in the Twenty First Century* (Peterborough, Epworth Press, 2007).

voiced Bible teaching and where difference of opinion is unwelcome are sliding into the realms of Foucauldian normalisation. I am attracted to Simon Walker's key metaphor for leadership as that of 'a host', leadership as creating a safe and hospitable space in which people can relax, hear God's voice, discover their own gifting and, in turn, give themselves to others.[38] (It is an interesting question to ask as to whether digital church, so essential at the moment, helps or hinders a quest for Gospel-shaped expressions of power. My own sense is that though there are some obvious draw-backs to on-line pastoral care and character education; space to choose, room to reflect, alternative voices to listen to are all potential on-line pluses.)

Third, we need to reaffirm the importance of sacramental worship as a God-given safeguarding of an appropriate asymmetry.

Ian Stackhouse has argued that the ignoring of the sacraments by much contemporary evangelicalism, particularly its revivalist streams, has led to a theological 'immediacy' which, in turn, has allowed the church to become prey to manipulation.[39] 'The collapse of the theological notion of mediation means that God is all too near.'[40] In terms of this essay we could say that the value of the sacraments is that they guard against the potential Foucauldian distortion of truth by power. This vigilance occurs in at least two ways. First, precisely because the sacraments are so christologically focussed, pointing us to a drama where power has been totally subverted, the only appropriate response is one of humility and gratitude. Both baptism and communion are material spaces which magnify the primacy of divine grace and promise. As Stackhouse well puts it 'through the instrumentality of mediated grace, true encounter is allowed to take place, without ever violating the notion of the other.'[41] God's transcendence is honoured and human freedom is respected. Second, the sacraments emphasise, through our union with the death and resurrection of Christ, both the equality and unity of all God's people. Worldly power is barred from this table and pool.

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38 Simon P. Walker, *Leadership*, p. 153.

39 Ian Stackhouse, *The Gospel Driven Church. Retrieving Classical Ministries for Contemporary Revivalism*, (Paternoster, 2004), pp. 125-130.

40 Ibid., p. 127.

41 Ibid.

Finally, only a truly biblical vision of shalom can foster in a congregation the likeness of the One who came to bring fullness of life. The flourishing self is not, as with Foucault, about social construction, even less about self-transformation, but is about allowing the grace of God in Christ to renew His image in us. For Christian leaders to foster such a divine plan requires a wholehearted commitment to the empowering of others, seeking their 'faithfulness in the totality of life.'[42] It is when leaders cease to define their task in utilitarian ways, (anxious to solicit help in this programme and that ministry; addicted with the need for success) but rather seek to equip God's people for the whole of life – home, workplace and community – that God's purposes take their rightful place and with it the self-giving power of God's love. Thus, a glorious, as opposed to a vicious, circle is at work: a renunciation of self-seeking power among leaders allows the image of Christ to be more clearly formed in our congregations – and that image is precisely one of selfless love.

[42] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 'Formation – the task of making disciples – is orientated towards the cultivation of faithfulness in the totality of life', p. 227.

Response to Andrew Rollinson's paper

Jenny Stirling

Our congregation recently started Sunday evening Communion Services and we have been given the use of a beautiful sanctuary in the town, (the Town Hall where we usually gather being out of operation). One evening I shared a short Reflection from Luke 4:16-21 where Christ, in his hometown synagogue, reads the prophetic words from the scroll of Isaiah and then sits down and declares 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.' As I was preparing the Reflection, I was struck anew by the significance of this Sacrament we were anticipating. Firstly, because we would be reading this scripture in the sanctuary, Christ was also present with us; one aspect of the Lord's Supper is the reminder of the Lord's presence with us. Secondly, that these same prophetic words of Good News and freedom were equally true for us today and, finally, that the mechanical action of going forward for Communion, in this strange season of pandemic, was reinforcing the posture with which each one of us comes to partake of the elements; before receiving the symbols of Christ's once-and-for-all death on the cross, people would be asked to *clean their hands* and *remove their masks* as they approached the Communion Table one-by-one.

Posture is a word which I have been dwelling on. Physiotherapists are forever reminding us to 'watch our posture' or we'll develop physical aches and pains or even mechanical misalignment. In the same way I believe we must guard our spiritual posture. The imaginary thread that holds us up from our sternal notch is akin to our spiritual alignment, never allowing us to forget for one moment what Proverbs 1 reminds us: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'. As soon as we forget this, our posture slumps and we rely on our own power.

A Pastor friend of mine recently had to counsel a young student who had decided that the culture of the church she had been attending the previous year was one where she felt the power of the leadership in an unhealthy way. For transparency she approached the leadership to inform them of her decision and leaving was made difficult. Having been in student ministry for over 20 years, I've had to renounce my own tendency to think of people as 'my people'. I've had to guard against inappropriate jealousy of someone seeking counsel elsewhere, wrought out of my own insecurities... 'why didn't they come to me?'. Or counter the opposite, when undiscerning young minds have flattered and praised, and me having to be so aware of being a servant, God's ambassador, not a 'successful' ministry leader. These are just a few of the power-fuelled tempta-

tions the Devil's arrows have tried to penetrate my armour with. But how do we guard against these arrows?

One of the maxims my husband and I have adopted is that 'it's better for someone we're pastoring to make their own *bad* decision rather than our *good* decision'. Andrew talks about the need for an asymmetrical balance between human and divine agency and I think this is one practical example of how to guard against subtly diminishing divine agency.

In my early days of ministry I became aware that I was living to please the expectations of a ministry leader above me. When I wouldn't 'slow down' and found myself over-stretched, marital and parenting responsibilities being resented, I was asked the question 'who are you trying to please?'. Sadly I had fallen into the trap of pleasing man and not God – the ministry leader had no insight (I trust) into just how powerful he was – and my freedom in Christ was hindered and entangled and I was no longer fixing my eyes on Jesus, running the race He had marked out for me, but had gone off-track when listening to a different voice. Anyone observing from the outside might have still seen fruit and commended my diligence but I had unknowingly abandoned the First Commandment. And this leads me to another practical 'agency' check; the body of believers. A couple of people loved me enough to gently challenge me and expose my misalignment. How can each one of us have a posture of submission to our brethren, no matter our age and experience?

Ecclesial suffocation is not a pleasant term. Heavenly Father, please keep me from ever stifling your Spirit or quenching life. At the inception of the church I serve, we sought to emphasise that we existed to help people grow in their knowledge of God so that they could flourish in their day to day environments; in their homes, families, work place, communities. We did not want to create tiers of busyness designed to build up our empire. Our aim was never to have a large church as evidence of our own success. No. We simply want to be faithful in being image-bearers of the Creator God, bringing Shalom. Jesus says 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light'. Father, please forgive us for the times when we have inflicted a grating yoke and a heavy burden on those you have asked us to gently shepherd; instead, let us daily learn from you.

We cannot pass on Living Water if we are stagnant. Have we become so entrenched in our routines of Church that we no longer expect to see the Holy Spirit at work? Do we recognise that as we go through the motions of church services, leading home groups and prayer meetings, or individual pastoral meetings, we have as much to learn about our Lord as the people we are seeking to serve? Do we model Sabbath-taking? When did we last actively take a step of faith? Instead of encountering communities marked

by drivenness, competitiveness, judgmentalism and faux joy, we want to lead by example to create environments of Shalom. The leader sets the culture so we must be the first to experience the cleansing of repentance, remove our masks of performance and savour the incredible grace of the body of Christ, broken for us, and the blood of Christ shed for us. And live in the freedom that Christ has set us free for.

Response to Andrew Rollinson's paper

Alasdair Black

I want to thank Andrew for a very helpful, insightful and timely paper. Andrew rightly notes that while for a considerable time the social sciences have studied and been aware of the power dynamics within community and organisational settings while the church has been slow to discuss and recognise such dynamics. This situation is possibly due to the threatening nature of the subject or the sense that this form of analysis is contrary to a biblical world view. Yet while we have largely ignored the work of thinkers such as Foucault, which Andrew ably explains and elucidates (a task that is far from easy), our society has absorbed a great deal of this influence. It was the philosopher Fredrick Nietzsche who said, 'power not truth'. By this he meant that the world is not shaped by truth, but by those who are able to choose what truth is, who wield power. Such a perspective has increasingly influenced our thinking. A cultural Marxism which interprets all social relations in terms of their power dynamics has not only permeated society at large and our media, but our churches. They who hold power are cast as the oppressors who dispossess and deprive others not only of their voice, but their human worth and value. Yet how applicable is this understanding of power in the Christian community?

Andrew's paper invites us to engage with this question. He claims Christian churches are particularly naïve when it comes to issues of power and the way the self and the institution are shaped by such dynamics. Such a notion deserves a qualified acceptance. I would contend that when it comes to an understanding of what can be called 'organismal power dynamics' most leaders are very aware. Andrew references sociologist Steven Luke's 1974 thesis which argues organisational power has three expressions or components:

1. Decision-making, which is concerned with the activities of the decision makers.

2. Non-decision making, which is concerned with the way in which power is used to limit the range of decisions that the decision makers can choose from.

3. Shaping desires, which is concerned with the ways in which individuals can have their attitudes and beliefs manipulated so as to accept a decision which is not in their own true interests, as when people have their ideas manipulated by an advertising campaign.

Although we would not portray preaching in such ideological terms as the last of these, most leaders are aware of these powers in relation to the Christian community. They would recognise that while they do not always have the power to make the decision, they do determine the grounds on which a decision is made. Equally congregations are aware of these power dynamics. Those familiar with the language of Baptist church meetings or those persistent emails will know that often a leader is no longer perceived as acting purely in terms of the truth or the good of the community. Decisions are interpreted according to a predetermined personal or corporate agenda rooted in position and power. Whether such a situation is positive or not is hard to determine but is a reality of modern ministry.

Nevertheless, as Andrew claims there is a degree of naivety and lack of self-awareness in relation to power, especially in terms of what I would call 'inter-personal power dynamics'. Movements like 'Me Too' and 'Black Lives Matter' have very much brought to the fore the personal abuse that can stem from relational power imbalances. We are now much more aware of how a power disparity in an adult relationship can lead to a sense of abuse even when a relationship is consensual and mutual. The power dynamics between doctor and patient, lecturer and student, police officer and witness, or even minister and congregant are pregnant with the possibility of damage to the self. Given this context there is real merit in Andrew's use of Foucault to highlight the subtle and less obvious uses of power which can wound. Yet his paper not only invites us to consider the potential for abuse both physically and spiritually in clerical relationships with congregants but holds out the prospect of the positive use of such asymmetrical power relationships. It asks how power can allow space for the formation of Christ-likeness in Christian discipleship and the 'shaping of the self'. This question would seem of the utmost importance in our present context and invites clerical self-reflection and adaptation. It also invites pressing considerations for ministerial training, formation and models of expression.

However, while these considerations are worthwhile and important, they could play into the anti-power and institutional rhetoric of the post-modernists. This is made more problematic by the lack of definition of power and its nature. To define power purely in terms of the 'ability to enable change' lacks specificity and is so general its usefulness needs to be questioned. The word 'power' I would also contend carries implicit negative connotations for Protestant evangelical ecclesiology. It is hard to think of a church celebrating a leader's power! Although Andrew's paper acknowledges not all power is bad, I'm not sure it rehabilitates the notion. It seems to work very much within the confines of a post-modern critique

and interpretation which is always pulling towards the idea of power disparity as manipulative and self-interested. Yet in such analysis we run the risk of falling into a purely reductionist perspective. For instance, if we understand preaching primarily as a vehicle for a particular power dynamic which shapes behaviour and thought, it becomes merely ideological. There is little room for the ideas of the proclamation of the word of God and the work of the Spirit which are treated as masking a particular hold on power by the preacher. Cynicism and suspicion prevail.

Equally I think there can be confusion over the distinction between 'inter-personal' and 'organisational' power dynamics. The way one interacts with an individual is open to variance, but the way one behaves within an organisation is often constrained by the organisation itself. This was very much illustrated by the sociologist Robert Michels in the 1940s. In considering what I will call 'functionality', the inevitable and necessary functioning of an organisation, he held all voluntary organisations are inevitably oligarchic. Within any organisation we will find a few people who make the key decisions while the rest of the membership are essentially powerless. Michels termed this the 'iron law of oligarchy', by which he meant that no organisation could ever be democratic or allow true participation in decision making by its members. Although I would be reticent to accept such an analysis and think it overly cynical it points to what I would call 'the nature of a thing'. One could easily argue – despite our varying theologies of leadership and governance – there is a propensity to oligarchic structures and expressions in our churches. The reason for this is not necessarily power crazed leaders imposing their wills, in fact many leaders would try and resist such a model, but it is the inevitable consequence of the nature of the organisation. One could even argue an ecclesiastical body would not function if it was not so. What I often see is leaders and congregations, perhaps in the light of the post-modern conceptions of power, working against the organisation. Rather like health and safety legislation we have got so concerned with what might happen we curtail the exercising of effective leadership and organisational functionality brings about frustration, disillusionment, conflict and inevitable decline. Is it not time that we recognise that not all voices or roles within a church are equal and work within the power dynamics which are implicit within the givenness of the organisation? Instead we have ministry leaders who feel guilty and tainted by power and congregations who want to ensure it will stay that way.

This then leads to a further question as to whether there is ever a legitimate expression of power within the church. Andrew's paper touches on this in terms of 'servant leadership' and the counter-cultural expression of the lamb upon the throne in Revelation. While attracted to the

imagery and force of these concepts of power in many situations I've seen them used to facilitate the abdication of leadership allowing churches to lurch into chaos and confusion. Sometimes servant leadership is standing up and asserting yourself, usually at considerable cost and criticism, in the face of something which would harm or destroy the church. It is not allowing certain caustic and malevolent agendas to prevail and does involve the overt ascertain of power and position. Yet can this ever be legitimate? Our dominant culture would probably say no.

Part of the problem here I think is that our critique of clerical power is too one sided. It is cast as the power of the leader over the congregant who is viewed relatively passively. Within such a perspective it is easy to fall into the implicit assumption which sees things in terms of perpetrator and victim. Yet we need a much more nuanced view of the dynamics of power. At the beginning of the twentieth century the sociologist Max Weber was acutely aware of the deficiencies of using the concept of power in relation to bureaucracies and organisations. He argued that if rather than thinking in terms of power we spoke of coercion and authority our analysis would be much more effective. According to Weber, organisational coercion is 'punishment centred' and fear driven and is based upon the imposition of rules and the ensuring of conformity as an end in itself. It is concerned with the need to extract obedience from a group and the imposition either of a corporate or individual will on the other. This end is achieved through both psychological and sociological means. By way of contrast, authority is never imposed, but always granted and is the basis of what he calls 'legitimate rule'. Authority is based on the consent of the other and the willingness to accept direction and render obedience.

This authority for Weber was invariably grounded in one of three 'ideal types of legitimation': Charismatic where you granted 'consent 'because of the person; Traditional which consented because of the office; and Rational-legal where a person's role over another was accepted on pragmatic grounds and the nature of expertise. The significance of Weber's analysis is that he sees power not as something that is done to you, or as a dialectic of those with power and those without power, but as a mutual act. Such a concept of requisite authority is I think entirely necessary to see true Christian discipleship and the 'shaping of the self'. Without this I don't think we take sufficient congruence of the biblical ideas of 'submission' to leaders and the role this plays in Christian formation. Even such language makes the post-modernist uncomfortable. Equally it is important to ensure this concept of authority does not become imposed or coerced, but always remains granted and consensual. It also requires the presence of trust on the part of the congregation and altruism on the part of the leader. I believe it is in part the loss of these

things, due to abuse and misappropriation, which has made the concept of power so problematic. We feel we must protect ourselves and others from power rather than understand the mutual dynamics which the exercising of authority invites. Therefore, my fear is that if we only focus on those who are perceived as wielding power we will miss an important element to the 'shaping of the self' and always inadvertently see the leader set over and against the congregant.

Nevertheless, Andrew's paper is significant and opens up a series of important horizons. It requires us to ask difficult questions about the nature of power in our ecclesiastical settings and how it shapes our life together. It also shows the way in which port-modern critiques can feed into our understanding of Christian discipleship and ministry and is very much deserving of further consideration.

Worship From Calvin to Westminster: Continuity or Discontinuity? (Part 2)

Dr. Terry L. Johnson

CONTENT

The conviction that worship must be 'according to Scripture' had a direct impact on the elements of worship, their content, and the order in which they were presented.

Elements

The Westminster Puritans, like Calvin before them, identify five basic elements of public worship:

Prayer

Calvin's *Form* included a 'call,' confession of sin, five-fold intercessions, (civil authorities, church and its ministers, sick or suffering, sanctification of the saints), Lord's Prayer illumination, benediction, and a post-communion thanksgiving.

The *Directory* provides an invocation; a comprehensive 'Great Prayer' that includes confession of sin and assurance of pardon, intercessions and illumination; a post-sermon thanksgiving, with the Lord's Prayer; and concluding benediction. When one remembers that the invocation/call, intercessions, illumination and benediction were restored to the ordinary Lord's Day public services of the church by the Reformers, the continuity is significant. One can even discern the five-fold categories of intercession reordered: sanctification of the saints, Christian mission ('propagation of the gospel'), civil authorities ('all in authority […] especially for the King's Majesty'), the church and its ministry ('for the particular city or congregation in the ministry of the word, sacraments, and *discipline*').[1] The influence of Calvin's *Form* is unmistakable.

Singing

The Reformation restored congregational singing, as is well-known. Reformed Protestants primarily sang psalms. The *Directory* follows Calvin's *Form* (1542) in designating two psalms to be sung. The Westminster Puritans' commitment to psalm-singing may be measured by its commit-

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[1] See Johnson, *Worshipping With Calvin*, pp. 111-15, with citations.

ment to producing a metrical psalter, the so-called 'Rous' psalter, which eventually resulted in the *Scottish Psalter* of 1650.[2]

Scripture Reading

The *Directory* provides extensive guidance as it recommends *lectio continua readings* ('It is requisite that all the canonical books be read in order') of both the Old and New Testaments, a chapter from each in each service ('where the reading in either Testament endeth on one Lord's day, it is to begin the next').[3] In this respect, the *Directory* follows the larger Reformed tradition, including Bucer's *Strasbourg Liturgy* (1539), the Scots first *Book of Discipline* (1560), and the Puritans' *Middleburg Liturgy* (1586). Also Baxter's *Savoy* or *Reformed Liturgy* (1661) and Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer* (1549, 1552) made up for the deficiencies of the Lord's Day *lectio selecta* through daily *lectio continua* readings that covered most of the Old Testament each year and the New Testament three times.[4]

Surprisingly, Calvin's *Form* gives no directions for either the reading or the sermon. However, his practice was *lectio continua* preaching, and a second reading that was determined not by a schedule but the content of the sermon, typically a parallel passage from the testament not being preached. At this point the Westminster Puritans are more representative of the Reformed tradition than Calvin.

Preaching

The *Directory's* section on preaching represents a high point in the Reformation's pulpit revolution, excelling anything written by Calvin. B. B. Warfield calls it 'a complete homiletical treatise.'[5] Sinclair Ferguson regards it as 'perhaps the finest brief description of expository preaching to be found in the English language.'[6] A high view of preaching, its place at the centre of worship, is maintained by both the Westminster Puritans and Calvin. Of the former, Warfield highlights 'the dominant place it gives in the public worship of the Church to the offices of reading and preaching the Word.'[7]

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2 See Millar Patrick, *Four Centuries of Scottish Psalmody* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. 79-104.

3 *Directory*, p. 375.

4 See Johnson, *Worshipping With Calvin*, pp. 89-91.

5 Warfield, *Westminster Assembly*, p. 52.

6 Sinclair B. Ferguson, 'Westminster Assembly Documents', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, ed. by Nigel M. de. S. Cameron (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993), p. 864.

7 Ibid., p. 51. Mitchell cites with approval the statement of J. B. Marsden in his work *The History of the Later Puritans: From the Opening of the Civil War in*

Sacraments

Both the *Directory* and the *Form* recognize two dominical sacraments. Both provide extensive directions for the Lord's Supper on what is to be said, read, and prayed. Both urge frequent observance. Both urge due preparation. Both include the fencing of the table, exhortation, words of institution, distribution of the elements (separately), and a concluding thanksgiving.

The *Directory* does not include the Creed or the Ten Commandments, as does Calvin's *Form*, though both were bound together with the confessional documents and the *Directory*, implying, perhaps, their readiness for use.[8] Yet the absence of fixed forms beyond the Lord's Prayer does not imply their prohibition. Use of the Creed or Ten Commandments was not forbidden by the *Directory*.

Given the common theology of Westminster and Geneva, we are not surprised to find substantial agreement in the elements of worship. We note as well their shared omissions. The various liturgical responses of the congregation in the medieval mass (usually spoken by priests or monks) have been removed from both the *Form* and *Directory*. The *sanctus* ('Holy, holy, holy Lord […]'), *Kyrie eleison* ('Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy), *Gloria* ('Glory to God in the highest...'), *Sursum corda* ('Lift up your hearts'), and other congregational responses (e.g. to the greeting, to Scripture readings), have been eliminated.[9] In the Reformed service the congregation responds by singing. These deletions were made by Farel in his order, *La Maniere et fasson* in 1524, and by Bucer in the *Strausbourg Psalter* of 1526, and were never restored by Reformed Protestants. At their meetings with Charles II in 1661, the Westminster Puritans were still complaining of 'unmeet repetitions or responsals.'[10]

We note again the absence of processionals, incense, genuflecting, bowing to the east, and clerical garb. Vestments, the sign of the cross at

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1642, to the Ejection of the Non-Conforming Clergy in 1662, 2nd edn (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1854), p. 88: 'So much good sense and deep piety, the results of great and diversified experience, and of a knowledge so profound, have probably never been gathered into so small a space on the subject of ministerial teaching.' Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly*, p. 240.

8 The Creed did appear in early versions of the *Directory*, yet without explanation was not included in the final edition.

9 W. D. Maxwell comments in the Reformer's decision to eliminate the responses: 'The responses of course had long ago disappeared from the people's usage, but now they were excised from the text' (in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, ed. by J. G. Davies (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), p. 458).

10 Fawcett, *Liturgy of Comprehension*, p. 2.

baptism, and kneeling at communion have all been eliminated. The five basic elements are unencumbered by extraneous actions or movements.

Order

It is in connection with the order of service that we see the greatest contrast between Calvin and the Westminster Puritans. The movement of Calvin's service is clear, and will prove influential. It moves from praise (metrical Psalms and call),[11] to the confession of sin (confession, absolution, law of God, commitment), to the means of grace (Scripture reading, sermon, prayer of intercession, sacraments), to thanksgiving (psalm, benediction). This is essentially the flow of the gospel, driven by the logic of the gospel, and is evident in virtually all the historic liturgies. It should be noted that Calvin favoured a strong statement of absolution. In this he followed the pattern of Bucer's *Strasbourg Psalter* (1539), as well as John Oecolampadius' *Form & Manner* (1525), used in Basel.[12] The absolution was considered a novelty in Geneva and was resisted by the authorities. Calvin 'yielded to their scruples,' though the absolution was retained in the Strasbourg edition of the *Form of Prayers* (1545).[13] The Reformed tradition has tended not to follow the Genevan practice, typically replacing a formal absolution with words of assurance, expressed either in the prayer itself or immediately following.[14]

The *Directory* appears to treat the order of service with a light touch. There are references to sequence. Worship is to 'begin with prayer.'[15] The first psalm is parenthetically inserted before the 'Great Prayer;' likewise the 'Great Prayer' is placed 'after the reading.'[16] The second prayer is 'after the sermon,'[17] along with the Lord's Prayer, and perhaps the Creed.[18] The

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11 At least by 1552 the Genevan service began with a psalm, as Elsie McKee has demonstrated (Calvin, *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, pp. 99, 100.) It is likely that John Knox's 'The Form of Prayers' (1556) follows the same pattern. So also the Puritan's Genevan-dependent 'Waldegrave' or 'Middleburg Liturgy.' Subsequent practice in Presbyterian churches which adopted the *Directory* also would suggest an opening metrical psalm.

12 Thompson, *Liturgies*, pp. 171, 213.

13 Ibid, pp. 191, 198.

14 e.g. Knox's *Form of Prayers* (1556), Ibid., p. 297; Puritans' *Middleburg Liturgy* (1586), Ibid. p. 323; *Book of Common Prayer* (1552), Ibid., pp. 278, 279.

15 *Directory*, p. 375.

16 Ibid, p. 376.

17 Ibid, p. 381.

18 Maxwell maintains that the Creed was 'sometimes' said at this point 'following old Scottish use' (*Worship in the Church of Scotland*, p. 103).

second psalm is after the sermon and final prayer and prior to the benediction.

The directions for 'The Singing of Psalms,' are placed at the end of the *Directory* as if an afterthought, following directions for funerals, weddings, and visitation of the sick. The *Directory's* order is as follows:

1. Prayer
2. Reading of the Old and New Testament
3. Psalm sung
4. Prayer
5. Sermon
6. Prayer
7. Lord's Prayer
8. Psalm sung
9. Benediction

Charles G. M'Crie points out that the first three elements look like the 'Reader's Service' from the Scots *Book of Common Order* (1560), only now being led by a minister.[19] The lack of any language of sequence in connection with the Scripture reading and sermon, plus the placement of the directions for singing psalms, indicate that either order was assumed, order was regarded as of secondary importance, or structure was regarded as a matter of liberty.

Given that the subcommittee that prepared the *Directory* was made up of representatives of the Presbyterian majority, the Scottish commissioners, and the independent Thomas Goodwin, in the end the *Directory* was a compromise document. It reflects the resistance of Goodwin and the Independents to prescribed forms, and the Scots affinity for aspects of the structure of Knox's *Form* found in *The Book of Common Order*.

Nevertheless, a number of authorities see the outlines of the Genevan order in the *Directory*. James Hasting Nichols (1915-1991), former Professor of History at Princeton Theological Seminary and author of *Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition* (1968), maintains that the *Directory* 'lays out materials for a Lord's Day service in a structure recognizably of the Strasburg-Geneva pattern.'[20] Yet, he observes, 'the structure could be freely reordered and other material presented, as in fact the Independents intended to do.'[21] Similarly, Howard G. Hageman (1921-1992), in his

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19 Charles Greig M'Crie, *The Public Worship of Presbyterian Scotland* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1892), pp. 438, 439.

20 J. H. Nichols, *Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), p. 100.

21 Ibid.

Pulpit and Table, based on his Stone Lectures at Princeton Seminary in 1960, commends the *Directory's* directions as 'generally excellent' as well as 'scrupulously faithful to the Calvinistic structure of worship.'[22] For John Leith (1919-2002), Professor of Theology at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 'the *Directory* suggests an order of worship that is not very different from that of Geneva and of the Scottish *Book of Common Order*.'[23] Even Horton Davies, in the end, finds for the Lord's Day services 'an exact structural similarity to the Genevan *Form* and *Prayers*.'[24]

Biblical language

Little more remains to be said about content given all of the preceding. We are left merely to underscore the shared concerns from Strasburg to Geneva and Westminster that the Bible supply the content of Christian worship. Bucer repeatedly underscored this commitment in *Grund and Ursach* (1524), the first systematic defence of Protestantism's reforms of medieval worship. The call to worship was to be biblical. The sung praises were to be biblical in content. The prayers were to be biblical in content. The readings were to be biblical in content, not apocryphal. The sermons were to be biblical in content. The sacraments were to be biblically administered.

A central complaint of the English Puritans from Elizabeth I to Charles I was that the Anglican liturgy was insufficiently scriptural. Consequently, the *Directory* is saturated with Bible. At the restoration of Charles II, the commitment to scriptural content continued as they urged a revision of the prayer book that would be 'as much as may be in Scripture words.' Where the old language was to be retained, they urged the 'addition or insertion of some other form of scripture phrase.'[25] Even the Collects were deemed to be in need of biblical supplementation. Baxter, in his 'Reformed' or 'Savoy Liturgy,' sought to construct his service almost entirely out of scriptural phrase, a project he had already defended in his *Five Disputations of Church Government and Worship* (1659). Baxter, says Thompson, 'was remarkably successful at the difficult task of building divers phrases of Scripture into sustained orders of worship.'[26] At the final attempt at comprehension in 1689, the Collects were actually revised for the sake of the Dissenters, fortified with scriptural expression. Calvin and

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22 H. G. Hageman, *Pulpit and Table: Some Chapters in the History of Worship in the Reformed Churches* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1962), p. 42.

23 Leith, *Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*, p. 190.

24 Davies, *Worship of the English Puritans*, p. 130.

25 Fawcett, *Liturgy of Comprehension*, p. 2.

26 Thompson, *Liturgies*, p. 383.

the Westminster Puritans agree: the language of the Bible is to supply the language of worship. While structure is not a strength of the *Directory*, its handling of the elements, their contents, its specific directions with respect to the tone of the service and the handling of each element, marks positive development, not regression.

EVALUATION

Our view then is that the *Directory* not only descends from, but improves its Genevan predecessor. We may point to the following twelve points under six headings;

1. Regarding preparation for worship

i) The *Directory* provides several paragraphs addressing the congregation's preparation, attitude, and behaviour in worship; the *Form* has no such directions.

2. Regarding prayers

ii) The *Directory* provides a model invocation. Calvin's *Form* has no invocation beyond Psalm 124:8. It provides no model for the opening prayer of praise. Hughes Old classifies the *Directory's* invocation as among the 'most mature devotional insights' that Protestant theology produced.[27]

iii) As noted, the *Directory* includes substantial prayer both before and after the sermon; the *Form* envisions only the prayer of illumination prior to the sermon. Old finds that the 'sense for the full range of prayer found *implicitly* in the Strasburg and Genevan psalters is elaborated *explicitly* in the *Westminster Directory for Worship*.'[28]

iv) The *Directory* commends only one fixed form, the Lord's Prayer, yet it does not forbid the moderate use of creeds and written prayers, leaving the decision to use or not use to individual pastors and churches.

3. Regarding Scripture reading

v) The *Directory* provides substantial and specific directions for Scripture reading including the reading of canonical books only, one chapter of each Testament in each service, *lectio continua* and the text being read by the ministers; the *Form* has no directions at all.

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[27] Hughes O. Old, *Themes and Variations for Christian Doxology: Some Thoughts on the Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), p. 37.

[28] Old, *Worship*, p. 173 (my emphasis).

4. Regarding preaching

vi) The Directory includes classic directions for preaching of which Calvin's Form has no parallel. Indeed, B. B. Warfield calls the *Directory's* instructions 'a complete homiletical treatise.'[29]

5. Regarding the sacraments

vii) Old points out that the Westminster Puritans 'developed a number (of Eucharistic) insights of the 16th century Reformers in a most positive manner.'[30] The *Directory* includes the requirement that there be a communion preparatory service that 'all may come better prepared to that heavenly feast.'[31] Indeed, Mitchell argues that 'the materials of the preliminary exhortation supply the outlines of one of the most complete and impressive addresses to be found in any of the Reformed Agenda.'[32]

viii) Old cites the *Directory's* superior communion epiclesis, in which the minister calls upon the Holy Spirit,

> to sanctify these elements both of bread and wine, and to bless his own ordinance, that we may receive by faith the body and blood of Jesus Christ consecrated for us, and so feed upon him, that he may be one with us, and we one with him.[33]

The continental Reformers invoked the Holy Spirit, Old notes, 'but in nothing like the fullness we find here.'[34]

ix) The *Directory* requires a collection for the poor following the post-communion thanksgiving. This too, says Old, 'had been an important aspect of the eucharistic piety of Continental Reformed churches,' but rarely specified in liturgical documents as it was in the *Directory*.[35] Mitchell's view is that the *Directory's* communion service as a whole is 'more complete in all that such a service should embrace than any similar office either in the reformed or the ancient church.'[36]

x) The *Directory* includes a more fully developed covenantal theology, as evidenced in the baptismal administration with multiple references to the 'covenant' or 'covenant of grace,' and baptism's 'sealing' function. (see also *Shorter Catechism* #'s 92 and 94; *Larger Catechism* #'s 162, 165, 167, 174, 176; *Westminster Confession of Faith* XXVII.1; XXVIII.1)

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29 Warfield, *Westminster Assembly*, p. 52.
30 Old, *Worship*, p. 137.
31 *Directory*, p. 384.
32 Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly*, p. 234.
33 *Directory*, p. 385.
34 Old, *Worship*, p. 138.
35 Ibid.
36 Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly*, p. 235.

xi) The *Directory* includes a baptismal epiclesis, the minister offering a prayer 'for sanctifying the water for this spiritual use.'[37] D. B. Forrester, assessing the *Directory's* handling of the sacraments, notes that 'the sections on baptism and the Lord's Supper have attracted favourable comment from liturgists of many traditions.'[38]

6. Regarding other helps for ministers

xii) The *Directory* includes far more substantial guidance for both the 'Solemnization of Marriage' and for the 'Visitation of the Sick.'

Old regards the *Directory* section on preaching as a 'considerable departure from the approach of the Continental Reformers.'[39] He has in mind particularly their commitment to *lectio continua* preaching. Yet, should it be regarded as such? On the one hand, *lectio continua* reading is more clearly articulated in the *Directory* than in any continental documents. On the other hand, the commitment to simple, plain-style, textual preaching is clear. The *Directory* insists that truths taught be 'contained in, or grounded in that text, that the believers may discern *how God teacheth it from thence*.'[40] The *Directory* is silent on *lectio continua* preaching per se. A number of Westminster Puritans were famous for the book-length expositions: William Bradshaw on 2 Thessalonians; Thomas Manton on James and Jude; Joseph Caryl on Job; Thomas Adams on 2 Peter; and John Cotton (who was invited to participate in the Assembly) on 1 John.

Yet consideration should be given to the way in which the *lectio continua* developed among the Reformed in England, Scotland, and New England. Increasingly the objection to 'dumb reading' led to what we might call an 'expository reading,' to which, typically, a half-hour of *lectio continua* reading with explanation was devoted prior to the sermon. This practice was first recommended by Martin Bucer in *Grund und Ursach* (1524). The *Directory* attempts to regulate the expository reading by requiring that 'when the minister who readeth shall judge it necessary to expound any part of what is read, let it not be done until the whole chapter or psalm be ended.' The *Directory* also takes care to guard the sermon proper so that the expository reading, virtually a sermon in its own right, not be too long ('regard is always to be had unto the time') so as to interfere with the reception of the sermon.[41]

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37 *Directory*, p. 383.

38 Forrester, 'Worship', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p. 846.

39 Old, *Worship*, p. 80.

40 *Directory*, p. 379 (my emphasis).

41 *Directory*, p. 376.

The expository reading, already a practice at the time of the Assembly, developed further among English Dissenters, the Scottish Presbyterians, and the New England Puritans, and persisted in some circles into the late 19th century.[42] The *lectio continua* expository reading became a common feature among the Reformed. This is *development*, not *departure*. The importance of systematic Bible instruction was recognized at Westminster as well as Geneva.

INFLUENCE

The *Directory* was adopted by the Scots in 1645, but it never had any practical governing authority in England. Warfield's view is that while the *Directory* was neglected in England, in Scotland 'it gradually made its way against ancient custom and ultimately very much molded the usages of the churches.' [43] Following the Act of Uniformity in 1662 and the forming of non-conforming denominations, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Baptist, dissenting worship was essentially uniform for 250 years. Writing in 1962, Hageman could say, 'To this day the *Directory* remains a standard of worship not only for the Church of Scotland but for most English-speaking Presbyterian churches as well.'[44] To this we can add the English-speaking Baptist, Congregationalist, and even the Methodist and free churches into the 20th century, including their mission churches throughout the world.[45]

William D. Maxwell (1901-1971), in his Baird Lectures of 1953, published as *A History of Worship in the Church of Scotland*, was overly critical of the impact of the *Directory* and its Puritan originators. He speaks of the result being bare worship becoming 'barer still.' 'Tedious' lectures replaced Scripture reading; 'long, detailed, exhaustive, and exhausting extemporary prayers' became the norm.[46] Metrical psalmody was 'stulti-

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42 See Johnson, *Worshipping with Calvin*, pp. 91-94.

43 Warfield, *Westminster Assembly*, p. 51.

44 Hageman, *Pulpit and Table*, p. 42; Before him William Beveridge could say in 1904, 'at the present day worship in Presbyterian Churches is conducted to a very large extent on the admirable lines of the Westminster Assembly's *Directory*.' William Beveridge, *A Short History of the Westminster Assembly* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1904), pp. 91, 92.

45 Nichols cites with approval a late 19th century historian who recognized that the order of worship in these denominations was 'recognizably related to the *Directory*' (*Corporate Worship*, p. 107).

46 William D. Maxwell, *A History of Worship in the Church of Scotland* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 106, 107.

fied' for two hundred years by the 'revolting practice of "lining."'[47] Worship 'sank to a very low' as 'worship became tedious and dismal in the extreme, and continued so for a century or more.'[48] One wonders how anything so universally bad became so universally practiced, accepted, aggressively defended, and beloved.

What Maxwell described was bare-bones dissenting worship *poorly done*. Any form of worship poorly done is likely to be tedious, dismal, and exhausting. He failed to recognize that the *Directory's* order, devoid of fixed forms, was not imposed by outside authority but demanded by the actual participants. The standard service with its reverential tone, the progression from praise to prayer to Scripture reading to sermon, the richness of the prayers, the joy of the psalmody, the delight in the Scripture readings, the inspiration of the sermons, drew crowds and was cherished. By the middle of the 18th century the 'bare-bones' worship of low-church Protestantism in the English-speaking world had become the predominant form of worship.

Warfield, for his part, leaves us with a happier assessment. He commends the *Directory* 'for the emphasis it places upon what is specifically commanded in the Scriptures,' for its 'lofty and spiritual' tone, for its 'sober and restrained' conception of acceptable worship that is 'at the same time profound and rich.'[49] 'The paradigms of prayers which it offers,' he says, 'are notably full and yet free from over-elaboration, compressed and yet enriched by many reminiscences of the best models which had preceded them.'[50] The word of God, read and preached, is given the prominence it deserves 'as a means, perhaps we should say *the* means, of grace.'[51] He finds the paragraph on preaching to be 'remarkable at once for its sober practical sense and its profound spiritual wisdom,' and finds it 'suffused with a tone of sincere piety, and of zeal at once for the truth and for the souls which are to be bought with the truth.'[52] He finds the *Directory* 'notable for its freedom from petty prescriptions and "superfluities."'[53] In

47 Ibid., p. 110. He later calls lining 'insufferable' (p. 129).

48 Ibid., p. 111.

49 Warfield, *Westminster Assembly*, pp. 51, 52. William M. Hetherington (1805-1865) commends the *Directory* as 'both full of sound and well-expressed instruction, and eminently suggestive.' (*History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*, 3rd edition (1856; Edmonton, Canada: Still Waters Revival Books, 1991), p. 344).

50 Ibid., p. 52.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid. Mitchell comments similarly: 'I know of no formulary of the same sort which is so free from minute and harassing regulations as to postures, ges-

summary, the *Directory* 'can scarcely fail to commend itself as an admirable set of agenda, in spirit and matter alike well fitted to direct the public services of a great church.'[54] High praise, indeed, from one of the greatest theologians and historians of the Reformed tradition.

tures, dresses, church pomp, ceremonies, symbolism, and other "superfluities," as Hales terms them, which 'under pretext of order and decency' had crept into the church and more and more had restricted the liberty and burdened the consciences of its ministers.' (*The Westminster Assembly*, p. 231).

[54] Ibid., p. 51.

English Calvinistic Baptists and vocation in the long eighteenth century, with particular reference to Anne Dutton's calling as an author[1]

Michael A. G. Haykin

Towards the close of his preaching ministry, the celebrated Victorian Baptist preacher C. H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) happened to reflect on his calling as a herald of the gospel in a sermon that he preached in 1889. He admitted to his congregation:

> When some of you do not behave yourselves, and matters in our church get a little out of order, I say to myself, "I wish I could give this up, and turn to an employment less responsible, and less wearing to the heart"; but then I think of Jonah, and what happened to him when he ran away to Tarshish; and I remember that whales are scarcer now than they were then, and I do not feel inclined to run that risk. I stick to my business, and keep to the message of my God; for one might not be brought to land quite so safely as the runaway prophet was. Indeed, I could not cease to preach the glad tidings unless I ceased to breathe. …I had sooner be a preacher of the gospel than a possessor of the Indies. Remember how William Carey, speaking of one of his sons, says, "Poor Felix is shrivelled from a missionary to an ambassador." He was a missionary once, and he was employed by the government as an ambassador; his father thought it no promotion, but said, "Felix has shrivelled into an ambassador." It would be a descent indeed from bearing the burden of the Lord, if one were to be transformed into a member of Parliament, or a prime minister, or a king.[2]

Informing this rather humorous reference to Jonah is Spurgeon's determination to be faithful to his calling as a gospel minister. The reference has added gravitas in view of the fact that Spurgeon had recently gone through what has come to be called the 'Downgrade controversy,' in

[1] In the preparation of this essay, I am deeply thankful for help given by Josiah Classen, one of my doctoral students, Dr. Blair Waddell of Providence Baptist Church, Huntsville, Alabama, Dr. Adam G. Winters, the Archivist of the James P. Boyce Centennial Library at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, and Dr. Taffey Hall, the Director of the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville, Tennessee.

[2] C. H. Spurgeon, *The Burden of the Word of the Lord* in his *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1975), XXXV, 614.

which the London Baptist found himself contending against fellow Baptists for some of the essentials of classical Christian orthodoxy. But the other reference, namely, the remark of the iconic missionary William Carey (1761–1834) about his son's calling, is of a different order. Felix Carey (1786–1822), the eldest son of William Carey, had gone to Burma from Bengal as a missionary in 1808, but seven years later returned to Calcutta as the ambassador of the Burmese government.[3] His father, deeply grieved by his son's decision to abandon his missionary calling, bluntly told his close friend John Ryland, Jr. (1753–1825) back in England that his son had 'shrivelled from a missionary into an ambassador.'[4] Carey probably meant no disparagement of so-called 'secular' callings per se—after all, he had served co-vocationally as the manager of an indigo factory in Mudnabati during the 1790s. But his remark, and Spurgeon's later use of it, does indicate an approach to vocation that seems out of sync with the Reformation perspective of the fundamental equality of all legitimate callings. It is somewhat reminiscent of the medieval perspective that accorded a greater spirituality to what were viewed as 'sacred' vocations.[5]

In fact, possible proof that service for God as a pastor or deacon was deemed a more spiritual vocation than others in the long eighteenth-century English Baptist community can be found in a stray comment by John Gill (1697–1771), the doyen of London Baptists. Commenting on Proverbs 22:29, Gill observed:

> Every good man has a work or business to do in a religious way; some in a higher sphere, as officers of churches, ministers and deacons; the work of the one lies in reading, study, meditation, and prayer, in the ministration of the word and ordinances, and other duties of their office; and the business of the others in taking care of the poor, and the secular affairs of the churches; others in a lower way, and common to all Christians, which lies in the exercise of grace, and performance of all good works, relative to themselves, their families, and the church of God.[6]

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3 For studies of Felix Carey, see D. G. E. Hall, 'Felix Carey', *The Journal of Religion*, 12, no. 4 (October, 1932), 473–92; M. Siddiq Khan, 'Felix Carey: A Prisoner of Hope', *Libri*, 16, no. 4 (1966), 237–68; Sunil Kumar Chatterjee, *Felix Carey (A Tiger Tamed)* (Hooghly, West Bengal: Sunil Kumar Chatterjee, 1991).

4 Chatterjee, 'Felix Carey', 114. For the remarkable problems surrounding Felix being the Burmese ambassador, see Hall, 'Felix Carey', 484–91.

5 See the classic study by Karl Holl, 'The History of the Word Vocation (*Beruf*)', trans. Heber F. Peacock, *The Review and Expositor*, 55, no. 2 (April 1958), 126–54.

6 John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament* (London, 1763–1765), IV, 450, commenting on Proverbs 22:29. This four-volume work, as well as Gill's five-

Gill here distinguished between the 'higher sphere' of the calling of pastors and deacons and the 'lower way' of other Christians, who had secular callings. While Gill did not explicitly call the former a more spiritual calling, his use of 'higher' and 'lower' leaves the reader with the impression that being a pastor or deacon was somehow a 'better' calling than others.

'SETTING AN EXAMPLE OF DILIGENCE AND FIDELITY': CO-VOCATIONAL PASTORS

Gill was also convinced that pastors should be 'exempt from all worldly business and employment,' since the ministry is 'sufficient to engross all a man's time and thoughts.'[7] Gill's understanding of what is entailed in pastoral ministry obviously shaped this judgment. As he stated in an ordination sermon that he preached in 1734: 'Time is precious, and ought to be redeemed, and diligently improved, by all sorts of men; but by none more than the ministers of the Gospel, who should spend it in frequent prayer, constant meditation, and in daily reading the Scriptures, and the writings of good men.'[8] Yet, most Baptist pastors in this era were co-vocational by necessity. As Faith and Brian Bowers have noted, 'Few eighteenth-century ministers received an adequate income from church alone.'[9] For instance, the leading Baptist pastor in Southwark, London, at the beginning of the long eighteenth century was James Jones. He had trained as a tailor, but in Baptist tradition he has been known as the 'coffee-man in Southwark.' He was so named due to his ownership of a coffeehouse in the parish of St. Olave, Southwark, from which he sought to lead his congregation and to plant others in the 1670s and 1680s.[10] Further north, in Liverpool,

volume New Testament commentary (see following note), will be cited henceforth by the relevant volume and page number, as well as the specific biblical text upon which Gill is commenting.

7 John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament, Both Doctrinal and Practical* (London: George Keith, 1774–1776), III, 78, commenting on Acts 6:4. As Gill maintained in his comments on 1 Timothy 5:18: 'such who labour in the preaching of the Gospel, ought to have a sufficient and competent maintenance' (*Exposition of the New Testament*, IV, 556).

8 John Gill and Samuel Wilson, *The Mutual Duty of Pastor and People, Represented in Two Discourses Preached at the Ordination of the Reverend George Braithwaite*, M. A. (London: Aaron Ward, 1734), p. 9.

9 Faith and Brian Bowers, 'After the Benediction: Eighteenth-century Baptist Laity', in Stephen L. Copson and Peter J. Morden, ed., *Challenge and Change: English Baptist life in the Eighteenth Century* (Didcot, Oxfordshire: The Baptist Historical Society, 2017), p. 234.

10 Anonymous, 'James Jones' Coffee House', *The Baptist Quarterly*, 6 (1932–1933), 324–26.

the oldest Calvinistic Baptist congregation had been formed in the first decade of the eighteenth century, but struggled financially for a good number of decades. In 1714 the church called Peter Davenport, a tobacconist, as its pastor. He was succeeded by John Sedgefield, who soon left to take up farming because the congregation could not support him financially. By 1730 the congregation was meeting on Byrom Street and John Turner (d.1741), a pharmacist (then called an apothecary), was its pastor. Occasionally people would turn up on Sunday mornings seeking medical aid, and Turner would have to ask the congregation to sing and pray while he went to help his patients and then return to lead worship! When Turner died in 1741, the financially-feeble congregation of twenty or so members called the theological eccentric John Johnson (1706–1791), and he too had to supplement his meagre salary by engaging in business.[11]

When John Hirst (1736–1815), the superintendent of a woollen factory in the north of England, began to preach in the late 1760s, his work entailed him to be 'at his post from Monday morning to Saturday night.' What little time he had for study he snatched from sleep so that he could prepare to preach throughout the Lord's Day. His biographer James Hargreaves noted that although Hirst loved to preach, he was also conscious of his need to provide for his five children—his first wife had died by this point—and thus he was 'diligent in business,… setting an example of diligence and fidelity to servants.'[12] Hirst was called to pastor the Baptist church in Bacup, Lancashire, in late 1772, but the church's fifty-five members could not pay him an adequate salary. He thus engaged in a business venture, but by 1775 he had lost all of his investment. Some friends initially paid his debts, rescuing him thereby from debtor's prison, and over the next few years his 'diligence, frugality, and the blessing of God' enabled him to repay what he owed. He even worked at a loom in a factory till he got to the point that 'ministry was his sole employment.'[13]

Or consider Benjamin Francis (1734–1799), who graduated from Bristol Baptist Academy in 1756 and preached for a while in Chipping Sodbury, Gloucestershire. Eventually, in 1757, he moved to Horsley, where

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11 Robert Halley, *Lancashire: Its Puritanism and Nonconformity* (Manchester: Tobbs and Brook/London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1869), II, 326–27; Robert Dawbarn, 'The "Johnsonian Baptists"', *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, 3, no.1 (May 1912), 54–55.

12 James Hargreaves, *The Life and Memoir of the Late Rev. John Hirst, Forty Two Years Pastor of the Baptist Church Bacup* (Rochdale: Joseph Littlewood, 1816), pp. 45, 88–89.

13 Hargreaves, *Life and Memoir of the Late Rev. John Hirst*, pp. 115, 118–19, 120–21.

the following year he was ordained at the age of twenty–four.[14] Although the church there consisted of sixty-six members, most of them were poor artisans and clothworkers and were unable to provide enough financially for his support. Francis once described the circumstances of most of the congregation as being 'extremely indigent.' And near the end of his life, he remarked that his congregation was for the most part 'poor, plain, and have not had the advantage of literature.'[15] Thus, 'he was obliged to rear pigs, to grow his own fruit and vegetables, to keep a school, and to venture into the woollen trade (with disastrous financial consequences) in order to make ends meet.'[16]

Other co-vocational ministers included Thomas Newcomen (1664–1729), an ironmonger in Dartmouth and the inventor of the first practical steam engine; Andrew Gifford, Jr. (1700–1784), the assistant librarian of the British Museum; Robert Parsons (1718–1790) in Bath, a widely-admired carver in stone and marble; the eccentric John Ryland, Sr. (1723–1792), a schoolteacher; and William Carey, also a schoolteacher and cobbler.[17] There were also a significant number of lay persons in the Calvinistic Baptist community who made notable contributions to the worlds of English art and trade, men like Emanuel Bowen (1693/4–1767), a Welsh Baptist who was cartographer to George II[18]; Robert Bowyer (1758–1834), a miniature painter to George III and publisher, who later became a lay preacher[19]; and William Burls (1763–1837), a wealthy London merchant who served as a deacon at Carter's Lane Baptist Church in London

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14 For a brief account of the early history of the Horsley church, see Albion M. Urdank, *Religion and Society in a Cotswold Vale. Nailsworth, Gloucestershire, 1780–1865* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 90–93.

15 Cited Urdank, *Religion and Society*, 95; Geoffrey F. Nuttall, 'Letters by Benjamin Francis', *Trafodion* (1983), 6. In one of the circular letters that Francis drew up for the Western Association, he mentions that some of his readers are 'sorely distressed with pressing indigence' (Circular Letter of the Western Association, 1772, p. 3).

16 Gwyn Davies, 'A Welsh Exile: Benjamin Francis (1734–99)' (Unpublished ms., 1999; in the possession of the author), p. 2. On Francis' financial problems, see also Thomas Flint, 'A Brief Narrative of the Life and Death of the Rev. Benjamin Francis, A. M.', annexed to John Ryland, Jr., *The Presence of Christ the Source of eternal Bliss. A Funeral Discourse,… occasioned by the Death of the Rev. Benjamin Francis, A. M.* (Bristol, 1800), p. 49.

17 Bowers, 'After the Benediction', pp. 233–36.

18 J. H. Y. Briggs, 'Baptists and the Wider Community', in *Challenge and Change*, ed. by Copson and Morden, p. 135.

19 K. R. Manley, 'Robert Bowyer (1758–1834): Artist, Publisher and Preacher', *The Baptist Quarterly*, 23 (1969–1970), 32–46.

and was the treasurer of the Baptist Missionary Society for many years.[20] What these pastors and lay persons may have thought with regard to the various callings in which they were involved is largely speculative, however, since few of them left any substantial writing about their quotidian occupations. Possibly the best resource for examining Baptist thought about vocation in the long eighteenth century, therefore, are the various works of the voluminous autodidact John Gill, especially his critical commentaries on the entire Bible that enjoyed a wide circulation in the English Baptist community.[21] *An Exposition of the New Testament* appeared in 1748 and seventeen years later Gill began to issue *An Exposition of the Old Testament*, which was published over three years in a number of large folios.

'MAN WAS CREATED AN ACTIVE CREATURE': JOHN GILL ON VOCATION

In Gill's comment on 2 Thessalonians 3:11, for example, the Baptist exegete observed that the refusal of some of the Thessalonians to work

> at their callings, trades, and businesses in which they were brought up… was walking disorderly indeed, even contrary to the order of things before the fall, when man was in a state of innocence; for before sin entered into the world, Adam was put into the garden of Eden to keep and dress it; man was created an active creature, and made for work and business; and to live without, is contrary to the order of creation, as well as to the order of civil societies, and of religious one, or churches, and even what irrational creatures do not.[22]

From the fact that God's design for Adam was for him to be a gardener in the paradise of Eden, Gill reasoned that human beings in general were 'made for work and business' and so were to be 'active' in creation. Adam's son Abel, though heir to one who was 'the lord of the whole earth,' was

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[20] Ernest A. Payne, *The Excellent Mr. Burls: First London Member of the Committee and Third Treasurer of the Baptist Missionary Society; First Treasurer of the Baptist Irish Society* (London: Carey Press, [1943]).

[21] In the year of Gill's death, Gill's magnum opus, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, was described as 'incomparable' by the Northamptonshire Association. See *The Circular Letter from the Ministers and Messengers, Assembled at Oulney, in Buckinghamshire, June 4 and 5, 1771* (Circular Letter of the Northamptonshire Association, 1771), p. 4. During his lifetime, it was a saying among some English Baptists that ''Tis safe to believe any thing, if Mr. G[ill] believes it' (Anonymous, *Unity among Christian Ministers and People. Recommended in a Letter to Mr. John Gill* [London, 1746], p. 3).

[22] Gill, *Exposition of the New Testament*, IV, 507, commenting on 2 Thess. 3:11.

thus 'a keeper of sheep' that he might not be idle but engaged in a 'useful and laborious employment.'[23] Possibly because the figure of a shepherd is employed in both Testaments for pastoring the people of God, Gill expressly cited the secular calling of shepherding as one that is 'valiant, honourable, innocent, and useful.'[24]

In fact, Gill argued from the phrase 'to dress it, and to keep it' in Genesis 2:15 that even before the Fall from Eden, there was work:

> [S]o… it seems man was not to live an idle life, in a state of innocence; but this could not be attended with toil and labour, with fatigue and trouble, with sorrow and sweat, as after his fall; but was rather for his recreation and pleasure; though what by nature was left, to be improved by art; and what there was for Adam to do, is not easy to say: at present there needed no plowing, nor sowing, nor planting, nor watering, since God had made every tree pleasant to the sight, and good for food, to grow out of it; and a river ran through it to water it…[25]

Gill proceeded to cite a number of Jewish commentators who understood this primeval work of Adam to involve the study of and obedience to the law. Gill did not affirm this interpretation, but remained somewhat agnostic about what exactly Adam would have done before the entrance of sin into the Garden. What is noteworthy is his affirmation that the goal of Adam's primeval labours were 'his recreation and pleasure.'

Whatever calling is God's lot for a believer in life, it is to be pursued with 'all diligence and industry.'[26] Thus, when Christ had yet to pour out his Spirit and so initiate the commission to preach the Word throughout the world, Peter went back to fishing 'partly that he might not live an idle life, and partly to obtain a livelihood.'[27] A person is to be commended, therefore, if he or she is 'constant' at their calling, namely, 'swift, ready and expeditious at it; who industriously pursues it, cheerfully attends it, makes quick dispatch of it; does it off of hand, at once, and is not slothful in it.' Gill obviously regarded all true vocations as important. They

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23 Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament*, I, 30, commenting on Gen. 4:2.

24 Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament*, IV, 479, commenting on Prov. 27:23.

25 Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament*, I, 17, commenting on Gen. 2:15.

26 Gill, *Exposition of the New Testament*, IV, 359, commenting on Phil. 4:6. See also Gill's comments on Prov. 12:11; 20:13; 26:13; 27:24, 27; 29:17; Matt. 5:21; Rom. 12:11; 2 Thess. 3:13. The emphasis on diligence in these various comments is part of Gill's indebtedness to Puritanism. See Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans As They Really Were* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), p. 34.

27 Gill, *Exposition of the New Testament*, II, 667, commenting on John 21:3.

merited mindful attention and significant effort. At the same time, God's direction, 'strength and assistance' in one's calling is to be sought by prayer, and glory given to him when such prayer is answered.[28]

Gill identified various reasons for being diligent at one's vocation. It was the God-given way to secure the finances needed for life's basic necessities for oneself and one's family.[29] It was also the means to provide for 'the relief of the poor' as well as 'the support of the Gospel, and the interest of Christ.'[30] Gill thus included working in 'honest lawful employment' under the rubric of the 'good works' enjoined by Paul in Titus 3:14.[31] On the other hand, Gill was very aware of the dangers that attended success in one's vocation and the financial wealth that might accrue from such success, namely, the formation of 'an immoderate care for, and pursuit after the world' and so becoming 'inebriated with the world.'[32] One central cause for such inebriation was a distinct failure to lay to heart 'the power, providence, and faithfulness of God.'[33] Alluding to a statement by the North African Latin author L. Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius (*c*.260–*c*.330) that 'the highest good of man is in religion alone (*summum… hominis bonum in sola religione est*),'[34] Gill was adamant that man's true *summum bonum* was not to be found ultimately in being successful at one's calling but in the things of religion.[35]

'His heart is not in his master's goods': wisdom from Joshua Thomas

An interesting reflection on a vocation in the world can be found in the archives of Bristol Baptist College in an unpublished manuscript that records the precious friendship of two Welsh pastors, Benjamin Francis,

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28 Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament*, III, 336, commenting on Ps. 37:5. See also Gill's comments on Ecc. 9:11 and 1 Pet. 5:7.

29 See Gill's comments on Prov. 14:23; 20:13; Ecc. 3:22; 9:10; 1 Cor. 7:33; Gal. 6:8; Phil. 4:6; 2 Thess. 3:8, 12–13.

30 Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament*, IV, 567, commenting on Ecc. 9:10, and *idem, Exposition of the New Testament*, IV, 637, commenting on Titus 3:14. See also Gill's comments on Ez. 44:11; 46:1; Acts 13:5; Rom. 12:11; Phil. 4:6; 2 Thess. 3:12–13.

31 Gill, *Exposition of the New Testament*, IV, 637, commenting on Titus 3:14.

32 Gill, *Exposition of the New Testament*, IV, 470, commenting on 1 Thess. 5:6.

33 Gill, *Exposition of the New Testament*, IV, 359, commenting on Phil. 4:6.

34 Lactantius, *Divine Institutions* 3.10.1 in L. Caeli Firmiani Lactanti, *Opera Omnia. Pars I*, ed. by Samuel Brandt (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, vol. 19; Prague and Vienna: F. Tempsky/Leipzig: G. Freytag, 1890), p. 202.

35 Gill, *Exposition of the Old Testament*, IV, 587, commenting on Ecc. 12:13.

mentioned above, and Joshua Thomas (1719–1797), who for forty-three years was the pastor of the Baptist cause in Leominster. The manuscript is actually a transcript, drawn up by Thomas, of letters that passed between him and Francis from 1758 to 1770.[36] The practice of Francis and Thomas appears to have been for one of them to mail two or three queries periodically to the other. Then, some months later the recipient mailed back his answers, together with fresh questions of his own. These answers were commented on, the new questions answered and both the comments and answers mailed back along with new queries, and so forth. All in all, there are sixty-eight questions and answers in two volumes—fifty-eight in the first volume, the remaining ten in Volume II. On only one occasion during these years from 1758 to 1770 was there a noticeable gap in correspondence. That was in 1765 when Francis lost his wife and his three youngest children. It is noteworthy that at the beginning of the correspondence the two friends sign their letters simply with their names or initials. However, as time passes, their mutual confidence and intimacy deepens, and they begin to write 'yours endearingly' or 'yours unfeignedly' and even 'yours indefatigably' or 'yours inexpressibly.' It was in October, 1762, that Thomas first signed himself 'your cordial Brother Jonathan,' and the following February Francis replied with 'your most affectionate David.' From this point on this is the way the two friends refer to each other.

The questions and their answers are extremely instructive as to the areas of personal theological interest among mid-eighteenth century Calvinistic Baptists. For example, there are queries about spiritual vitality, the eternal state of those who die in infancy, how best to understand the remarks in Revelation 20 about the millennium, and whether or not inoculation against that dreaded killer of the eighteenth century, smallpox, was right or wrong. And there is this question about vocation, asked by Francis in July of 1762 and answered by Thomas the following October:

> Quer[y]: What is the difference between a lawful diligence in the world, and a criminal love of the world? Or wherein does the difference lie?
> Sol[ution]: Ever since man became a living soul, it is his very nature to be active. Activity conduces much to his health etc. Before sin entered Adam was to dress the Garden, when then was all delight. After the fall, man is to eat his bread by labour, sweat etc. … I would note, that the persons who love the world sinfully, differ in many particulars from those who are conscientiously

[36] 'Queries and Solutions of Joshua Thomas and Benjamin Francis of Horsley 1758–70, being the answers of one to questions posed by the other on matters of theology, church government, preaching', 2 vols. (MS G.98.5 in the Archives of Bristol Baptist College, Bristol, UK).

diligent in it. I dare say you can split the differences better than I am able to do it, but I must attempt.

The good man considers often how he may adorn the gospel, glorify God, and serve his generation; and in order to do this, he finds it very necessary to read the Word often, to pray earnestly and frequently, and to attend on sanctuary seasons. He may, and often does, labour hard; but meditation upon the state of his soul, the nature of religion and salvation, the Saviour, the glory above etc., etc. is the meals to maintain his strength, cordials to keep up his spirits, salve to heal his sores &c. This being the case, religion will be kept up, in the soul, in the closet, in the family, and in the Church; all conducing… to help him through the world.

…But he that sinfully loves the world contrives how to be rich in this life: he does not want to serve his generation, but himself. His heart is so much upon what he calls lawful, that he cannot meditate as above noted. He has no time often for private prayer: and that in the family suits him but very indifferent; he is often hindered to meetings on weekdays, the excuse is at hand. He thinks it no great sin to contrive a good deal of the world in his mind, some in word, etc. on the Lord's Day. The greatest part of religion is a dead weight to him; a little of it will, and must do.

…Again, the piously diligent delights in his labour from a principle as so very different from the other, viz. because he knows it to be his duty, and that in his daily calling he serves Christ, Col. 3:22 etc. and he that rightly considers himself as a servant of Christ is excited and animated by the most excellent and noble motives. A servant may be very diligent, frugal etc. from a sense of duty, and the love he bears to his master, when his heart is not in his master's goods. The faithful servant will manage his affairs so as to keep his set hours and seasons to sit down and converse with his master, give account, receive further instructions and money to bear expenses, relate difficulties, and be honoured with a fresh testimony of his Lord's approbation etc. etc. But the criminal lover of the world is a kind of a proprietor; he is not fond of coming to his master; he pretends he is always busy for his master, he cannot ever have time; but he has time to go elsewhere. He seldom waits for instruction, looking upon himself to be wise enough. Let the difficulties be ever so many, he does not care to come to his master, he learns to love the master's possessions more than the owner. He looks upon his own approbation to be sufficient, and supposes, perhaps, that the master will pass by all this effrontery.

…What a world this! What confusion sin hath made! Yet all the confusion by sin, or order by grace here, is as nothing to that which will be hereafter. Vile sin! but glorious grace! Precious blood! Happy people![37]

Thomas agreed with Gill that in the primeval state Adam was created for work, and that the first man would have found this labour 'all delight.' Since the Fall, however, a deep disorder has entered into the human heart.

[37] 'Queries and Solutions', I, 156–61, *passim*.

There is now a sinful passion regnant that loves the world and the wealth that work creates more than the Master of this earth. And yet, due to God's 'glorious grace,' there are those who are learning to use this world and its goods aright. They seek to be diligent in their labours, but know the vital importance of spiritual disciplines to keep the heart in tune with God. They thus know that their work is a means of service to Christ and their generation, and will be used by God for his glory. The latter, Thomas deemed, to be truly 'happy people.'

A 'HEART BRIM-FULL OF JOY': INTRODUCING ANNE DUTTON

Yet another significant reflection on vocation in this era is from the pen of Anne Dutton (1692–1765), who was born Anne Williams to Congregationalist parents in Northampton in the East Midlands.[38] Her conversion had come at the age of thirteen after a serious illness.[39] Two years later, in 1707, she joined the Congregationalist church, although she wrestled with doubt and various fears as a young believer. Subsequently, though, she experienced a significant encounter with the Holy Spirit that she interpreted as the sealing of the Spirit—a phrase derived from such Pauline texts as Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30. As she later recalled the experience, the Holy Spirit used Philippians 4:4 ('Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say rejoice,' KJV) in his sealing of her heart:

> [This] word brake in… upon my heart, with such a ray of glorious light, that directed my soul to the true and proper object of its joy, even the Lord himself. I was pointed thereto, as with a finger: In the *Lord*, not in your *frames*. *In*

[38] For Dutton's life and thought, see especially J. C. Whitebrook, 'The Life and Works of Mrs. Ann Dutton', *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, 7, nos. 3–4 (1921), 129–46; Stephen J. Stein, 'A Note on Anne Dutton, Eighteenth-Century Evangelical', *Church History*, 44 (1975), 485–91; Michael D. Sciretti, Jr., '"Feed My Lambs": The Spiritual Direction Ministry of Calvinistic British Baptist Anne Dutton During the Early Years of the Evangelical Revival' (PhD thesis, Baylor University, 2009). Most of Dutton's works have survived in only a few copies. Thankfully many of her works are currently available in a series of volumes compiled by JoAnn Ford Watson, *Selected Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton: Eighteenth-Century, British-Baptist, Woman Theologian* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003–2015), 7 vols.
The sketch of her life that follows is dependent in part on Sciretti, 'Feed My Lambs', 48–115. For her own account of her conversion, which she detailed in her *A Brief Account of the Gracious Dealings of God, with a Poor, Sinful, Unworthy Creature* (1743), see Watson, comp., *Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton*, III, 8–27.

[39] Sciretti, 'Feed My Lambs', pp. 51–53.

> the Lord, not in what you enjoy *from* him, but in what you are in *him*. And the Lord seal'd my instruction, and fill'd my heart brim-full of joy, in the faith of my eternal interest, and unchangeable standing in him; and of his being an infinite fountain of blessedness, for me to rejoice in alway; even when the streams of sensible enjoyments fail'd. Thus the Blessed Spirit took me by the arms, and taught me to go.
>
> …the Lord the Spirit went on to reveal Christ more and more to me, as the great foundation of my faith and joy. He shew'd me my everlasting standing in his person, grace and righteousness: and gave me to see my security in his unchangeableness, under all the changes which pass'd over me. And then I began to rejoice in my dear Lord Jesus, as always the same, even when my frames alter'd.[40]

In other words, Dutton learned to put her faith in Christ alone, and not in her experience of him. Her beliefs about the sealing of the Spirit were probably derived from reading the works of the Puritan Thomas Goodwin (1600–1679).[41]

In 1710, she transferred her church affiliation to an open-membership Baptist church in Northampton, pastored at the time by John Moore (1662–1726).[42] There, in her words, she found 'fat, green pastures,' for, as she went on to explain, 'Mr. Moore was a great doctrinal preacher: and the special advantage I receiv'd under his ministry, was the establishment of my judgment in the doctrines of the gospel.'[43] It was in this congregation that she was baptized as a believer around 1713.[44] Two years later, when she was twenty-two, she married a Thomas Cattell and moved with her husband to London. While there she worshipped with the Calvinistic Baptist church that met at premises on Wood Street in the Cripplegate region.[45] Her pastor was John Skepp (d.1721), a one-time member of the Cambridge Congregationalist church of Joseph Hussey (1659–1726), who had been called as the pastor of this congregation in 1714.

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40 Dutton, *Gracious Dealings of God* in Watson, comp., *Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton*, III, 27–28. Dutton's capitalization of words in her writings, as well as some of the italicization, all of which Watson's editions retained, has been modernized.

41 On Goodwin's influence on Dutton, see Sciretti, 'Feed My Lambs', p. 62.

42 On Moore, see Sciretti, 'Feed My Lambs', pp. 59–60, n.42.

43 Dutton, *Gracious Dealings of God* in Watson, comp., *Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton*, III, 47, 50.

44 Sciretti, 'Feed My Lambs', pp. 64–65.

45 On this church's history during this period, see Murdina D. MacDonald, 'London Calvinistic Baptists 1689–1727: Tensions within a Dissenting Community under Toleration' (DPhil thesis, Regent's Park College, Oxford, 1982), pp. 109–31.

Hussey is often seen as the father of Hyper-Calvinism, insomuch as he argued in his book God's Operations of Grace: But No Offers of Grace (1707) that offering Christ indiscriminately to sinners is something that smacks of 'creature-co-operation and creature-concurrence' in the work of salvation.[46] Skepp published but one book, and that posthumously, which was entitled *Divine Energy: or The Efficacious Operations of the Spirit of God upon the Soul of Man* (1722). In it he appears to have followed Hussey's approach to evangelism. It is sometimes argued that Anne Dutton's exposure to Hyper-Calvinism at a young age shaped her thinking for the rest of her life. If so, it is curious to find her rejoicing in the ministry of free-offer preachers like George Whitefield (1714–1770) in later years. Dutton found Skepp to be an impressive preacher, owing in part to what Dutton called his 'quickness of thought, aptness of expression, suitable affection, and a most agreeable delivery.'[47] Despite his refusal to freely offer the gospel to all and sundry, the overall trend in the church during his ministry was one of growth. There were 179 members when he came as pastor in 1714. When he died in 1721, the church's membership had grown to 212.[48]

In the early months of 1719, Dutton's life underwent a deep trial as her husband of but five or six years died.[49] She returned to her family in Northampton, and found herself wrestling with spiritual depression. In her words, Dutton sought God 'in his ordinances, in one place and another; but alas! I found him not.'[50] She was not long single, however. A second marriage in the middle months of 1720 was to Benjamin Dutton (1691–1747), a clothier who had studied for vocational ministry in various places, among them Glasgow University. Anne and Benjamin had met in the final months of 1719 and within a year they were wed.[51]

Ministry took the couple to such towns as Whittlesey and Wisbech in Cambridgeshire, before leading them finally in 1731 to a Calvinistic Baptist congregation in Great Gransden, Huntingdonshire, in 1733.[52] It

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46 Joseph Hussey, *God's Operations of Grace: But No Offers of Grace* (London: D. Bridge, 1707), p. 209.

47 Dutton, *Gracious Dealings of God* in Watson, comp., *Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton*, III, 51.

48 MacDonald, 'London Calvinistic Baptists 1689–1727', p. 124.

49 Dutton, *Gracious Dealings of God* in Watson, comp., *Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton*, III, 63–64.

50 Dutton, *Gracious Dealings of God* in Watson, comp., *Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton*, III, 70.

51 Sciretti, 'Feed My Lambs', pp. 76–77.

52 For a brief history of the church, see Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: Isaac Taylor Hinston and Holdsworth & Ball, 1830), IV, 509–10.

is noteworthy that prior to this call to Great Gransden, Benjamin Dutton had wrestled with alcoholism. But Benjamin found deliverance from this crippling addiction around the time of the move to Great Gransden. In his own words, he said that he now 'stood not in need of wine, or strong drink. The Lord also, of his great goodness, took away my *inclination* thereto; so that I had no more inclination to it, or desire after it, than if I had never tasted any in my whole life.'[53]

Under Benjamin Dutton's preaching the church flourished so that on any given Sunday the congregation numbered anywhere between 250 and 350, of whom roughly 50 were members. This growth led to the building of a new meeting-house, which can still be seen in the village. Benjamin decided to go to America to help raise funds to pay off the debt incurred in the building of the meeting-house but the ship on which he was returning foundered not far from the British coast in 1747, and Dutton was drowned. Thankfully, he had sent the money he had raised by means of another ship, so that at least was not lost.

'A TALENT OF WRITING': ANNE DUTTON'S VOCATION

Widowed now for the second time, Anne Dutton was to live another eighteen years. During that time 'the fame of her… piety,' as Baptist historian Joseph Ivimey (1773–1834) once referred to her spirituality,[54] became known in Evangelical circles on both sides of the Atlantic and that through various literary publications. Dutton had been writing for a number of years before her second husband's demise. After his death a steady stream of tracts and treatises, collections of selected correspondence, and poems poured forth from her pen.

Among her numerous correspondents were a number of key figures in the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival: the Welsh preacher Howel Harris (1714–1773), the redoubtable Selina Hastings, the Countess of Huntingdon (1707–1791), and George Whitefield.[55] Harris was convinced that the Lord had entrusted her 'with a talent of writing for him.'[56] When William Seward (1711–1740), an early Methodist preacher who was killed by a mob in Wales, read a letter she had written to him in May, 1739, he found it 'full of such comforts and direct answers to what I had been writing that it filled my eyes with tears of joy.'[57] And Whitefield, who helped

53 Cited Sciretti, 'Feed My Lambs,' pp. 91–92.

54 Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, IV, 510.

55 See the discussion of these links by Stein, 'Note on Anne Dutton', 485–90, and Sciretti, 'Feed My Lambs', pp. 198–280.

56 Cited Stein, 'Note on Anne Dutton', 487–88.

57 Cited Stein, 'Note on Anne Dutton', 488.

promote and publish Dutton's writings, once said after a meeting with her: 'her conversation is as weighty as her letters.'[58] By 1740 she had written seven books. Another fourteen followed between 1741 and 1743, and fourteen more by 1750.[59] And there were yet more, for she continued to write up until her death in 1765. She was clearly the most prolific female Baptist author of the eighteenth century. Her writings reveal eighteenth-century Calvinistic Baptist piety at its best—solidly Christ-centred and robustly crucicentric.

Consider, for example, her eucharistic treatise *Thoughts on the Lord's Supper* (1748). 'Not a dram of new covenant-favour', she wrote, 'was to flow to the heirs of promise, but thro' the death of Jesus.' As she went on to exclaim: 'O what a wondrous draught, what a life-giving draught, in his own most precious blood, doth God our Saviour, the Lord our lover, give to dying sinners, to his beloved ones in this glorious ordinance.'[60] Dutton devoted the first section of this sixty-page treatise on the Lord's Supper to outlining its nature. Dutton argued that the Supper has three essential purposes: as a 'representation,' it is a powerful reminder of Christ's saving work; as a 'confirmation,' it gives a sense of assurance; and as a 'communication,' it is a vehicle for making the Risen Christ present with his people. With regard to the latter, Dutton noted: 'As our Lord is spiritually present in his own ordinance, so he therein and thereby doth actually communicate, or give himself, his body broken, and his blood shed, with all the benefits of his death, to the worthy receivers.'[61] In line with John Calvin's (1509–1564) view of the spiritual presence of Christ at the Table, Dutton affirmed that the Lord Jesus is indeed present at the celebration of his supper and makes it a means of grace for those who partake of it with faith. As she stated later in the treatise: in the Lord's Supper 'the King is pleas'd to sit with us, at his table.'[62] In fact, so highly did she prize this means of grace that she declared, with what other Calvinistic Baptists of this era would describe probably as some exaggeration, that the celebration of the Lord's Supper 'admits' believers 'into the nearest approach to

58 George Whitefield, Letter to Mr. [Jonathan] B[ryan], July 24, 1741 in *Letters of George Whitefield for the period 1734–1742* (1771 ed.; repr. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), p. 280.

59 Sciretti, 'Feed My Lambs', pp. 100–101.

60 Anne Dutton, *Thoughts on the Lord's Supper, Relating to the Nature, Subjects, and right Partaking of this Solemn Ordinance* (London: J. Hart, 1748), p. 7. Quotes from this work have been modernized with regard to capitalization.

61 Dutton, *Thoughts on the Lord's Supper*, pp. 3–4.

62 Dutton, *Thoughts on the Lord's Supper*, p. 21.

his [i.e. Christ's] glorious self, that we can make in an ordinance-way on the earth, on this side the presence of his glory in heaven.'[63]

WRESTLING WITH HER VOCATION: ANNE DUTTON ON WOMEN'S WRITING

Although affirmed in her vocation as an author by such Christians as George Whitefield and Howel Harris, Dutton clearly wrestled with whether or not it was biblical for her to publish her works. In a tract entitled *A Letter To such of the Servants of Christ, who May have any Scruples about the Lawfulness of Printing any Thing written by a Woman* (1743), she noted that she had been criticized for going into print.[64] Her critics appear to have regarded her writings as a violation of two specific texts, 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34–35.[65] She also mentioned that some considered women 'unfit' for the vocation of writing, even 'unworthy of it,' and that it made them 'arrogant and affirming.'[66]

Dutton pointed out that the Pauline verses mentioned above specifically forbade women to engage in 'public authoritative teaching in the Church.' Publishing was of quite a different order. Though books were public media, they were read in private and not in the assembly of the congregation. In this way, books were akin to private letters sent to a friend or having a 'private conference' with him or her.[67] The Scriptures clearly did not forbid such a means of communication. Moreover, as Dutton pondered Romans 14:19 ('Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another,' KJV), she noted that it was addressed to all believers, male and female, and that it was therefore 'the duty of women to seek the edification of their brethren and sisters.' When Dutton applied this text specifically with regard to writ-

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63 Dutton, *Thoughts on the Lord's Supper*, p. 25.

64 Anne Dutton, *A Letter To such of the Servants of Christ, who May have any Scruples about the Lawfulness of Printing any Thing written by a Woman* (London: J. Hart, 1743), p. 3. It is reprinted by Watson, comp., *Spiritual Writings of Anne Dutton*, III, 253–58.

65 Dutton, *Printing any Thing written by a Woman*, p. 4. On the employment of these Pauline texts in the Calvinistic Baptist community, see Michael R. Watts, Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), I, 319–20. More generally, on other female authors in the English Calvinistic Baptist community, see Timothy Whelan, '"No sanctuary for Philistines": Baptists and Culture in the Eighteenth Century' in Copson and Morden, ed., *Challenge and Change*, pp. 214–17.

66 Dutton, *Printing any Thing written by a Woman*, p. 8.

67 Dutton, *Printing any Thing written by a Woman*, pp. 4–5, 6–7.

ing books, it led her to conclude that 'any believer, male or female, that is gifted for, and inclin'd to publish their thoughts in print, about any truth of Christ, for the private instruction and edification of the saints,' is not only free to do so, but is 'commanded so to do.'[68] She thus generalized later in the tract regarding the way individuals need to follow their respective vocations: 'If any person is fully persuaded in his own mind, from the Word and Spirit of Christ, that it is his duty to engage in any piece of service for God; it is sufficient warrant for him so to do.'[69]

Dutton appealed to the example of Priscilla in Acts 18:26, who, with her husband Aquila, taught Apollos in private. 'Communicating one's mind in print, is as private' a means of teaching as what Priscilla did in this case.[70] Dutton also had to answer critics who argued that other female authors had used the press for 'trifles.' Dutton pressed home her case with some vehemence: 'shall none of that sex be suffer'd to appear on Christ's side, to tell of the wonders of his love, to seek the good of souls, and the advancement of the Redeemer's interest?'[71] Dutton believed it quite possible that this opposition to female Christian authors was a stratagem of Satan to hinder their 'usefulness.' But to anyone acquainted with the biblical record, such opposition was not surprising. The Apostle Peter, for instance, had to be rebuked when he sought to dissuade Christ from his 'great work of redemption' and told by Jesus in no uncertain terms, 'Get thee behind me Satan' (Matthew 16:23).[72] The disciples' opposition to the woman who anointed Christ's head at Bethany was yet another illustration to Dutton that Christians, 'under the influence of sin and Satan' may disparage 'those good works, which the Lord himself will own and honour.'[73]

Dutton emphasized that she wrote not for fame, but for 'only the glory of God, and the good of souls.' It was her 'earnest desire, some way or other, to serve him, his interest and people.'[74] She thus asked those who

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68 Dutton, *Printing any Thing written by a Woman*, p. 5.

69 Dutton, *Printing any Thing written by a Woman*, p. 10.

70 Dutton, *Printing any Thing written by a Woman*, pp. 6–7. Gill also argued on the basis of Priscilla's example in Acts 18 that 'women of grace, knowledge, and experience, though they are not allowed to teach in public, yet they may, and ought to communicate in private what they know of divine things for the use of others' (*Exposition of the New Testament*, III, 259, commenting on Acts 18:26). Compare his comments on Rom. 16:3, 12; 1 Cor. 14:34–35; 1 Tim. 2:12.

71 Dutton, *Printing any Thing written by a Woman*, p. 7.

72 Dutton, *Printing any Thing written by a Woman*, pp. 8–9.

73 Dutton, *Printing any Thing written by a Woman*, p. 9.

74 Dutton, *Printing any Thing written by a Woman*, pp. 3, 11–12. See also Dutton's comments in her *Thoughts on the Lord's Supper*, A3 recto, where she

objected to her writing to imagine that 'when my books come to your house, that I am come to give you a visit' and have 'communion… in this way.' Although she might be but 'so weak a worm,' it is 'all one to Omnipotence to work by worms, as by angels.'[75] Anne thus viewed her books as a means of carrying on important conversations and thus a vehicle for furthering fellowship within the Church. And in this way, she was serving her generation with diligence, which her contemporary Joshua Thomas had noted was one mark of true piety.

stated that she wrote this particular work on the Lord's Table out of 'love to Christ's honour and the good of souls.'

[75] Dutton, *Printing any Thing written by a Woman*, p. 11. Catherine A. Brekus has argued that Anne's use of the term 'weak' to describe herself and likening her printed words to 'the lispings of a babe' (Dutton, *Printing any Thing written by a Woman*, p. 11) was a strategy to find a degree of credibility in the eyes of her male readers. See Catherine A. Brekus, 'Writing Religious Experience: Women's Authorship in Early America', *The Journal of Religion*, 92 (2012), 489. See also Dutton, *Thoughts on the Lord's Supper*, A2 recto, where she noted her 'weakness and insufficiency' to write about the Lord's Table.

BULLINGER AND THE *DESCENDIT* CLAUSE

Joe Mock

I. INTRODUCTION

This article examines how Heinrich Bullinger's (1504-1575) understanding of Christ's *descensus* developed over the years from his time in Kappel am Albis (early 1520s) till the 1560s when he was the established *Antistes* or chief minister in Zurich. This provides a window into how he interpreted the whole biblical canon, critically read what was written by the church fathers and evaluated church tradition. Bullinger's wrestling with the *descendit* clause in the Apostles' Creed must be viewed in the context with what the Jesuit Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) wrote against the view of the *descensus* held by the reformers John Calvin (1509-1564), Martin Bucer (1491-1551), Johannes Brentz (1499-1570) and Theodore Beza (1519-1605) in his *De Controversiis*.[1] Bellarmine particularly took issue with Calvin's interpretation which he regarded as a most offensive heresy.[2]

There is no *descendit* clause in the Westminster Confession of Faith. However, in the *Larger Catechism*, in response to Question 50 'wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after his death?' the answer is:

> Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day; which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, *He descended into Hell*.[3]

The Westminster Assembly took the view that *descendit* clause was a rephrasing of the Creed's statement that Christ was buried. This understanding of the clause has been taken by Jeffrey Hamm to be that of the Zurich reformers, Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531) and Bullinger, who in turn, he argued, were influenced by Desiderius Erasmus's (1466-1536) errors. That is, firstly, mistaking Cyprian (died 258) for the author of Rufinus' work on the Creed and, secondly, for misinterpreting what Rufi-

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1 Robert Bellarmine, *Disputationes de Contraversiis Christianae Fidei adversus hujus temporis Haereticos*, 3 vols (Ingolstadt: ex officina typographica D. Sartorii, 1586–93).

2 Russ Leo, 'Jean Calvin, Christ's Despair, and the Reformation *Descensus ad Inferos*', *Reformation*, 23 (no. 1, 2018), 56; 75-78.

3 *The Westminster Confession of Faith, Together with the Larger and Shorter Catechism with the Scripture Proofs* (Atlanta, GA: Committee for Christian Education & Publications, 1990), p. 96.

nus actually meant.[4] Thus, the Assembly decided against Calvin's understanding of the clause.[5] According to Calvin, Christ essentially experienced the terrors of hell on the cross and, in doing so, interpreted the clause metaphorically.

Hamm has, in fact, inadvertently misunderstood Bullinger. He correctly cites Bullinger on the clause from Sermon I.7 of *The Decades*, but he has not, however, adequately grasped the significance of this section in its context. Hamm's citation reads as follows:

> Bullinger explains: "Cyprian saith thus: 'It is to be known verily, that in the creed of the Latin church this is not added, 'He descended into hell;' nor yet is this clause received in the churches of the east but yet the sense of the clause seemeth to be all one with that, where it is said, 'He was buried.'" Then obviously following Erasmus' exposition, Bullinger adds the former's proof text from Jacob, "So then Cyprian's opinion seemeth to be, that to descend into hell is nothing else but to be laid in the grave, according to saying of Jacob: 'Ye will bring my grey hairs with sorrow to hell, or the grave."[6]

In the very next sentence, however, Bullinger pointed out that to interpret the clause in terms of Christ's burial is 'without justifiable proof.'[7] He then proceeded to offer his own insight. Furthermore, this particular section of *The Decades* needs to be read and understood alongside what he wrote about the clause in Sermon III.8. To grasp Bullinger's understanding of the *descensus* it is imperative to read widely into Bullinger.

This article examines how, from the early 1520s, Bullinger initially understood the *descendit* clause in terms of synecdoche and metonym mirroring the view of Zwingli who understood the clause as the benefits of Christ's death reaching down to the righteous dead. After wrestling with the matter for many years, by the time he wrote *The Decades* (1549-1551)

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4 Jeffrey L. Hamm, '*Descendit*: Delete or Declare? A Defense against the Neo-Deletionists', *Westminster Theological Journal*, 78 (2016), 101-03.

5 Calvin discusses the clause in the *Institutes* II. XVI, 8-12. For a recent study on Calvin and the *descendit* clause see Preston Hill, '"The useful and Not-to-be despised Mystery of a Most Important Matter": The Place of Christ's Descent into Hell in the Theology of John Calvin', in *Calvinus Frater in Domino: Papers of the Twelfth International Congress on Calvin Research*, ed. by Arnold Huijgen and Karin Maag (Göttingen: V&R, 2020), pp. 243-56.

6 Hamm, '*Descendit*', p. 102, fn. 41. The citation is from *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, ed. by Thomas Harding (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004), p. 137.

7 *Sermonum Decades quinque de potissimus Christianae religionis capitibus* (1552), ed. by Peter Opitz, HBTS, vol. 3 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2008), p. 88.

Bullinger had come to the view that Christ's soul did, in fact, descend to *inferos*. By this time Bullinger also understood *inferos* and heaven spatially. His fully developed view is reflected in his catechism of 1561. The progression of Bullinger's thought concerning the *descensus* will be discussed in this article through a close examination of his relevant treatises and commentaries.

II. BULLINGER AND ZWINGLI

The interactions and communications between Bullinger and Zwingli are important for understanding Zurich theology.[8] Of the correspondence between Bullinger and Zwingli only three letters are extant: two from Bullinger to Zwingli and one from Zwingli to Bullinger. In 1526 Bullinger wrote a short letter to Zwingli seeking his understanding regarding the *descendit* clause:

> I pray you sincerely, my dear Zwingli, that you be open and share a few words with me so that I can understand your position clearly concerning what it is that we confess when we confess that Christ descended into hell (*Christum ad inferna descendisse*). Today, there are a few learned who invent wonderful tales to stir up readers and in the meantime goad one another in their desire for a prize [for their inventiveness].[9]

Joachim Staedtke's opinion is that the dating of 8 November 1528 for Bullinger's letter to Zwingli by the editors of Zwingli's correspondence is probably incorrect.[10] Rather, Staedtke takes the view that Bullinger wrote his letter to Zwingli in autumn 1526 straddling his *Quod animae a corporibus separatae non dormiant* ['That souls separated from bodies do not sleep'] published in the summer or autumn of 1526 and his *De articulo*

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8 See for example Joe Mock, 'To What Extent did Bullinger Influence Zwingli with Regard to his Understanding of the Covenant and of the Eucharist?' *Colloquium* 49 (2017), 89-108.

9 Zwingli, *Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke*, vol. 9, Corpus Reformatorum 96 (Leipzig: Heinsius, 1925), p. 597. The editors of the collected works of Zwingli (Zwingli, *Werke*, IX (1925), 597) had thought that the letter was dated 8 November 1528. However, this date was revised to Autumn 1526 by Ulrich Gäbler and Endre Zsindely, *Heinrich Bullinger Brief Wechsel Band I* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), p. 123. English translation from Jim West, 'Zwingli and Bullinger Through the Lens of Letters', in *From Zwingli in Amyraut: Exploring the Growth of European Reformed Traditions* ed. by Jon Balserak and Jim West (Göttingen: V&R, 2017), p. 38.

10 Joachim Staedtke, *Die Theologie des jungen Bullinger* (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag Zürich, 1962), p. 283.

fidei, descendit ad inferna ['Concerning the article of faith "He descended into hell"'] published at the end of the same year.[11] Nonetheless, Staedtke deems that there is no doubt about Zwingli's influence on Bullinger with respect to the clause.[12] This conclusion has been taken up by Peter Stephens who stated, concerning Bullinger's *De articulo*, that 'On this occasion Bullinger consulted Zwingli and Bullinger's reply reflects Zwingli's exposition of the subject.'[13]

Stephens is referring to the letter that Zwingli wrote to Berchtold Haller on 6 November 1526 in which Zwingli addressed the *descensus*.[14] In this letter Zwingli linked 1 Peter 3:19f with 1 Peter 4:4ff to understand *euanggelisthē* as 'proclaim' as opposed to 'preach the gospel.' Zwingli's point was that the efficacy of Christ's death was proclaimed to the souls of the dead, both righteous and the unrighteous. However, judgment was proclaimed to the souls of the unrighteous. He affirmed that all flesh will be judged when Christ returns and that, in the interim, the spirits of the righteous live in God through Christ where they rejoice.[15] Although Zwingli affirmed that the benefits of Christ's death reached down to the dead, he did not express this in a spatial sense. The dead were not referred to at all as those in Hades (*inferi*) but always as the dead (*mortui*). Moreover, although Zwingli did refer to the dead being in Hades (*apud inferos*), he did not actually refer to Christ *descending* to the dead but, rather used the verb *coming* (*advenisse*). His understanding of the clause was subsequently reflected in Leo Jud's catechism (1534).[16]

On 8 November 1528, Johannes Oecolampadius (1482-1531), the leading Protestant scholar in Basel, sent Zwingli a letter in which he also raised the question of the clause.[17] In this letter, Oecolampadius referred to recent opposition in Schaffhausen to Erasmus's understanding of the *descensus* and outlined his own understanding. However, there is no extant reply to either this letter nor Bullinger's earlier letter to Zwingli.

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11 Ibid., p. 283.

12 Ibid., p. 173, fn. 21.

13 W. Peter Stephens, *The Theology of Heinrich Bullinger* (Göttingen: V&R, 2019), p. 455.

14 Zwingli, *Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke*, vol. 8, Corpus Reformatorum 95 (Leipzig: Heinsius, 1914), pp. 759-63.

15 Ibid., pp. 762-63.

16 Leo Jud, *Catechismus brevissima Christianae religionis formula instituendae iuventuti Tigurinae catechizandisque rudibus aptata adeoque in commune omnium piorum utilitatem excusa* (Zürich: Froschauer, 1539), pp. 45-46.

17 Ibid., pp. 595-96.

Zwingli further wrote concerning the clause in his *Exposition of the Faith* (1531)[18] which Bullinger published in 1536:

> If he had not died and been buried, who would believe that he is very Man? And for the same reason the apostolic Fathers added to the Creed the words, "He descended into hell (*ad inferos*)." They used this expression periphrastically, to signify the reality of his death – for to be numbered amongst those who have descended into hell (*inferos*) means to have died – and also to make it clear that the power of his atonement penetrates even to the underworld (*ad inferos*). This is confirmed by St Peter when he says that the Gospel was preached to the dead, that is, to those in Hades (*eis inferis*), who from the beginning of the world had believed the divine warnings like Noah, even when the wicked had despised them.[19]

III. QUOD ANIMAE A CORPORIBUS SEPARATAE NON DORMIANT (1526)

In the first section of *Quod animae*, Bullinger discussed the nature of the soul, specifically the immortality of the soul. He did this not only from Scripture but also by citing certain classical scholars. The remainder of the letter is full of Scripture citations and allusions.[20]

Bullinger explained that 'sleep' refers to the death of the body whereas 'souls that have been separated from bodies are not sleeping but live with Christ in heaven.'[21] Alluding to Genesis 1:7 and Acts 17:28 Bullinger emphasized that it is 'by the breath of the living God by whose power we live, move and are.'[22] From the Scriptures Bullinger showed that souls live

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18 *Christianae fidei brevis et clara expositio ad regem Christianum*, Zwingli, *Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche Werke*, vol. 6.5, Corpus Reformatorum 93.5 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1991) Heinsius, 1914), pp. 50-167.

19 G. W. Bromiley, *Zwingli and Bullinger* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 252.

20 See Stephens, *Theology of Henrich Bullinger*, p. 454, fn. 19, for a helpful comparison between Zwingli and Bullinger on the topic of soul sleeping. A study of Zwingli's writings against soul sleeping is to be found in Gergely Juház, *Translating Resurrection: The Debate between William Tyndale and George Joye in its Historical and Theological Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 193-226.

21 Bullinger, *Quod animae non dormiant* in Hans-Georg vom Berg, Bernhard Schneider and Endre Zsindely (eds.), *HBTS Band 2 Unveröffenlichte Werke der Kappeler Zeit* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 1991), p. 128.

22 Ibid.

on after death because believers have eternal life.[23] Thus, in the *peroratio*, Bullinger concluded by stating that, on death, souls do not sleep but live with Christ in heaven.[24]

Significantly, Bullinger referred to both 'Abraham's bosom' and 'paradise.' Bullinger was emphatic that 'Abraham's bosom was not a place for sleeping.' He stated that, at death, bodies 'sleep' and are subsequently resurrected whereas souls neither die nor 'sleep' but are consciously in the presence of Christ while waiting for glorification to take place when body and soul are reunited.[25]

What is noteworthy in this early work of Bullinger is the linking of the reference of the discussion of Abraham's bosom with the covenant. Anticipating what he would later expound in his treatise on the covenant (1534)[26] and *The Old Faith* (1539),[27] Bullinger pointed out that those in Abraham's bosom are reached, through faith, by the power of the covenant as they are in the covenant with the faithful Abraham.[28] The use of *testamentum* here for 'covenant' indicates Bullinger's intention to affirm that both believers in the new covenant as well as believers in the old covenant are redeemed through Christ's death as both sets of believers are the seed of Abraham.

IV. DE ARTICULO FIDEI, DESCENDIT AD INFERNA (1526)

This work was written in 1526 in reply to a communication from Rudolf Weingartner.[29] At the very beginning, Bullinger declared:

> We confess, therefore, that Christ descended to the place of the dead, that is, the virtue of his death and the price of redemption was actually made known to them. He also liberated from prison those to whom in the place of the dead from the time of Adam was revealed the coming of the future Messiah. Therefore, you should realize that 'through Christ' refers neither to the body nor to the soul of Christ, but the whole matter of redemption understood by means of synecdoche. Thus also, you should take by the noun 'those in the

23 Ibid., p. 129.
24 Ibid., p. 133.
25 Ibid., p. 132.
26 Heinrich Bullinger, *De testamento seu foedere Dei unico & aeterno Heinrychi Bullingeri brevis expositio* (Zürich: Froschauer, 1534).
27 Heinrich Bullinger, *Der alt gloub* (Zürich: Froschauer, 1539).
28 Bullinger, *Quod animae*, p. 131.
29 Weingartner was a minister in Zug who had exchanged letters with Bullinger since 1524. Bullinger was responding to a letter in which Weingartner had asked for clarification about the *descendit* clause as well as Acts 15:29.

> place of the dead (*inferorum*),' who were kept in the place of the dead, to be a metonym.[30]

This understanding of the *descendit* clause indicated that Bullinger clearly distanced himself from the determination of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) which took the view that, after his death, the soul of Christ (but not his body) truly descended to the place of the dead. He also distanced himself from the view of the Anabaptists who understood the descent in a literal sense. Bullinger was aware of Peter Lombard's discussion about the *descensus* that was the basis for the understanding of the Fourth Lateral Council.[31] Before he embraced a reformed faith Bullinger had carefully studied Lombard's *Sentences* as a young man in 1520.[32] In particular, Bullinger would have known Lombard's well-known statement *Quod Christus ubique totus est, sed non totum; ut totus est homo vel Deus sed non totum* ('That the whole Christ is everywhere, yet not wholly, just as he is whole man or God, yet not wholly').[33] Following John Damascene[34] Lombard used the *totus/totum* distinction to explain that, during the three days (*triduum*), Christ could be in the grave and also in the place of the dead. Lombard said that Christ was in the grave and in the place of the dead according to his humanity and everywhere according to his divinity.

In the *confirmatio*, which follows immediately after he outlined the *scopus*, Bullinger acknowledged that it is indeed a difficult topic and that he planned to substantiate his own understanding from the Scriptures. As might be expected, Bullinger commenced with a discussion of the relevant pericope in 1 Peter 3:18-4:6. Bullinger pointed out that the difference between them is that Weingartner understood the passages of Scripture in terms of a literal descent to the place of the dead.[35] In the *scopus* Bullinger had already stated that neither the soul nor the body of Christ descended to the place of the dead and that the passages that discuss the *descensus* should be read in terms of synecdoche and metonym.

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30 The marginal note indicates that this is the *scopus rei et sensus articuli* – Bullinger, *De articulo fidei «Descendit ad inferna»* in Hans-Georg vom Berg, Bernhard Schneider and Endre Zsindely (eds.), *HBTS Band 2 Unveröffenlichte Werke der Kappeler Zeit* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 1991), p. 174.

31 Peter Lombard, *Sententiarum Libri Quattor*, III, 22.1-3.

32 Emil Egli, *Heinrich Bullingers Diarium der Jahre 1504-1574* (Basel: Basler Buch und Antiquariatshandlung, 1904), pp. 5-6.

33 This is the sub-heading to chapter 3, Distinction 22 of Book 3 of the *Sentences*.

34 John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, III, 7.

35 Bullinger, *De articulo fidei*, p. 175.

Apart from citing its use in the Creed, Bullinger did not once use the verb 'to descend' (*descendisse*) to refer to Christ's 'descent' to the place of the dead. Rather, he chose to use the verb 'to flow down' (*demanasse*) to point out that the power and the merits of Christ's death 'flowed down' to the saints. This is linked to Bullinger's understanding of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6 where 1 Peter 3:18 and 1 Peter 4:6 function as an *inclusio* which Bullinger understood as explaining how the elect are saved in both the old covenant and in the new covenant. The frequent use of 'believers' (*credentes*) in this work points to Bullinger highlighting the salvation of the elect both before Christ and after Christ. Thereby, Bullinger dismissed any hint of universalism in understanding the import of the *descensus*.

The markers of the *inclusio* in 1 Peter are: 'For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God' and 'For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to the dead, so that they may be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.' Just as the unrighteous in Noah's time refused to listen to God's voice and mocked Noah and his family, Bullinger explained that Peter points out that, in a similar way, the recipients of his epistle are living in the midst of the unrighteous with their ungodly lifestyle who heap abuse on them. The *descendit* clause means that the certainty and the hope of salvation was announced to the righteous who died before the coming of Christ while damnation was proclaimed to the unrighteous. At the *eschaton* both the righteous and the unrighteous shall be judged.

Bullinger also turned his attention to where Christ was during the *triduum*. In response to the question 'surely he could not have been in the place of the dead?' Bullinger replied emphatically, *'Non, Hercule.'*[36] He referred to the trichotomy of Christ as spirit, soul and body. The soul and the body are circumscribed by space whereas the spirit is his divine nature which, appealing to 1 Corinthians 15:28, can be both in the upper heavens as well as always present with those who have died.[37] During the *triduum* the body of Christ was in the grave and his soul was in the hands and glory of God.

As in *Quae animae*, Bullinger had a brief explanation about Abraham's bosom.[38] This is a place for the repose of the souls of the faithful after death where they enjoy eternal life in the presence of God. Bullinger appears to consider that *hades/sheol* could be understood as having

[36] This expression is taken from Cicero's *De republica, Oratio pro Quinctio and Epistulae ad Atticum*. A contemporary expression might be 'no way, Jose!'

[37] Bullinger, *De articulo fidei*, p. 178.

[38] Ibid., p. 179.

two 'compartments,' one for the righteous who were not in prison, but in Abraham's bosom, and one for the unrighteous who suffered punishment in 'prison'. However, for Bullinger, Abraham's bosom was not spatially 'below the earth' but, rather, 'up above' (*ad superos*) where God is. Because Bullinger made no reference to Luke 23:43 and the promise that the thief would be in paradise with Jesus that day, no comment was made on the relationship between Abraham's bosom and paradise. Furthermore, Bullinger repeated from *Quae animae* the fact that those in Abraham's bosom were reached, through faith, by the power of the covenant as they are in the covenant with the faithful Abraham.

V. BULLINGER'S COMMENTARIES

Bullinger's commentaries on Acts (1533) and 1 and 2 Peter (1534) reveal developments in his understanding of the *descendit* clause. In his comments on 1 Peter 3:19-20 the reader is referred to his Acts commentary written about seven months before the 1 Peter commentary.[39] The comments on Acts 2:22-32 emphasized both the true humanity as well as the deity of Christ. In particular, Bullinger referred to the Hebrew word (*'ish*) for 'man' to describe Christ's humanity.[40] He underscored that Christ's body would not experience decay.[41] However, he indicated that he was aware of Augustine's comment in *De praesentia Dei ad Dardanum* (417) ['Concerning the Presence of God: To Dardanus'] on this very sermon of Peter stating that Augustine 'reckoned that the soul of Christ actually descended to the place of the dead, but he suffered nothing.'[42] Furthermore, Bullinger indicated that he knew of many who had genuinely laboured to understand this difficult clause of the Creed but that very few had made use of what Augustine had written to Dardanus.

Bullinger recognized that *inferos* could be taken as referring to the grave in passages such as Genesis 44 which, in fact, represented his understanding of the *descendit* clause in 1533. However, he underscored that *sheol* is not the same as hell (*tartarus*). It is not 'the place of punishment but the grave and the pit.' In other words, he wanted it to be made

[39] *Kommentare zu den neutestamentlichen Briefe Hebräerbrief – Katolische Briefe*, ed. by Luca Baschera, HBTS, vol. 9 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2019), p. 245.

[40] Heinrich Bullinger, *In Acta Apostolorum Heinrychi Bullingeri Commentariorum libri VI* (Zürich: Froschauer, 1533), p. 18.

[41] Ibid., p. 19.

[42] Ibid.

absolutely unequivocal that for Christ to descend[43] to *inferos* indicated that Christ truly died like all men and experienced all that human death entails. Yet his death was not because of any sin in him. Moreover, Christ did not suffer at all. This may be contrasted with the view of Calvin who understood Christ to have *suffered* the pains of *inferos* while on the cross *before* his actual burial. Furthermore, Bullinger's view was diametrically opposed to any concept of the harrowing of the place of the dead. He was adamant about affirming Christ's finished work of salvation for the elect, from Adam onwards, through his death on the cross. Bullinger declared that a proper understanding of the 'descent' of Christ was essentially the power of his redemption reaching down to the faithful patriarchs. He underlined that Christ descended 'in power, especially, not in person.'[44] Bullinger based this on his understanding of the *en ho* of 1 Peter 3:19 where he pointed out 'what truly is the spirit of Christ unless it is the power, life and evidence of the merit of Christ?'[45] Because Bullinger did not consider a literal descent to the place of the dead he twice mentioned that speaking of the descent *ad inferos* was speaking by means of rhetorical devices. Hence, he regarded proclaiming or preaching to the dead is the gospel 'that is the power of the redemption of Christ that profits the dead holy patriarchs.'[46]

Bullinger was clearly not comfortable with a spatial descent according to the accepted cosmological world view of the time. This might account for his preference for 'to the dead in Hades' (*ad inferos*) rather than 'to Hades' (*ad inferna*) with a focus on Christ reaching the dead saints rather than the place of the departed. He said that 'we would understand *inferos* to refer to those who are dead just as we understand *superos* to refer to those who are alive.'[47] Lest he be misunderstood, Bullinger wrote:

> Thus, it is not necessary for you to inquire, "Could it be that the soul of Christ (which however was in the hands of the Father) would have descended all the way to *inferos*, to *limbum* or to *tartarum* to the point of resurrection? What did he do there? And what did he suffer there?" These questions are truly unnecessary.[48]

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43 Unlike his *De articulo fidei* Bullinger was comfortable to use *descendisse* of Christ in his commentary on Acts.

44 Ibid., p. 19.

45 Ibid., p. 20.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., p. 19.

48 Ibid., p. 20.

Bullinger referred to the fact that Cyprian was of the opinion that the clause was not in the original Roman Creed but that it was added from that of the Eastern Church in order to oppose the Valentinians by affirming the true death of the body of Christ. Hamm may well be correct to suggest that Bullinger had been influenced here by Erasmus's work on the Creed (1533).[49]

In his commentary on 1 Peter 3:18-4:6 Bullinger took 'but was vivified in the spirit in which' (*sed vivificatus spiritu in quo*) in 3:18-19a to refer to the power of Christ's passion. He pointed out that Peter understood 'spirit' here to refer to 'the divine and life-giving power of Christ, beautifully stating what the spirit is in the death of Christ, that is, that it consists of life of the mortals.'[50] As in his earlier works, Bullinger emphasized that it was the vivified power of Christ that reached to the saints who are dead. He stated that 'It was life and also redemption that was gained through the death of Christ that was proclaimed to those who have died or are in the place of the dead, that is, what profited the dead who formerly were the holy patriarchs.'[51] The proclamation of the gospel to the saints in the place of the dead 'is none other than to announce redemption.' Based on his understanding of 1 Peter 4:6 Bullinger revealed that his exposition of this exegetical crux was by ethiology or personification (*per ethiologiam sive prosopopoeiam* (from the Greek *prosōpopoiia*)). This second term refers to a rhetorical device that was often used by Cicero and Quintillian to ascribe human characteristics to a non-person. For Bullinger, to state that Peter understood the power and merit of Christ's death as proclaimed to the saints in the place of the dead can be spoken of as Christ descending to the place of the dead. Thus, unlike in *De articulo*, the verb *descendere* was used several times by Bullinger of Christ with this qualification.

It seemed that by the time Bullinger penned his commentary on 1 Peter he was more open to the possibility that Christ's soul descended to the place of the dead as he was less strident in opposing this understanding. He graciously and humbly wrote:

> However, if anyone contends at all that it was actually the soul of Christ that descended to the holy patriarchs, we do not exceedingly cry out in protest (as we have testified in our commentary on Acts 2). Meanwhile, I propose that

[49] This work was written at the request of Thomas Boleyn, 1st Earl of Wiltshire, and had the title *A plain and godly Exposition or Declaration of the Commune Creed*. See Hamm, *Descendit*, 101-103 for a discussion that Erasmus mistook Rufinus' work on the Creed to have been written by Cyprian and that he misunderstood Rufinus because the section was not properly read in context.

[50] Baschera (ed.), *HBTS*, vol. 9, p. 244.

[51] Ibid., p. 244.

> such an opinion that is seen to be elicited from the words of Peter be weighed up by impartial readers.[52]

Nonetheless, in the very next sentence, Bullinger wondered how it could be possible for such impartial or fair readers not to know that the soul of Christ was in the care of the Father throughout the *triduum*.

Although the text of Peter's epistle mentions that the disobedient dead are in a 'prison,' Bullinger was aware that, over the centuries, it was generally understood that the righteous dead were kept in a sort of 'prison'. For Bullinger, this is neither the limbo of the patriarchs (*limbus patrum*) nor purgatory. There is a marginal note, 'The prison of the saints' (*Carcer sanctorum*), alongside the comment that the locality of the prison (for the holy patriarchs and the elect) is unknown but that it is a place of consolation which he identified as the bosom of Abraham. Furthermore, he cited Tertullian from his *Adversus Marcionem* ['Against Marcion'] to indicate that the bosom of Abraham is an elevated section of *inferos*.[53] Because there can be no certainty concerning the 'spatial' perspective of *inferos*, Bullinger reiterated that the souls of the saints who have died before Christ are indeed purified by Christ's death and added the comment, 'I do not know whether in uncertain things which God keeps to himself he thus permits to be the subject of conjecture.'[54]

One significant feature on the comments on Christ's *descensus* in the 1 Peter commentary of Bullinger is his citing of Zechariah 9:11 in which God refers to 'the blood of my covenant with you.' This verse is part of a section of messianic prophecy in Zechariah which links salvation of the nations with the covenant. Bullinger constantly emphasized that both the elect of the old covenant and the elect of the new covenant are saved through Christ's sacrifice of blood on the cross.

As reflected in his earlier works, Bullinger understood 1 Peter 4:6 as stating that the *descensus* affirms the salvation of the souls of the saints who have departed who are now living in the spirit with Christ where they are rejoicing. But, together with the whole of humanity, they will be judged at the *eschaton* when all will be judged according to the flesh or corporeal existence. This is when the souls of the righteous will be joined to their resurrection bodies. In the meantime, the bodies of the righteous do not resurrect while waiting for the Day of Judgment and for their glo-

52 Ibid., p. 251.
53 Ibid., p. 245.
54 Ibid., p. 245.

rification. On that day, the souls of the righteous will be clothed with a resurrected body and 'surely not with the pure substance of the spirit.'[55]

Bullinger made no reference to the *descensus* in his discussions in his commentaries on Matthew 12:4, Romans 10:6, 7 or Philippians 2:10. In his commentary on Ephesians (1537) he understood the reference to *descendit* in Ephesians 4:7 to refer to Christ's incarnation and passion.[56]

In his commentary on Luke (1557) he has a marked different text at Luke 16:22-23 from that of the Vulgate. Bullinger used the translation: *Mortuus est autem & dives, ac sepultus est. Atque in tartaro sublatis oculis suis, cum esset in tormentis videt Abraham eminus & Lazarum in sinu eius.*[57] The main difference is that Bullinger used 'hell' (*tartaro*) rather than Hades (*inferno*). Significantly, Bullinger refers here to the rich man to be in hell (*tartarus*) after death while Lazarus was in the bosom of Abraham. This reflects Bullinger's understanding that the place of the dead is divided into two compartments.

VI. THE DECADES (1549-1551)

Bullinger wrote *The Decades* from 1549 to 1551. His discussion about the *descendit* clause is found in both Sermon I.7 and Sermon III.8. The passage from Sermon I.7 (see above) that is referred to by Hamm is followed by Bullinger doubting that 'he was buried' and 'he descended into hell' to be a hendiadys. This is because the second phrase is both vague and obscure rather than clear and straightforward which would be expected in a hendiadys.[58] Thus, Bullinger referred to Augustine's letter to Evodius in which he 'tortured himself' over the clause. Furthermore, he cited Augustine's letter to Dardanus, 'Concerning the presence of God' (*De Dei Praesentia*), where he wrote that 'the Lord entered hell (*tartarum*) but experienced no suffering.'[59] Having reconsidered what others, in particular Augustine, had written on the topic Bullinger proceeded in the following section to set before his readers his own present understanding. Because this section is critical to correctly understand Bullinger's thought

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55 Ibid., p. 252. Here Bullinger is echoing what Zwingli wrote to Haller – Zwingli, *Werke*, VIII (1914), 762.

56 *Kommentare zu den neutestamentlichen Briefen: Gal – Eph – Phil – Kol*, ed. by Luca Baschera, *HBTS*, vol. 7 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2014), p. 170.

57 Heinrich Bullinger, *In luculentum et sacrosanctum Evangelium domini nostri Iesu Christi secundum commentariorum lib. IX* (Zürich: Froschauer, 1557), p. 91v.

58 A similar point was made by Calvin, *Institutes*, II.16.8.

59 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 88.

and since the English translation in the Parker edition is somewhat free and, at times, a paraphrase, the following translation is given:

> For a long while it seemed to us to understand this article more simply, as follows: if we realize that the virtue of the death of Christ actually flowed to those who have departed and benefited them, that is, on account of Christ, all the dead patriarchs and the faithful men before the coming of Christ were saved from eternal death. Just as Saint Peter mentioned that the Lord went in the spirit and proclaimed to the disobedient spirits and those held back in prison. Certainly, he made known to them the just sentence of damnation because of the death of Christ for, when they were living, they did not believe with Noah himself and those with him in the coming of the Messiah. Certainly, concerning both *inferos* or *inferna* we understand that it is not the place of punishment determined for the wicked but the faithful who have departed just as by *superos* we signify those presently alive thus far. Consequently, the soul (*anima*) of Christ descended to those who are dead (*inferos*), that is, those who have been carried to the bosom of Abraham where all the dead faithful are gathered. Thus, when the thief was crucified with him, he said, 'Today, you will be with me in paradise' (Luke 23:43) he promised him the shared inheritance of life and of the blessed spirits. Concerning the bosom of Abraham our Lord discussed this fully in Luke 16:19-31. One may truly say that the Lord descended, however, this is in a manner of speaking. Otherwise from Luke, it is clear that the bosom of Abraham is far separated from *tartarus* and certainly situated in a lofty position. However, to inquire inquisitively concerning these things and examine them is to be curious people rather than pious people. We confess in this article that souls are immortal and that immediately after corporeal death pass over to life and that all the saints, in fact, from the beginning of the world are by faith sanctified through Christ and in Christ and through Christ receive the inheritance of eternal life.[60]

The discussion commences with the comment that, for a long while, Bullinger held the view that the *descensus* concerned Christ's virtue and not his person. But he is now willing to assert that the *anima* of Christ descended to *inferos*. He no longer referred to Christ *descending* as being by way of a rhetorical device. Bullinger clarified the use of the terms as he understood them. He did not equate *inferos* with *hades* or *sheol*. *Inferos* referred to the saints or the elect who are dead whereas *inferna* referred to the place of the dead. That is why Bullinger preferred *ad inferos*. *Superos*, on the other hand, referred to those who are living. From a spatial perspective, he equated *inferos* with the bosom of Abraham which is the place where the departed saints experience joy *in the presence of God*. In Paul-

[60] Ibid., pp. 88-89.

ine terminology, for Bullinger, for the faithful who have died to be in the bosom of Abraham means to be 'in Christ.' This is clearly enunciated in Chapter XXVI of *The Second Helvetic Confession* (1566) which states '… we believe that the faithful, after bodily death, go directly to Christ.' This enabled him to deal with the conundrum he had grappled with concerning Luke 23:46. He further equated it with paradise. Moreover, spatially he regarded *inferos*/the bosom of Abraham/paradise as separated very far from *tartarus* and high and lofty. Although he did not specifically unpack it in detail, Bullinger was effectively indicating that *hades/sheol* has two compartments, one for the saints who experienced joy in God's presence and one (*tartarus*) for the wicked who suffered torture. As Bullinger understood it, the moment a person dies he or she goes either to *inferos*/bosom of Abraham or to *tartarus*. The souls of the elect are joined to their resurrected bodies, which are spiritual bodies, after the judgment of the living and the dead on the Day of Judgment. Since the souls of the righteous are waiting for the Day of Judgment it may be said that they are in a 'prison' whereas the 'prison' that Peter mentions is for the disobedient, that is, *tartarus*. According to the convention of the time Bullinger was satisfied to use *descendisse* to refer to Christ going to the saints who are dead.

VII. BULLINGER'S LATER WORKS

Bullinger's work *Resurrectio* (1545) is primarily about the resurrection of Christ and the bodily resurrection of believers. Although there is no comment on the *descensus*, the section on heaven gives a window into his thinking that is relevant to the *descendit* clause.[61] This is particularly the case as this work was written just prior to *The Decades*. In this section, Bullinger acknowledged that Scripture speaks of heaven from several perspectives. Nonetheless, from a spatial perspective, heaven is a place. Heaven is God's habitation above us as well as the habitation for the blessed souls. Bullinger pointed out that 'although God is infinite and not circumscribed by place' it is valid to refer to heaven as a certain, particular place. He further asserted that the human nature of Christ is circumscribed and localized in heaven. He regarded heaven as having 'a certain locality' which 'is above us.'[62] Just as Bullinger wrestled with understand-

[61] Heinrich Bullinger, *Resurrectio de gloriosa domini nostri Iesu Christi nostrorumque corporum resurrectione & vita sanctorum perpetua libellus* (Zürich: Froschauer, 1545), pp. 16r-18r.

[62] 'This heaven, I say, is the residence of the blessed. It has a certain locality in which was received Jesus when he ascended to heaven,' Ibid, p. 17v; 'Accordingly, the Lord Jesus is in heaven which is above us,' Heinrich Bullinger,

ing heaven as a localized place he was also wrestling prior to *The Decades* with understanding the nature of *inferos*/*inferna* as a localized place.

In *Compendium christianae religionis* (1556) ['Summary of the Christian Religion'] Bullinger discussed the articles of the Creed. The wording of the Creed has 'he descended to Hades' (*descendit ad inferna*) but the marginal note for this discussion has 'he descended to the dead' (*descendit ad inferos*) which indicates Bullinger's focus on the *descensus*. Bullinger pointed out that, firstly, the *descensus* demonstrated Christ experienced the full extent of human death. This was an affirmation of his true humanity. Secondly, Bullinger stated that 'his soul was separated from the body and accepted into the bosom of Abraham, that is, into the peace and comfort of all the holy patriarchs who have now departed from the living.'[63] He further reiterated the finished work on the cross for salvation. This meant that the purpose of the *descensus* was not to provide salvation. The death and passion of Christ was 'sufficiently efficacious for the redemption of all the holy patriarchs and, for that matter, all who at any time after Adam onwards obtained salvation through Christ.'[64]

As might be expected, Bullinger's catechism (1561) has questions and answers on the articles of the Creed. The answer to the question concerning *descendit ad inferna* is as follows:

> I believe concerning Christ, that at his corporeal death his soul went to the souls of the departed but that he himself, through his death, made salvation for all the holy patriarchs who have died since the foundation of the world. Furthermore, I believe that, through his death for all of us who believe in him, he shattered eternal death and freed from all the terror of *tartarus*.[65]

VIII. CONCLUSION

Bullinger's interest in the *descendit* clause was related to his oft repeated declaration that the reformers had rediscovered the 'old faith' that is expressed in Scripture and expounded by the early church fathers as opposed to the 'new faith' introduced by Rome. That is why *The Decades* commences with a discussion of the four general synods or councils of

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Compendium christianae religionis, decem libris comprehensum (Zürich: Froschauer, 1556), p. 76v.

63 Heinrich Bullinger, *Compendium christianae religionis decem libris comprehensum* (Zürich: Froschauer, 1556), p. 76v.

64 Ibid.

65 Heinrich Bullinger, *Catechesis pro adultioribus scripta de his potissimum capitibus* (Zürich: Froschauer, 1561), p. 37r.

the church to underscore the orthodoxy of Zurich. This is followed by sermons on the word of God, true faith and justification by faith. Then Bullinger successively gives an explanation of each of the articles of the Apostles' Creed.

When Bullinger first wrote on the *descensus* it was in terms of the power or the merit of Christ's death reaching down to the righteous dead. It was a *descensus* by way of a rhetorical device for the person of Christ did not actually descend. By the time of his commentary on 1 Peter (1534) he still maintained this perspective but would not argue with those who taught that the body of Christ was in the tomb during the *triduum* while his soul descended to the dead. However, in *The Decades* (1549-1551) Bullinger began to take the view that the soul of Christ *descended ad inferos* during the *triduum*. This understanding was more clearly enunciated in his *Compendium* and his catechism.

Bruce Gordon has pointed out that Bullinger devoted more attention in his works in the 1550s and the 1560s to death and the afterlife.[66] He acknowledged the three-tiered world of the biblical times and of the church fathers and, therefore, viewed 'descending' as anthropomorphic language to describe Christ's going to the place of the dead. For Bullinger, therefore, the *descensus* was spatial but not a literal descent to the underworld. Referring to Bullinger's tract *Concerning Heaven and the Right Hand of God* (1561),[67] Gordon noted that, for Bullinger:

> Christ has revealed that there is another life after this one and, further, that God has created a particular place (*'ein gewüß ort'*) for the blessed. These two statements belong together: heaven is a real and circumscribed space where God, Christ and the blessed dwell.[68]

The development of Bullinger's understanding and conviction concerning the *descensus* illustrates his attempt to correctly interpret the whole canon, judiciously assess what was written by the church fathers and evaluate church tradition. In particular, he constantly affirmed the full divinity and full humanity of Christ and the sufficiency of Christ's death for the salvation of the elect in both the old and new covenants.

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66 Bruce Gordon, '"In my Father's house there are many mansions": Henrich Bullinger on Death and the Afterlife', in *A Linking of Heaven and Earth: Studies in Religious and Cultural History in Honor of Carlos M.N. Eire*, ed. by Emily Michelson, Scott K. Taylor and Mary Noll Venables (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 159-73.

67 Heinrich Bullinger, *Von dem Himmel un(d) der Gråchten Gottes* (Zürich: Froschauer, 1561).

68 Gordon, 'Death and the Afterlife', p. 168.

Hamm's article has done a great service in stimulating further discussion and research amongst Reformed scholars on the *descensus* as he considers the contributions of the patristics, the Reformers, the discussions at the Westminster Assembly and provides an overview of key exegetical cruces of 1 Peter 3:18-22. This present article is a modest contribution to this discussion. It has pointed out that Hamm made conclusions about Bullinger's understanding of the *descensus* by inadvertently not reading him in full context. For Bullinger, the *descendit* clause was an article in its own right in the Creed and not a rephrasing of Christ's burial. By studying Bullinger's *oevre* as a whole it can be seen that, although his view did develop with time and further reflection, he never doubted that this particular clause is integral to the Creed. For Bullinger, it is biblical, is catholic because it is attested by the church fathers and is important for fully understanding the person and work of Christ.

Reviews

Bavinck: A Critical Biography. By James Eglinton. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020. ISBN: 9781540961358 (cloth). xxiv + 450pp. £26.39.

The Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck (1854-1921) is one of the most significant theologians in the Reformed tradition. The recent publication (2003-2008) of his four volume *Reformed Dogmatics* in English has introduced him to a much wider audience and it is good that a new biography has been written to further that work of making Bavinck more widely known.

This biography is a significant contribution to our understanding, not only of Bavinck himself but of the whole neo-Calvinist movement of which he was a leader. We are indebted to the author, James Eglinton, Meldrum Senior Lecturer in Reformed Theology at New College in the University of Edinburgh. The detailed archival research undertaken and the depth of scholarship involved is impressive and apparent throughout, yet it is written in a most readable way, making it accessible to a wide audience of readers.

Previous biographies and biographical comments conspired to paint a picture of a 'divided' Bavinck. They spoke of an 'orthodox' Bavinck and a 'modern' (in theological and philosophical terms) Bavinck. Eglinton examined this thesis in an earlier volume, *Trinity and Organism* and found it wanting. He concluded that Bavinck lived as an orthodox theologian in a changing culture and remained a 'son of the Secession' (referring to the establishment of the Christian Reformed Church in 1834, of which his father became a minister). Given the 'collapse of the "two Bavinck" hermeneutic' (p. xx), Eglinton sets out in this volume to portray an 'integrated' Bavinck, who was both 'orthodox' and 'modern' at the same time, a truly scientific theologian. Eglinton's earlier book was concerned with Bavinck's theological method but now he turns to a full-scale biography.

As Eglinton demonstrates, Bavinck was born into early modern society and lived his adult years in late modern society. The most significant point of change being 1848, the year of revolutions, after which the Netherlands soon became a democratic state with a constitutional monarchy, significant civil liberties and a functional separation of church and state. His father and others having been persecuted (and some fined or imprisoned) for leaving the state church at the secession of 1834, Herman Bavinck grew up in a society where one could choose one's religious allegiance without fear of reprisals.

Throughout the book, one theme returns frequently, namely, the nature and location of Christian theology. Should it have a place in the university, or should it be taught in a Church-controlled seminary? Bavinck's life was somewhat framed by this dichotomy. He started his education at the Theological School in Kampen (the school of the secession church) but was dissatisfied and, after a year, went to the University of Leiden. Many of the Seceders were horrified and some were angry at his father for permitting this but Bavinck wanted a 'scientific' education and believed firmly that theology was the 'queen' of the sciences and ought to be at the heart of a university, influencing all of the other subjects.

The same dichotomy surfaced again in his teaching career. He began as a lecturer in the Theological School at Kampen but ended up in the Free University of Amsterdam which had been founded by Abraham Kuyper. He had previously turned down several offers from Kuyper to make this move, always hoping that the Theological School and the Free University would merge. Although Bavinck only served a short pastorate, he was actively involved in the church throughout his life and worked hard to seek the unification of his own Christian Reformed Church (Seceder) with Abraham Kuyper's Dolerende, which was finally accomplished in 1892. Bavinck's great concern thereafter was that the Theological School in Kampen (Seceder) and the Free University of Amsterdam (notionally Dolerende) should be united but in this he failed. Only when it became clear that this was not going to happen did he move to Amsterdam. In the Free University it was possible to do what was not possible in either Kampen or Leiden, namely, to work out a Christian Reformed theology which impacted on the whole of the academic curriculum and indeed, the whole of life.

Kuyper's vision of a Calvinism which is not defined purely in terms of soteriology (the 'five points') but rather impacts on all of thought and life, including science, medicine, the arts, literature, politics and everything else, was astonishing in its design and accomplishment. It led Kuyper to become a minister, to found a Christian newspaper, to establish a Christian political party, to create a Christian university and ultimately to become Prime Minister of the Netherlands. This understanding of the nature of Calvinism soon became known as neo-Calvinism and was taken up enthusiastically by Bavinck. One key element of this neo-Calvinism was the development of a Christian 'worldview' and this was a key theme in Bavinck's writing, both as a subject in itself and as a methodology for considering other subjects.

Like Kuyper, Bavinck was widely involved in promoting Calvinism, in his writing, in his ministry in the church, in his involvement in Kuyper's Anti-Revolutionary political party, in his time as editor of a Christian

newspaper and in his period of service as a (part-time) member of the Dutch Parliament.

Bavinck's main focus in his teaching career was Christian dogmatics. This accelerated later when other teaching responsibilities were withdrawn, enabling him to concentrate more directly on teaching and writing in this area. The legacy of this work is his *Reformed Dogmatics* but, given his vision for a Calvinism which impacts every area of life, he wrote and spoke widely on other matters: ethics, Christian education, Christianity and culture, psychology, philosophy, evangelism and foreign missions, the expansion of voting rights, education for girls, modernism and much more. He was also involved in the production of a new Dutch translation of the Bible. He truly was a polymath and his influence was widely recognised. He received a knighthood from the Queen of the Netherlands and was appointed to membership in the Royal Academy of Sciences. Indeed, when he visited the USA, as a distinguished Dutch visitor, he was granted a meeting with President Roosevelt.

In the final years of his life, Bavinck became more and more concerned by the influence of Marx and Nietzsche on Europe in general and the Netherlands in particular. He saw before his own eyes the disintegration of Christian culture and the replacement of religion by atheism. This being the case, he began to focus much more on an apologetic which sought to create a coalition to affirm Christianity.

Dr Eglinton has produced a fine volume which, as the various endorsements of the book affirm, is likely to be the standard biography of Bavinck for generations to come. What might we expect next? Clearly, it is not possible in a biography of this nature to expound in detail the 'content' of the *Reformed Dogmatics* and to compare and contrast it with other dogmatic writing in the Reformed tradition, such as the work of Cunningham, Orr, Heppe, Hodge and Warfield. Might Dr Eglinton consider writing a companion volume to Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*, expounding the content, showing its distinctive moves and setting it in the wider context of Reformed theology? One can only hope...

Everyone who takes Reformed theology seriously should read this book. Scottish readers might well reflect on the differences between the Calvinism of Scotland and the neo-Calvinism of the Netherlands and consider how our own Scottish theology might be reviewed and reconstructed.

A.T.B. McGowan, Rutherford Centre for Reformed Theology

Exodus, Freedom to Serve God. By Antony Billington. (The Gateway Seven Series). London: IVP, 2019. ISBN: 978-1-78974-084-4 print; 987-1-78974-085-1 eBook. 80pp. £4.99.

Ezekiel, Living in the Light of God's Presence. By Antony Billington. (The Gateway Seven Series). London: IVP, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-78974-161-2. 80pp. £4.99

In the words of Tracy Cotterell, the series editor, '*The Gateway Seven* series selects seven books of the Bible representing seven genres: Proverbs (Wisdom), Exodus (Law), 1 Peter (Letters), Ezekiel (Prophecy), Ruth (Narrative), Mark (Gospel), and Revelation (Apocalyptic). The series, beginning with Proverbs, offers study guides for each of the books with a whole-life discipleship perspective. The mini-features sprinkled through the studies, along with the questions and thoughts for discussion, help you understand each book within its background and genre as well as the content of the book itself. Each study has been crafted with the same desire: to offer a gateway to a deeper love of God's word and richer insights into its implications for all of life, Monday through Sunday' (https://licc.org.uk/ourresources/gateway-seven-series/).

Crafted they are, carefully chosen and beautifully presented. Each study emerged from the 'Bible Days' LICC (London Institute for Contemporary Christianity) runs for leaders, preachers and church members. SETS member Antony Billington is Theological Advisor to LICC, which was founded in 1982 out of John Stott's desire to enable Christians and churches to engage with scripture and contemporary culture. Antony also pastors the Beacon Church, Ashton-in-Makerfield, and is thus very well-placed to approach three of these 'Gateway Guides.' So far, I have seen the first two; Proverbs is his third.

After an introduction to the series and the Bible book, participants are invited to identify the frontline where God has placed them, 'an everyday place where you live, work, study, or play, and where you're likely to connect with people who aren't Christians' (*Exodus* p. 15; *Ezekiel* p. 13). With that in mind, the studies recognise the size of the task and encourage us to read right through Exodus and Ezekiel in the six weeks the studies take. Then the studies begin.

The studies link with *The Bible Project* videos which 'say a lot and say it well' (*Exodus* p. 11; *Ezekiel* p. 8). Both Exodus and Ezekiel are big books to tackle in Bible study groups, and Antony has chosen to emphasize encounter with God and our purpose as his people. 'First thoughts' are followed by the selected text in full, questions to enable us to engage, commentary alongside, a story to show how a person or group have been

impacted by the text, and a review article (for example an overview of Exodus; a description of the prophet's role). Each section provides space to write impressions, notes and lessons, communicating the expectation we will take time to invest.

As we have come to expect from LICC, these are high quality, clear and insightful introductions to the message of each book and the range of writing that makes up the single scripture story. While we wrestle with how to connect and keep up with our culture, LICC's vision is for all our churches to recognise the potential impact of our congregations scattered during the week. I said before that I believe this to be the heart of a new reformation.

Both the writer and the layouts of these studies serve the text faithfully and communicate the message very clearly, and connect these Old Testament books through to Jesus and the further horizon of the New Testament. I cannot wait to use them in my congregation.

Mike Parker, Edinburgh

Anglicanism—A Reformed Catholic Tradition. By Gerald Bray. Bellingham WA: Lexham Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-1-68359-4369 print; 978-1-68359-4376 digital. 169pp. £23.99; Kindle £7.30.

Across almost all our historic denominations, significant realignments are going on. While established patterns crumble and change shape, new networks emerge. We need the ministry of perspective to discern where these changes fit with both the past and the future.

Gerald Bray brings just such perspective. He reveals his instincts as he dedicates this book to his 'Anglican students at Beeson Divinity School who are bearing witness to this tradition in an ecumenical and evangelical context'. This beautifully presented book is deceptively short, tightly packed from his years of teaching and research in church history and theology. A brilliant introduction to all things Anglican/Episcopalian, it offers a panoramic survey of the origins of Anglican church thinking, and as up-to-date a snapshot of contemporary movements within Anglicanism as you could wish for given the time-lags in publishing.

Bray's main thrust is to show Anglicanism is firmly in the Western, Protestant, Reformed Catholic tradition, despite the unusual circumstances of its separation from Rome in the sixteenth century, and thus 'an integral part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church that is confessed in the Nicene Creed' (p. 54). He has written many times on the foundations of Anglicanism, notably in '*The Faith we Confess—An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*' (Latimer Trust, 2009). At the heart of this book is a fresh exposition of The 39 Articles of Religion, 'the Church

of England's confession of faith' (p. 16), which reached final form in 1571 and have been published in many Anglican Prayer Books since. Either side of this exposition is a comprehensive introduction ('What is Anglicanism?'), and three brief and immensely useful chapters on 'The Book of Common Prayer', 'Church Government (Ecclesiology)' and 'The Anglican World Today'.

Along the way, readers may find some surprises. On Page 1, 'Anglicanism as we think of it today is essentially a nineteenth century invention…' Page 10 reveals that calling the Monarch 'Defender of the Faith' was the title given to Henry VIII by Pope Leo X after the treatise he wrote against Martin Luther (*Assertion of the Seven Sacraments*). Page 15 examines the oft-heard assumption that 'Many modern Anglicans define their church as a "middle way" between Roman Catholicism and a Calvinistic kind of Protestantism [In Scotland, Presbyterianism]'; 'but this is incorrect'. And on page 16 we hear that *The 39 Articles*… preceded 'the more detailed Westminster Confession of Faith which was composed nearly a century later and began as a conscious attempt to improve the 39 Articles… [p. 22] *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, composed in 1646, was largely the work of members of the Church of England and in that sense can claim to be an Anglican document.'

I do have two tiny quibbles. Bray describes 'Anglicanism as Reformed, not Lutheran, Anabaptist, or *Pentecostal/Charismatic*' (p. 55). As I understand it, 'charismatic' is a stream running through churches and across churchmanship lines, including many Anglican churches, and not to be confused with Pentecostalism. And his description of churches like the Scottish Episcopal Church as 'Rebel' (p. 161) might better be 'Churches with Rebel roots' if many of my contemporaries are not to dismiss his analysis.

In short, this book brilliantly and succinctly captures the essence of Anglicanism. It will be, in turn, helpful for Episcopalians and Anglicans to understand their family roots; a valuable summary for non-Anglicans, wondering what kind of animal we are; and infuriating for those who like their theology tied down more closely and their bases covered and for whom Anglicanism is far too open-ended. For me, therein lies its genius, its usefulness in both public worship and apologetics, and its flexibility and portability across global cultures.

Bray ends this book wondering what the future holds. He is very well aware of global distinctives and present fluidity: 'Whatever happens, Anglicanism is not static and is certain to look very different in 2100 from the way it appears now, though at deeper levels it may still be much the same… Quite what that will mean in practice, we shall have to wait and

see' (p. 166). Indeed, pray for us, and may we be obedient as the Lord leads us.

Mike Parker, Edinburgh

If Jesus is Lord: Loving our Enemies in an Age of Violence. By Ronald J. Sider. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019. ISBN: 9780801036286. xvi + 240pp. £16.99.

The recent five-year extension of the new START treaty between the United States and Russia may help to relieve anxieties of a possible accidental nuclear inferno. Nevertheless, a book on pacifism is timely, given that the rise in the number of smaller nations possessing atomic weapons means the fear of nuclear conflict has not gone away. Ronald Sider, a well-known pacifist advocate, provides in this book a strong stimulus and an important resource not only for fellow pacifists, but also for 'just war' defenders, to review their thinking and praying about war and peace in the 21st century.

The book begins with a review of Jesus' rejection of the military messiahship anticipated by his contemporaries. Sider goes on to note Jesus' dismissal of the crowd's desire to declare him king and his deliberate choice of peaceful symbolism in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. This is followed by a review of the Sermon on the Mount, focusing on the command to love our enemies. Next there is an exploration of Jesus' other teachings, including his inaugural sermon in the Nazareth synagogue, his refusal to call fire down on inhospitable Samaritans, and his challenge to disciples to take up their cross. Sider then passes to review the teaching on peace in the rest of the New Testament, and follows this with an appraisal of texts considered to be problematic for pacifists, like 'I did not come to bring peace, but a sword' (Matt. 10:34).

The second half of the book focuses on examining issues arising in following Jesus as Lord in our violent age. For Sider, the overriding theological issue is that the New Testament derives Christian ethics from God's redeeming activity in Christ on the cross, rather than from the fallen condition of humanity. The author freely acknowledges that pacifism presents problems for thinkers like, C. S. Lewis and Oliver O'Donovan, who regard it as socially irresponsible. Needless to say, Sider robustly refutes such charges, before making the point that Just War Thinking also has its difficulties. The book ends with a review of Christians and killing in Church History.

This book has much to commend it. It provides an enthusiastic introduction to Christian pacifism, and does so by arguing biblically and theologically. It recognizes that pacifists and Just War advocates can, and

should, cooperate in many ways to minimize social violence and to reduce the threat of war. On the other hand, Sider's biblical interpretation raises some questions. For example, he grants minimal recognition of the state as divinely sanctioned, and in effect ignores its right to 'bear the sword' (Rom. 13:4) in self-defence. And when civil rulers do 'bear the sword', invariably their actions are characterized as 'violence' rather than 'force'.

Furthermore, making Jesus' command to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44) the master hermeneutic in understanding the Old Testament, bypasses some key features of Old Testament ethics. The fact that the command to love enemies and the prohibition of killing were already established in Old Testament ethics is glossed over, while, in contrast, divine commands to kill in specific instances are highlighted. The ambivalence of these divine directives undoubtedly creates problems for all Christian interpreters, not least for Sider. He quotes Greg Boyd's assertion that 'God allows the human authors of Scripture to choose to say things about God that are false' (p. 157). While appearing sympathetic to Boyd's stance, Sider also wonders whether it differs substantially from the view that says the Old Testament is wrong and must be rejected at certain points. His indecision leaves this important issue hanging in the air.

Sider's treatment of nonviolence and the atonement also raises questions. He readily affirms the reality of God's wrath against sinners and rejects divine child abuse theories, but he refutes Packer's assertion of propitiation being the only means whereby God's no could become a yes. 'An infinite, all-knowing, all-loving God could have chosen any number of ways to forgive us' (p. 189).

Sider's theology may in places be open to question, but his pacifist zeal will challenge his readers to become peacemakers, ready to pray more and to work harder for peace in our fallen, broken world.

Fergus Macdonald, Edinburgh

Mere Discipleship: Growing in Wisdom and Hope. By Alister E. McGrath. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2018. ISBN: 978-0281079940. xiii+158pp. £9.99.

In this book, Alister McGrath has gathered a series of lectures, addresses and sermons, given over the period of 2010–2017, which focus on the area of discipleship: specifically, what McGrath terms 'discipleship of the mind'. In chapter one, he explains, 'I want to commend a "discipleship of the mind", in which we deliberately and intentionally cultivate a Christian habit of thought, as part of the grace-wrought process of transformation by the gospel' (p. 3). Being a collection of public addresses, the style of writing is accessible at the popular level. This book would be useful to

those concerned about how the mind, intelligence and thought can impact and be shaped by faith in Jesus Christ; especially ministers or interested lay people. This book does not provide anything like a 'discipleship programme' but acts as a stimulant for further reflection.

The book is split into three sections. In section one, McGrath provides five reflections on this main topic: these include exploring the potential ways faith interacts with our minds; how the creeds or confessions of the Church provide a framework which shapes our understanding of faith; the importance of the Church community in guiding that understanding; the significant role of books as part of this faith journey; and using the image of a balcony and road to describe Christian discipleship. McGrath's argument is refreshing. His aim seems to be to reclaim ground which has perceived to have been 'lost' to atheism and secularism. He argues persuasively that the rational mind is as much a part of the journey of faith as, say, the 'heart', and that having faith in Jesus Christ does not require one to abandon intelligence or rationality. One criticism is that this section can feel quite dense and requires real focus from the reader in order to follow and grasp the depth of McGrath's arguments; which is perhaps to be expected given the encouragement to use the mind and intelligence in the pursuit of the Christian faith.

In section two, McGrath presents the views of four other theologians on the theme of discipleship: those of Dorothy Sayers, C.S. Lewis, John Stott, and J.I. Packer. McGrath explains that the inclusion of these other perspectives stems from his awareness that theological thought interweaves and intermingles. He is, therefore, endeavouring to present perspectives on discipleship which go beyond his own experience. The inclusion of 'other voices' does add breadth and further affirms McGrath's encouragement to think broadly and critically about discipleship.

The final section contains four sermons. Beginning with the idea of discipleship of the mind, McGrath leads the reader toward the hope of the Christian faith, arguing that this hope, while foolish to some, is not unintelligent; it is robust and can be believed credibly. Ending the book with sermons provides a pastoral grounding for McGrath's arguments, which is particularly useful for a Church setting.

If you come to this book seeking a discipleship programme for the mind, you will be disappointed: McGrath does not provide this, nor is that his intention. His aim is to encourage Christians to think and reflect further on how their minds are part of their journey of discipleship: and he certainly achieves this aim. This book is, therefore, a welcome and thought-provoking contribution into the field of discipleship and is a helpful reminder not to neglect the role of the mind in following Christ.

Stuart Love, Clincarthill Parish Church, Glasgow

Preaching Hope in Darkness: Help for Pastors in Addressing Suicide from the Pulpit. By Scott M. Gibson and Karen E. Mason. Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2020. ISBN: 9781683594116. 288pp. £23.99.

This book landed on my desk for review at a time when I have been grieving with a dear friend over the suicide of his 24-year-old son. The devastation for the loved ones of a suicide victim can scarcely be overstated. It is traumatic, destabilising and incapacitating. Sadly, it is also increasingly prevalent and in the UK is now the commonest cause of death in men under 50. If pastors have not already dealt with suicide, they are likely to be faced with this tragic reality sooner or later. Furthermore, as pastors preach week by week to their congregations, it is almost certain there will be listeners who have contemplated or even attempted suicide in the past, or are currently struggling with suicidal ideation. As the authors point out, this is a topic discussed infrequently in our churches and preached about even less.

Happily, the title of this book is misleading and it concerns so much more than pulpit preaching. Gibson's background as a homiletics professor is reflected in valuable preaching advice together with sample sermons. Mason brings her expertise in suicide prevention to the entire pastoral task, not just the pulpit. This combination makes the book more a manual for pastoral care. Each chapter starts with a case study, connecting what is said subsequently to real life example. There is solid practical advice on pastoral care (especially visiting), dealing with families, medical staff, or congregations with questions—as well as advice on and worked examples of preaching for funerals of suicide victims, preaching to a congregation in which there has been a suicide, and, perhaps most challengingly, preaching to prevent suicide. A holistic approach is evident throughout in which spiritual, emotional and mental health are not separated and pastors are advised when to seek help from mental health professionals.

The theme of suicide prevention dominates. The authors recommend 'seven fences' for building a church culture suffused with the Gospel that does everything possible to discourage suicide and gives people reasons to live. (These are preaching and teaching on: connection to others; the worth and dignity of every person; hope; moral objections to suicide and reasons to live; self-control to develop the habit of choosing life; grief and suffering; and, lastly, encouraging people to reach our for help. Each of these is explained in more detail.)

The authors explicitly address the issue of an emerging generation demonstrably more emotionally fragile than those before and in which suicide rates are rising. A whole chapter is devoted to ministering to youth

and young adults and, in an appendix, there is also a Bible study programme on the 'seven fences' for youth groups (though this may need 'translation' to the UK culture).

Overall, this book is a call to churches to be the sort of communities in which people are connected, are able to be honest and vulnerable, and are able to lament together over the pain and sorrows of life. It is an extended plea for properly biblical community as the environment most likely to dissuade people from suicide and give them reasons to live.

Apart from the misleading title, I have only one other criticism. It is striking that in a book that rightly advocates high levels of pastoral responsiveness and intense relational involvement in the lives of hurting people, there is no warning of the dangers. Many reading this review will know that responsiveness without boundaries and relational involvement without self-awareness of one's need to be needed (and enjoyment of helping) is a recipe for pastoral burnout and personal disaster. A discussion of how to care and pastor well and wisely recognising these common pitfalls would have made this a much better book. Similarly, an expanded section addressing ways in which the church may serve the wider community and be light in the increasingly emotionally and mentally dark places of our contemporary culture would have been helpful.

In summary, this is a really helpful and Gospel-centred book. It can be read profitably by any established pastor, but may be most helpful for those in training. At several points in the book the authors highlight mistakes made mostly by the young, inexperienced and overconfident. We may pray this book finds its way into the hands of such young pastors! It deserves to be widely read and those who do read it will not only become better preachers as a result, but they will become wiser, more sensitive, better informed and more loving pastors.

Mark Stirling, Chalmers Institute, St Andrews

Angels: What the Bible Really Says About God's Heavenly Host. By Michael S. Heiser. Bellingham, WA. Lexham Press, 2018. ISBN: Print, 9781683591047; Digital, 9781683591054. xx + 223pp. £16.99.

Dr Heiser's *Angels* is the most recent of several books he has written about the unseen and supernatural beings of the Bible. This is not a long book, but it is a piece of serious scholarship. It is a relatively easy to read, and well ordered. Starting in the Old Testament, he examines the range of terminology used to describe the heavenly host. He moves on to look at developments in Second Temple Judaism, then reviews the language about angels in the New Testament. He concludes with some consideration of the various myths that have arisen in our contemporary culture.

Any reader interested in finding out more about angels would find Dr Heiser's book very informative and thoughtful.

Dr Heiser, a specialist in Hebrew and Semitic languages and history, sets out his stall in his introduction. 'Why should we care about angels? Because angelology helps us think more clearly about familiar points of biblical theology. God's supernatural family is a theological template for understanding God's relationship to his human family of believers—and our greater importance compared to them' (p. xv). The book is an extensive assessment of the Bible's teaching seen through the supernatural worldview of the ancient world.

The opening chapters of the book look at the terminology of the Old Testament as a basis for framing a theology of 'the heavenly host'. There is a hierarchy of spiritual beings in heaven of which angels make up but one, if significant, part. There are also 'ministers', 'watchers', the 'host', 'mediators', 'cherubim', and 'seraphim'. Angels form part of the heavenly or divine 'council' ('assembly') whose members variously serve, advise, and witness to God's decisions and actions. Angels have a particular role as 'messengers', appearing on earth in human form at key moments of the Bible story, representing, or 'imaging', God himself. Readers will be familiar with the occasions in the Bible story when angels appear as messengers in human form.

Before moving on to consider what the New Testament says, Dr Heiser spends two chapters examining the development of Jewish thought about angels in the intertestamental period, showing how Jewish language and literature remained largely consistent with Old Testament vocabulary for God's heavenly agents. Then, in the third section of the book, he deals with the New Testament, analysing the language used there of the heavenly host. There is significant continuity with the Old Testament understanding of angels as 'messengers', with the added sense of acting as guardians or protectors. Some particular thorny issues in New Testament angelology are discussed, for example, who the angels of the seven churches in the opening chapters of Revelation are.

For centuries Christians have been fascinated by angels, and over time various myths and misconceptions have arisen. The book ends by considering and challenging these myths, for example, the extent to which we may think of angels as eternal, fallen or imperfect beings. Helpfully, *Angels* challenges the popular preconceptions of angels as having wings, carrying harps, being always female, and the idea that each one of us should have one as our 'guardian angel' (predominantly the view of some Christmas cards, Nativity plays, and the popular media). It rightly takes angels much more seriously than that, and strives to form a proper view of this part of the supernatural world, free of superstition.

Angels is helpful, but should be approached critically. I was grateful to Dr Heiser for making me think much more purposefully and carefully about angels, and their significant place in Scripture. I have a better view of heaven, and the variety and activity of its spiritual occupants. But, absorbing as this can be, I see the danger of being distracted by this from the central message of Jesus Christ and his Gospel. Surely angels are minor characters when compared with the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, and Jesus himself? I remain concerned at Dr Heiser's preoccupation with his subject. In addition, at times he assumes rare interpretations, for example, Genesis 1:26 ('Let us make man in our image') is a reference to the Trinity, and not, as he states, about angels helping God in his act of creation.

If you know relatively little about angels, and want to find out more, and to come to a better, informed biblical understanding of them, this book will prove helpful. However, it should be approached critically.

Andrew Anderson, Oxford

The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents: Divisions and Exegetical Roles beyond Syntax. By Sung Jin Park. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-108-79098-7. xv + 178pp. £26.99.

In this textbook, Park examines the Tiberian Hebrew accent system (*te'amim*) as found in the 'twenty-one' prose books of the Old Testament. The book is intended for intermediate Hebrew students in an eight-week course. The Palestinian and Babylonian accent systems appear in Appendix B while he mentions the accents used in Psalms, Proverbs, and the poetic portions of Job in Appendix C. Park's volume was published in the same month as *Basics of Hebrew Accents* by M. Futato. I will compare these volumes throughout this review.

Park begins by presenting the names and symbols of the twenty-eight Tiberian accents as well as highlighting the most important. He argues that the *soph pasuq* is the disjunctive accent delineating the verse (pp. 4–5; *contra* Futato p. 28). The accents fall either on the stressed syllable (normal), before (post-positive), or after it (pre-positive). Park discusses the Hierarchy Rule (i.e., accents govern different domains) and the Dichotomy Rule (i.e., a disjunctive can be divided by another disjunctive that is in a domain lower than it) in chapter two. Chapters three and four illustrate the conditions under which disjunctive accents can be substituted to produce 'variegated musical neumes' (pp. 23, 33).

The conjunctive accents (chapter five) were not originally part of the Tiberian Hebrew accent system but developed to connect the words between disjunctive accents. Unlike the disjunctive accents, they do not

have a pattern of hierarchy. Most disjunctive accents take two or three conjunctive accents and prefer certain conjunctives.

In chapter six, Park discusses the Simplification Rule, Division Rule, Spirantisation Rule, and the Nesige Rule. According to the Simplification Rule, a conjunctive accent can replace an excessive amount of disjunctive accents to smooth the reading process. According to the Division Rule, a phrase of two words may be further divided by a disjunctive accent if one of the words is phonologically long. According to the Spirantisation Rule, a word beginning with a *begadkefat* letter 'softens' when preceded by a conjunctive accent but 'hardens' when preceded by a disjunctive (Park references Judg. 1:8 on p. 85— *wayyillaḥamu* [conjunctive] *vene yehudah* [disjunctive] *birušalaim* 'The sons of Judah fought against Jerusalem…'). Finally, according to the Nesige Rule, a *maqqef* causes the stress to retract to avoid the juxtaposition of two stressed syllables.

Park examines the primary function of the disjunctive accents in chapter seven. He argues that accents do not always correspond to Hebrew syntax nor do they all mark stress. Subsequently, Park argues that Prosodic Analysis provides the proper avenue to comprehend the Tiberian accentual system. This is the study of the intonation and stress of an utterance. Prosodic analysis can be similar, but not identical, to syntactic analysis. For example, the phrases appearing in Genesis 14:12; 19:1; and 23:10 are syntactically identical (i.e., Conjunction w + Subject + participle of *yšb* 'to dwell' + *b* prepositional phrase with the object being a location) but there are different accents in each context (p. 107). Thus, the Masoretes mark the phrase differently in each case. After presenting criteria for connecting disjunctive accents and intonational phrases (p. 109), Park then tests his criteria on Isa. 1:10 (pp. 111–112). Additionally, Park includes analysis from Performance Structure which notes the boundaries of utterances. The most prominent break in an utterance is usually in the middle of the sentence and in the middle of each half sentence. This is where the disjunctive accents surface. Thus, Park suggests that accents mark the pauses for proper recitation (p. 115). He suggests that there is a general linguistic connection between intonation and musical melodies (pp. 139–140).

In the final chapter, Park argues that the Masoretic accents aids exegesis. For example, the accents clarify ambiguous meaning such as the placement of the phrase 'in the wilderness' in the second line of Isa. 40:3 (pp. 118–119; *contra* Futato pp. 84–86). The accents can emphasize words or phrase as does the disjunctive accent after *zo't torat* 'this is the law' in Leviticus 6:2, 7; 12:7; and 15:32. This break illustrates which 'instruction' is under discussion (p. 121). The accents can create a dramatic effect

such as the slow-motion account of Ehud stabbing Eglon in Judges 3:21 (pp. 128–129).

This book provides a useful introduction to a neglected topic. The exercises ask the student to identify and produce the accents to aid the learning process (*contra* Futato p. 100). Park's line drawing arrangement of the accentual hierarchy of disjunctives is more illustrative than Futato's tree-diagram. There are a few minor issues with this volume. Park's presentation is at points a bit terse and unclear in the first six chapters. The first six chapters do not provide a translation of the copious Hebrew examples discussed because they focus on the Tiberian accents. A translation would have reinforced the emphasis and breaks inherent in the system (though this should not be a significance hinderance to the student). Nonetheless, this resource will help students of the Hebrew text gain an appreciation for the Tiberian accentual system.

Josiah D. Peeler, University of Edinburgh

Basics of Hebrew Accents. By Mark D. Futato, Sr. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020. ISBN: 978-0-310-09842-3. 113pp. £10.99.

Futato provides a clear and engaging introduction to the Tiberian Hebrew accent system found in the Old Testament. His work targets the intermediate student of biblical Hebrew who has just finished an introductory grammar (p. 13). Futato's volume was published in the same month as *The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents* by S. Park. I will compare these volumes throughout this review.

In chapter one, Futato introduces the accents, their position (impositive, prepositive, and postpositive), and their jobs. He argues that there are three jobs which accents do concurrently. They mark word stress, mark the sense of the text (i.e., syntax), and aid in chanting. Chanting is connected to the sense of the text. Thus, the phonologic stress of a word, syntax, and musical considerations work together in the accentual system. He does not believe that *soph pasuq* is a disjunctive accent (*contra* Park pp. 4–5) as it does not mark word stress or appear consistently in Hebrew manuscripts (e.g., Aleppo Codex).

Futato sketches the disjunctive accents in the next chapter. He notes that the system is 'binary' by which he means there is 'continuous dichotomy' (p. 34). The text divides into two parts from the sentence level down to the phrasal level. He divides the disjunctive accents into four groups (i.e., group one and two are major disjunctives and groups three and four are minor disjunctives) alluding to the 'kingly' terminology often utilized to describe the hierarchy of power within the disjunctive accentual system. He uses a tree-diagram to represent the various levels of division in the

verse. He explores the conjunctive accents in chapter three. Throughout these two chapters, summaries appear at the end of each smaller section within the chapters, so the student is not overwhelmed by the material. The exercises at the end of each chapter provide a guided reading through a few verses to illustrate what reading with the accents means. There are exegetical and theological comments attached to these guided readings.

Futato argues that the accentual system provides a Masoretic ancient commentary on the text. He suggests there are subtle, significant differences, and errors when the reader follows the accents. An example of a subtle difference is the *atnakh* in Genesis 1:1 on *'elohim* 'God'. This is to emphasis the polemic nature of the creation account. It is Israel's God, and not another god (e.g., Marduk), who created the world (p. 68). Regarding significant differences, he notes that Genesis 6:4 provide parenthetical information regarding the *nefilim* and their presence before and after the flood (pp. 79–81). Moreover, the disjunctive between 'the Aramean' and the participle *'obed* illustrates that this should be read as a participle ('an Aramean was pursuing my father') instead of as an attributive adjective ('a wandering Aramean') in Deuteronomy 26:5 (pp. 81–83).

Futato contends that the Masoretes made mistakes when accentuating the Hebrew text. For example, he believes that the Masoretes have mistakenly separated the phrase 'in the wilderness' in Isaiah 40:3 when compared with the similar construction in Isaiah 40:6, the Septuagint and the Vulgate of Isa 40:3, and the New Testament (e.g., Matt. 3:3) quotation of this verse. Thus, this phrase should go with the first part of the verse, not the second (pp. 84–86; *contra* Park pp. 118–119). Also, *massa'* is the name of a location in North Arabia where Lemuel is king in Proverbs 31:1 instead of referring to an oracle (also *massa'*) which his mother gave him (pp. 87–89).

In chapter five, he describes the accents in 'the three' (Psalms, Proverbs, and the poetic sections of Job). There are three hierarchal groups instead of the four in the 'twenty-one'. After covering these accents briefly, he goes through Psalm 29 and comments on the accents in this text. He overviews Yeivin's guides for dividing the text in Appendix one and suggests resources for further study in Appendix two.

Futato's presentation is student-friendly and clear. It is more accessible for the beginning student than Park's volume. Throughout the individual discussions of the accents, he places a representation of the accent beside its name (contrast the approach of Park to discuss the accents without representing them after their initial introduction). His exegetical insights remind the student there is a reward to learning the system. This volume

would be a welcome addition to a beginning Hebrew course since most introductory textbooks do not include this material (p. 13).

Josiah D. Peeler, University of Edinburgh

The Case for Biblical Archaeology: Uncovering the Historical Record of God's Old Testament People. John D. Currid. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2020. ISBN 9781629953601. xiii + 263pp. £23.99.

The title of the volume states the intent: to make a case for studying biblical archaeology, not in order to prove the Bible, but 'to confirm, illuminate, and give "earthiness" to the Scriptures' (p. 3). Three major sections survey the history and practice of archaeology (part 1), the physical geography of the land (part 2), and varied aspects of ancient Israelites society illuminated by material remains, including architecture, ceramics, and burial practices (part 3). The book is written in such a way as to include beginners but also provides much of interest to those already knowledgeable about the culture and history of the ancient Middle East. A summary of key terms, discussion questions, and guidance for further reading closes each chapter.

I found Currid's book interesting and I'm grateful to him for deepening my knowledge of the biblical world. If nothing else, *The Case for Biblical Archaeology* reminded me of the presence and activity of different people groups in the promised land for millennia before Israel settled there; in some ways, our spiritual forbears were latecomers in the ancient Middle East. Numerous interesting details are presented throughout: the exact location of the Lachish ostraca amidst the burnt remains in a guard room between the inner and outer gates of the city (the record of communication between the two military commanders under the looming presence of the Babylonians remains forever poignant to me); the remains of 20 distinct layers of human occupation found at Megiddo from the Neolithic period to the Persian period; the role Napoleon played in sparking interest in Egyptian artifacts; the contrasts in the physical geography of Israel, which contains both the deepest place on earth (the Dead Sea stands 1300 feet below sea level) together with mountains reaching 9000 feet; the development of bronze age plowshares, which helped Palestine become an early centre for the exportation of fruit and wine; a 10th century abecedary which testifies to the presence of Hebrew as a language as scribes practice writing it. I was also unaware of the crucial role which the remains of pottery plays in dating different strata within a tell. In these and other ways, the Bible did appear more 'earthy' to me after reading.

At the same time, the book's detail and thoroughness feel something of a weakness, because some chapters and sections go on apparently only

for the sake of completeness, or to fill out the available data from archaeology. For example, the second section moves from north to south in the land of Israel, summarizing the archaeological data from different sites and relating it to the OT—when possible. Some sites (e.g., Tel Regev in the Jezreel valley) are not mentioned in the OT; one gets a summary of the work done at the tell and the author moves on. I found myself skimming as I read. At other points, I found myself wishing for more interpretation and analysis from the author as opposed to the presentation of data. For example, knowing that Sisera's battle with the king of Hazor (Judg. 4–5), Saul's battle with the Philistines (1 Sam. 29–31), and Josiah's ill-fated conflict with Pharaoh Neco (2 Kings 23) all happened at the same site (the Jezreel valley) is interesting; but does it make us read these texts differently? Similarly, a summary of burial practices in Palestine before Israelite occupation is interesting, as well as Israelites continuing the practice of cave burials from their Canaanite forbears (p. 225); but does this influence how we read Pentateuchal legislation relating to burial practices? Perhaps a failure of ancient Israel to distinguish itself from the surrounding peoples? We are not told.

Like an archaeologist, Currid lays out for us, in orderly fashion, the material remains from the ancient Middle East. A summary-like and relatively accessible book of his kind is very valuable for bringing the bible alive to us as we can more easily visualize its historical truth. However, there was a missed opportunity: it could have been helpful interested to hear how Currid himself reads the OT in light of the data which he presents.

Eric Ortlund, Oak Hill College

Ani Maamin: Biblical Criticism, Historical Truth and the Thirteen Principles of Faith. By Joshua Berman. Jerusalem: Maggid Books, 2020. ISBN: 9781592645381. 368pp. £22.99.

The title, *Ani Maamin*, is a transliteration of the Hebrew phrase 'I believe'. In this work, Berman writes for a popular Orthodox Jewish audience, seeking to reassure his readers that they may believe what the Tanakh (the Old Testament) teaches. As for evangelical Christians, for Berman, an Orthodox Jew, the challenges brought by source criticism, accusations of inconsistency, and others are of concern. In this work he addresses many such issues. Although the target audience are Orthodox Jews, much of what he says may be valuably read by an evangelical Christian audience. While there are likely other works written from a Christian perspective covering these issues, reading a book such as this may give a bit of an insider perspective to how they are viewed in the Orthodox Jewish

community. This book could be of interest to those wanting to know how Berman addresses these issues, and to learn more about Orthodox Judaism and how Berman suggests the community handles these issues.

The book is broken up into two major sections. Part 1 consists of seven chapters dealing with the Tanakh (OT) in its historical context. Part 2 consists of a further four chapters looking at the historical background and application of the rabbinic thirteen principles of faith, with particular reference to the principle of Torah from Heaven. Berman concludes his book with an afterword, 'When we are left with questions'. I focus on Part 1 as it will be of wider interest to SBET readers.

Part 1 begins with a short chapter arguing for a rabbinic mandate to understand the Torah (first five books) in their ancient near eastern context. He moves on in Chapter 2 to discuss whether it is 'history'. This includes an examination of what we today expect from history-writing and what we should expect from the Torah in its ancient context. Berman writes, 'We take it as axiomatic that the reporting of an event stripped down solely to its factual components will not accurately convey the message that we need to take from the event. Instead, we approach our texts seeking how the Almighty has authorized that these events be told' (p. 42).

In Chapter 3, Berman examines the Exodus, looking at the evidence for it as a historical event and some of the scholarship surrounding it. He spends a few pages discussing difficulties with and a solution to the large census numbers. He suggests that such numbers may have been used symbolically to indicate the status of various tribes at times, rather than exact numbers. This would not indicate an attempt to mislead because it would have been expected that numbers be used in that manner. Berman then turns to the initial escape from Egypt and shows how the biblical story contains many parallels to Rameses II's propaganda about the Battle of Kadesh. As such, he argues that God demonstrates his power during the Exodus to the Israelites and the Egyptians who would have well known the story of the pharaoh's defeat of the Hittite army at Kadesh with supposedly godlike powers. At the exodus God is shown to be the true God with real power.

In Chapter 4, he examines some narrative inconsistencies between Deuteronomy and the earlier books. He shows how in ancient Near Eastern treaties it was common practice to restate a treaty for a new generation, restating the story to bring out the point the suzerain was trying to make. It was also expected that the vassal would read the original treaty and compare them. Whether or not one accepts Berman's analysis of the biblical situation, it is definitely worth considering his arguments carefully.

In Chapter 5, Berman spends some time critiquing source criticism with reference to the flood story of Genesis. He argues well that the source critical view is inherently unsustainable. He finishes off the first section with a chapter on legal inconsistencies between Deuteronomy and the earlier books and a chapter titled 'But is it Divine?' These chapters will be of greater interest to those specifically interested in a Jewish response.

This work was a fascinating read. Berman's work is a good example of scholarly exhortation and may well encourage people about the reliability of the Tanakh (Old Testament). While there are other works written from a Christian perspective on a similar topic, it can be helpful to see how the issues are addressed by others who maintain a similar commitment to the reliability of the biblical texts.

Philip D. Foster, Edinburgh

T.F. Torrance in Recollection and Reappraisal. By Bruce Ritchie. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications (imprint of Wipf & Stock), 2021. ISBN: 978-1-7252-7643-7 (pbk). xviii + 279pp. £23.

There have been many articles, books, dissertations, symposia and festschriften published in respect of the life and theology of T.F. Torrance but this one is unique. The Rev Dr Bruce Ritchie, a Church of Scotland minister, missionary, writer and theological teacher, reflects upon all that he heard and learned during the years (1973-1976) he spent as a student of Christian dogmatics, in the classroom of T.F. Torrance. For the avoidance of doubt, this is not an exposition of the published writings of T.F. Torrance, although many of them are quoted, this is a reflection on classroom lectures, the main source material being the meticulous notes he took as a student and the handouts he received.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the book is the way in which Ritchie describes the transitions which took place in his own thinking, as a direct result of those classroom encounters. In particular, he compares and contrasts the Calvinist theology which he learned from his minister, John Riddell in Jedburgh (as reinforced by James Philip in the church he attended as a student), with the theology he was taught by T.F. Torrance. He describes how, at first, he was not persuaded that Torrance's theology was true to Scripture and outlines the problems he had with Torrance's understanding of some key Christian doctrines. As time went on, however, he came to understand more deeply what Torrance was trying to do and became convinced that he was right on most of these issues. It is this fascinating theological pilgrimage which makes the book so readable and so challenging.

At the same time, Ritchie does not dismiss his earlier theological convictions. He writes, 'Over the years, two theological streams have fed my Christian faith' (p. xv). That is to say, the Calvinism of his youth and the theology of T.F. Torrance, combined to develop his understanding of Christian theology. It seems clear that part of his mission in writing the book is to bring some rapprochement between these two 'tribes' within Scottish Reformed theology. For that reason, Ritchie tries very hard to reconcile the two streams. This is not an easy task but Ritchie tries to show that these streams are not necessarily contradictory and, with deeper insight, can be seen to help one another.

After a Foreword by Robert Walker, nephew of T.F. Torrance and editor of two volumes of his uncle's classroom lectures (*Incarnation* and *Atonement*) Ritchie divides his work into four sections. 'Part One: Recollection' has three chapters, reflecting on his time in theological college. 'Part Two: Methodology' has four chapters, in which there is an exploration of what it means to call theology a science, the need to adopt an appropriate methodology and an exploration of the concepts thus developed. 'Part Three: Christology' has five chapters and is given over to the centrality of the Person and Work of Christ in Torrance's thinking. 'Part Four: Reappraisal' has four chapters and focuses on several key issues related to Christology, not least the ideas of history and time. Finally, there are four appendices. First, an outline in detail of the Dogmatics Course over the three years of study, including reading lists, essay titles and lectures attended. Second, all the exam papers for the Dogmatics course, which Ritchie sat during those years. Third, a list of the speakers and topics covered at the Firbush conferences, led by Robert Walker, where Torrance's theology was expounded and examined. Fourth, since the exegesis of 2 Corinthians 5:21 was so important to the discussion in the earlier part of the book, a breakdown of what some major theologians and biblical scholars have said on the subject.

Given that one purpose of the book is to suggest ways in which the 'two streams' of Ritchie's theology might be reconciled, perhaps we might focus in on three areas where the jury remains out.

First, Ritchie argues that at no point did Torrance want to replace the notion of penal substitutionary atonement, rather he simply used ontological categories to deepen and enhance the biblical teaching on substitutionary atonement. Ritchie says, 'By critiquing Reformed theology's almost exclusive reliance on the forensic/legal model, Torrance wanted to strengthen – not weaken – the concept of substitutionary atonement in which Christ bore the penalty of the wrath of God against sin. Torrance's aim was to reinforce the notion of substitutionary atonement, not dilute it' (p. 136). Again, 'At no point, did Torrance displace the forensic/legal

by the ontological. Rather his concern was to show that when we grasp the core ontology of the situation, all models of the atonement – including the forensic/legal one – gain even greater strength and profounder depth' (p. 137). Anyone who has read Torrance's book *Scottish Theology* will undoubtedly find this interpretation hard to believe. In that book and in various other writings, Torrance could be quite vitriolic in his antagonism towards 'Westminster Calvinism', including its notion of penal substitution. The idea that he was simply trying to strengthen and improve the penal substitutionary theology, does not exactly leap out from the pages of his writing!

Second and related to this, throughout the book Ritchie supports Torrance's insistence on the atoning significance of the incarnation. In other words, the incarnation was not simply a means to an end but was itself where atonement takes place, albeit culminating in the Cross. Torrance argued that, by dint of the incarnation, divinity and fallen humanity are united in the Person of Christ and so are reconciled. Human beings share in that reconciled life through union with Christ. Herein lies the problem. As Dr Duncan Rankin demonstrated in his Edinburgh PhD thesis, to achieve this Torrance requires two different positions on union with Christ: an incarnational union and a spiritual union. This is to say nothing of the complete absence in Scripture of the idea that incarnation brings atonement. In Scripture, the focus for atonement is on the Cross.

Third, this emphasis on the incarnation leads Torrance/Ritchie to adopt an ahistorical position. In other words, the emphasis on the incarnation leads Torrance to reinterpret historical realities. Ritchie writes, 'For Torrance, the Hebrew vocabulary used by the Old Testament to describe atonement (*goel*, *kipper*, *padah*) was a vocabulary necessitated by the person and work of Jesus Christ… in the providence of God it was the once-for-all atoning work of Christ which had in fact driven these concepts, and their vocabulary, back into Israel's understanding of God's redemptive purposes. Thus, the Old Testament atonement liturgy was what it was because of Christ, not *vice versa*' (p. 96). This 'historical reversal' is seen elsewhere. Ritchie writes, 'Calvary made Bethlehem possible, and it was the death and resurrection of Jesus which created the very possibility of his birth – not vice versa – though all come together as one dissoluble reality' (pp. 164-65). Again, 'Therefore, though Bethlehem precedes Calvary in historical time, the argument outlined above has indicated that Calvary is ontologically prior to Bethlehem in terms of causation' (p. 182). Finally, 'Hence, it is the atoning action of the cross and resurrection, which enables the incarnation to occur at Bethlehem' (p. 184). When Ritchie comes later to discuss Christ and time, this approach is driven even further. He argues that historical time is

only made possible by the resurrection and triumph of Christ and says that 'there exists no space-time *apart from* that which was brought into being through the event of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ' (p. 202). Such an approach turns the chronology and logic of the redemptive-historical development we see in Scripture on its head. It is the direct result of Torrance's view that everything must be viewed from the perspective of Christology.

Despite these areas of disagreement, one thing which is very clear in this book is Ritchie's theological competence and his commitment to serious analysis of disputed questions. When we consider the appendices and examine the reading lists, the essay and exam questions and the lectures he attended, this should not surprise us. Rather, one is likely to conclude that standards have fallen and that obtaining a good degree in theology today, requires much less rigour than when Ritchie studied under his mentor, T.F. Torrance. May the debate continue!

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