

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_sbct-01.php

EDITORIAL

Within the structure of Scottish piety, the celebration of communion was a highlight, not only for those who took the elements, but also for the hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of hearers who often attended several sacramental festivals during the summer months.¹ The connection between the sacrament and spiritual awakening, where the communion season became a 'converting ordinance' in the experience of many who attended, can be traced back to the 1630s and is best exemplified in the revival at Shotts.² Thomas Boston spoke of such occasions as 'sweet gospel day[s]', 'great days[s] of the gospel', or 'sweet time[s] of the gospel'.³ Robert Wodrow speaks of the 'fair-days of the Gospel'⁴ indicating that through the drama of the word and sacrament, many people were reborn and revived, as sinners were converted and believers were renewed in their faith.⁵ The Supper was so important to Calvin that he attempted to institute a weekly celebration in Geneva because he believed the Supper was spiritual nourishment for the life of the church.

The Lord's Supper stood out in thinking of pastoral ministers in Scotland as one of the chief means of grace which God provided to the

¹ See Leigh Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*; George B. Burnet, *The Holy Communion in the Reformed Church of Scotland 1560-1960* (Edinburgh, 1960); Gwen Kennedy Neville, *Kinship and Pilgrimage: Rituals of Reunion in American Protestant Culture* (Oxford, 1987) pp. 35-9.

² John Livingston speaks of how 'the night before I had been with some Christians, who spent the night in conference and prayer... and enjoyed... such liberty and melting of heart as I never had the like in publick all my life.' *Select Biographies* (Edinburgh, 1845), vol. 1, pp. 138-9. Robert Fleming recalls, 'near five hundred had at that time a discernible change wrought on them, of whom most proved lively Christians afterward.' *Fulfilling of Scripture* (Edinburgh, 1850), vol. 1, p. 355.

³ Thomas Boston, *A General Account of my Life*, edited by G. Low (London, 1908), p. 46.

⁴ Robert Wodrow, *The Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Wodrow* (Edinburgh, 1842-43), vol. 1, p. 55.

⁵ George Wemyss in his Preface to John Spalding, *Synaxis Sacra* (Glasgow, 1750) speaks of 'Communion is Scotland' as being 'for the most part very solemn, and... many hundreds, yea thousands in this land, have dated their conversion from some of these occasions' (p. viii).

believer so that his faith, love and hope might deepen. During a communion season in Dunfermline in 1747, Thomas Gillespie encouraged his congregation to believe that God gave this ordinance 'for his honour and the conversion of sinners' as well as 'the edification of His Body mystical in faith, holiness and comfort'.⁶ It was an event where the Christian could anticipate eternity where believers would 'constantly enjoy Christ's presence and see Him', for in heaven they 'will not be deprived of His sensible, ravishing presence a single moment'.⁷

It is doubtful if the Lord's Supper is so central in the corporate worship and spirituality of Scottish Evangelicals in 2002. We appear to have moved some distance from the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper in the early days of the church.⁸ Even among the Christian Brethren that expressed its worship and devotion in the weekly breaking of bread service,⁹ there are some indications that the split between the earlier communion service and an evangelistic family service has undermined the importance of the 'breaking of bread' service. In most Scottish Baptist congregations, although communion is often integrated within a morning service, there is still a sense of it being viewed as an 'add-on' rather than a central act of devotion. Within Scottish Presbyterianism, Calvin's vision of a weekly communion service was never realised. Eleanor Kreider has commented that 'Churches will be renewed when the Lord's Supper, graced by God's presence and Word, oriented to the living Lord and empowered by the Spirit, is fully restored to the place it had in the early centuries – as the central communal Christian act of worship.'¹⁰

There is a need to remind ourselves that the Lord's Supper is a means of grace, a sacrament, a moment of special encounter with the Triune God of grace and mercy who meets his people in all their need to refresh and renew their spiritual vitality. The stress, within some strands of Scottish piety, overly to 'fence the tables' and inhibit believers from 'examining themselves, so as to eat' has hindered many from experiencing the welcoming love of God that Rabbi Duncan spoke of when he said 'tak' it woman, it's for sinners!' The emphasis of the solemnity of the occasion, remembering the death of our Saviour, must never take away that note of

⁶ Thomas Gillespie, *Dunfermline Sermons for 1747*, f42r. (The sermons are located in the Dunfermline Public library.)

⁷ *Ibid.*, f51r-52v.

⁸ I. Howard Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper* (Exeter, 1980), p. 108.

⁹ See Neil Dickson, *The History of Open Brethren in Scotland 1838-1999* (Stirling University, PhD, 2000).

¹⁰ Eleanor Kreider, *Given for You: A Fresh Look at Communion* (Leicester, 1998), pp. 12-13.

rejoicing in the presence of the risen Christ and the hope of his coming glory. A variety of tones and moods for a communion service will often depend upon the season of the year as well as the pastoral concerns for a particular community of believers. Frequency of communion enables congregations to vary the note that is sounded. Finally, we must never forget that the Lord's Supper was intended to be a powerful means of 'proclaiming the Lord's death' as a converting ordinance to young and old.

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast;
 Let every soul be Jesu's guest;
 Ye need not one be left behind,
 For God hath bidden all mankind.

Come, and partake the gospel feast,
 Be saved from sin, in Jesus rest;
 O taste the goodness of your God;
 And eat his flesh, and drink his blood.

See him set before your eyes,
 That precious, bleeding sacrifice!
 His offered benefits embrace,
 And freely now be saved by grace!¹¹

A renewal of the 'breaking of bread', 'communion seasons' and the celebration of the 'Lord's Supper' would undoubtedly impact the spiritual pilgrimage of Christians today as it did in previous periods of our spiritual history.

¹¹ A hymn by Charles Wesley in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 7, edited by Franz Hilderbrandt and Oliver A. Beckerlegge (Oxford, 1983), pp. 81-2.

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ADOPTION

I: AN ACCOUNT

TIM J. R. TRUMPER, WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
PHILADELPHIA

The evangelical doctrine of Adoption – succinctly described as ‘an act of God’s free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God’ – has received but slender treatment at the hands of theologians. It has been handled with a meagreness entirely out of proportion to its intrinsic importance, and with a subordination which allows it only a parenthetical place in the system of evangelical truth.

Robert A. Webb, *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption*

Over recent years a small but growing number of Reformed Christians have noted the need for the recovery of adoption (*huiothesia*, Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5), one of the most underrated doctrines of Holy Scripture.¹ Not since the fallout from the short-lived Crawford/Candlish

¹ See Gordon Cooke’s paper, ‘The Doctrine of Adoption and the Preaching of Jeremiah Burroughs’ in *Eternal Light, Adoption and Livingstone*. Congregational Studies Conference Papers, 1998 (published by the Evangelical Fellowship of Evangelical Churches); S. B. Ferguson, ‘The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship’, in N. M. de S. Cameron and S. B. Ferguson (eds), *Pulpit and People: Essays in Honour of William Still on his 75th Birthday* (Edinburgh, 1986), pp. 81-8; Erroll Hulse, ‘Recovering the Doctrine of Adoption’, *Reformation Today* 105 (1988), pp. 5-14; Mark G. Johnston, *Child of a King: The Biblical Doctrine of Sonship* (Fearn, Ross-shire, 1997), p. 10; and D. F. Kelly, ‘Adoption: An Undeveloped Heritage of the Westminster Standards’, *Reformed Theological Review* 52 (1993), pp. 110-20. See also J. I. Packer’s comments in *Knowing God*, 1975 ed. (London, 1988), pp. 255-6; Robert Peterson, *Adopted by God. From Wayward Sinners to Cherished Children* (forthcoming); T. Trumper, ‘The Metaphorical Import of Adoption: A Plea for Realisation I: The Adoption Metaphor in Biblical Usage’, *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 14 (1996), pp. 129-45; ‘The Metaphorical Import of Adoption: A Plea for Realisation II: The Adoption Metaphor in Theological Usage’, *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 15 (1997), pp. 98-115; ‘Adoption: The

debate of the 1860s has awareness of the neglect of the doctrine been so perceptive and the *communis consensus* so significant. As will become apparent, the fact that these late nineteenth- and twentieth-century appeals were generally made by those of a Reformed persuasion² indicates the slowly growing recognition that lurking in the literary and credal archives of the tradition are some isolated and long-forgotten filial or familial emphases.³ These emphases stand out, with rare devotional and liturgical exceptions,⁴ against a backdrop of sweeping nescience in the post-Reformation church at large. Thus, while this two-part series is a product of the Reformed tradition and is written with a view to the enrichment of it, it has wide-ranging application to the theology of the church at large.

Forgotten Doctrine of Westminster Soteriology', in Lynn Quigley (ed.), *Reformed Theology in Contemporary Perspective*, 1997 Rutherford House Dogmatics Conference (Edinburgh, forthcoming); N. Westhead's introductory comments in 'Adoption in the Thought of John Calvin', *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 13 (1995), p. 102. For a practical theology perspective see the World Harvest Mission Training Program, 'Sonship: Discovering Liberty in the Gospel as Sons and Daughters of God', distributed by Westminster Media, 2960 W. Church Rd, Glenside, PA 19038, USA, in conjunction with J. Adams' critique, 'Biblical Sonship: An Evaluation of the Sonship Discipleship Course' (Woodruff, S.C., 1999), and the World Harvest Mission response by Stephen E. Smallman, 'A Response to "Biblical Sonship: An Evaluation of the Sonship Discipleship Course"', obtainable from World Harvest Mission, 100 West Ave., Jenkintown, PA 19046-2697, USA See also Chad B. Van Dixhoorn, 'The Sonship Program for Revival: A Summary and Critique', *Westminster Theological Journal* 61 (1999), pp. 227-46, and Neil Williams' paper, 'The Theology of Sonship' (World Harvest Mission, Jenkintown, PA, 2002).

- ² Exceptions include Thomas A. Smail's *The Forgotten Father* (first printed 1980, reprint ed., London, 1990) and Mark Stibbe's *From Orphans to Heirs: Celebrating our Spiritual Adoption* (Oxford, 1999). Opening his foreword to Stibbe's book R. T. Kendall writes: 'The time is long overdue that the church generally should rediscover the New Testament teaching of adoption.'
- ³ Writing more generally, Wolfhart Pannenberg states: 'Modern Protestant theology in particular has stressed the comprehensive significance of this thought of being children of God' (*Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids, MI, 1993, p. 212).
- ⁴ I have particularly in mind the Methodist emphasis on the assurance granted by the Spirit of adoption, as well as the Brethren's hymnological emphasis on adoption (*ut infra*).

Despite the longstanding, distorting and truncating nature of the lacuna to which the aforementioned appeals have pointed, it is surprising that to date little if any intensive remedial action has been undertaken. This suggests that what appeals there have been have fallen on deaf ears notwithstanding their coinciding with the modern orientation towards a more familial understanding of the gospel. Indeed, Thornton Whaling's complaint that 'the history of the doctrine of adoption is yet to be fully and adequately written'⁵ is as relevant now as when he made it in the 1920s. As things stand, most theologians have either never thought seriously about the doctrine, or, alternatively, being unaware of its neglect they assume that it has been treated as sufficiently as any other element of salvation. Failing that, they interpret incorrectly the sparseness of literature on adoption as a reflection of its profile in Scripture.

The absence of progress requires then yet another appeal. In order to make this one more effective than its forerunners we have sought to go a little farther by pursuing a more determined and detailed promotion of the case for the recovery of adoption than has been witnessed hitherto.⁶ The best we can do at present is to improve the weightiness of the modern and now postmodern claims filed concerning the neglect of adoption. This we have sought to achieve, first of all, by exposing as much of the scantiness of the church's reflection on adoption as is possible in the space allowed, then, in the second article, by providing a *rationale* for why the doctrine has so consistently been overlooked in the history of the church.

At the outset we are faced with a difficult decision. Should our narration of the theological history of adoption focus on those who have or those who have not written on the doctrine? There are advantages and disadvantages either way. One thing is certain, so substantive has the church's oversight been that it is in fact easier to document those who

⁵ Thornton Whaling, 'Adoption', *Princeton Theological Review* 21 (1923), p. 234. Hugh Martin writes, for example, that, 'in Dr Cunningham's Lectures on Historical Theology, the doctrine is not even broached – for the simple reason that it has no history to present. The same thing is evident in Hagenbach's History of Doctrines' ('Candlish's Cunningham Lectures', *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 14, 1865, p. 728).

⁶ For the record, my contribution to the promotion of the recovery of adoption began with the plea for the realization of the metaphorical import of adoption (see my *SBET* articles, *op. cit.*). It continues in these articles with a more historical approach, of which more can be read in my PhD dissertation entitled, 'An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption in the Calvinistic Tradition' (University of Edinburgh, 2001). Note the change of title from that given in the original *SBET* articles.

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ADOPTION

have. The problem with this choice, however, is that by homing in on those creeds and writings that deal with adoption *in its own right* there is the risk of conveying the impression that adoption is not so neglected after all.

The opposing problem is worse. It simply is not possible to list all those who have overlooked adoption. Even if it were, it would hardly make for scintillating reading, nor would it bring to light the resources required to help stimulate creative thinking in the years to come. For example, the observation that Harnack, Dorner, Hagenbach, Charles Hodge, Robert J. Breckinridge, W. G. T. Shedd, Thomas Chalmers, George Hill, and William Cunningham (to list a few)⁷ are silent about the doctrine, tells us nothing except that these theologians need not be consulted when expounding it. This, the reader will agree, is not that helpful. Thus, for practical purposes we have opted for the quieter but ultimately more effective and manageable approach.⁸

ADOPTION IN THE CHURCH'S CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

In Philip Schaff's collection of *The Creeds of Christendom*⁹ there are only six confessions that contain anything like a distinct chapter on adoption. However, given that Schaff's list is not exhaustive, we must remain open to the possibility that there are others hidden away within the annals of ecclesiastical history. In any case, the many referred to are not all cited in

⁷ Edward McKinlay, 'The relation of incarnation to atonement in the Christology of R. S. Candlish and its contribution to the development of Scottish Theology' (Edinburgh University: PhD thesis, 1966), p. 110; Robert Alexander Webb, *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1947), p. 17. John Dick was simply wrong in asserting that 'a place is commonly assigned to [adoption] in systems of Theology' (*Lectures on Theology*, 2 vols in 1 (New York, 1851), p. 224).

⁸ A disclaimer is appropriate here. Despite the greater detail, what follows inevitably remains an incomplete account. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the following theological history may stimulate further research with a view to the reduction of its incompleteness.

⁹ *The Creeds of Christendom: With a History and Critical Notes*, 3 vols, ed. P. Schaff, revd D. S. Schaff, sixth ed. reprinted from the 1931 ed. (Grand Rapids, MI, 1990). This is a particularly valid avenue of investigation given Schaff's assessment of the general credal function: 'A Creed, or Rule of Faith, or Symbol,' he says, 'is a confession of faith for public use, or a form of words setting forth with authority certain articles of belief, which are regarded by the framers as necessary for salvation, or at least for the well-being of the Christian Church' (*ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 3-4).

full. Nevertheless, the fewness of the confessions containing distinctive statements on adoption explains in part why the doctrine has been so infrequently discussed throughout the millennia of theological reflection.

As far as can be discerned, the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) was the first confession in the history of the Church to devote a whole chapter to the doctrine. Although chapter XII is the shortest in the confession, it is nevertheless of seminal credal importance:

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

Given this distinctive *locus*, it is ironic that the confession has been so vilified for its juridical approach.¹⁰ As Sinclair Ferguson reminds us, 'perhaps more than anything else it is the presence of [the twelfth chapter] which has kept alive within Presbyterianism (particularly in Scotland and the Southern Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A) the significance of Sonship in the life of Faith.'¹¹

Now, without doubt, the confession's influence was aided by the answers given to Questions 34 and 74 of the Shorter and Larger Catechisms, both of which ask, 'What is Adoption?'

Answer 34

Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

Answer 74

Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the

¹⁰ For a response to this criticism see my paper, 'Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine of Westminster Soteriology' (*op. cit.*) or 'An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption' (*op. cit.*, chapter 5, 'The Confession of Adoption').

¹¹ 'The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship', *op. cit.*, p. 83.

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ADOPTION

liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.

Indicative of the influence of the Westminster Standards is the fact that two of the other five relevant credal statements in *The Creeds of Christendom* are copied *verbatim* from the WCF. These are found in the Savoy Declaration (1658) and the Baptist Confession of Faith (1689), respectively. Interestingly, the three remaining statements were formulated between 1890 and 1925 and are by-products of the nineteenth-century drift towards a more familial understanding of the gospel.

Article XIV of the XXIV Articles of the Presbyterian Synod of England (1890), although entitled 'Of Sonship in Christ', closely follows the biblical contours of adoption:

We believe that those who receive Christ by faith are united to Him, so that they are partakers in His life, and receive His fulness; and that they are adopted into the family of God, are made heirs with Christ, and have His Spirit abiding in them, the witness to their sonship, and the earnest of their inheritance.¹²

The Confessional Statement of the United Presbyterian Church of North America (1925), which is described by Schaff as 'the boldest official attempt within the Presbyterian family of Churches to restate the Reformed theology of the sixteenth century',¹³ also contains an article on adoption. Article XI of The Basis of Union of the United Church of Canada (1925), while entitled 'Of justification and Sonship', reads:

We believe that God, on the sole ground of the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Christ, pardons those who by faith receive Him as their Saviour and Lord, accepts them as righteous, and bestows upon them the adoption of sons, with a right to all the privileges therein implied, including a conscious assurance of their sonship.¹⁴

¹² Schaff, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, 918. The New Testament, of course, includes other filial models and this is reflected, for example, in Article XI of a 'Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith' (1902), which was prepared by a committee of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and is entitled 'Of the New Birth and the New Life' (*ibid.*, p. 923).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 924.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 936.

A *prima facie* glance at this survey demonstrates that adoption is mainly, but not exclusively, a Reformed distinctive. Various confessions of other pre- and post-Reformation traditions also make passing allusions to adoption or at least employ the sort of familial terminology that can be construed as such. These include: (1) The Councils of Toledo (675) and the Synod of Frankfurt (794), which discuss adoption in relation to the sonship of Christ;¹⁵ (2) The Sixty-Seven Articles or Conclusions of Ulrich Zwingli (1523);¹⁶ (3) The Anglican Catechism (1549);¹⁷ (4) The French Confession of Faith (1559);¹⁸ (5) The Scots Confession of Faith (1560);¹⁹ (6) The Canons and Dogmatic Decrees of the Council of Trent (1563);²⁰

¹⁵ L. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, first published 1937 (Edinburgh and Carlisle, 1969), pp. 111-12; R. S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God: Being the First Course of the Cunningham Lectures*, supplementary volume to the 5th ed. (Edinburgh, 1870), pp. 65-6.

¹⁶ This, the first creed of the Reformed churches, was originally written in Zwingli's Swiss German dialect. Although possessing no specific references to adoption, two of the articles, nevertheless, include statements on the filial relationship between believers and their heavenly Father. Article VIII: 'From this follows, first, that all who live in the Head are members [*Glieder*] and are children of God [*Kinder Gottes*], and that is the Church or communion [*Gemeinschaft*] of the saints, a housewife [*hausfrau*] of Christ, the catholic church [*ecclesia catholica*].'; Article XXVII: 'That all Christian men are the brothers of Christ and are subject to one another [*unter einander*]. Therefore [*und*] no one shall be named Father. For this reason orders and sects *etc.* decline' (Schaff, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 198 and 201).

¹⁷ Here too we find familial language rather than any explicit reference to adoption (*ibid.*, p. 517). The Anglican Catechism does, however, make mention of the new birth (*ibid.*, p. 521).

¹⁸ Having been prepared by Calvin, it is no coincidence that the French Confession contains two references to adoption and one allusion. See Articles XVII, XIX and XXII (*ibid.*, pp. 369-72).

¹⁹ Article XIII ('Of the cause of Good Works') does not actually mention adoption but is couched in terms of sonship (*ibid.*, pp. 452-3). For more on the Scots Confession see 'Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine of Westminster Soteriology' (*op. cit.*) or 'An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption', *op. cit.*, ch. 5.

²⁰ Mention of adoption is made in the Decree on Justification, chapter II. In chapter IV, justification is said to involve 'a translation, from that state wherein man is born a child of the first Adam, to the state of grace, and of the adoption of the sons of God, through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, our Saviour' (*ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 91). Adoption is clearly implied in chapter VIII (*ibid.*, p. 97). Moreover, in chapters VII, XI and XVI there are references to

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ADOPTION

(7) The Heidelberg Catechism (1563);²¹ (8) The Second Helvetic Confession (1566);²² (9) The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (1566);²³ (10) Formula Concordiae (1576 (L. 1584));²⁴ (11) The

the closely related themes of inheritance and eternal life (*ibid.*, pp. 94-5, 101, and 107).

²¹ Questions 33 and 120 are of greatest relevance, particularly the former: 'Question 33. Why is he called God's only-begotten Son, since we are also the children of God [*Gottes Kinder*]? Answer. Because Christ alone is the eternal natural Son of God; but we are the children of God by adoption [*Kindern Gottes angenommen sind*]' (*ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 318). For Question and Answer 120, *ibid.*, p. 351.

²² The Second Helvetic Confession is described by Schaff as 'the last and best of the Zwinglian family' (*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 390). He states that according to the teaching of ch. XX ('Of Holy Baptism'), 'there is only one baptism in the Church; it lasts for life, and is a perpetual seal of our adoption' (*ibid.*, p. 414).

²³ Adoption receives mention in at least two articles: Art. XVII ('Of Predestination and Election') – 'Wherefore *such as have* so excellent a benefit of God *given unto them*, to be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons by adoption: they be made like unto the image of *God's* only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity' (*ibid.*, p. 633). Schaff writes that Article XVII 'very clearly teaches a free eternal election in Christ, which carries with it, by way of execution in time, the certainty of the call, justification, adoption, sanctification, and final glorification (Rom. viii.29,30)' (*ibid.*, p. 634). Cf. Article XVII of The Forty-Two Articles of the Church of England (1553) in Oliver O'Donovan's *On the 39 Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity*, A Latimer Monograph, reprint ed. published for Latimer House, Oxford (Carlisle, 1993), p. 142. Adoption is also mentioned under Article XXVII ('Of Baptism'): 'Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from other that be not christened: but is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly, are grafted into the Church: the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God, by the holy ghost, are visibly signed and sealed: faith is confirmed: and grace increased by virtue of the prayer unto God' (*ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 504-5). Cf. Article XXVIII of the Forty-two Articles in O'Donovan, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

²⁴ The fourth in the list of Schwenkfeldian errors complains that 'the water of baptism is not a means whereby the Lord seals adoption in the children of God and effects regeneration' (*The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, p. 178).

Saxon Visitation Articles, 1592;²⁵ (12) The Irish Articles of Religion (1615);²⁶ (13) The Canons of the Synod of Dort (1618-19);²⁷ (14) The Orthodox Confession of the Eastern Church (1643);²⁸ (15) The Confession of the Waldenses (1655);²⁹ (16) The Confession of Dositheus, or The Eighteen Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem (1672);³⁰ (17) Easter Litany of the Moravian Church (1749);³¹ (18) The Articles of Religion of the

²⁵ Article III.iv states that 'baptism is the bath of regeneration, because in it we are born again, and sealed by the Spirit of adoption [*Kindheit/adoptionis*] through grace' (*ibid.*, p. 184).

²⁶ The section entitled 'Of God's Eternal Decree and Predestination' (Article 15) notes the Ephesians connection between adoption and predestination: 'Such as are predestined unto life be called according unto God's purpose (his spirit working in due season), and through grace they obey the calling, they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten son Jesus Christ' (*ibid.*, p. 529).

²⁷ Under the fifth head of Doctrine ('Of the Perseverance of the Saints'), Article VI declares that 'God, who is rich in mercy, according to his unchangeable purpose of election, does not wholly withdraw the Holy Spirit from his own people, even in their melancholy falls; nor suffer them to proceed so far as to lose the grace of their adoption and forfeit the state of justification, or to commit the sin unto death; nor does he permit them to be totally deserted, and to plunge themselves into everlasting destruction' (*ibid.*, pp. 572 and 593). Adoption is also implied in connection with assurance. See Article X of the same head of doctrine (*ibid.*, pp. 573 and 594).

²⁸ Question XXXV contains a passing reference to adoption: 'This grace of adoption [*tēs huiothesias*] is given freely through Christ, as the Scripture says (John 1:12) as many as received him to them he gave the authority to become the children of God' (*ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 316-17).

²⁹ Article XXIX: 'That Christ has instituted the sacrament of Baptism to be a testimony of our adoption, and that therein we are cleansed from our sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, and renewed in holiness of life' (*ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 766).

³⁰ The end of Decree XVI speaks of the receipt (*analambanō* of adoption (*huiothesia*) upon return to the Lord through the mystery of repentance (*ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 427).

³¹ 'I believe in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath... made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: having predestined us unto the adoption of children [*zur Kindschaft*] by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved' (*ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 799; *cf.* p. 802).

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ADOPTION

Reformed Episcopal Church in America (1875);³² (19) A Commission of the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the U.S.'s statement of doctrine (1883).³³

This list is lengthy and thereby somewhat deceptive, simply because it includes even the very faintest allusions to the familial implications of the gospel that can be gleaned from Schaff's *Creeds of Christendom*. The list cannot then in all honesty be used to deny the substantial neglect of adoption. The evidence will not allow it, as is surely verified by the small number of confessions that allot adoption a distinct chapter or section.

The truth is that adoption has rarely been accorded official credal recognition. When referred to at all, it is usually mentioned in connection with predestination, assurance or the sacrament of baptism. Indeed, we may infer this oversight of adoption from Schaff's comment that 'a creed may cover the whole ground of Christian doctrine and practice, or contain only such points as are deemed *fundamental* and *sufficient*'.³⁴ That adoption has, historically, been deemed generally to lie outwith the fundamental or sufficient elements of the gospel is itself indicative of the church's inadequate understanding of the role and importance of the doctrine for her grasp of salvation.

ADOPTION IN THE CHURCH'S CORPUS

Typically speaking, the neglect that adoption has suffered has been masked by two factors: First, by its usual inclusion in the relevant dictionaries and lexical aids, and, second, by the filial awareness ideally characteristic of the Christian life, resulting from the possession of the Spirit of adoption.³⁵

³² Although adoption is not mentioned explicitly, the tenor of these articles is most relational. The closest to a specific reference is found in Article XIV ('Of the Sonship of Believers'). However, the article alludes to regeneration as much as to adoption (*ibid.*, p. 819; cf. Article X, *ibid.*, p. 817).

³³ Article VII merely acknowledges that 'through the person and work of Jesus Christ as mediator and redeemer and sender of the Holy Spirit, those trusting in him are made the children of God' (*ibid.*, p. 914).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, vols 1, 4 (italics inserted).

³⁵ The reader is referred to the relevant lexicons and dictionaries: *A Catholic Dictionary of Theology*. S.v. 'Adoption as sons' by H. P. C. Lyons; *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*. S.v. «Grace (II. Le Mystère de la Filiation Adoptive)» by Charles Baumgartner; *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology*, 2nd ed., ed. J. H. Blunt (London, Oxford and Cambridge, 1872), pp. 5-6; *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. S.v. 'huiōthesia, as, hē';

However, neither the proliferation of dictionary entries nor the availability of the language of *Abba* in the household of faith has served to bring adoption into the regular theological currency of the church. It seems that the doctrine has been lost somewhere between etymological investigation and filial praise. Nowhere is this more evident than in a general perusal of the major figures of historical theology, which more than confirms the story told by the creeds and confessions.

J. I. Packer states that 'it is a strange fact that the truth of adoption has been little regarded in Christian history'. 'There is,' he continues, 'no evangelical writing on [adoption], nor has there been at any time since the Reformation, any more than there was before.'³⁶ Similarly Edward McKinlay notes that 'the failure to consider, and adequately to develop along satisfactory lines, the doctrine of adoption, can be traced back to the early Fathers of the Church'.³⁷ The accuracy of these assessments is generally attested to by the sheer dearth of monographs devoted to adoption. To our knowledge there are but two serious monographs, both of which are post-Reformation products of the Reformed faith, the first of which, however, being a practical treatise.³⁸ Generally, however, the writings of pre- and post-Reformation theologians contain only fleeting allusions to adoption, but even then what references there are are usually located in discussions of other doctrines. In those isolated instances where

Dictionnaire Latin-Français des Auteurs Chrétiens. S.v. «adoptarius» et al. by Albert Blaise; *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. S.v. 'Adoption' by C. F. D. Moule; *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. S.v. 'huiiothesia, hē'; *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. S.v. 'huiiothesia' by Eduard Schweizer.

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 255.

³⁷ Edward McKinlay, 'The relation of incarnation to atonement in the Christology of R. S. Candlish, and its contribution to the development of Scottish Theology' (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1966), p. 106.

³⁸ See T. Houston, *The Adoption of Sons, its Nature, Spirit, Privileges, and Effects: A Practical and Experimental Treatise* (Paisley, 1872), and R. A. Webb, *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1947). Both volumes are out of print.

Mention could also be made of J. L. Girardeau's ninety pages on adoption in his *Discussions of Theological Questions* (Harrisonburg, VA, 1986), pp. 428-521. Evidence from the Blackburn Collection (Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS) reveals, however, that Girardeau's treatment of adoption is composed of a collation of several papers written at various points during his ministry. This explains in part the inordinate amount of attention accorded to the question of Adam's status in Eden.

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ADOPTION

adoption does obtain its own section, the sections have usually been too obscure to attract much attention.

Beginning with the patristic period, it is probably true to say that the Greek Fathers overlooked adoption less than their Latin counterparts.³⁹ J. Scott Lidgett suggests for example that, 'nowhere can we find more emphatic and constant reference to the "adoption of sons" as the characteristic gift to believers in Christ than in Irenaeus'.⁴⁰ Although this claim is more appropriately made of Calvin,⁴¹ nevertheless the adoption motif does figure in Irenaeus' theology as a cognate theme of the

³⁹ The search through the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* for the stem *huioth-* reveals that in addition to the five usages in the New Testament, the following employ or contain some form of *huiothesia*: Lycophon (1) (4th-3rd century BC); Diodorus Siculus (3) (ante 3rd century BC?); Herodianus et Pseudo-Her (1), Acta Pauli (3) and Irenaeus (4) (2nd century AD); Claudius Aelianus (2), Clemens Alexandrinus (17), Origenes (53) (2nd-3rd centuries AD); Diogenes Laertius (1) and Hippolytus (5) (3rd century AD); Gregorius Nyssenus (10), Eusebius (1), Epiphanius (12), Gregorius Nazianzenus (4), Marcellus (3), Pseudo-Macarius (14), Amphilochius (6), Etropius (1) and Severianus (1) (4th century AD); Joannes Chrysostomus (10), Palladius (1) and Theodoretus (46) (4th-5th centuries AD); Hesychius (2) (5th century AD); Joannes Laurentius (1) (6th century AD); Theophylactus Simocatta (1) (7th century AD); Joannes Damascenus (42) (7th-8th centuries AD); Georgius Monachus (6) and Photius (33) (9th century AD); Constantinus VII Porphyroge (4) and Suda (6) (10th century AD); Michael Psellus (4) (11th century AD); Anna Comnena (3) (11th-12th centuries AD); Nicephorus Gregoras (5) (13th-14th centuries AD); Concilia Oecumenica (21) (varia). Given what I have argued in my *SBET* articles (*op. cit.*) concerning the distinctively Pauline emphasis on adoption, it is worth noting Pannenberg's comment that the Greek fathers interpreted salvation along the lines of Johannine thought (*op. cit.*, pp. 213-14). A computer-aided search of the Latin Fathers is, at the time of writing, unavailable to the author.

⁴⁰ J. Scott Lidgett, *The Fatherhood of God in Christian Truth and Life* (Edinburgh, 1902), p. 160. Lidgett describes Irenaeus' importance for the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God as unique. Irenaeus, he claims, 'is the teacher, above all others, of the Fatherhood of God' (*ibid.*, cf. pp. 153 and 156). For the reasons behind Irenaeus' emphasis, see *ibid.*, pp. 156-7.

⁴¹ In addition to what is said of Calvin below, see Part One of 'An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption' (*op. cit.*), where there is an extensive overview of the reformer's rich theology of adoption.

Fatherhood of God.⁴² Regrettably, however, Irenaeus failed to work through the implications of divine paternity for his theology.

Later third- and fourth-century Greek fathers of the Alexandrian tradition also demonstrated interest in the familial themes of Scripture. Origen (c.185-c.254), for instance, keenly investigated the relationship between Christ's only-begotten Sonship and the adoptive sonship of believers.⁴³ According to Widdicombe, however, 'it was not until the fourth century with Athanasius [c.297-373] that the fatherhood of God became an issue of sustained and systematic analysis'.⁴⁴ Once it did, there developed the Alexandrian reflection on the Johannine model of rebirth and the Pauline model of adoption. These models became especially fundamental to 'Athanasian' soteriology.⁴⁵

In the West, meanwhile, Loughran claims that the fathers failed to follow the adoptive interest of the East.⁴⁶ Catholic scholars are divided on this however. Lyons asserts that 'adoptive sonship is no less clearly taught by the Latin fathers'.⁴⁷ Yet that does not say much, for he argues that

⁴² Although adoption receives numerous mentions in *Adversus Haereses* it receives only one in *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. from the Armenian with Introduction and Notes by J. Armitage Robinson (London and New York, 1920). The profile of adoption in *Adversus Haereses* is confirmed by an unpublished doctoral class paper by David B. Garner entitled 'Irenaeus: Fountain Father of Adoption Theology' submitted December 1999, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. For other helpful information, see J. Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London, 1948), pp. 157-8; R. Noorman, *Irenaeus als Paulusinterpret: zur Rezeption und Wirkung der Paulinischen und Deuteropaulinischen Briefe im Werk des Irenaeus von Lyon* (Tübingen, 1994), particularly pp. 410-16 and 487-92.

⁴³ P. Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius*. Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford, 1994), pp. 79 and 93-118. Widdicombe overlooks Irenaeus when he writes that the Fatherhood of God 'has a perceptible prominence for him [Origen] that it did not have for earlier Christian writers' (*ibid.*, p. 7; contrast Lidgett, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-3).

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Widdicombe, *op. cit.*, p. 145. Contrast Lidgett's less favourable assessment of Athanasius: 'The Father is insufficiently manifested in and through the Son to men; and men are insufficiently brought, in the Son, to the Father' (*op. cit.*, p. 180).

⁴⁶ *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*. S.v. 'Adoption, Supernatural' by M. M. Loughran.

⁴⁷ *A Catholic Dictionary of Theology*. S.v. 'Adoption of sons' by H. P. C. Lyons.

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ADOPTION

'even St. Augustine does not seem to grasp the richness of its implications nor does he integrate it into his teaching on grace'. Lidgett is more critical still: 'With the theology of Augustine the Fatherhood of God... passed entirely out of sight. It had been replaced by the conception of His sovereignty.'

Recent scholarship is more cautious. In drawing a connection between adoption and the neglected concept of deification, Gerald Bonner claims that Augustine's neo-platonically influenced view of deification is nevertheless equivalent to the New Testament use of *huiiothesia*.⁴⁸ For proof of this, he points to Augustine's *Epistulae ad Galatas expositio* (24.8) and his *Tractates on St John's Gospel*.⁴⁹ Interestingly, Augustine's references to deification are plainly in full agreement with the Greek concepts espoused by Irenaeus and Athanasius.⁵⁰

In the millennium following Augustine western interest in the Fatherhood of God waned as the sovereignty of God came to dominate dogmatic interest.⁵¹ Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* is said to illustrate this. Loughran argues that Anselm's juridical view of redemption, which focuses on the necessary infinite satisfaction of Christ, constrained him to work from the premise of God's sovereignty rather than his love.⁵² Similarly, Aquinas is said not only to have ignored the Fatherhood of God but to have consciously dispensed with it: 'Every line of the theology of Aquinas has... gone, not only to make the Divine sovereignty the only conceivable relationship between God and man, but also to externalise and harden it.'⁵³

By the Reformation, then, western soteriology had, it appears, become thoroughly juridical. The predominant Augustinian emphasis on God's sovereignty was combined with the rigorous and polemical dissection of

⁴⁸ Gerald Bonner, 'Augustine's Conception of Deification', *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, 37 (1986), pp. 377, 378, 381, 384. I am indebted to Dr Angus Morrison, Church of Scotland Minister, the Isle of Lewis, for some pointers concerning Augustine.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 376. The consistency between Augustine and Irenaeus is interesting because Dietrich Ritschl attributes to Irenaeus' influence Hippolytus' development of a doctrine of participation in Christ, which he expressed in terms of deification and mystical union ('Hippolytus' Conception of Deification: Remarks on the Interpretation of Refutation X', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 12, Dec. 1959, p. 388).

⁵¹ Lidgett, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-200; *contra* Whaling, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

⁵² 'Adoption, Supernatural', *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁵³ Lidgett, *op. cit.*, pp. 217 and 220.

justification by the reformers, so increasing the attention given to the forensic element of the gospel, with the result that 'the subject of adoption, or the sonship of Christ's disciples, did not... occupy the place and receive the prominence to which it is on scriptural grounds entitled'.⁵⁴

Thus, despite the impact of Paul's Roman and Galatian epistles on Luther (which, remember, contain four of the five NT uses of *huiothesia*), Lidgett explains that 'the graciousness – and indeed fatherliness – of God in Christ is not, for the most part, expressed [by Luther]... strictly in terms of Fatherhood'.⁵⁵ According to Brigit Stolt, it was only on becoming a father himself that Luther realized the loving, comforting and joy-giving nature of the Fatherhood of God. Prior to that his understanding of divine paternity was affected by the austerity of his own experience of childhood.⁵⁶

In contrast to Luther, Lidgett rightly, but to many surprisingly, claims that 'no other writer of the Reformation makes such use of the Fatherhood of God [or, we may add, of adoption] as does Calvin'.⁵⁷ Although the

⁵⁴ R. S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God: Being the First Course of the Cunningham Lectures*, fifth ed. (Edinburgh, 1869), p. 192. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 240-47; McKinlay, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-6.

⁵⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 251. See M. Luther, *Works*, vol. 25, ed. H. C. Oswald (Saint Louis, 1972), pp. 71-3; and vol. 27, ed. J. Pelikan (Saint Louis, 1964), pp. 288-91. There is adequate proof of this from Luther's sermons. Although his sermon on Galatians 4:1-7 is couched in terms of justification he refers to believers as the children or sons of God, but only mentions adoption once in addition to the apposite biblical references (*Sermons of Martin Luther*, ed. John Nicholas Lenker, trans. John Nicholas Lenker and others, vol. 6, Sermons on Epistle Texts for Advent and Christmas, Grand Rapids, MI, 1988, pp. 224-66). His most pertinent comment on adoption is found in his sermon on Galatians 3:23-29. Referring to verses 26-27, Luther writes: 'Christ is the child of God; therefore, he who clothes himself in Christ, God's son, must be the child of God. He is clothed with divine adoption, which unquestionably must constitute him a child of God' (*ibid.*, p. 287). In his two sermons on Romans 8:18-22, Luther again has plenty on the believers' status as children of God, but mentions adoption just the once in a quotation of Romans 8:23 (*ibid.*, vol. 8, Sermons on Epistle Texts for Trinity Sunday to Advent with an Index of Sermon Texts in Volumes 1-8, pp. 96-118).

⁵⁶ Brigit Stolt, 'Martin Luther on God as a Father', *Lutheran Quarterly*, New Series, 8 (1994), pp. 389-90.

⁵⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 253. See Marc Lienhard, 'Luther et Calvin: Commentateurs du notre Père', *Revue D'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 72 (1992/1), pp. 73-88.

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ADOPTION

Genevan reformer provides no separate section on adoption in the *Institutes*, it is evident that the motif was most important for him.

In *The True Method of Giving Peace to Christendom, and of Reforming the Church*, he boldly describes the grace of adoption as ‘not the cause merely of a partial salvation, but [that which] bestows salvation entire [and] which is afterwards ratified by baptism’.⁵⁸ In his commentary on 2 Corinthians 1:20, he asserts that chief of all the promises that in Christ are ‘yea’ and ‘amen’ is that ‘by which He adopts us as His sons’. This means that Christ is ‘the cause and root of our adoption’.⁵⁹ In the *Institutes* he asserts that the authority of the entire gospel is embraced in adoption and the effecting of salvation.⁶⁰ This he unpacks in the preamble to his commentary on Ephesians: ‘God’s wonderful mercy shines forth in the fact that the salvation of men flows from His free adoption as its true and native source.’⁶¹ From Calvin’s description of his conversion, written just prior to his death, we are able to tell that these sentiments of his were not just theological abstractions. Rather, in death as in life he believed that he had ‘no other defence or refuge for salvation than [God’s] gratuitous adoption, on which alone [his] salvation depend[ed]’.⁶²

Although we cannot be entirely sure what the implications of these sentiments are for Calvin’s theology,⁶³ they are certainly substantive evaluations requiring greater attention among Calvin scholars than has been the case hitherto. According to Garret Wilterdink, ‘for Calvin, adoption into the family of God is synonymous with salvation’.⁶⁴ It is just

⁵⁸ *Tracts*, vol. 3, p. 275. The whole sentence reads in Latin: ‘Baptismum ergo praecedat adoptionis gratia, necesse est: quae non dimidia tantum salutis causa est, sed eam ipsam salutem in solidum affert, quae baptismo deinde sancitur’ [CO 7 (35):619].

⁵⁹ *CC 2 Cor.*, 22 [CO 50 (78):23].

⁶⁰ *Inst.* III.xxv.3 [CO 2 (30):730]; cf. Parker, *Calvin*, p. 123.

⁶¹ *CC Eph.*, 121 [CO 51(79):141].

⁶² ‘Life of John Calvin’ (*Tracts*, vol. 1, cxxiv [CO 21 (49):162]).

⁶³ This hesitance is a climb-down from the bolder position taken in my 1997 Rutherford House Dogmatics Conference paper (*op. cit.*). The matter is eagerly commended to Calvin scholars as a fruitful topic of research.

⁶⁴ Garret A. Wilterdink, ‘The Fatherhood of God in Calvin’s Thought’, *Articles on Calvin and Calvinism*, vol., 9. *Calvin’s Theology, Theology Proper, Eschatology*, ed. Richard C. Gamble (New York & London, 1992), p. 185; see also *Tyrant or Father? A Study of Calvin’s Doctrine of God*, vol. 1, Scholastic Monograph Series (Bristol, IN, 1985), p. 21. Similarly, but in reference to the *Institutes*, Sinclair Ferguson writes: ‘While there is no separate chapter on sonship in the *Institutes*, *adoptio* (sonship) is one of

a pity that, for whatever reason, his layout of the *Institutes* does not reflect the important place the doctrine occupies in his theology. That later Calvinism failed to pick up on this is in part due to Calvin's decision not to apportion the doctrine a section in the *Institutes*.

Calvin, although of seminal importance, was not alone among the reformers in dealing with adoption. In his *Loci Communes* Calvin's older correspondent Peter Martyr Vermigli (1500-1562)⁶⁵ relates adoption to the old and new covenant, the differences between the Son and the sons, union with Christ, and in expounding Romans 8:15.⁶⁶ In the process he makes mention of Chrysostom, Augustine and Ambrose.⁶⁷

Not surprisingly, John Knox (c.1515-1572), having spent a few years in Calvin's Geneva, also mentions adoption, thereby capturing in part some of the familial atmosphere present in Calvin's work, yet which was to recede in later Calvinism. We find this especially in Knox's lengthy tract *On Predestination in Answer to the Cavillations by an Anabaptist, 1560*.⁶⁸ There he mentions adoption but only in connection with

the expressions by which he most frequently designates the idea of being a Christian. He does not treat sonship as a separate *locus* of theology precisely because it is a concept which undergirds everything he writes' ('The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship', *op. cit.*, p. 82).

⁶⁵ In his foreword to Joseph C. McLelland's volume, *The Visible Words of God: An Exposition of the Sacramental Theology of Peter Martyr Vermigli A.D. 1500-1562* (Edinburgh and London, 1957), p. vi, T. F. Torrance writes: 'Peter Martyr was undoubtedly one of the finest scholars and ablest theologians of his generation and must be ranked close to Calvin himself with whom he stood in the highest estimation and with whom he was in the fullest agreement' (*cf.* pp. 35, 278-81).

⁶⁶ See 'De adoptione Dei. Ex Rom. 8. cap. ver. 15' in *Loci Communes D. Petri Martyris Vermiglii, florentini, Sacrarvm Literarvm in Schola Tigvrina* (Londini, 1583), pp. 502-4. *The Common Places of the Most Famous and Renowned [sic] Diuine Doctor Peter Martyr, diuided into foure principall parts: with a large addition of Manie Theological and Necessarie discourses, some never extant before.* Trans. and partlie gathered by Anthonie Marten, 1583, Pt. II: xvi, xviii; III: iii.

⁶⁷ Augustine: 594b, III:iii, 80b, III:iv, 153b; Chrysostom: 592b, 594a; Ambrose: 594b, 595a, III:iii, 82a.

⁶⁸ For Knox's tract *On Predestination* see John Knox, *Works*, vol. 5, collected and edited by David Laing (Edinburgh, 1895), pp. 7-468. Knox's more notable statements relate to the Fatherhood of God (pp. 27, 35, 50, 56, 82, 130, 204-5, 231, 241, 254, 376-7, 394-5, 412); children of God (pp. 21, 23, 28, 52, 58, 81, 87, 92, 96, 210, 235, 236, 237, 249, 250, 257, 273, 285, 301, 338, 340, 356, 376-7, 383, 394-5, 403, 414, 415, 417); sons

predestination.⁶⁹ Predestination, he says, is 'the eternall and immutable decree of God, by which he hath once determined with himself what He will have to be done with everie man.'⁷⁰ Those called before all time God has loved in Christ. These are assured of their adoption by their justification through faith. Soteric predestination formed, then, Knox's proof of the freeness of salvation.⁷¹ 'We affirm, those whom he [God] judgeth worthie of participation of salvation to be adoptate and chosen of his free mercie for no respect of their own dignitie.'⁷²

Despite the interest of Calvin, Peter Martyr and John Knox, for reasons discussed elsewhere, it was not long before the filial or familial tenor of Reformed theology was lost. Here we may just note the fact that Heinrich Heppe in his *Reformed Dogmatics* alludes to adoption in reference to but three theologians – Andreas Hyperius (1511-1564), Franciscus Burman (1628-1679) and Johann Heinrich Heidegger (1633-98).⁷³ Although Heppe's *Reformed Dogmatics* is a secondary source his scant allusions certainly resonate with what we know of the loss of adoption's profile in the theological discussions of seventeenth-century continental Protestantism.⁷⁴ That said, two other interested theologians of the Dutch Second Reformation come to mind.⁷⁵ First, there was Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635-1711) of Rotterdam who included a chapter on adoption in the soteriological section of *The Christian's Reasonable Service*.⁷⁶ Then

of God (pp. 310 (cf. 312), 413, 417, 418); adoption (pp. 26, 36, 38, 44, 169); children of the devil (pp. 131, 136).

⁶⁹ Note Knox's use of Ephesians 1:4-5, which text generally provided for the reformers the *locus classicus* of predestination (*ibid.*, p. 44).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26; cf. 169.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁷³ For further biographical details see *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. S.v. 'Hyperius' by H Weissgerber; 'Burman' by W. F. Dankbaar and 'Heidegger' by J. F. G. Goeters.

⁷⁴ Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics: Set out and Illustrated from the Sources*, English trans. G. T. Thomson, first published in Great Britain, 1950 (reprint ed., Grand Rapids, MI, 1978), p. 552.

⁷⁵ For a short history of the Dutch Second Reformation see J. Beeke's *Assurance of Faith: Calvin, English Puritanism, and the Dutch Second Reformation*. American University Studies, Series VII, Theology and Religion, vol. 89 (New York, 1991), pp. 387-95.

⁷⁶ Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service in which Divine Truths concerning the Covenant of Grace are Expounded, Defended against Opposing Parties, and their Practice Advocated as well as the Administration of this Covenant in the Old and New Testaments*, vol. 2,

there was Alexander Comrie (1706-1774), a native of Scotland. Comrie distinguished between an assurance of the uprightness of faith and the assurance of adoption – the former being contingent on an indirect work of the Spirit to aid the believer's reasoning and the latter, being divinely reserved for a minority of believers, on a direct and immediate sealing of the Spirit.⁷⁷

In England, meanwhile, the Puritans – who had been influential in the development of Dutch Puritanism *via* the work of Willem Teellinck (1579-1629)⁷⁸ – were busy breaking new ground. Ironically, the same Assembly that drew up a seminal credal chapter on adoption stopped short of making the Fatherhood of God and adoption regulative in the Standards they produced. Thus, despite their experimental emphases, 'the Puritan teaching on the Christian life, so strong in other ways, was notably deficient here, which is one reason why legalistic misunderstandings of it so easily arise'.⁷⁹

The Puritans left, therefore, an ambiguous legacy. While it would be incorrect to claim that they overlooked adoption, their treatments leave much to be desired. Certainly there was a filial or familial tenor to some of their sermons,⁸⁰ but with the exception of expositions of the Shorter and

trans. Bartel Elshout based on the 3rd ed. of the original Dutch work entitled *Redelijke Godsdienst* published by D. Bolle, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (Ligonier, PA, 1993), pp. 415-38.

⁷⁷ Beeke, *op. cit.*, pp. 298ff.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 118ff..

⁷⁹ Packer, *Knowing God*, pp. 255-6. Cf. Hulse, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁸⁰ See, for example, Roger Drake's sermon in *Puritan Sermons 1659-1689: Being the Morning Exercises at Cripplegate, St. Giles in the Fields, and in Southwark by Seventy-five Ministers of the Gospel*, vol. 5 (Wheaton, IL, 1981, originally published London, 1660), pp. 328-44. For lesser examples see the sermons by William Cooper (*ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 129-53), William Bates (*ibid.*, pp. 368-77) and Richard Mayo (*ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 253-63).

In Cooke's paper, 'The Doctrine of Adoption and the Preaching of Jeremiah Burroughs', he notes that although Burroughs did not write a treatise on adoption, deep within his 41 sermons on the Beatitudes are two sermons on adoption, taken from Matthew 5:9: 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God.' Cooke comments: '... – perhaps not the first verse from which we would preach adoption', but unwisely adds that, 'the Puritans didn't preach in the exegetical straightjackets we impose upon ourselves!' (*op. cit.*, p. 25). Here Cooke betrays a lack of objectivity too often characteristic of the conservative Reformed appreciation of the Puritans. Had they allowed for the authorial

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ADOPTION

Larger Catechism too few of the Puritans dealt with the doctrine as a distinct theological *locus*. Notable exceptions include William Ames (1576-1633) and his 27 characteristics of adoption,⁸¹ Thomas Watson with his chapter on adoption in *A Body of Divinity*,⁸² as also Herman Witsius (1636-1708) in *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*.⁸³ Characteristic of those treatments that do exist is the practice of reading Paul's doctrine into John, thus confusing the apostles' distinctive models of adoption and the new birth. Thereafter, the practice became *pro forma* in the tradition.

Other significant Puritans such as Thomas Goodwin (1600-1679) and John Owen (1616-1683) refer to the doctrine merely in relation to other issues such as predestination⁸⁴ and communion with God.⁸⁵ While it is a shame that two such prominent Puritans did not exemplify the importance of the distinctive treatment of adoption, Ferguson is of the opinion that as far as Owen is concerned this highest privilege of grace is subsumed under

diversity of Scripture they would have been better placed to perceive Paul's distinctive use of *huiothesia*, which is essential to an awareness of the redemptive-historical unfolding of adoption.

⁸¹ W. Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. from the third Latin edition, 1629, and ed. John D. Eusden (Durham, NC, 1983), pp. 164-7.

⁸² T. Watson, *A Body of Divinity Contained in Sermons upon the Westminster Assembly's Catechism*, first published as part of *A Part of Practical Divinity*, 1692. First Banner of Truth Trust edition reprinted from the 1890 ed., 1958 (Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA, 1965), pp. 231-40.

⁸³ H. Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants*, vol. 1, pp. 447-72. *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, S.v. 'Witsius, Herman (1636-1708)' by W. F. Dankbaar.

⁸⁴ *The Works of Thomas Goodwin, D. D.* With a general preface by John C. Miller and memoir by Robert Halley, vol. 1, containing an exposition of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians (Edinburgh and London, 1861), pp. 83-102.

⁸⁵ *The Works of John Owen*, ed. W. H. Gould, vol. 2, first published by Johnstone & Hunter, 1850-53. Facsimile reprint ed. (Edinburgh, 1966), pp. 5-274. See particularly pp. 207-22. Owen also has a short treatment of Galatians 4:6 in his treatise 'A Discourse of the Work of the Holy Spirit in Prayer' in vol. 4. Facsimile reprint ed. (Edinburgh, 1967), pp. 265-70. For a nineteenth-century comparison of Owen and Goodwin on adoption in relation to the sonship of Christ, see Hugh Martin, 'Candlish's Cunningham Lectures', *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 14 (1865), p. 780.

communion with Christ precisely to emphasize that the grace of adoption is only possible through the Son.⁸⁶

Later in Scotland some interest in adoption became evident in the work of Thomas Boston (1676-1732).⁸⁷ In his *Complete Body of Divinity* he regards it as a distinct benefit of effectual calling.⁸⁸ In his *View of the Covenant of Grace* he deals among other things with the promissory aspects of the covenant, part of which pledges a new and saving covenant-relationship to God that is built on reconciliation, adoption and Yahweh's commitment to be the God of his people.⁸⁹ Thus, Boston illustrates the importance of challenging the frequent charge that federal theology is exclusively forensic and prone to legalism.⁹⁰

Boston died just as the phenomenal rise of Methodism was beginning. Although the Methodists were not noted for their profound theological acumen, their experiential emphasis on assurance, understood in terms of the 'Spirit of adoption',⁹¹ impacted upon the homiletics and hymnody of the period. The filial tenor of Methodist devotion is well illustrated in Howell Harris' testimony to his conversion:

June 18th 1735, being in secret prayer, I felt suddenly my heart melting within me like wax before the fire with love to God my Saviour; and also

⁸⁶ S. B. Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life* (Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA, 1987), p. 89.

⁸⁷ Although McGowan's volume on Boston, *The Federal Theology of Thomas Boston*, Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology (Edinburgh, 1997) contains much helpful detail and argumentation, he falls into the same trap as many an orthodox Calvinist; that is, of discussing justification and sanctification without paying heed to the place of adoption in Boston's thought. He only introduces adoption as a foray into the thought of Stephen Charnock to show in Reformed theology that adoption is usually treated in connection with regeneration (*ibid.*, pp. 108 and 109; cf. p. 100).

⁸⁸ *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend Thomas Boston of Ettrick*, vol. 1 (Aberdeen, 1848), pp. 612-53; vol. 2, pp. 15-36.

⁸⁹ *Works*, vol. 8, pp. 483-6.

⁹⁰ The most ardent critic of late has been James B. Torrance. He wrongly, but somewhat understandably, claims that 'the federal scheme has substituted a legal understanding of man for a filial. That is, God's prime purpose for man is legal, not filial, but this yields an impersonal view of man as the object of justice, rather than as primarily the object of love. We can give people their "legal rights" but not see them as our brothers.' Wilhelm H. Neuser, *Calvinus Sacrae Scripturae Professor*, International Congress on Calvin Research (Grand Rapids, MI, 1994), p. 35.

⁹¹ *New Dictionary of Theology*. S.v. 'Sonship' by Ralph P. Martin.

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ADOPTION

felt not only love, peace, etc., but longing to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. Then was a cry in my inmost soul, which I was totally unacquainted with before, Abba, Father! Abba, Father! I could not help calling God my Father; I knew that I was His child, and that He loved me and heard me.⁹²

For others of the period, however, the application of adoption ranged wider than the improvement of devotion. Baptists such as John Gill (1697-1771) saw in adoption an additional *apologia* of the free and sovereign grace of God. As we shall see in the second article the place of adoption in Gill's *Body of Doctrinal Divinity* contrasted markedly with the contradictory fortunes of the doctrine among Wesleyan Methodists.⁹³

With the development of the Brethren movement in the nineteenth-century there was repeated much of the spirit of Methodism. While J. N. Darby has little to say of adoption in his 34 volumes of *Collected Writings*,⁹⁴ his theology nevertheless retains something of the familial imagery and tenor of Scripture.⁹⁵ This is reflected rather uniquely in Brethren hymnody, which contrasts markedly with, for example, Reformed compilations.⁹⁶

In the intervening period Presbyterians had unwittingly and almost universally settled for a truncated proclamation of their confession's soteriology. Eventually this truncation contributed to the provocation of the early nineteenth-century rejection of the juridical emphasis predominant

⁹² Cited by E. Evans, *Daniel Rowland and the Great Evangelical Awakening in Wales* (Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA, 1985), p. 53. See also George Whitefield's account of his conversion as cited by John Stoughton in his *History of England from the Opening of the Long Parliament to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 6, *The Church in the Georgian Era* (London, 1881), pp. 125-6.

⁹³ See Book VI chapters 9 and 10 of Gill's *Body of Doctrinal Divinity* in his *Body of Divinity*, reprinted from the London edition of 1839 (Atlanta, GA, 1950), pp. 518-28.

⁹⁴ J. N. Darby, *Collected Writings*, ed. William Kelly, 34 vols (Lancing, Sussex, 1964 (?)-1967).

⁹⁵ See, for instance, Darby's treatments on 'The Prodigal with the Father' (*ibid.*, vol. 12); 'Notes on Romans - Ch. 8' (*ibid.*, vol. 26); 'Notes on the Epistle to the Ephesians' (*ibid.*, vol. 27); 'Fellowship with the Father and with the Son' (*ibid.*, vol. 28); 'On Sealing with the Holy Ghost' (*ibid.*, vol. 31).

⁹⁶ See *Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Little Flock*. Selected 1856. Revised edn (Kingston-on-Thames, 1962).

among Westminster Calvinists.⁹⁷ Thomas Erskine of Linlathen and John McLeod Campbell became prominent agitators for a renewed accent on the Fatherhood of God. So widespread did this initially romantic then Broad School emphasis become, that when, in the 1860s, Robert Candlish confronted the issue from what he believed to be an orthodox Calvinistic point of view, he could only evoke a short-lived debate with his fellow Calvinist Thomas Crawford. Even then, interest was not guaranteed. When Daniel Dewar (1788-1867), Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen, published his three-volume series entitled *Elements of Systematic Divinity* three years later, it is significant that his chapter on adoption made no mention of Candlish's Cunningham Lectures.⁹⁸ Not all were silent, however. In *Man's Relations to God*⁹⁹ the renowned Free Churchman John Kennedy of Dingwall attempted to cut through the dense complexities of the arguments involved.

Kennedy was not alone. Across the Atlantic the insights of James Henley Thornwell (1812-1862) and Robert J Breckinridge (1800-1871),¹⁰⁰ coupled with the stimulus of the Candlish/Crawford debate encouraged the Southern Presbyterians John L. Girardeau (1825-1898) and Robert A. Webb (1856-1919)¹⁰¹ to investigate further the doctrine of adoption. Although their treatments were of limited success they did at least increase the amount of resources available from which the long hoped-for recovery can draw. The same may be said of the brief and less polemical treatment of the Southern Baptist John L. Dagg (1794-1884). In his *Manual of*

⁹⁷ For an informative list of those prominent historical and systematic theologians in Germany, USA and Scotland who omit adoption from their tomes, see McKinlay, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁹⁸ Dewar's treatment lacks Candlish's unhealthy and sometimes speculative preoccupation with Adam's sonship. Daniel Dewar, *Elements of Systematic Divinity*, vol. 2 (Glasgow, 1867), pp. 488-503.

⁹⁹ John Kennedy, *Man's Relations to God: Traced in the Light of 'the Present Truth'*, reprinted from the 1869 ed. (Edinburgh, 1995). It was during the same period, but unrelated to the debate, that Thomas Houston published his experimental monograph on adoption in 1872.

¹⁰⁰ See Robert J. Breckinridge, *The Knowledge of God, Subjectively considered. Being the Second Part of Theology considered as a Science of Positive Truth, both Inductive and Deductive*. New York and Louisville, 1859, pp. 178-202.

¹⁰¹ See J. L. Girardeau's *Discussions of Theological Questions*. Although the material found in Webb's monograph dates back to lectures he delivered at Louisville Theological Seminary, Kentucky, it was not published until 1947, nearly 30 years after his death.

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ADOPTION

Theology he lists adoption as a blessing of grace, but curtails his exposition to but an enumeration of adoption's privileges.¹⁰²

Finally, we must briefly mention the fact that the Candlish/Crawford debate ran contemporaneously with a parallel bifurcation between two Roman Catholic theologians: Matthias Joseph Scheeben (1835-88) and Theodore Grandérath (1839-1902). 'Never before in the history of Roman Catholic theology,' writes Edwin Palmer, 'was there such an extensive discussion of the formal cause of adoption as in the Grandérath-Scheeben debate.'¹⁰³ He wisely adds that a better knowledge of Scheeben's theory would help inform and dialectically challenge the Reformed understanding of adoption.

So much, then, for the theological history of adoption! As we shall explain in the next article, its abrupt ending reflects the fact that the advent of liberal theology, with its espousal of a universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, did, surprisingly, as little justice to adoption as had the prior conservative preoccupation with legal categories. What further developments the twentieth century witnessed were largely a repetition of the Methodist and Brethren emphasis on filial and familial devotion, as became manifest in the Charismatic movement. Even there, however, the focus on the Father could not be guaranteed. By the later twentieth century Tom Smail, a former leader of the movement, was lamenting its immature self-absorption:

A renewal in danger of being dominated by the desire of Christians to have their felt spiritual, emotional or physical needs satisfied, or by the pursuit of charismatic power, needs to be converted from its own self-concern to a new obedience to the universal purpose and will of the Father. The renewal will find an expanding significance and life, not within its own internal evolution, but only as it seeks to see what the Father is doing.¹⁰⁴

While germane to the Charismatic movement, Smail's comments are relevant for us all. We need neither a self-reliance, nor a Jesuology tantamount to the practical christomonism that marks too many Christian lives, but a robust trinitarianism that, in Smail's words, 'starts not with the cross of Jesus or with the gift of the Spirit, but with the Father who so

¹⁰² John L. Dagg, *A Manual of Theology*, first published 1857 (Harrisonburg, VA, 1982), pp. 274-7.

¹⁰³ E. H. Palmer, *Scheeben's Doctrine of Divine Adoption* (Kampen, 1953), p. xi.

¹⁰⁴ Smail, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

loved the world that he gave his Son in his Spirit'.¹⁰⁵ Of course, many would affirm the same. But if this is so self-evident then why do the insights of the foregoing theologians continue to languish in the archives of the church, their potential contribution to the development of soteriology remaining untapped to this day? The time has surely come for the discussion to move on from the documentation of the neglect of adoption to the intentional appropriation of the resources required to integrate finally the doctrine of adoption into the everyday theology of the church.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

MARRIAGE UNDER THREAT IN THE WRITING OF GEORGE SWINNOCK

MICHAEL PARSONS, THE BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE AND
MURDOCH UNIVERSITY, PERTH, WA.

INTRODUCTION

Little is known of the life of George Swinnock. That which is certain can be summarized as follows. He was born in Maidstone, Kent in 1627. His father is said to have been 'a most zealous Puritan'.¹ Swinnock studied at Cambridge, going after his graduation to Oxford as chaplain of New College until his appointment as a Fellow of Balliol College in 1648. He was vicar for a time at Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire and then again at Great Kemble in Buckinghamshire. He was deprived of his living in the Great Ejection of 1662, but served as chaplain to the family of Richard Hampden. Following the Declaration of Indulgence he returned, in 1672, to minister in his hometown of Maidstone where he died a year later. He is described as one accounted 'an eminent preacher among those of his persuasion'.² Judged by any scholarly definition, George Swinnock's persuasion was that of Puritanism. It seems difficult to be precise in stating exactly what Puritans were.³ However, whether Puritans are characterized by certain personal qualities and spiritual concerns,⁴ or

¹ *The Works of George Swinnock*, volumes 1-5 (A reprint of James Nichol's edition, 1868 – Edinburgh, 1992), vol. 5, x – hereafter, *Works*. See the original editor's brief account of Swinnock's life, vol. 1, ix-xv. This essay retains the spelling and the punctuation of Nichol's edition.

² *Works*, vol.5, xi.

³ See B. Hall, 'Puritanism: the Problem of Definition' in ed. G. J. Cuming, *Studies in Church History*, vol. 2 (London, 1964), pp. 283-96; C. Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London, 1966), pp. 13-29; T. de Welles, 'Sex and Sexual Attitudes in Seventeenth Century England: The Evidence from Puritan Diaries', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 12 (1988), p. 59, fn. 1.

⁴ See Diane Willen, 'Godly Women in Early Modern England: Puritanism and Gender', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 43 (1992), pp. 562-3; R. Buick Knox, 'Puritanism Past and Present', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 19 (1966), pp. 293-305. On the significance of the Bible for both their

whether a more generic evaluation is adopted, it is clear that Swinnock was a Puritan.⁵

The Puritans wrote a great deal specifically on the subject of marriage and family relationships and much has been written on their views. Swinnock wrote during the mid- to late 1600s. His work was written after many marriage treatises had been published by a whole host of earlier Puritan writers. William Haller, for example, lists Henry Smith's *Preparative to Marriage* (1591), John Dod and Robert Cleaver's *Godly Forme of Householde Government* (1598), William Perkins' *Christian Oeconomie* (translated from Latin into English in 1609), William Whately's *Bridebush* (1617) and *Care-Cloth* (1624), William Gouge's *Domesticall Duties* (1622) and Daniel Roger's *Matrimoniall Honor* (1642).⁶ Understandably, most recent studies on the subject limit their research to this earlier, more productive literary period.⁷ Typically, in a recent essay Daniel Doriani, for example, confines himself to English Puritans before the Civil War. Others have been similarly focused. While

teaching and daily life and practice, see for example, J. R. Knott, Jr, *The Sword of the Spirit: Puritan Responses to the Bible* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 13-41; J. I. Packer, 'The Puritans as Interpreters of Scripture' in *A Goodly Heritage: Papers given at the Westminster Conference* (London, 1958), pp. 18-26; I. Murray, 'Living the Christian Life exemplified in the English Reformers', in *Living the Christian Life: Papers given at the Westminster Conference* (London, 1974), pp. 14-28.

⁵ Peter Lewis, *The Genius of Puritanism* (Haywards Heath, Sussex, 1977), p. 12; B. C. Lane, 'Two Schools of Desire: Nature and Marriage in Seventeenth Century Puritanism', *Church History* 69 (2000), p. 373. See also, Willen, 'Godly Women', p. 362.

⁶ W. Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution* (New York, 1955), p. 83.

⁷ See for example, Daniel Doriani, 'The Puritans, Sex and Pleasure', *Westminster Theological Journal* 53 (1991), pp. 125-43, which confines itself to English Puritans before the Civil War, specifically from Thomas Becon's work published in 1542 to Daniel Roger's, published in 1642. See also A. Fletcher, 'The Protestant Idea of Marriage in Early Modern England', in eds A. Fletcher and P. Roberts, *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 161-81; Willen, 'Godly Women', pp. 561-80. Three notable exceptions are Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England: 1500-1720* (London, 1993); Stevie Davies, *Unbridled Spirits. Women of the English Revolution* (London, 1998), particularly ch. 9, 'Three Puritan Marriages', pp. 181-209, and, earlier, Joyce L. Irwin, *Womanhood in Radical Protestantism 1525-1675* (New York, 1979).

not suggesting that there was ever simply one distinctive Puritan theory of domestic relations, by examining a later writer we discover something of where the inherent tendency of Puritan thinking might have been leading.

That tendency did not originate with the Puritans, of course. Levin Schücking suggests that as far as marriage was concerned the Puritans continued the teaching of the continental reformers, though in reference to specifically sexual matters he singles out the teaching of Martin Luther.⁸ Others have voiced the same opinion – the Puritans' ideal of marriage was there in the original reformers⁹ – though some specify Calvinist principles, in particular.¹⁰ Kathleen Davies, in what has become something of a seminal essay, follows William Haller's lead in pointing to the influence of Bullinger in familial matters. In this she may be right. His work *Der Christliche Ehestand* (1540) was published several times in English as *The Christian State of Matrimony*, sometimes with a preface by the Puritan Thomas Becon.¹¹ Martin Bucer is not to be entirely discounted, either. Despite Selderhuis' recent conclusion that Bucer's permanent influence was limited, it is still possible that the reformer

⁸ Levin L. Schücking, *The Puritan Family* (London, 1969), pp. 21-3.

⁹ For example, J. I. Packer, 'Marriage and Family in Puritan Thought' in *Among God's Giants* (Eastbourne, Sussex, 1991), pp. 341-61.

¹⁰ See R. R. Ruether, *Women and Redemption. A Theological History* (London, 1998), p. 128; O. C. Watkins, *The Puritan Experience* (London, 1972), p. 238 (see generally pp. 226-39). Certainly, it is true that the characteristic theology of English Protestant sainthood was Calvinism – N. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987), p. 1; Knott, *Sword of the Spirit*, p. 3. It is interesting that Swinnock cites the reformers occasionally throughout his work: Luther (*Works* 1.69, 1.332, 1.491), Melanchthon (*Works* 1.83), Peter Martyr (*Works* 1.335), Beza (*Works* 1.473) and Erasmus (*Works* 1.473). Nevertheless, Calvin is cited most often and, sometimes, at very significant points in Swinnock's comments on marriage: *Works* 1.52, 1.86, 1.134, 1.245, 1.423 – on Genesis 24 (1.453), on Genesis 22 (1.479), on Genesis 2:18 (1.490), on Genesis 39:31 on the subject of love. He quotes these and others at less significant times throughout his work, *The Christian Man's Calling*.

¹¹ Kathleen Davies, 'The Sacred condition of equality – how original were Puritan doctrines of marriage?', *Social History* 5 (1977), pp. 563-80. Davies states that Bullinger is 'clearly the source for much of the later writing' (p. 580). See also C. W. Pfeiffer, 'Heinrich Bullinger and Marriage' (doctoral thesis, St Louis University, 1981); J. T. Johnson, *A Society Ordained by God* (New York, 1970), p. 90; M. Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge, 1987).

should be considered as initiating some of the ideas that developed in Puritan thinking. Selderhuis, himself, notes the possible influence on the Puritans William Perkins, Thomas Becon and Robert Browne.¹² Certainly, in general terms, the reformers and the Puritans deal with many of the same questions: the purpose of marriage, the ideal form of domestic life and practical advice on how to attain that ideal.¹³ To a point, they share common sources too, particularly the Scriptures.¹⁴ The question that confronts us is 'What became of that thinking in a little over a hundred years?'

Swinnock did not produce a treatise on marriage as such. He sought to define familial relations within the wider context of godliness, as he understood it. His massive work, *The Christian Man's Calling* (1662-4),¹⁵ runs to over twelve hundred pages in Nichol's edition. It is his exposition and application of the latter part of 1 Timothy 4:7, 'Exercise thyself unto godliness.' Consequently, the concept of godliness is the wider context in which Swinnock grounds his views of marriage. It is this that is perhaps most significant.

The present short study discusses Swinnock's view of the relationship between the spouses. Unsurprisingly, it shows that his ideas are traditional. But, much more significantly, it argues that these orthodox views gain an almost unbearable spiritual intensity from two aspects. These aspects are the concept of godliness that Swinnock works with and elaborates, and the continual and nagging reference to threat that abounds in his work. For George Swinnock, marriage is a life under the potential threat of God. Consequently, this essay argues that however positive Swinnock appears about mutuality, the concepts of godliness and threat lock husband and wife further into a patriarchal pattern of rule and obedience. This, in turn, suggests implications for the conclusions that we might reach on Puritan thinking on mutuality in marriage.

¹² See H. J. Selderhuis, *Marriage and Divorce in the Thought of Martin Bucer* (Kirksville, Missouri, 1999). Bucer's impact in England was limited, largely because his views on divorce were considered too liberal (pp. 370-72). See also, G. Hammann, *Entre La Secte et La Cite: Le Projet d'Église du Réformateur Martin Bucer. 1491-1551* (Geneva, 1984), pp. 109-19.

¹³ Davies, 'The sacred condition', pp. 564-5.

¹⁴ See Doriani, 'The Puritans, Sex and Pleasure', pp. 137, 143.

¹⁵ *The Christian Man's Calling*, first published in 1662-4. It is Swinnock's most famous work.

GODLINESS: THE CONTEXT OF SWINNOCK'S MARITAL THEOLOGY

The wider context for Swinnock's teaching on marriage is his understanding of 'godliness' in the Christian life. The concept of godliness becomes determinative of how he defines marriage and of the way in which he employs the traditional template on marriage to focus on salvation, itself. Marriage, governed by godliness, is treated in Swinnock's exposition of the biblical exhortation, 'Exercise thyself unto godliness.' Although Swinnock realizes that the text is written specifically to Timothy, as a leader of the church, he believes that its application should govern all believers in both their general call (as Christians) and their particular, vocational call.¹⁶ Consequently, the application of the text is almost exhaustive. The areas in which godliness is dealt with at length in *The Christian Man's Calling* are as follows. In general, they are prayer, hearing and reading the Word, receiving the Lord's Supper, the Lord's Day, eating and drinking, clothes and sleep, recreation. In particular, they are as a minister, in the family, as parents, children, husbands and wives, as masters and servants, in prosperity and adversity, in the choice of companions, among evil people and in good company, in solitude and, lastly, on week days. Swinnock wishes his readers to apply the truth to every conceivable area of their lives. He says, for example, that the Christian

must be holy in his closet, alone, holy among company, holy at home, holy abroad, holy in his shop, holy among his sheep, holy in church, holy in his chamber, holy at his table, holy in his travels, holy in prosperity, holy in adversity, holy in every relation and in every condition, 'in all manner of conversation'.¹⁷

According to Swinnock, 'godliness' has two components. It is defined as both the immediate worship of God and as duty towards one's neighbour. Swinnock distinguishes between 'heart-godliness' and 'life-godliness'. Their conjunction goes to make a complete Christian. Elsewhere he states that, 'Godliness is a worshipping the true God in heart and life, according to his revealed will' (1.31).¹⁸ That is, to be godly is to be obedient to both

¹⁶ See *Works*, 1.49, 1.85. To reduce the number of footnotes, simple volume and page references will appear in the text in brackets wherever appropriate.

¹⁷ *Works*, 1.84. A similar passage is found at 1.301.

¹⁸ *Works*, 1.33. See also 1.34-5, 2.174-6, 2.187.

tables of biblical law (1.28). Consequently, godliness is defined in relation to Swinnock's primary idea of God as lawgiver.

It is extremely significant that Swinnock seems to view God as *primarily* one to whom duty is owed. This is a deciding factor for how he sees godliness and how he defines marriage. In what appears to be a determining image, Swinnock says, 'God did indeed set up the admirable house of the visible world... for his own service and honour: but the *payment of this rent is expected at the hands of man*, the inhabitant. He was made and put into this house upon this very account... [to] pay into the great landlord his due and deserved praise.'¹⁹ The metaphor of 'landlord' conjures the ideas of a legal contract and obligation that, for Swinnock, is part of the imagery employed to define the essential nature of the ongoing gospel relationship. That is, though that relationship is created and sustained by love (divine primarily, and reciprocated on the human level), there has also to be a discharged obligation on the part of the believer to confirm that relationship. Notice, too, that the logic and force of an earlier remark is drawn into this image. Earlier he says,

According to the title or power which one hath over another, such must the service be. Where the right is absolute, the obedience must not be conditional; God having therefore a perfect sovereignty over his creatures, and complete right to all their services, his end and aim, his will and word, must be principally minded by them (1.46-7).

Just as others before him, Swinnock's teaching discloses a God who is involved in human life and its relationships. This in itself is not surprising. This is part and parcel of the evangelical belief in a personal God. But whereas others had pictured God as looking on and delighting in marriage,²⁰ *The Christian Man's Calling* generally presents a different view altogether. Because God is primarily considered as the one to whom all service is due, Swinnock is able to conclude, 'Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently' (1.55). Positively, duty has to be undertaken in a whole-hearted manner, but the implied threat and its inherent force is significant and does not elude Swinnock's reasoning. God is present both

¹⁹ *Works*, 1.48-9 – emphasis added. Elsewhere Swinnock says, 'Timothy must make it his trade to *pay God and men their due*' (1.28 – emphasis added). See also, 1.31, 1.85.

²⁰ This was certainly the reformers' view, in general. See, for example, Luther's assertions of the joy of marriage *coram Deo*, LW 45.39-41 [WA 10².295-7]; LW 51.362 [WA 49.801]; *etc.*; Bullinger, *The Decades* (Cambridge, 1849-50), Decade 4, 112.

immanently and at the distance of the beginning of eternity – but neither perspective affords much comfort for those who are deficient in service. On the one hand, ‘God’s eye is all the day long upon thee.’ He takes notice and ‘will reckon with thee’ (2.488).²¹ On the other hand, divine judgement awaits those who are negligent in godliness. Concerning this possibility Swinnock is most graphic:

Is not that worthy to be made thy business, which will help thee to comfort and confidence at a dreadful day of judgement, and cause thee to lift up thy head with joy, when thousands and millions shall weep and wail? The day of judgement will be a terrible day indeed. ... When God sends his officer, death, to arrest sinners for *the vast sums which they owe to his justice* for their breach of his laws, and this serjeant, according to command from the King of kings, executes his writ ... then, oh, then, they will wish with all their souls and strengths, again and again, that they had minded the Christian man’s calling.²²

The ‘Christian man’s calling’ is that of godliness, of course. But notice the strong sense of obligation conjured by the italicized words and the threat implied in the images and the tone of the whole passage, a passage that actually continues unabated for four or five pages.

With this pervasive idea that faith makes things that are future present to the believer’s consciousness²³ it is hardly surprising that he emphasizes the sense of Christian life as a journey to be made or as work to be undertaken. Speaking of the Christian, he says, ‘in his whole life he walks with God’ (1.36). The Christian is to ‘walk within the view of heaven’ (2.137). ‘He doth not stand still’ (2.185). Again, Swinnock’s imagery is significant. The chief image that he employs related to godliness as work is that of trade. Christians need to be ‘always trading heavenward... an unwearied commerce... betwixt God and our souls’ (1.85); they need to ‘drive a trade in heaven’ (1.300).²⁴ If they are serious about this, believers

²¹ Again, Swinnock says, ‘[T]hou hast every moment of thy life to do with the great God... in every part, and passage’ (2.171 and 172).

²² *Works*, 2.177, 182 – emphasis added. It is this graphic perception of reality that puts everything into eternal perspective, of course – see 2.183.

²³ This is explicitly stated at *Works*, 3.103, but the idea permeates Swinnock’s writing.

²⁴ See also, *Works*, 1.29, 1.44, 1.66, 1.79. In Swinnock’s work, *The Door of Salvation Opened*, he asks the rhetorical question, ‘Is it thy business and trade to do his will, thy calling and employment to finish his work?’ (5.105).

must be active and earnest in their endeavour – particularly with such great gain in store for those who succeed.²⁵ Swinnock remarks that the ‘holiness of a saint must be operative’ (1.300). This is really the key. The list of images he uses to gain the impression is quite remarkable. In just a few random pages the list includes natural phenomena like running water, consuming fire, clouds scudding across the sky, the sun shining, a spring bubbling, birds flying. These appear together with active characters like tradesmen, fishermen, sailors, merchants, runners, labourers, soldiers, watchmen, husbandmen and those rowing boats – images that imply movement, energy, industry and direction.²⁶ The following is an example of how the images are employed as vignettes to provoke action: ‘What labour and industry doth the husbandman use for profit! He riseth early, sits up late, denieth himself, loseth his sleep, rides and runs to and fro, embraceth all opportunities, is eaten up almost with cares and fears, all for earthly mammon’ (1.68).

In terms of motivation, Swinnock reminds his readers that humanity was created *for* strenuous activity (both in temporal work and in godliness).²⁷ However, there is also that teleological draw towards heaven and ultimate spiritual gain. He says, for instance, ‘The profit of godliness is invaluable above price’ (1.71). He then lists the eternal gain as favour with God, the promises of the gospel, the covenant of grace, the blood of Christ, the ‘embroidery of the Spirit’, the life of faith, hope of heaven and joy in the Holy Ghost. Later in the work the intensity of his comments is clearly perceived. He remarks, ‘So absolute is the necessity of man’s making religion his business, that *upon his diligence or negligence herein*, his eternal salvation or damnation doth depend.’²⁸ Notice the use to which he puts this idea:

²⁵ *Works*, 1.29, 1.39-40, 1.51, 2.184.

²⁶ See *Works*, 1.25-8, 1.38, 1.41, 1.44, 1.50, 2.173. The list is incomplete. See also, 1.351. Swinnock’s stress on industry is partly because of his view of the nature of God, himself, as inherently active – *Works*, 1.378.

²⁷ He cites Job 5:7 and Genesis 2:15 (1.29). Swinnock says that, ‘man in an especial manner is predestinated and created for this purpose’ (1.48).

²⁸ *Works*, 2.186 – emphasis added. Ryken, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986), p. 49, says that Puritans insisted that every activity had to carry a purpose higher than itself. Certainly, the ultimate purpose, for Swinnock, is always to glorify God; but the penultimate purpose is salvation. See also Hill, *Society and Puritanism*, p. 451; Packer, ‘Marriage and Family’, p. 358.

Godliness is a work that relates... to the boundless, bottomless ocean of eternity indeed, and therefore calleth for all our care and diligence. ... Eternal life is promised to the diligent, eternal death is the portion of the negligent. ... Who would not labour hard to attain eternal life! Who would not work night and day to avoid eternal death, eternal woe! ... Ah, did but man know... he would do anything, were it never so hard, to arrive at heaven (1.57, 58).

Swinnock defines 'godliness' in such a way that it is largely severed from an image of God who delights in his people, *as they are*. He cements that definition to the image of lawgiver (the 'landlord') to whom Christians owe everything and by whom the performance of duty is minutely scrutinized. Because of this theological construct it is certainly appropriate for Swinnock to employ threat to motivate his readers to active godliness – appropriate, but ultimately both negative and destructive.

Three things, then, crowd the believer's consciousness. First, there remains a sense of the possibility of salvation. But the certainty of this comes *only* if the law is kept and the duty paid. Swinnock asks, 'How exact should he be in his life, who must be tried by so holy a law!' He is adamant that every thought, word and action is to be strictly revealed, examined and weighed by God (3.133-5).²⁹ Second, the believer's life is to be dominated by the consideration of his/her own death – any day might prove to be their last (2.486).³⁰ Earlier Swinnock remarks, 'None will work so hard as they who think themselves near their everlasting homes' (3.124). Third, the believer sees judgement as an awful reality. With little exaggeration, Tyacke says, generally of Puritan thinking, 'the saints needed

²⁹ Swinnock comments, 'He had need to labour hard that would attain heaven' (1.29). See his use of Philippians 2:12 at this point. No wonder that generally the Puritans were concerned that visible evidence of present grace was necessary in the believer's life and relations, before spiritual assurance was assumed. See also, *Works*, 3.185. See R. B. Bickel, *Light and Heat: The Puritan View of the Pulpit* (Morgan, PA, 1999), pp. 141-53; Willen, 'Godly Women', p. 567.

³⁰ 'Believe it, thy death may be nearer than thou dreamest; the glass of thy life may be almost out, though thou thinkest it is but new turned' (3.125). He exhorts, 'Think often of thy dying day, and what price and value godliness will be to thee at such a time' (3.119). See also, *Works*, 1.486 and Swinnock's work, *The Fading of the Flesh*, 3.434-42.

to be on permanent alert, *for God was a jealous and a punitive creator*'.³¹ We observe this characteristic teaching in Swinnock's work.

In summary, the overarching context for Swinnock's comments on marriage consists of the following characteristics: (a) God is primarily seen as lawgiver, (b) godliness is defined as keeping law, (c) the whole of life, and every particular involved, is directly related to salvation, (d) industry and, above all, obedience, is absolutely necessary to secure eternal life. Of course, this is somewhat oversimplified, yet it gives the dominant feel of Swinnock's teaching. And, as a defining construct, it does not appear to be a very positive or liberating context into which to place marital relations. We notice, next, how this context confines and qualifies his comments on marriage.

SWINNOCK'S VIEW OF A GODLY MARRIAGE

Marriage, Swinnock says, is 'a fellowship of the nearest union and dearest communion in this world'. More formally, he speaks of it as 'a lawful conjunction of one man and one woman for the terms of their natural lives'.³² In a traditional way he underlines the idea that it is God and not humanity who institutes marriage – both historically, in the joining together of Adam and Eve (1.464) and presently (1.481). The form of the union is one of mutual covenant (1.464). Though not a sacrament because it does not confer grace, it is nevertheless dignified and noble in itself (1.466). The central principle that Swinnock enunciates is that marriage is thus instituted with an over-riding purpose: 'to be a help to religion' – that is, to be a help to godliness. Involved in this assertion is the conclusion that sanctification and matrimony are not incongruous. Indeed, 'Good company should make us walk the more cheerfully in the way of God's commandments' (1.465). This, according to Swinnock, is the *material* cause of marriage. It is a significant principle that permeates the whole of his understanding. Notice the bringing together of the image of walking with the primary idea of God as lawgiver.

Swinnock's perception of family is also important. His formal definition says little that is new: 'A family is a natural and simple society of certain persons, having mutual relations one to another, under the

³¹ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 1 – emphasis added. For Swinnock on this aspect, see his writings, *The Fading of the Flesh*, 3.442-53; *The Sinner's Last Sentence*, 5.265-461; *The Incomparableness of God*, 4.467.

³² *Works*, 1.362, 464 respectively. See also, *Works*, 1.481, where he speaks of marriage as 'a relation of the sweetest and nearest communion in this world, ordained by our God'.

private government of one head or chief' (1.330). His most frequently employed image is that of the family as a little church.³³ This, in itself, was quite commonplace – its use goes back, at least, to Augustine.³⁴ What strikes the reader about Swinnock's use of the image, though, is the way it consciously unfolds to imply significantly heavy responsibility for family members. He says, 'Every master of a family is a priest, and his whole family should be a royal priesthood, offering at least morning and evening sacrifice to God, acceptable through Jesus Christ' (1.337). As he contemplates the image he seems to expand it. The family is a church, but it has to be more than a church. It is a tabernacle – with a new stress on it being temporary (1.360). Then the family 'should be a resemblance of heaven above' – with an implied emphasis on both responsibility and duty.³⁵ Now the husband is not merely priest, but his position and duty are considerably elevated: 'Thy duty is to resemble Christ' (1.493).³⁶ Elsewhere, Swinnock speaks of husbands governing and directing the family in the same way that Christ did his disciples (3.296).

Swinnock's perception of both marriage and family underlines what I would argue is his determining principle, that of *salvific usefulness*. We have observed this in his definition of 'godliness'. Every circumstance of

³³ See, for example, *Works*, 1.331, 1.334, 1.354, 1.380, 1.484, 1.493, and so on. Other images are used as well, of course. The typical, reformed image of the family being a school or nursery of piety and learning is one such (1.331).

³⁴ See Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* in ed. J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus* (Lille, 1952), p. 18. Also, *Serm. Matt.* 25:24 in ed. P. Schaff, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, 1886), vol. 1.6.406, where he says that the husband must take on 'the office of the Episcopate'. See also, Luther, who speaks of 'the household church' (*domesticam Ecclesiam*) – *Comms Gen.* 34:1-2, LW 6.187 [WA 44.139]; 37:4, LW 6.325 [WA 44.243]; 49:4, LW 8.221 [WA 44.740] and Calvin, who writes of the family 'in the likeness of the church' (*ut sit ecclesiae imago*) – *Comm. Col.* 4:15 (CO 52.132); *Comm. Acts* 16:14-18 (CO 48.378); *Comm. I Cor.* 16:19 (CO 49.571). See Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, p. 87. It is well noted by Schücking, *The Puritan Family*, p. 56, that religion for the Puritans is essentially family religion: 'Divine worship is, not incidentally but primarily, family worship.'

³⁵ *Works*, 1.359 – emphasis added. See also, *Works*, 1.380, 1.487, 1.499.

³⁶ *Works*, 1.493. See also, *Works*, 3.231. Part of what it means to resemble Christ can be seen in the following comment from Swinnock's work, *Heaven and Hell Epitomised* (3.203-399): 'Doth it [the family] not need pitying, sanctifying, pardoning, directing, preventing mercy every day, nay, every moment? And is not all this worth a prayer?' (3.221).

life, every relationship is directly related to eternity. Marriage is no exception. At the appropriate point he will reiterate the conventional threefold purposes for marriage: procreation, companionship and the avoidance of sin; but much more significantly, Swinnock insists that marriage is actually an aid to individual salvation. Indeed, ultimately, that is its *raison d'être*. It is this that undergirds his understanding. The married couple is to fellowship together 'in the way that leads to everlasting life' (1.481), to 'be serviceable to each other's souls' (1.486).³⁷ Therefore, husbands are exhorted not to consider marriage as a hindrance to holiness, 'for by it thou hast more advantage to promote religion in thy family' (1.487). In this emphasis, Swinnock's work seems, at least, to resemble Martin Bucer's approach to the subject, perhaps more than others. Selderhuis states that, to the reformer,

Marriage is not... an emergency measure but an aid. ... Marriage is now defined in positive terms and viewed by Bucer as a means that a husband and a wife can use to help each other and themselves to attain eternal life. ... *He compares marriage to a journey to eternity*. The crucial point for us humans is that we 'end up with God'.³⁸

This is exactly Swinnock's point and the image of journey is not insignificant, as we have already observed. Swinnock insists that marriage is founded on a common understanding of the purpose of life, itself. Within that broader understanding, the primary purpose of the family is to glorify God. Therefore, Swinnock seeks to place daily familial relationships and activities within a setting profound enough to invest them with true, spiritual and, indeed, eternal significance.³⁹ The most

³⁷ The kingdom of heaven is 'raised or ruined' by the good or wicked management of families (1.356).

³⁸ Selderhuis, *Marriage and Divorce*, p. 193 – emphasis added. The final internal quote is from Bucer's *Enarrationes... in quatuor Evangelia* (Strasbourg, 1530), 154D. Elsewhere, in defining the kingdom of Christ, Bucer says that *everything* contributes to the gaining of people's salvation – and that marriage is no exception. See *De Regno Christi* in ed. W. Pauck, *Melanchthon and Bucer: Library of Christian Classics*, vol. 19 (London, 1969), p. 225. The context and determinative principle behind Luther's teaching is largely the temporal kingdom and for Calvin the concept of social *ordo* – see my forthcoming book, *Reformation Marriage: Husband and Wife Relations in Luther and Calvin* (Rutherford House, Edinburgh).

³⁹ See Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, p. 73.

intense way of doing that is to stress that the individual's salvation rests on performance of duty – an important subject to which we return below.

Swinnock is entirely conventional on the secondary purposes of marriage. The first mention lists them as follows: 'for the generation of children, the avoiding of sin, or the comfort of mutual society'. Significantly, though, as Swinnock explicates them he inverts the order of the final two, citing relevant biblical texts: procreation (Gen. 1:26), the benefit of a good companion (Gen. 2:18) and, since the Fall, the avoidance of fornication (1 Cor. 7:2). He even adds that some include a fourth, that is, to resemble Christ and his Church, though he does not specifically enlarge on this (1.464). The writer appears relatively uninterested in the first and the final causes of marriage, saying nothing at all about them.⁴⁰

Swinnock's emphasis clearly lies with the concept of companionship within marriage. Indeed, scholars have singled out this aspect of Puritan thought as its distinctive contribution to defining marriage within a traditional framework. Puritan writers seem to shift the primary emphasis from both procreation and *remedium peccati* to companionship.⁴¹ Joyce Irwin may well be correct in suggesting that in the beginning of the attempt to reform familial relations those advocating clerical marriage saw the chief value in being a remedy against sin. But, she continues, 'The longer the Protestant ministers lived with their wives, however, the more they realized that companionship had more than physical benefits.'⁴² I would argue that, in fact, there is more than a hint that this shift is present in the Reformers' thinking⁴³ – but it is certainly concretized in the Puritan idea of marriage.

There is a creational logic in Swinnock's thought. God created men and women *to be* sociable, that is part of their essential nature (2.238).

⁴⁰ However, Swinnock does spend considerable time in speaking of parents' responsibility. See *Works*, 1.337-40.

⁴¹ See, for example, Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, p. 47; Crawford, *Religion and Women*, p. 39; Johnson, *A Society*, p. 42.

⁴² Joyce Irwin, *Womanhood*, p. xxiii.

⁴³ See, for example, Luther, *Sermon on the Estate of Marriage*, LW 44.10-11 [WA 2.168-9]; *On Marriage Matters*, LW 46.312-14 [WA 30³242-3]; *Comm Gen* 16:6, LW 3.58 [WA 42.590]; *Comm Isa.* 56.4, LW 17.262 [WA 31².463]; Calvin, *Serm. Deut.* 22:13-24 (CO 28.48); Bucer, *De Regno Christi*, 316-27; Bullinger, *The Decades*, 2, 393-410. See also, C. J. Blaisdell, 'The Matrix of Reform: Women in the Lutheran and Calvinist Movements', in ed. R. L. Greaves, *Triumph Over Silence* (Westport, Connecticut, 1985), pp. 13-44; Selderhuis, *Marriage and Divorce*, pp. 43-7; Pfeiffer, *Heinrich Bullinger*, p. 145.

Sociability is most clearly evidenced where a husband and a wife are bound together in love.⁴⁴ The husband is to 'enjoy his wife' (1.498). Swinnock speaks in the warmest terms of her: 'my fellow... delight of mine eyes... ravisher of my heart' (1.499). He is to be tender, sympathetic, patient, to love her as his own soul.⁴⁵ Likewise the wife is to cherish her husband, looking upon him and his actions 'through the spectacles of love' (1.519).⁴⁶ The point is underlined:

They are one body, one flesh, and so should have but one soul, one spirit; they have one bed, one board, one house, and therefore should be one in heart. ... Without the union of hearts, the union of bodies will be no benefit. ... The husband ought to love his wife, and she him, above... all others in the world (1.471-2).⁴⁷

They are, as it were, 'glued together' (Swinnock's phrase). 'Their love must last whilst they live. No affliction must quench it, no flood drown it; nay, like the ark of Noah, it must rise the higher for these waters' (1.473).

Here in Swinnock, as in the Puritans generally, is an ambivalence. On the one hand, Puritans seem to exalt women (particularly *in their roles* as wives and mothers) and to lavish comments of affection upon them.⁴⁸ On the other hand, the context for that love is clearly one of unequal power-relations in the family. It is worth noting the context in which Swinnock speaks of mutual love. Four things may be observed.

A real (a literal) inequality between the husband and wife

Swinnock teaches that the man is actually superior and the woman is correspondingly inferior. It is not close enough to say with Ryken that in Puritan thinking, the difference is one of function, not of worth; that it is 'a style of managing a family, not an assessment of personal value'. Nor is

⁴⁴ See, for example, Johnson, *A Society Ordained*, p. 11.

⁴⁵ *Works*, 1.499-500. Elsewhere, 'Where there is love and godliness, it is a lovely, delightful conjunction' (1.470).

⁴⁶ See also, *Works*, 1.353, 1.484, 1.489-90, 3.360. Swinnock is well aware that there are couples who do not love each other in this way: see *Works*, 1.465. Marriage is good but it is not all sweetness – *Works*, 3.95, 1.470-71, 1.491.

⁴⁷ 'They are partners in the nearest degree imaginable' (1.475). Swinnock emphasizes the unity of a married couple: they are one *jure originis* – as Eve came from Adam's body; *suppositione legis* – legally; *jure conjunctionis* – by God's institution (1.474).

⁴⁸ See, for example, *Works*, 1.381-2.

Stevie Davies correct in her conclusion that, 'Marriage is viewed as a union of not-quite (but almost) equals, with gender-specific roles and spheres'.⁴⁹ Swinnock, at least, is adamant that the difference is more than social; indeed, that it is of the essence of what it means to be male and female. Notice the following remark: 'Every woman, as a woman, is inferior to man, much more as a wife; and therefore it is but natural and rational that she reverence her superior' (1.505). He speaks of this as 'the relation grace of the wife'. We note that, essentially, *as a woman* she is the man's inferior. And Swinnock then adds that *as a wife*, relationally, she is *even more so*.⁵⁰

Wherein lies the man's superiority? Swinnock claims that superiority employing a conventional list: Adam was created first, Eve was made *from* the man and *for* the man, woman was the first to sin,⁵¹ man is the head of woman, it is man who is the image and glory of God, and, finally, God has given this dominion to the husband over his wife.⁵² On the basis of a simple restating of these traditional reasons, Swinnock says that, 'A commanding wife inverts the order of nature, as well as the ordinance of the Creator.'⁵³ The image that he most often employs to differentiate between the husband and wife is the traditional one of the sun and the moon. 'If the moon get the upper hand of the sun, the wife of the husband, the next thing to be expected is an eclipse of the honour of that house.'⁵⁴ She can take government upon herself in the absence of her husband; but 'God hath appointed that she gives place to her husband, and be willing to prefer him' (1.504).

Dominant ideas of control and obedience in Swinnock's teaching

The husband is the head of his wife (1.497). Although Swinnock does not employ that particular image often, the ideas of superiority, control and domination are there throughout his work. Elsewhere, Swinnock speaks of the husband as a prophet, a priest and a king in his family. He is a prophet

⁴⁹ Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, p. 76; Davies, *Unbridled Spirits*, p. 183, respectively. Packer, 'Marriage and Family', 351, also asserts it to be *functional* subordination of wives.

⁵⁰ Notice, superiority carries with it responsibility: 'Thou art above thy wife in place, oh be above her in piety' (1.487).

⁵¹ 'Since he sinned in being ruled by her, it is fit that she should be ruled by him' (1.507).

⁵² *Works*, 1.507-8.

⁵³ *Works*, 1.509. See also, *Works*, 1.510. In fact, Swinnock says very little about order in this context, but note 1.522.

⁵⁴ *Works*, 1.508. See also, *Works*, 1.524, 5.261.

in his educative role. He is to guide and to direct through prayer and teaching (1.493-4). He is a priest who leads the family (including the wife) into godliness through worship and the reading of Scripture (1.340). But, significantly, too, he is king to rule and to govern.

The husband is not to rule over his wife as a master rules a slave, but rather as a soul over the body – but it clearly remains dominion. Yet, Swinnock insists that it is a dominion exercised with discretion (1.488). The husband is to use neither ‘a foolish fondness’ (presumably, an over-familiarity) that leads to contempt and scorn, nor a rigorous severity that might degenerate into cruelty and hatred. But, Swinnock is clear that God requires of wives a reverence and love for their husbands. A husband must be assertive enough to command and to gain ‘an awful fear’ in his wife (1.488). The following advice is typically given: ‘Maintain thy power and authority in thy family; a wise grave carriage will sharpen the weapon of reproof, and make it pierce the deeper. Foolish familiarity blunteth the edge of it’ (1.349).

Of course, love and genuine affection is the first specific duty of the husband. That takes priority. Husbands, Swinnock notes, are most negligent in this duty, but generally diligent in ruling their wives. His exhortation comes, then, in the context of marital love:

Thy love should make thee moderate in all thy commands; nothing should be enjoined but what is both needful to be done, and fit for her to do. Thy wife is the weaker vessel and therefore not to be put to servile labours (1.491).

Husbands are to command in love.⁵⁵ They are also to take into account the peculiar ‘yoke’ of the wife – that of childbearing and raising.⁵⁶

Wives, on the other hand, are to obey. Swinnock is clear that the wife’s role is determined and defined by her love for and fear (or reverence) of her husband. In this she needs to acknowledge his superiority over her. She has to be unwilling to displease him in anything and to ‘dread lest she should offend him’.⁵⁷ This, of course, is the vocation to which God has called her (1.524), as difficult as it is.

⁵⁵ *Works*, 1.381-2.

⁵⁶ Swinnock remarks, ‘She conceiveth with sorrow, bringeth forth with much pain, and in bringing up her children often misseth of desired pleasure. Her fears disquiet her in the night, and her cares disturb her in the day’ (1.498). See also, *Works*, 1.496.

⁵⁷ *Works*, 1.505. The wife needs to reverence the husband outwardly as Sarah called Abraham ‘lord’ – to know her own place: to answer her husband with

Subjection is so much against the hair, that many, like untamed heifers, kick and fling if the yoke come but near their necks; though the harder their task is, the greater is their credit if they perform it conscientiously (1.503).

Although Amanda Porterfield suggests that generally the Puritans believed that 'male dominance was inextricably linked to female willingness to accept that dominance', there is certainly no such recognition in Swinnock's writing.⁵⁸ Rather, he seems to reverse the argument, saying that women should not expect their husbands to love them *unless* they obey (1.503). Naturally, the sphere of the wife's station and obedience is the home (1.349-50).⁵⁹

The wife is measured (or valued) by reference to the husband

It is worth noting briefly that within the context of marital love in Swinnock's teaching, the wife is valued insofar as her work enables the husband to be the godly head of the household. Swinnock employs an image to convey this perspective: 'The wife to the husband, must be as the lock to the key, answerable and suitable, *or else of no use.*' Again, 'Women ought to take care of their *husband's* affairs within doors.'⁶⁰

The overarching purpose of marital love

Companionship is espoused *in order*, or with the purpose, that each partner might be helped in their godliness and their spiritual journey. Swinnock is quite explicit about this. He asserts that mutual care is chiefly for 'each other's eternal welfare' (1.479). He says that godliness is to be the motive of conjugal love (1.424).

How does this 'work'? Swinnock implies at least three ways. First, companionship will make the journey of life more pleasant. Swinnock

modesty; to advise him with lenity; to admonish him with humility; to speak of him respectfully and to speak to him reverently (1.506). See also, *Works*, 1.512-13, 516-19.

⁵⁸ A. Porterfield, 'Woman's Attraction to Puritanism', *Church History* 60 (1991), p. 209. See also p. 201.

⁵⁹ Swinnock says, 'She is fitly termed a housewife' and remembers that Sarah (Gen. 18:9) was 'in the tent' (1.511).

⁶⁰ *Works*, 1.516, 512, respectively – emphases added. See also, *Works*, 1.515. This is not to say that the wife cannot criticize her husband; but it must be done in humility and godliness. He prays, 'Lord, help me to hearken to all her holy counsels and to hear thee speaking by her' (1.501). Interestingly, he says, 'as the case *often* falls out, it may be a call from God: "Hearken to the voice of thy wife"' (1.480). See also, *Works*, 1.520-22.

uses the image of two people 'that row and labour together... to get, through God's blessing, an honest and comfortable living' (1.475). But notice, of course, that the image still implies movement towards a destination. This is not to say that this life is insignificant, of course. Swinnock is adamant that it *is* important. But he certainly prioritizes heaven and the insistence that both husband and wife attain it.⁶¹ However, specifically, in hardship the spouses will be able to cheer each other up (1.486).⁶² Second, piety itself will thrive in the context of love. Remarkably, Swinnock says that Eve was given to Adam for their joint and mutual godliness (1.479).⁶³ Third, the comfort of each other's love will cause each to 'long the more for [their] meeting in heaven' (1.485). In this sense it becomes a motive-force in their relationship.

Notice, in the following comment, the dual ideas involved. Marriage has a purpose both for the present and for heaven:

Because marriage is a fellowship of the nearest union and dearest communion in this world, and *because the fruits of religion will thrive much the better*, if cherished by the sweet breath and warm gale of love...; Lord let my wife be to me as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let me be ravished always with her love... (1.362 – emphasis added).

No wonder, then, that Swinnock strongly exhorts men to take exceptional care over those they marry. He gives the reason in rather stark terms, 'To err once in the choice of a wife, is usually to be undone for ever' (1.335).⁶⁴

MARRIAGE UNDER THREAT

Despite the positive things that George Swinnock says concerning marriage and the husband-wife relationship it is remarkable that so much of his writing is in the form of threat. It is by this means that he seeks to

⁶¹ See *Works*, 1.497, 500-501. See Davies, 'The sacred condition', 571.

⁶² See also *Works*, 1.353.

⁶³ *Works*, 1.479. See also, 1.480-81.

⁶⁴ Swinnock continues to use masculine examples, though he clearly intends both sexes. Earlier he says, 'Be careful who you choose as husband or wife' (1.334). See *Works*, 1.309, 1.336, 1.480-81, 1.423-4, 1.437, 1.474-5. It is invariably through the impious wife that the devil attacks the godly man. Citing Job's wife as an example, Swinnock remarks, 'Some women are the choicest arrows the devil hath in his quiver' (1.400). See *Works*, 1.336, 1.351.

motivate to godly living in this particular area, as he does in every area. At this juncture it is enough to list a few of the many examples.

In respect of the covenant of marriage

Because it is God who institutes marriage, then he is sure to bring all married people to final judgement – ‘How severely doth God avenge the quarrel of his covenant!’ (1.469). He will avenge the breach of it. But Swinnock warns that God is not merely distant in that sense, but he ‘in fury is near them’ (1.470).⁶⁵ Swinnock stresses the awfulness of this by the use of imagery, as one would expect. If a couple is unfaithful to the covenant, then ‘the serjeant of death be ready to arrest us, and haul us to the prison of hell’. He further speaks of vengeance, curse, dreadful loss and ruin (1.483), and ‘the eternal fire of hell’ (1.477). The following comment on a family devoid of godliness gives a feel to the intense imagery. Passages like this cover multiple pages of Swinnock’s work on marriage.

The curse of God will be a moth in thy wardrobe, murrain among thy cattle, mildew in thy field, the plague to thy body, wrath to thy soul, will indeed make thy house a very hell upon earth. ... [A] place full of skulls... a churchyard full of carcasses, gilded, rotten, and golden damnation (1.333, 334).

In relation to the husband’s responsibility

Of course, these more general threats are made specific as Swinnock singles out both the husband and the wife – and, again, the imagery is intense, the responsibility heavy. If the husband fails to find his delight in his partner and to love her outwardly *and* spiritually she might well become ‘the object of God’s greatest hatred and fury! ... a companion of frightful devils’(1.501). In this context God is imaged principally as the Judge before whom the husband is held accountable: ‘Thou art accountable to the judge of the quick and the dead, for all the souls in thy family’ (1.354).⁶⁶ But, as we have noticed earlier judgement starts in the present:

This wrath can... turn thy wife, children, and all thy comforts into amazing crosses and terrifying curses. ... If thy family be irreligious, thou mayest

⁶⁵ See also, *Works*, 1.442, 1.461, 1.485.

⁶⁶ See also, *Works*, 1.355-357, 1.498. The husband is presented with a choice. He can instruct his family and be a good example for them, or he can ‘allow them to die eternally’ (1.341). There are only the two alternatives. See also, *Works*, 1.343.

expect this scalding wrath, not by drops, but by showers to come pouring down upon it (1.358).

In relation to the wife's responsibility

Significantly, Swinnock has the woman saying, 'If I resist his [God's] law, I proclaim myself a rebel' (1.525). Again, we notice a future judgement and a present one in relation to any ungodliness on the part of the wife. And again we note the intensity of the ideas.

Hath not my God told me that if I break my covenant, he will not spare me, Deut 29:20-21,⁶⁷ but have his full strokes at me with his almighty arm; and the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, infinitely worse than the hottest fire, shall smoke against me, and all the curses, heavier than mountains of lead, written in his book, shall lie upon me, and the Lord shall blot out my name from under heaven, cause my very remembrance to rot as an unsavoury carcass (1.524).⁶⁸

Citing Michal, David's wife,⁶⁹ Swinnock suggests that in the present God judges those wives who refuse to be subordinate: 'God hath barren wombs for such bold, impudent women' (1.505); and, again, 'If she slight her head, God will scourge her body (1.505-6).

CONCLUSION

Diane Willen perceptively insists that, 'If intense spirituality dominated the Puritan's existence, it ought also to provide the framework for an examination of the interaction between Puritanism and gender.'⁷⁰ The present essay, adopting this guideline, has shown that Swinnock's teaching

⁶⁷ Deuteronomy 19:20-21 reads, 'The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law' (King James Version).

⁶⁸ See also, *Works*, 1.511. In a similarly dogmatic fashion, the Puritan, Richard Greenham, *The Works of the Reverend Richard Greenham* (London, 1612), p. 742, says of the wife, '[I]f shee be not obedient she cannot be saved' – quoted by Willen, 'Godly Women', p. 564.

⁶⁹ Swinnock cites 1 Chronicles 15:29, 'Michal... saw David dancing and playing; and she despised him' (KJV).

⁷⁰ Willen, 'Godly Women', 563.

on marriage relations *is* integral to his understanding of spirituality (or 'godliness', in Swinnock's terminology). The fact that his concept of godliness is largely that of obedience and duty before God, imaged as lawgiver, is significant. The area that this short study has concentrated on is that of the husband-wife relationship. If spirituality ('godliness') is to have any practical effect it should certainly become evident at that point.

It was noticed above that there is an ambiguity in Puritan teaching, generally. Of course, this has been noted by scholars, some seeking to be as positive as the situation allows. For example, Ryken says that the ideal of companionate marriage, 'tended to soften the claims of male dominance and to produce an enlightened version of marital hierarchy'.⁷¹ In itself, this underlines the point that there *is* male dominance. Ryken further comments that Puritan ideas of marriage 'had the effect of mitigating hierarchy in the direction of marital equality'.⁷² Schücking insists that Puritan marriage 'primarily consists in a perfect sharing'⁷³ – though he says this while speaking of an 'enhanced authority on the part of the man'!⁷⁴ Among the more negative writers K. M. Rogers speaks of Puritans' misogyny and of their distrust and contempt for women. Kathleen Davies writes of the Puritan 'obsession with achieving male dominance'.⁷⁵

What have we found in Swinnock's understanding? His view of marriage is entirely traditional. It is strictly hierarchical, the husband rules, the wife obeys. He bases this on what he supposes to be biblical precedent, reinforced by the notion that the woman is essentially inferior to the man. Nonetheless, there is that positive thread that suggests mutuality, care,

⁷¹ Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, 53.

⁷² Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, 52.

⁷³ Schücking, *The Puritan Family*, 38. He says further, 'the cool realism of the Puritans recognized marriage as being essentially a sharing of spiritual-sensual experience'.

⁷⁴ Schücking, *The Puritan Family*, p. 33. He comments, 'When there is such spiritual accord the whole idea of "subjection" loses much of its practical significance' (p. 48).

⁷⁵ K. M. Rogers, *The Troublesome Helpmate* (Seattle, 1966), p. 159; also pp. 135-59; Davies, 'The sacred condition', p. 567. Other writers who might be listed here: B. Barker-Benfield, 'Anne Hutchinson and the Puritan Attitude Toward Women', *Feminist Studies* 1 (1973), pp. 65-96; M. Olfson Thickstun, *Fictions of the Feminine: Puritan Doctrine and the Representation of Women* (Ithaca, New York, 1988). It is important to note that in certain areas Puritan women were leaders in their own right. See for example, M. J. Westerkamp, 'Anne Hutchinson, Sectarian Mysticism, and the Puritan Order', *Church History* 59 (1990), pp. 482-96.

genuine love and 'sharing' – but *not* equality in relationship, of course. In the context of Swinnock's teaching on godliness, the traditional positions and status of husband and wife would seem to be further entrenched and fixed within a patriarchal pattern. This thinking begins with his primary image of God as lawgiver who is not only able to threaten wrongdoing, but who continually does so.⁷⁶ With an intense perception of God's judgement and punishment for those who stray from a very clearly defined marital pattern, there appears no real or genuine possibility of furthering any concept of true mutuality, based on equality between the spouses. As we have observed, repetition and intensity of threats dominate Swinnock's writing. They appear to be his primary method of social (and personal) control.

Interestingly, Patricia Crawford argues for an increased authority on the part of the husband and father in the Puritan family.⁷⁷ On the basis of our reading of Swinnock, it is quite clear that the authority the man has is certainly underlined as spiritual, as directly related to his own salvation (and that of others) and as part of what God demands of him. A similar pattern is discerned in relation to the humble submission of the wife. Given the specificity and intensity of the threats levelled at them both, and given the clear delineation of boundaries that must not be transgressed, it would be very surprising indeed if more relational-creativity in marriage were likely to develop. Such things as freedom, equality, mutual vulnerability and openness are unlikely.

Schücking suggests that,

If there is to be friendship and mutual liking, if intimate human relationships are to develop, it is essential that there should be freedom. Only where freedom exists, only where characters are strong enough not to allow their humanity to be utterly suppressed by their religion, can the Puritan family provide an opportunity for a real understanding between its members.⁷⁸

In line with this conclusion, the present study has argued that marriage under threat is likely rigidly to maintain the *status quo*, at least theoretically. What happened in social practice may have been somewhat different, of course. Nevertheless, marriage under threat limits positive implications with the deadening and constraining weight of fear.

⁷⁶ See Nancy Victorin-Vangerud, *The Raging Hearth* (St Louis, Missouri, 2000) for a fascinating interpretation of how concepts of family and God (and church) are thematically woven in Christian thought.

⁷⁷ Crawford, *Women and Religion*, p. 40.

⁷⁸ Schücking, *The Puritan Family*, p. 95.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

CRAWFORD GRIBBEN, CENTRE FOR IRISH-SCOTTISH STUDIES, TRINITY
COLLEGE DUBLIN

From the Marxism of Christopher Hill to the Anglicanism of J. I. Packer, puritan studies have been the victim of confessional bias. Since the rediscovery of the puritan literary corpus in the mid-twentieth century, historical and theological scholars have regularly culled source documents for confirmation of their own theological predispositions.¹ In this struggle between objectivity and appropriation, perceptions of puritan eschatology have become a critical focus of discussion – especially in the rush to own the *gravitas* conferred by the most influential of the puritan credal statements, the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647). In his study of puritan eschatology, Bryan W. Ball noted that the reference to the *parousia* of Jesus Christ in this ‘ultimate official pronouncement of Puritan dogma’ indicates ‘the measure of its respectability’ in seventeenth-century orthodoxy.² But others have sought to go beyond this, and, in a series of competing claims, historical theologians from backgrounds as diverse as Calvinism and Seventh-day Adventism have attempted to articulate the meaning of WCF 33:1-3. R. G. Clouse, arguing that the confession is ‘clearly’ amillennial, found ‘no suggestion of a period of latter-day glory or of a millennium connected with the conversion of the Jews’.³ LeRoy Froom has viewed the confession as ‘the strongest premillennialist symbol of Protestantism’.⁴ James de Jong has argued that ‘Westminster’s formulation must be seen as a deliberate choice of mild, unsystemized,

¹ John Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions: The mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 5-15.

² Bryan W. Ball, *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (Leiden, 1975), p. 44.

³ R.G. Clouse, ‘The Rebirth of Millenarianism’, in Peter Toon (ed.), *Puritans, The Millennium, and the Future of Israel* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 60.

⁴ L.E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation* (Washington, 1948), ii.553.

postmillennial expectations.⁵ As this debate illustrates, in spite of all that has been written about puritan eschatology – and the literature is, by now, extensive – it is still a subject fogged by obscurity.⁶

In part this confusion is due to the often a-historical nature of theological discussions of ‘the Puritan movement’ and the confessions it produced. Popular-level evangelicalism often presents the movement as homogeneous, assuming an essential identity, for example, in ‘the puritan view’ of family, work, church, or state. Packer thus eulogizes ‘God’s giants’:

The Puritans ... were great souls serving a great God. In them clear-headed passion and warm-hearted compassion combined. Visionary and practical, idealistic and realistic too, goal-orientated and methodical, they were great believers, great hoppers, great doers, and great sufferers.⁷

But of which puritans is he speaking? One is tempted to imagine that Packer, like so many other writers on puritan themes, has cast his subjects in his own image.

As the debate about the meaning of the term ‘puritan’ suggests, therefore, there is little scholarly consensus in understanding what the movement actually was. It is difficult to be more specific than to suggest that the movement represented a broad spectrum of protestant ecclesiastical discontent and a call for further reformation over a wide range of issues in the early modern period.⁸ It would be surprising indeed if such a broad movement produced any substantial degree of ideological concurrence.

⁵ James de Jong, *As the Waters Cover the Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions* (Kampen, 1970), p. 38, n. 11.

⁶ Along with texts cited in previous footnotes, important studies of puritan eschatology include William Lamont, *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion, 1603-60* (London, 1969) and Richard Baxter and the Millennium: *Protestant Imperialism and the English Revolution* (London, 1979); B. S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth Century Millenarianism* (London, 1972); Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the eve of the Civil War* (Toronto, 1978); Katherine Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645* (Oxford, 1979). The most recent studies include Barry Howson, ‘Eschatology in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England’, *Evangelical Quarterly* 70 (1998), 325-50, and Crawford Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium: Literature & Theology, 1550-1682* (Dublin, 2000).

⁷ J. I. Packer, *Among God’s Giants: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Eastbourne, 1991), p. 24.

⁸ Gribben, *Puritan Millennium* (2000), pp. 15-16.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

At a more scholarly level, conservative theologians perpetuate a milder form of the same kind of a-historical analysis when they cite the Westminster Confession as a document charged with transcendent meaning, the first port of call in the storm of theological debate. Their approach often shows little sense of the context out of which the Confession emerged or the fact that it was deliberately designed as a generally acceptable compromise between parties convinced of various – and often mutually incompatible – systems. The documents of the Westminster Assembly could never have been dispassionate attempts to delineate objective truth when the disproportionate influence of the Scottish Commissioners' theology was more than partly due to the English Parliament's need to win the support of their Presbyterian army.⁹ Perhaps to signal their temporizing ambitions, the divines themselves disclaimed any notion of credal finality (WCF 31:4) and were reluctant to provide their conclusions with scriptural proofs when the English Parliament insisted that they should.¹⁰ Many modern readings of the Confession, however, overlook these historical complexities. This lack of historical sensitivity and anachronistic application of contemporary intellectual paradigms cannot fail to be misleading.¹¹ The disagreement between Clouse, Froom and de Jong is symptomatic of a wider and contemporary problem.

As a consequence, although their insights are often powerful and compelling, the interpretative frameworks in which Clouse, Froom and de Jong operate cripple the validity of their conclusions. Each of these scholars misrepresents the confession's eschatology because they each underestimate the extent to which puritan readings of Revelation defy and transcend the contemporary concepts of pre-, post- or amillennialism. These three positions, largely constructed by more recent eschatological enquiry, cannot be used as a heuristic tool to explicate puritan texts.¹²

⁹ R. S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord: Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly and the 'Grand Debate'* (Edinburgh, 1985), *passim*.

¹⁰ Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord* (1985), p. 518.

¹¹ Aspects of this problem have also been manifest in the recent debate about the proper interpretation of the 'six days' of creation among conservative Presbyterians in the USA. For responses to this context, see Robert Letham, "'In the space of six days': The Days of Creation from Origen to the Westminster Assembly", *WTJ* 61 (1999), pp. 149-74, and William S. Barker, 'The Westminster Assembly on the Days of Creation: A Reply to David W. Hall', *WTJ* 62 (2000), pp. 113-20.

¹² The term 'eschatology' itself is a nineteenth-century invention. Alan E. Lewis, 'Eschatology', in Donald M. McKim (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Reformed Faith* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 122-4.

Their inutility is registered by the fact that their most basic presupposition – that Revelation 20:1-7 refers to only one period of a thousand years – was not shared by every puritan who wrote on the passage. Thomas Brightman, one of the most influential of the puritan expositors of Revelation, argued instead that the thousand years of Satan's captivity (Rev. 20:2-3) and the thousand years of the reign of the saints (Rev. 20:4-6) referred to two historically distinct but contiguous periods of time stretching from the years 300 to 1300, and 1300 to 2300, respectively.¹³ A-, pre- and postmillennial paradigms, however useful they may be for current debate, ought to be abandoned as keys to explaining the puritan apocalypse. Puritan eschatology is much less precise, much more ambiguous, than contemporary terminology allows.

This revision of methodology and terminology, however, calls also for a revision of privileged texts. The variety of puritan readings of eschatology requires a new canon of source documents to balance the individualistic focus promoted by previous scholarship in this area. Ideas of puritan eschatology have too often been extrapolated from the writings of theologians deemed representative by modern historians, while the type of puritan deemed representative has largely been determined by the (often unconscious) presuppositions which historians bring to the text (and consequently leave undefined).¹⁴ Paradoxically, and perhaps in an earnest attempt to avoid the difficulties of the Clouse–Froom–de Jong debate, studies of puritanism often ignore the documents which were self-consciously created as defining the acceptable boundaries of the movement's constituent subgroups – the jointly-prepared, deliberately debated statements of denominational faith. It is at this point that the system of compromise upon which the confessions were founded becomes their most useful asset. When properly historicized, the puritan confessions are seen to express the negotiated centres of the movement as a whole.

Thus historians are well placed to study the puritan confessions. There is plenty of material; the very existence of the movement depended upon their careful articulation of the distinctives that made up their ecclesiastical manifesto. The publication of their conclusions, often supplied with detailed biblical proofs, acted as an invitation to contrast and compare each text with those other documents published with the same purpose, and

¹³ Gribben, *Puritan Millennium* (2000), pp. 42-3.

¹⁴ Note the reception given to Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Edinburgh, 1971). Murray's excellent study is often cited by conservative postmillennialists to support the notion that 'the puritans' were postmillennialists.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

called upon the reader to realign their denominational loyalties in accordance with the results of this enquiry.

Of course, there are distinct advantages, as well as limitations, in this 'survey of confessions' approach. Perhaps the most major difficulty is, paradoxically, that it underplays the importance of eschatology. The puritan end-of-the-worldview encompassed themes as diverse as epistemology, church government, foreign policy, and individual piety. In the confessions, eschatology is reduced to a two-dimensional subject of academic enquiry.

Nevertheless, the study of the confessions does illustrate the extent to which an interest in eschatology was not the monopoly of the poor and dispossessed. Instead, it was part of the essential cultural and ecclesiastical capital of the age, invested in the very fabric of the reform the movement was demanding. The publication of puritan creeds, doctrinal articles and confessions of faith offers an unparalleled opportunity to position the constituent groupings of the movement as collective entities in terms which their members would themselves recognize as authentic. It is surprising, therefore, that despite all the secondary literature in the area, the eschatology of the puritan confessions has never been examined. This article offers a contribution to that end.

The continuing debate about 'Calvin and the Calvinists' is pushing the acceptable boundaries of puritan studies deep into the sixteenth century.¹⁵ A number of recent studies have located the origins of seventeenth-century debates in a reformation context. But this movement of relocating crucial centres of discussion has not been balanced across the theological loci. While perceived discontinuities in soteriology continue to generate scholarly discussion across the chronological contexts, secondary treatments of early reformation eschatology are less numerous than those concentrating on its seventeenth-century variant.

Curiously, contemporary lack of interest in the subject is almost inversely proportional to the appeal it exercised in the sixteenth century. Those studies of Luther and Calvin which have been undertaken have illustrated the extent to which 'the Reformation was spawned in and

¹⁵ For representative positions in the 'Calvin and the Calvinists' debate see R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford, 1981), and Paul Helm, *Calvin and the Calvinists* (Edinburgh, 1982). More recent assessments can be found in Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Formation of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 6, 64; and Carl R. Trueman and R. S. Clark, 'Introduction', in Trueman and Clark (eds), *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment* (Carlisle, 1999), pp. xiii-xix.

nurtured by an atmosphere of intense hopes and fears about impending universal upheaval, disaster, transformation, judgement, and the end of the world'.¹⁶ Varieties of eschatology – at both popular and scholarly levels – were therefore both a cause and a consequence of the factors driving reformation. The lingering medieval worldview attached transcendental importance to the appearance of Halley's comet in 1531;¹⁷ descriptions of the new world were often couched in the language of eschatological hope, such as the anti-Islamic millenarianism of Christopher Columbus;¹⁸ and reformation rhetoric developed metaphors already employed to describe the cosmic battle of good against evil.

Despite this medieval impulse, the eschatology of the reformation movement also developed in startling discontinuity with the past. This is the most obvious factor about the reformation's credal statements on eschatology. Given the confusion of the Clouse-Froom-de Jong debate, it is rather ironic that one of the most important areas in the reformation's intellectual advance was its simplification of eschatology. Under the influence of Augustine, medieval Catholicism had abandoned the chiliasm of the Church Fathers and, in course of time, implicitly challenged the definition of eschatology as a discussion of the 'four last things' by developing an elaborate complex of spiritual destinations alongside the more traditional termini of death, judgement, heaven and hell.¹⁹ With historic Christendom, it argued that those who died in the guilt of mortal sin were damned. With more novelty, it contended that those whose guilt was merely venial were instead ushered into purgatory, where their souls

¹⁶ Robin B. Barnes, 'Apocalypticism', in Hans J. Hillerbrand (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Reformation* (Oxford, 1996), iii.63; H. Quistorp, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Last Things* (London, 1955); T. F. Torrance, 'The Eschatology of the Reformation', *Eschatology: Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers* 2 (1953), 36-62. For a recent study of reformation eschatology, as well as an up-to-date bibliography, see Irena Backus, *Reformation Readings of the Apocalypse: Geneva, Zurich, and Wittenberg* (Oxford, 2000).

¹⁷ Robin B. Barnes, 'Apocalypticism', in Hans J. Hillerbrand (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Reformation*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1996), iii.65.

¹⁸ Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Columbus* (Oxford, 1991), p. 26.

¹⁹ Michael J. Scanlon, 'Eschatology', in Allan D. Fitzgerald (gen. ed.), *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopaedia* (Grand Rapids, 1999), pp. 316-18; Brian E. Daley, 'Chiliasm', in Everett Ferguson (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1997), i.238-41; B.E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: Eschatology in the Patristic Age* (Cambridge, 1991).

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

were cleansed in preparation for the beatific vision. There were various minor modifications to this scheme. In the Old Testament dispensation, for example, the souls of believers who died without guilt could not enter directly into glory. Before the death of Christ, both those who died without guilt and those who had passed through the purification of purgatory waited in *limbus patrum* for Christ's 'harrowing of hell' and his 'leading captivity captive'. Although *limbus patrum* was now empty, the Church continued to posit a third – and eternal – destination alongside heaven and hell. This *limbus infantum* held the souls of un-baptized children and others who died in the state of original sin but without grievous personal guilt. There they remained eternally, in perfect natural happiness, but without ever enjoying the beatific vision.²⁰ With the reformation, however, protestants began to abandon these accretions to the biblical faith.

In this as in many other areas of reformation debate, protestant leaders developed their thinking in response to both the monolithic hostility of Roman Catholicism and the frenetic instability of the Anabaptists. As the reform movement progressed across Europe, a series of protestant confessions reiterated the ban on millenarianism first imposed by the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD – and consequently indicated the continuing appeal such ideas possessed.²¹ The takeover of Münster by millenarian Anabaptists in 1534 and 1535 graphically illustrated the social and political dangers of unfettered apocalypticism.²² A series of charismatic preachers introduced compulsory (re-)baptism, the burning of books, and polygamy. Protestant leaders reacted so vigorously to the danger of radical millenarianism that, for a time, it seemed to many Catholic scholars, a rejection of the canonicity of Revelation seemed to hallmark the reformation movement.²³ Zwingli denied that John's visions were in any way canonical; Luther's initial hostility to their contents was only slowly overcome.²⁴ But as reformers developed their readings of Scripture and

²⁰ P. J. Toner, 'Limbo', in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* (1910; rpr. New York, 1913), ix.256-9; 'limbo', in Richard P. McBrien, *The HarperCollins Encyclopaedia of Catholicism* (New York, 1995), p. 771.

²¹ The classic study of medieval millenarian movements is still Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (1957; rpr. London, 1962).

²² Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (1957; rpr. 1962), pp. 278-306. Cf. Klaus Deppermann, *Melchior Hoffman: Social Unrest and Apocalyptic Visions in the Age of the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1987).

²³ Irena Backus, 'The Church Fathers and the Canonicity of the Apocalypse in the Sixteenth Century: Erasmus, Frans Titelmans, and Theodore Beza', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 29 (1998), p. 662.

²⁴ Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain* (1979), p. 9.

providence, the rhetorical possibilities which apocalyptic tropes afforded seemed to eclipse the initial hesitancy about how best to read – or even whether to read – Revelation. William Perkins was perhaps unique among British expositors in defending the canonicity of Revelation in a preface to his *Godly and Learned Exposition of the three first Chapters in the Revelation* (1595), an eschatologically driven jeremiad over the Laodicean state of English Christianity.²⁵ His defence illustrated the compelling utility of biblical apocalyptic in the campaign to promote the puritan cause. Why should reformers ignore biblical apocalyptic when it so clearly described England's 'signs of the times' and the fall of an influential religious empire based in a city with seven hills?

This revival of interest in biblical eschatology was also accompanied by a growing enthusiasm for the apocalyptic teaching of various non-canonical sources. Not all puritans shared these esoteric interests; and the fears of those who did not suggest the interests of those who did. Readers of Thomas Hayne's *Christs Kingdom on Earth* (1645) were warned off the 'senseless' teaching of 'Rabbi Elias', who argued that the world would last only for six thousand years.²⁶ Others, like Thomas Hall in *A Confutation of the Millenarian Opinion* (1657), exposed the excessive credulity of some towards the eschatologies of Jewish Targums and Talmuds, Sibylline Oracles, the Koran, and astronomy.²⁷ Perkins' *A Fruitfull Dialogue Concerning the Ende of the World* (1587) imagined a discussion in which the credulous Worldling sources 'olde prophecies of this yeare found in olde stone walls' and other 'Anabaptisticall revelations' in support of his apocalyptic fears.²⁸ The very fact that Perkins felt the need to refute these kinds of arguments demonstrates something of the impact he felt they were having among his contemporaries.

Such sources enjoyed an international respectability. While lists of English publications from the 1650s demonstrate the popularity of texts attributed to Nostradamus, the Scottish expositor John Napier – now better known for the system of logarithms his millenarian exegesis developed – included the Sybilline oracles in the appendix of *A Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation* (1593). His writings exercised some influence in the

²⁵ William Perkins, *Works* (1616-8), iii.207-8.

²⁶ Thomas Hayne, *Christs Kingdom on Earth* (1645), pp. 61-2. For Elias, see Saul Leeman, 'Was Bishop Ussher's Chronology influenced by a Midrash?', *Semeia* 8 (1977), 127-30.

²⁷ A. R. Dallison, 'Contemporary Criticism of Millenarianism', in Toon (ed.), *Puritans, The Millennium, and the Future of Israel* (1970), p. 111.

²⁸ Perkins, *Works* (1616-18), iii.467.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

French Reformed Church, which would itself debate millenarianism throughout the seventeenth century.²⁹ Similarly, as a German delegate to the Synod of Dort, Johann Heinrich Alsted's Reformed credentials were never in doubt; but he managed to combine his millenarian enthusiasms with a fascination for the occult, while repeated citations of his work illustrate the pervasive influence he exercised on the development of puritan eschatology within the three kingdoms.³⁰

Against the complexities of these trends, the puritan confessions of faith evidence the movement's eschatology at its most guarded, operating most closely within the controls of Scripture. However popular religion developed at ground level or in the scholar's attic, it was vital for the movement's leaders to express their doctrines in terms buttressed by careful (if not convincing) biblical exegesis. In a study of their reception of biblical apocalyptic texts, the puritan confessions offer an unparalleled insight into a complex exegetical tradition.

But, as we have noted, the study of puritan eschatology co-exists ambiguously with the findings of the 'Calvin and the Calvinists' debate on the broader plane of intellectual history. Richard Muller has comprehensively answered R. T. Kendall's allegation that a basic discontinuity should be posited between the soteriology of Calvin and the Calvinists, largely by deconstructing the implied dichotomy.³¹ Nevertheless, the charge of discontinuity can be brought against the eschatology of Calvin and the 'Calvinists'. Eschatology was one of the few theological loci where such divergence was tolerated in early modern Reformed dogmatics. Nevertheless, as official statements, the puritan confessions illustrate the extent to which protestants in the three kingdoms proved reluctant to move beyond Calvin's caution. Louis Berkhof has claimed that amillennialism 'is the only view that is either expressed or implied in the great historical Confessions of the Church, and has always been the prevalent view in Reformed circles'.³² Qualifying his a-historical terminology, we can nevertheless test his assertion. To the extent that puritanism's official formulae diverge from a nervous reluctance even to consider the meaning of Revelation 20:1-7 or the existence of a distinctive

²⁹ Kevin C. Robbins, *City on the Ocean Sea: La Rochelle, 1530-1650: Urban Society, Religion and Politics on the French Atlantic Frontier* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 131, 181.

³⁰ Howard Hotson, *Johann Heinrich Alsted, 1588-1638: Between Renaissance, Reformation, and Universal Reform* (Oxford, 2000), *passim*.

³¹ Muller, *Unaccommodated Calvin* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 11-17.

³² Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (1939; rpr. Edinburgh, 1958), p. 708.

future period of blessing, we can posit a discrepancy between the reformation and its seventeenth-century descendants, between Calvin and the Calvinists.

THE SCOTS CONFESSION (1560)³³

The first of the British puritans were acutely aware of their debt to Calvin. Fleeing from the persecution of Mary in the 1550s, Geneva offered the tired refugees a haven of both physical reprieve and theological stimulation. With British refugees in other safe cities across the Continent, the Genevan exiles developed a distinctive worldview, which they advanced through the publication of a wide variety of texts – from historical studies to biblical commentaries and drama. Their potential for radicalism was nevertheless tempered by the conservatism of the protestant authorities who had given them shelter. The exiles' development of resistance theory and revolutionary apocalyptic was governed by conclusions like those reached by the Augsburg Confession (1530), drafted by Calvin's friend Melancthon and published with the approval of Luther. It had explicitly condemned those 'Anabaptists' who 'scatter Jewish opinions, that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall occupy the kingdoms of the world, the wicked being everywhere suppressed'.³⁴ The exigencies of their situation meant that even with all their interest in apocalyptic, the exiles never turned to millenarianism.³⁵

In part this is surprising. Before his participation in the exile, John Knox had already demonstrated an interest in radical eschatology. His first sermon had exegeted the apocalyptic historiography of Daniel 7:24-25, charging history with providential meaning.³⁶ His concerns paralleled the exiles' starkly apocalyptic literary project, intended, apparently, to combat native apathy by disseminating pro-puritan propaganda in belligerently apocalyptic tropes.³⁷ In *The Image of Both Churches* (1547), John Bale had

³³ A Latin text of the Scots Confession can be found in Philip Schaff (ed.), *The Creeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches* (London, 1877), pp. 437-79.

³⁴ Schaff (ed.), *Creeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches* (1877), p. 18.

³⁵ Backus, *Reformation Readings of the Apocalypse* (2000), *passim*.

³⁶ Geddes MacGregor, *The Thundering Scot: A Portrait of John Knox* (Philadelphia, 1957), p. 43.

³⁷ Jane E. A. Dawson, 'The Apocalyptic Thinking of the Marian Exiles', in Michael Wilks (ed.), *Prophecy and Eschatology: Studies in Church History, Subsidia 10* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 75-91. Idem, 'Trumpeting Resistance: Christopher Goodman and John Knox', in Roger A. Mason (ed.), *John*

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

exegeted Revelation to find a history of the true church of God in constant warfare with the 'devil's chapel'. Ten years later, in 1557, the apocalyptic momentum had visibly increased: John Olde authored a *Short Description of Antichrist*, Bartholomew Traheron published his lectures on Revelation 4, and Robert Pownall's *Admonition to the Towne of Callys* warned the English outpost of impending divine judgement. The preface to the first edition of the Geneva Bible (1560) described the exiles as a remnant that 'love the comming of Christ Jesus our Lord'.³⁸

Nevertheless, when Knox, together with other leaders of the Scottish Reformation, came to agree upon a statement of their common doctrine, the apocalyptic themes which elsewhere dominated his thinking were clearly underplayed. The Scots Confession, adopted by the Scottish Parliament on 17 August 1560 as 'hailsome and sound doctrine groundit vponne the infallibill trewth of Godis word', seems, at first glance, to continue Calvin's apparent neglect of apocalyptic.³⁹ Knox, after all, wrote not as a 'speculative theologian which desires to give you courage, but even your Brother in affliction'.⁴⁰ The confession reflects this pastoral concern.

Thus the articles of the confession follow the redemptive-historical chronology outlined in Scripture, and expound the work of Christ as the teleology of creation and redemption before moving on to the work of the Spirit, the Christian life, and the sacraments. Eschatological interests are limited to the ninth article, 'Of the Ascension', which deals with Christ's session, present glory, and coming judgement:

To the Execution [of judgement] we certainlie beleve, that the same our Lord JESUS sall visiblie returne, as that hee was sene to ascend. And then we firmly beleve, that the time of refreshing and restituioun of all things sall cum, in samekle that thir, that fra the beginning have suffered violence, injurie, and wrang, for richteousness sake, sal inherit that blessed immortalitie promised fra the beginning.

There follows an application of the doctrine:

Knox and the British Reformations, St Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 131-53.

³⁸ The Geneva Bible (1560), sig. iiiv.

³⁹ Quoted in G. D. Henderson (ed.), *Scots Confession, 1560* (Edinburgh, 1937), p. 8.

⁴⁰ John Knox, *Works* (ed. David Laing, Edinburgh, 1846-64), iii.10.

The remembrance of quhilk day, and of the Judgement to be executed in the same, is not onelie to us ane brydle, whereby our carnal lustes are refrained, bot alsua sik inestimable comfort, that neither may the threatning of worldly Princes, nether zit [yet] the feare of temporal death and present danger, move us to renounce and forsake that blessed societie, quhilk we the members have with our Head and onelie Mediator CHRIST JESUS⁴¹

Despite Knox's fearsome reputation, the eschatology of the Scots Confession was a recipe for the martyrs' endurance, not a programme for a revolution of the saints.

We should thus be careful of descriptions of Knox's eschatology. From his first sermon, he himself seems to have preferred the apocalyptic mode, which influences even his *History of the Reformation* (1586).⁴² But there is no evidence of millenarianism. Quite the opposite appears to be the case. As part of the pan-Calvinist international, the Scottish Reformed Church was also to adopt the second Helvetic Confession in 1566 alongside the Reformed churches of Hungary, Poland and Geneva. The importance of this document is that it was deeply hostile to the type of millenarian extremism displayed at Münster, roundly condemning the 'Jewish dreams, that before the Day of Judgment there shall be a golden world in the earth; and that the godly shall possess the kingdoms of the world, their wicked enemies being trodden under foot'.⁴³ The eschatology of the Scots Confession – by contrast rather muted, even in the heresies it condemns – illustrates the extent to which sixteenth-century denunciations of millenarianism were necessary only on the Continent. Knox did not need to follow Calvin that far.

⁴¹ Schaff (ed.), *Creeeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches* (1877), pp. 449-50; Henderson (ed.), *Scots Confession, 1560* (1937), pp. 57-9.

⁴² Carol Edington, 'John Knox and the Castileans: A Crucible of Reforming Opinion?', in Roger A. Mason (ed.), *John Knox and the British Reformations*, St Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, 1998), p. 46.

⁴³ Hall (ed.), *Harmony of the Protestant Confessions* (1842), p. 88. 'Damnamus præterea Judaica somnia, quod ante judicii diem aureum in terries sit futurum seculum, et pii regna mundi occupaturi, oppressis suis hostibus impiis', Schaff (ed.), *Creeeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches* (1877), p. 257.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

THE IRISH ARTICLES (1615)⁴⁴

As their situation developed, and Antichrist's influence was recognized within the ritualism still being tolerated in the established churches, English and Irish puritans could not but be dissatisfied with the limitations of their state-church's creed. Their stripped-down Thirty-nine Articles (1562) seemed to pale in comparison with models like the Scots Confession. But there was little momentum for change. The hotter sort of Elizabethan protestants produced the Lambeth Articles (1595) as a manifesto of their hopes, but in 1604 James refused to include them as part of the foundational documents of the Church of England.⁴⁵

Although the Lambeth Articles were unsuccessful in influencing the official structures of the Church of England, they did gain credal status in Ireland, where the Irish church's convocation included them in its Irish Articles (1615). These comprehensive statements – 104 in comparison to the English articles' 39 – were the position paper of a church which was struggling to balance acceptability to refugee nonconformists with loyalty to the English establishment. Their commitment to Calvinistic soteriology, witnessing the beginnings of covenant theology, together with their refusal to outline any system of *jure divino* church government, created a broad church structure attractive to the puritan ministers expelled from the churches of England and Scotland. As the articles demonstrate, the protestant community of early modern Ireland was not slow to adapt pragmatically the contours of existing reformed thought. Existing as a tiny minority in a land dominated by traditional loyalties to Rome, though nevertheless organising themselves as a state church and enjoying governmental support, the Irish Reformed were compelled to negotiate with their inheritance as they attempted to bring protestant thought to bear on their very different situation.⁴⁶ They were influenced by both Geneva and Canterbury. Composed under the shadow of the Thirty-nine Articles, the Irish Articles' silences are almost as illuminating as its explicit statements. Exercising profound influence throughout the course of the seventeenth century, the Irish Articles' contouring of protestant orthodoxy would provide a basic pattern for subsequent puritan confessions to follow.

⁴⁴ A text of the Irish Articles can be found in Schaff (ed.), *Creeeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches* (1877), pp. 526-44.

⁴⁵ A text of the Lambeth Articles can be found in Schaff (ed.), *Creeeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches* (1877), pp. 523-5.

⁴⁶ Alan Ford, *The Protestant Reformation in Ireland, 1590-1641* (Dublin, 1997), *passim*.

The composition of the articles was dominated by the leading theologian of the Irish church – the future archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656).⁴⁷ Like Knox, Ussher was fascinated by history, chronology and eschatology. In his DD oration at Trinity College Dublin in 1613, he chose as his subjects the ‘seventy weeks’ of Daniel 9, a passage whose eschato-chronological importance was unsurpassed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as the disputed Revelation 20.⁴⁸ In the same year, in his first published text, *Gravissimae Quaestiones de Christianarum Ecclesiarum Successione et Statu* (1613), Ussher had cautiously suggested the possibility of a second millennium, ‘de nova ligatione Satanæ per Evangelii restaurationem sub medium secundi millenarii ... fieri coepta’.⁴⁹ With changing circumstances at court making the articulation of radical ideas imprudent, Ussher never published that part of his history which its contents pages promised most controversial.

Instead, in composing the articles, Ussher remained on safe ground, with standard Reformed teaching on individual eschatology. Judgement is taken in under the work of Christ, where ‘he will return to judge all men at the last day’ (IA 30):

101. After this life is ended, the souls of God’s children be presently received into heaven, there to enjoy unspeakable comforts; the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, there to endure endless torments.

103. At the end of this world, the Lord Jesus shall come in the clouds with the glory of his Father: at which time, by the almighty power of God, the living shall be changed, and the dead shall be raised; and all shall appear both in body and soul before his judgment-seat, to receive according to that which they have done in their bodies, whether good or evil.

104. When the last judgment is finished, Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to his Father, and God shall be all in all.

⁴⁷ On Ussher, see R. Buick Knox, *James Ussher: Archbishop of Armagh* (Cardiff, 1967); Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans: Seventeenth-Century Essays* (London, 1987), pp. 120-64. On Ussher and the Irish Articles, see Amanda L. Capern, ‘The Caroline Church: James Ussher and the Irish Dimension’, *Historical Journal* 39 (1996), 57-85.

⁴⁸ James Ussher, *The Whole Works of James Ussher* (ed. C. R. Erlington and J. R. Todd, Dublin, 1847-64), i.33, 321; cf. xv.108.

⁴⁹ Gribben, *Puritan Millennium* (2000), pp. 84-91; Ussher, *Works* (1847-64), ii, xi.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

In general eschatology the articles offered the standard condemnation of Roman Catholicism:

102. The doctrine of the Church of Rome concerning limbus patrum, limbus puerorum, purgatory, prayer for the dead, pardons, adorations of images and relics, and also invocations of saints, is vainly invented without all warrant of holy scripture, yea, and is contrary to the same.

The inclusion of this article illustrated the dangers facing the tiny remnant of Ireland's protestants, and understates the extent to which Ussher's life of study was grounded upon his enduring antipathy to Roman Catholicism: 'Rome (whose faith was once renowned throughout all the world) [had] become "Babylon the mother of whoredoms and abominations of the earth".' Indeed, his reading of Revelation convinced him that her further reformation was impossible: 'Rome is not to cease from being Babylon, till her last destruction shall come upon her; and that unto her last gasp she is to continue in her spiritual fornications, alluring all nations unto her superstition and idolatry.'⁵⁰ It was perhaps this radicalism which underlay the most important credal innovation in the Irish Articles – their insistence that the Pope was the 'man of sin, foretold in the holy scriptures, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and abolish with the brightness of his coming' (IA 80). For the first time, the protestant conviction that the Pope was Antichrist had gained credal status.

This identification, however, did not gain universal approval. It would be debated at the Synod of Dort (1618-19), where Ussher's friend and correspondent Samuel Ward was one of the British delegation, which argued in favour of the Pope being described as 'an antichrist' rather than as 'the antichrist'.⁵¹ Ussher himself would later lament his foregrounding of the Antichrist trope. By the mid-seventeenth century, he had cause to complain that nothing was 'so familiar now a days, as to father upon Antichrist, whatsoever in church matters we do not find to suite with our own humours'.⁵² But Ussher perhaps never realized the extent to which the revolutionary atmosphere of the 1640s had been created by the Calvinistic and apocalyptic theology harnessed by his own Irish Articles.

⁵⁰ Ussher, *Works* (1847-64), xii.542-3.

⁵¹ M.W. Dewar, 'The British Delegation at the Synod of Dort: Assembling and Assembled; Returning and Returned', *IBS* 13 (1991), p. 75.

⁵² Ussher, *Works* (1847-64), vii.45.

THE FIRST LONDON CONFESSION (1644)⁵³

Ussher's reluctance to commit himself publicly to an innovative eschatology was necessarily prudent given the changing climate of the Stuart court. James VI, who had published a commentary on Revelation 20 in 1588, turned from his ebullient Presbyterianism after his removal to the English throne in 1603.⁵⁴ With the support of his prelates, he pursued policies advancing the uniformity of the churches throughout the three kingdoms – a policy which seemed to justify his burning of two millenarian Anabaptists in 1612.⁵⁵

Throughout the period of Laud's supremacy, from his appointment as Bishop of London in 1628 to his imprisonment in 1641, Baptist groups remained largely underground. After the recalling of the Long Parliament in 1640, however, radical groups could once more raise their heads. The Long Parliament unleashed its programme of deliberate apocalyptic provocation, publishing translations of Joseph Mede and Thomas Brightman, as well as new editions of John Foxe, John Cotton, and other writers banned under the Laudian regime. With the older models of the reformation's Augustinian apocalyptic being thus increasingly challenged, the staple elements of the older Marian exile ideology broke down completely in the free market of ideas created by the collapse of state censorship in the 1640s. As the three kingdoms entered the vortex of revolution, the Augustinian theology and Constantinian church-state settlement hanging over from the reformation were finally swept away.

Baptist rhetoric was all the while developing in a robustly eschatological tenor. John Smyth's *The Character of the Beast* (1609) had condemned the baptism of infants in a series of allusions to Revelation. By the 1640s, however, it was evident that for some Baptists the influence of Antichrist had pervaded far beyond Rome, far beyond the prelates, even into the puritan brotherhood. Christopher Blackwood's *The Storming of Antichrist in his two last and strongest Garrisons, of Compulsion of Conscience and Infants Baptism* (1644) argued that even the Presbyterian and Independent divines meeting at Westminster were under his nefarious

⁵³ The text for this confession is taken from *The First London Confession of Faith* (Rochester, NY, 1981).

⁵⁴ For a recent study of James' intellectual interests, see W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997).

⁵⁵ Christopher Hill, *A Nation of Change and Novelty: Radical Politics, Religion and Literature in Seventeenth Century England* (London, 1990), p. 256

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

influence. The 1644 confession refused to claim that the Pope was Antichrist.

It was with some caution, therefore, that English Baptists emerged from the puritan underground. Their very survival depended upon their ability to distinguish themselves from the destabilizing forces that had wreaked such havoc at Münster. Among their puritan brethren, distrust and suspicion could be overcome only by a careful articulation of the Calvinistic faith they shared. Rumours of their Arminianism were due to an inability to differentiate them from the General Baptists; rumours of their immorality, in the repeated stories of naked baptisms, were simply untrue.⁵⁶ Thus the leadership of the English Baptists – based mostly in London – met to articulate the respectability and orthodoxy of their common faith in 1644.

Their confession, which was republished with minor additions in 1646, was prepared mostly by John Spilsbury, William Kiffin and Samuel Richardson.⁵⁷ Against the lingering shadow of Münster, the *Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations or Churches of Christ in London, which are commonly (but unjustly) called Anabaptists* (1644) affirmed the right of private property (1644 31) and advocated obedience to civil authorities whose divine institution it recognized (1644 48).⁵⁸ Doctrinally, it affirmed the common Calvinism of puritan dissent and rejected the Pelagianism which seemed to characterize the General Baptists.

The most important aspect of the confession, however, was its presentation as an eschatological document. Its title's description of seven subscribing churches was an historical accident which provided for future rhetorical investment. In Revelation 2-3, the ascended Christ addressed seven churches in Asia Minor. Puritan and Reformed writers had repeatedly taken the state of each of the seven churches as a paradigm for periods of church history as a whole, or for the universal church. Nor were the Baptist churches ignorant of this; as one historian has noted, 'If at first the coincidence was accidental, it was soon remarked upon, and the churches accepted the hint, so that they began to speak of themselves as the Seven.... The peculiar retention of the number Seven, hints at a prediction [sic] for allegory and mysticism, if not for the warlike Fifth-Monarchy

⁵⁶ Barrie White, 'The Origins and Convictions of the First Calvinistic Baptists', *Baptist History and Heritage* 25 (1990), 39-47.

⁵⁷ Michael A. G. Haykin, *Kiffin, Knollys and Keach: Rediscovering our English Baptist Heritage* (Leeds, 1996), p. 33.

⁵⁸ Samuel E. Waldron, *A Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith* (Darlington, 1989), p. 427.

doctrines outright.⁵⁹ This should be contested. Some Fifth Monarchists urged violent revolution as a necessary means to establish the political expression of the millennial kingdom for which the group longed.⁶⁰ But the Baptist confession is markedly different. The confession did not allow a civil role for the moral law; the only subversion it allowed was passive resistance (1644 48); and it made no identification of its enemy. The Antichrist is never mentioned, presumably because they thought his seat of influence much nearer than the Vatican.

Nevertheless, the confession retained strong links to the Reformed tradition. Its structure advanced on Calvin's three-fold division of the work of Christ into the offices of prophet, priest and king. Like the Scots Confession, the Baptists linked Christ's kingly office to his future rule (1644 19-20): 'This his kingly power shall be more fully manifested when He shall come in glory to reign among his saints, and when He shall put down all rule and authority under His feet' (1644 20). The scriptural proofs which the confession cited in this article included 1 Corinthians 15:24, 28, Hebrews 9:28, 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, John 17:21, 26 – but, significantly, no reference was made to Revelation 20. With similar caution, the resurrection was dealt with in a general way, again without reference to the first or second resurrections which Revelation 20 put at either end of the millennium (1644 52). Its statements ended with the prayer, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'⁶¹ Its mood was definitely apocalyptic – but any reference to the political millenarianism of the Fifth Monarchists is clearly overstated.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION (1647)⁶²

At the same time as Spilsbury, Kiffin, and Richardson were working on their confession, a much larger assembly of divines was also meeting in London to produce a statement of faith and associated documents designed to ensure the uniformity of the church throughout the three kingdoms in

⁵⁹ W. T. Whitley, 'The Seven Churches of London', *The Review and Expositor* 7:3 (1910), p. 384, 405.

⁶⁰ The best study of the Fifth Monarchy movement is B. S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Millenarianism* (London, 1972).

⁶¹ *The First London Confession of Faith* (1981), p. 21.

⁶² The text of the Westminster Confession can be found in *The Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, with the Scripture Proofs at Large, together with the Sum of Saving Knowledge* ([Edinburgh] Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 1967).

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

accordance with 'the word of God and the best reformed churches'. First called in 1643, and publishing its confession only in 1647, the Westminster Assembly continued mainstream puritanism's interest in eschatological study and undertook its work in a self-consciously millenarian atmosphere.⁶³ Its divines were acutely aware of the Baptist confession, and specifically wanted to redress its theological system.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, despite their movement far beyond the relative conservatism of the 1644 Baptist confession, the Westminster divines' careful, deliberate exposition of biblical apocalyptic must be seen as contrasting with the more radical mood among many of its delegates and within the puritan brotherhood more generally. One of its most prominent delegates, Thomas Goodwin, had already published *An Exposition of the Revelation* (1639) as an articulate defence of Independent ecclesiology, suggesting several dates for important apocalyptic events.⁶⁵ On the other side of the ecclesiological divide, George Gillespie, the youngest and most vocal of the Scottish Commissioners, announced in a sermon to Parliament in March 1644 that biblical chronology proved that the building of Ezekiel's millennial temple had begun the year before, in 1643.⁶⁶ As in many other areas of their deliberation, however, the divines recognized some merit in advancing a system of biblical theology capable of sustaining several rather different readings – a necessary compromise if the confession was, after all, to sustain a broad national church.

Drawn up with 'an eye on the Irish Articles', the Westminster Confession was a statement of puritan theology in its maturity.⁶⁷ Couched and nuanced as the consequence of extended debate, its negotiations took longer than those of other documents that the Assembly produced. Several items produced in the interim displayed an evolution of thought even within the narrow chronological confines of the Assembly's meetings. *The*

⁶³ Gribben, *Puritan Millennium* (2000), pp. 101-26.

⁶⁴ S. W. Carruthers, *The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly* (Philadelphia, Presbyterian, 1943), p. 103.

⁶⁵ This text is reprinted as Thomas Goodwin, 'An Exposition of the Revelation', in *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (1861-66; rpt. Eureka, CA, 1996), vol. iii, pp. 1-226.

⁶⁶ George Gillespie, 'A Sermon Preached... March 27, 1644', in *The Works of George Gillespie: The Presbyterian's Armoury* (ed. W. M. Hetherington) (Edinburgh, 1846), i.23.

⁶⁷ Jan Rohls, *Reformed Confessions: Theology from Zurich to Barmen*, trans. John Hoffmeyer, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville, Kentucky, 1998), p. 26. Cf. A. A. Hodge, *Evangelical Theology: A Course of Popular Lectures* (1890; rpt. Edinburgh, 1976), p. 165.

Directory for the Publick Worship of God, which was published in 1644, exhibited the optimistic influence of the Scottish Commissioners and the English Independents, who had worked together on its completion.⁶⁸ It instructed parish ministers to pray for

the conversion of the Jews, the fullness of the Gentiles, the fall of Antichrist, and the hastening of the second coming of our Lord; for the deliverance of the distressed churches abroad from the tyranny of the antichristian faction, and from the cruel oppressions and blasphemies of the Turk; for the blessings of God upon the reformed churches, especially upon the churches and kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland, now more strictly and religiously united in the Solemn National League and Covenant.⁶⁹

The Confession itself was more guarded. Like the Scots Confession, Irish Articles and the 1644 Baptist confession, it did not refer to the conversion of the Jews, or the hoped-for deliverance from Islamic and Roman Catholic hostility. But neither did it restrict eschatological themes to the discussion of Christ's kingly office, as previous English and Scottish puritan confessions had. Instead, as in the Irish Articles, eschatology was given a separate discussion; form was matching content, locating the discussion at the end of the confession, in chapters 32-33. There the divines advanced a conservative Augustinian reading of eschatology, locating 'the last day' as the single day for judgement (WCF 32:2, 33:1) and guarding against any attempt to fix dates:

As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin; and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so He will have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen. (WCF 33:3)

With this prayer, echoing the finale of the Baptist confession three years before, the Confession concluded.

In the later documents these pietistic and soteriological emphases were expanded upon. The Larger Catechism (1648) expounded individual eschatology – death, the intermediate state and the resurrection – under its

⁶⁸ Murray, *Puritan Hope* (1971), p. 44.

⁶⁹ 'The Directory for the Publick Worship of God', in *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1967), p. 377.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

section on communion with Christ (LC 84-90). The Assembly's most vibrant statement of general eschatology was expounded in the section outlining the Lord's Prayer:

In the second petition, (which is, *Thy kingdom come*.) acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fullness of the Gentiles brought in; the church furnished with all gospel-officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate: that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted: that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him for ever: and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends. (LC 191)

In its most extensive treatment of the topic to this point, eschatology is linked to the Assembly's wider project, involving world evangelism and a last-days revival, proper ecclesiology, the theonomic rule of the 'godly prince', and the eternal reign of the saints.⁷⁰ It was an ebullient statement of the Assembly's comprehensive programme for reform and a marked advance upon earlier confessional statements.

THE SAVOY CONFESSION (1658)⁷¹

For many of its delegates, however, the documents produced by the Westminster Assembly were insufficiently exact. The publication of *An Apologeticall Narration* (1644) by the 'Dissenting Brethren' – leaders of the Independent faction at Westminster – indicated that all was not well in the citadel of English puritanism. The Independents believed that the Westminster confession could be more closely refined.

After two decades of Dutch exile and Anglican expulsion, and with a heady rise to dizzying influence during the Commonwealth period, the Independent divines were rapidly radicalized. The success of their polemic was also vigorously advancing. By the 1650s they had become the leading English denomination; in East Anglia, some thirty new congregations had

⁷⁰ Gribben, *Puritan Millennium* (2000), pp. 101-26.

⁷¹ A text of the Savoy Confession can be found in Schaff (ed.), *Creeds of the Evangelical Protestant Churches* (1877), pp. 707-29.

been established between 1650 and 1658.⁷² But when they met in convocation in 1658, they were sensing the gradual eclipse of their power. John Owen, their leading divine, had been Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford for five years when the Chancellor, Richard Cromwell, replaced him with the Presbyterian John Conant in 1657. Despite his sympathy for their distinctives, Oliver Cromwell himself was hoping to achieve the union of Presbyterians and Independents.⁷³ As in Ireland, so in England, the Independents were losing ground.⁷⁴

Their tradition had, however, tended to be more radical than that of the Presbyterians. The first use of the expression 'the Congregational way', for example, was made in the epistle to the reader prefacing *A Glimpse of Sions Glory* (1641), a radically millenarian sermon published anonymously but attributed, in its own day and since, to Thomas Goodwin.⁷⁵ Goodwin had preached the sermon while in Dutch exile alongside William Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughes, Philip Nye and Sidrach Simpson, all of whom were later Westminster delegates and signatories of *An Apologetical Narration*.⁷⁶ At the Westminster Assembly they opposed both Episcopalianism and Separatism, arguing instead for the inclusion of independent churches within a comprehensive state church. All were vibrantly millenarian. Anthony Dallison's study of Goodwin's sermons before 1658 has emphasized that 'the subject of the latter-day glory was not a mere speculative theory but a doctrine which supplied the churches of the Congregational way with a powerful motive for reformation and a glorious hope for the future'.⁷⁷

While in exile in Holland, Goodwin had preached the sermons which were published as *An Exposition of the Revelation* (1639).⁷⁸ One of these

⁷² A. G. Matthews, 'Introduction', in A. G. Matthews (ed.), *The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order 1658* (London, 1959), p. 24.

⁷³ Matthews, 'Introduction' (1959), p. 16.

⁷⁴ Matthews, 'Introduction' (1959), p. 10.

⁷⁵ G. F. Nuttall, *Visible Saints* (Oxford, 1957), p. 8, n. 4. The sermon is reprinted in Goodwin, *Works* (1861-66), xii.61-79. For the authorship debate, see Gribben, *Puritan Millennium* (2000), p. 48.

⁷⁶ Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 99-100.

⁷⁷ Anthony Dallison, 'The Latter-day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin', *Evangelical Quarterly* 58 (1986), p. 54.

⁷⁸ Dallison, 'The Latter-day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin' (1986), pp. 53-68. Cf. the comments on Goodwin in Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat: Milton and some Contemporaries* (1984; rpr. London, 1994), pp. 172-7.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

sermons was pirated and published as *A Sermon on the Fifth Monarchy, proving by invincible arguments that the saints shall have a Kingdom here on earth which is yet to come* (1654). One year later, several of Goodwin's sermons on Ephesians were pirated and published as *The World to Come; or, the Kingdom of Christ Asserted in two expository lectures on Eph. i. 21, 22* (1655). Both of these editions seem to have been published to further the cause of the radical and often amorphous Fifth Monarchist group.⁷⁹ John Owen, too, was an apocalyptic enthusiast.⁸⁰ His sermons to Parliament were bald statements warning of 'the shaking and translating of heaven and earth'. His increasing political radicalism co-existed uneasily with Goodwin's belief that Cromwell should take the throne.

Despite these tensions, when the leaders of the Independent churches met to forge a theological alliance at the end of the Commonwealth, they found their job much easier thanks to the efforts some of them had already made as part of the Westminster Assembly. Sessions of the Savoy Conference lasted from 29 September to 12 October 1658.⁸¹ The end product of the discussion was a revision of the Westminster Confession, carried out by Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, William Bridge, William Greenhill, Joseph Caryl (all of whom had attended the Westminster Assembly) and John Owen.⁸² The committee's conclusions were read every morning to the 120 delegates to synod, debated, and then adopted.⁸³ It was designed as a common front against the perception of weakness and division: Owen led the delegation that presented the Savoy Declaration to Richard Cromwell in October 1658.⁸⁴

The Savoy Confession largely reiterates the Westminster Confession's pronouncements on the intermediate state and the last judgement (Savoy 31-32, WCF 32-33). Its most innovative eschatological statements are included in chapter 26, 'Of the Church'. Here, evidencing their distinctive patterns of ecclesiology, the Savoy divines expansively modified the Westminster Confession's formulae. They affirmed only the first paragraph

⁷⁹ The best discussion of this movement is found in B. S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Millenarianism* (London, 1972).

⁸⁰ For Owen's eschatology, see Watts, *The Dissenters* (1978), pp. 134-42. Cf. Hill, *The Experience of Defeat* (1984; rpr. 1994), pp. 164-72. The most recent biography of Owen is Peter Toon, *God's Statesman: The Life and Work of John Owen* (Exeter, 1971).

⁸¹ Matthews, 'Introduction' (1959), p. 22.

⁸² Matthews, 'Introduction' (1959), p. 34.

⁸³ Matthews, 'Introduction' (1959), pp. 34, 22.

⁸⁴ Matthews, 'Introduction' (1959), p. 11.

of WCF 25, replacing subsequent paragraphs with a definition of the church which excluded baptized children from church membership and denied that the authority for the administration of ordinances or church government was given to the universal church, instead locating the foci of church authority in the local congregation (Savoy 26:2, contra WCF 25:2-3). Savoy 26 was also the closest the puritan confessions came to outright millennialism:

IV. There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be Head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God, whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

V. As the Lord in his care and love towards his Church, hath in his infinite wise providence exercised it with great variety in all ages, for the good of them that love him, and his own Glory; so according to his promise, we expect that in the later days, Antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the Kingdom of his dear Son broken, the Churches of Christ being enlarged [sic], and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable and glorious condition then [sic] they have enjoyed.

Although the confession refuses to treat of Revelation 20:1-7 – it avoids offering any Scriptural proofs whatsoever – it clearly posits a period of earthly blessing after the return of Christ. This is not to say, however, that it is premillennial: it does not assert a millennial reign of Christ upon earth, and could allude to Goodwin's belief that the millennium would be inaugurated by Christ without his presence on earth throughout its duration.⁸⁵ In an addition to WCF 25:6, the Savoy states that Antichrist will be destroyed at the second coming (Savoy 26:4), thereby linking ecclesiology to their eschatological hopes. Those Independents who were eschatologically minded did not hesitate to claim that the millennium would bring true church government.⁸⁶ The 'later days' (Savoy 26:5) will see the conversion of the Jews, the expansion of biblical churches, and the benefits of progressive revelation leading to increasing knowledge, grace and glory. Historians would be glad to know which scriptural texts the

⁸⁵ Dallison, 'The Latter-day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin' (1986), p. 62.

⁸⁶ Dallison, 'The Latter-day Glory in the Thought of Thomas Goodwin' (1986), p. 59.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

Savoy divines were thinking of when they referred to 'his promise' as the basis for these hopes (Savoy 26:5). This silence notwithstanding, the Savoy Confession was the most closely millenarian of the puritan confessions.

THE SECOND BAPTIST CONFESSION (1677/1689)⁸⁷

Part of the difficulty facing the Independents was the increasing influence of the Baptists at both popular level and in the state administration. Through the period of Parliament's ascendancy, the Baptist cause was rapidly expanding. By the late 1650s they had grown from seven churches in London to around 130 in England, Wales and Ireland.⁸⁸ By 1660, there were around 220 Baptist churches in existence, 130 of which were Calvinistic. But not many of these churches had entered Cromwell's national church. In 1662, only 19 Baptist ministers were ejected from the state church.⁸⁹ They had proved themselves more independent than the Independents.

Despite their separatism, the Restoration's clampdown on dissent encouraged Baptist leaders to demonstrate the essential unity of the nonconformists. By the 1670s, the 1644 confession was clearly out-of-step with the developing form and content of dissenting Calvinism. Covenant theology had developed through its refinements in the Westminster and Savoy confessions. Similarly, the 1644 confession's advocacy of 'closed' communion – the idea that the benefits of church membership were open only to candidates who had been immersed as believers – was clearly out-of-step with the increasingly ecumenical spirit of co-operation among dissenters.⁹⁰ A new confession of faith would articulate Baptist-Independent ecclesiology more carefully, while taking account of the theological developments of the previous 30 years. Thus Baptist leaders turned to the Savoy confession as a basic model for Baptist faith. This revision of the Savoy was carried out in 1677, largely by William Collins, although signatories included the prominent leaders Hanserd Knollys, William Kiffin and Benjamin Keach. This 'most influential and important of all Baptist Confessions'⁹¹ was reaffirmed by English Baptist leaders in 1689 and

⁸⁷ A text of the 1677/1689 Baptist Confession can be found in William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Chicago, [1959]).

⁸⁸ Haykin, *Kiffin, Knollys and Keach* (1996), p. 40.

⁸⁹ Watts, *The Dissenters* (1978), p. 160.

⁹⁰ Matthews, 'Introduction' (1959), p. 19.

⁹¹ W. J. McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia, 1911), p. 219.

adopted by American Baptists in 1742 as the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.

With all the sources at their disposal – the 1644, Westminster and Savoy confessions – it is interesting to note that on no occasion do the 1677 revisers privilege the statements of Westminster above those of the Savoy.⁹² The revised confession was composed of 160 paragraphs. Of this total, 146 are derived from the Savoy confession, eight from the 1644 confession, and only six appear to be original.⁹³ Retaining Calvinism, the revisers refined Westminster's covenant theology;⁹⁴ rejected the Presbyterian government of the Scottish church (1677/1689 26:7); supported lay-preaching, with due qualifications (1677/1689 26:11); and, in contrast to the 1644 and Westminster confessions, no longer demanded that every church member had to be baptized (1677/1689 26:6), or even that baptism was necessary before the individual could participate in communion (1677/1689 30).⁹⁵ The 1677/1689 confession demonstrates the distance that Baptists had travelled on the road from their Anabaptist reputation – no one now could doubt their status as a fully-fledged puritan denomination.

Like the other confessions, it was composed amid millennial excitement and disappointment. The radically millenarian Fifth Monarchists had always drawn the support of Baptists and were still suspected of fomenting rebellion one decade after the failure of Venner's London rising in 1661.⁹⁶ Leading Baptists, like John Bunyan, joined leading Independents, like Thomas Brooks and Thomas Goodwin, in distancing themselves from his Fifth Monarchism.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, these radical hopes were maintained after the Restoration. In 1688, Baptist leader Hanserd Knollys (who had signed the 1644 confession) was expecting the

⁹² Waldron, *1689 Baptist Confession of Faith* (1989), p. 428.

⁹³ Waldron, *1689 Baptist Confession of Faith* (1989), p. 429.

⁹⁴ Waldron, *1689 Baptist Confession of Faith* (1989), p. 429.

⁹⁵ Whitley, 'The Seven Churches of London' (1910), p. 390.

⁹⁶ B. R. White, 'John Pendarves, the Calvinistic Baptists and the Fifth Monarchy', *Baptist Quarterly* 25 (1974), 251-69.

⁹⁷ Thomas Brooks, *The Works of Thomas Brooks* (ed. A. B. Grosart) (1861-67; rpr. Edinburgh, 1980), i, xxxii; Greaves, 'Conscience, Liberty and the Spirit: Bunyan and Nonconformity', in N. H. Keeble, *John Bunyan: Conventicle and Parnassus: Tercentenary Essays* (Oxford, 1988), p. 28; Edward Rogers, *Some Account of the Life and Opinions of a Fifth Monarchy Man: Chiefly extracted from the writings of John Rogers, Preacher* (London, 1867), p. 327.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PURITAN CONFESSIONS

imminent commencement of the millennium.⁹⁸ Benjamin Keach, another Baptist leader, viewed the Glorious Revolution in vibrantly eschatological terms.⁹⁹ One year later, William and Mary's introduction of religious freedom was the context in which the confession was adopted by 'messengers' from 107 churches in the first general assembly of the Particular Baptists of England, in 1689.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, the 1677/1689 confession evidences a retreat from the heady apocalypticism of the Savoy divines. They simply omitted Savoy 26:5 from their discussion of the church. Again ignoring Revelation 20, their erstwhile millennial hope was being replaced by an increasing concentration upon ecclesiology. It does not take any explicit position on the millennium, but its position can be inferred from its identification of one day of judgement, not two separated by one thousand years. A thousand-year reign was implicitly denied.

The second Baptist confession's emphatic statement of a single judgement (1677/1689 32:1) echoes the Westminster/Savoy repudiation of date-setting: 'he will have the date of that day kept unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and always be watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come' (1677/1689 32:3). But its caution did not preclude its ending on the 1644/Westminster/Savoy's final note of joyful hope: 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!' (1677/1689 32:3).

CONCLUSION

For a movement of ecclesiastical radicalism, the eschatology of the puritan confessions of faith is remarkably conservative. Revealing the gradual rise and fall of the movement's eschatological priorities, Richard Sibbes' remark that 'we are fallen into the latter end of the world' seemed again and again to signal the sense of imminence upon which the hopes of the movement were grounded and also the caution which guarded against the inclusion of such hopes within the movement's confessional documents.¹⁰¹ Puritans seemed able to distinguish between that understanding of prophecy which was of 'private origin' and the more cautious expression of hope which was appropriate to collective statements of faith. Despite the number of detailed expositions of the subject, puritan eschatology never

⁹⁸ Howson, 'Eschatology in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England' (1998), p. 331.

⁹⁹ Kenneth G. C. Newport, 'Benjamin Keach, William of Orange and the Book of Revelation: A Study in English Prophetical Exegesis', *Baptist Quarterly* 36 (1995-96), 43-51.

¹⁰⁰ Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* ([1959]), pp. 235-8.

¹⁰¹ Richard Sibbes, *Works* (ed. A. B. Grosart) (Edinburgh, 1862-64), iv.43.

attained the finality afforded to the movement's statements of soteriology or even ecclesiology. Puritan confessions repeatedly refuse to endorse the radical eschatologies defended in the individual writings of some of the very theologians who composed them.

But the confessions were conservative also in their method. Despite the popularity and respectability of interest in non-canonical sources, the writers of the puritan confessions sought to remove the influence of pagan apocalyptic and replace it with data more firmly derived from Scripture. The puritan confessions can be judged successful by the extent to which subsequent generations of believers and unbelievers alike have looked to the Bible alone as sufficient in defining the Christian's blessed hope.

This repudiation of non-canonical sources is also illustrated in the extent to which puritan theology did not regard Calvin – or, indeed, any other expositor – as an infallible touchstone. Believing themselves to be at the end of history, when 'knowledge shall increase', puritan theologians advanced on the basis of progressive revelation to proffer readings of Revelation often unlike any maintained before. Sharing Calvin's rejection of the medieval past, puritan expositors showed themselves more open to rehabilitating the patristic millenarian tradition – but, remarkably, never in their confessions. To that extent, historians can posit a dichotomy between Calvin and the Calvinists, if not in the eschatology the confessions contain, then certainly in the mood the confessions represent.

So the confusion between Clouse, Froom and de Jong can be seen to misrepresent the very nature of the debate. With none of the puritan confessions ever citing Revelation 20, it is difficult to see how any of them could be properly described as either pre-, post- or amillennial. They were, nevertheless, all conservative in comparison to what some of their authors would commit themselves to elsewhere.

In a web of intertextuality, the puritan confessions emerged as highly referential developments of a common set of themes. As this survey has illustrated, in their tensions and dissensions the puritan confessions are snapshots of – if not monuments to – the developing puritan theological tradition in its movement of eschatology toward its modern position at the focus of Reformed dogmatics. They may not be amillennial, as Berkhof suggested, but they were certainly nervous about committing themselves to any exposition of Revelation 20 that could at all be definite. The eschatology of the puritan confessions seems as obscure as ever.

A THEOLOGY OF ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE

PETER NEILSON, ASSOCIATE MINISTER, THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST
CUTHBERT, EDINBURGH

The entertainment milieu has transformed the ways in which we believe and are capable of believing.¹

ENTERTAINMENT, LEISURE AND GOD

The dictionary tells us that 'to entertain' carries two meanings:

- to amuse or occupy agreeably (from Latin, *tenere*, to hold or grasp [one's attention]); and
- to receive or treat as a guest.

On these terms it could be argued that God is the best entertainer of all – the one who knows how to catch the attention of his people through the beauty of creation, the events of history, the escapades of people and uniquely by the captivating story and drama of Jesus: from angels and stars over Bethlehem to the deep pathos of a Cross and the ultimate 'sting' of resurrection. God is the ultimate storyteller and dramatist.

God is the perfect host who sets the table for the honoured guest 'in the presence of my enemies'. It is God in Christ who meets friends at table and has made a table of bread and wine the ultimate place of God's hospitality. In eternity God presides at the Wedding Banquet of the Lamb – where the Bride of Christ is royally entertained.

Of course, that Divine gift has been abused. There has been much to amuse and to occupy the attention – a distraction from the true worship of God. There have been many invitations to be guest at tables that serve a delicious poison – seductive and destructive. It may be that the greatest temptation of our entertainment world is to trivialize God-given reality.

Neil Postman in his book, *Amusing ourselves to Death*² suggests we have entered a 'peek-a-boo world' of 'fragments and discontinuities' where

¹ William Kuhns, *Electronic Gospel: Religion and Media* (New York, 1969), p. 165.

² Neil Postman, *Amusing ourselves to Death: Public Discourses in the Age of*

the entertainment medium trivializes reality. The weighty glory of God is exchanged for the lightweight celebrity status of a movie star.

As for leisure, that too is God's gift. The Sabbath rhythm has been given so that, according to the Exodus tradition, we may follow the example of God at rest.³ Leisure is about letting go and realizing that we do not run the world. Those who take to the hills and the garden as their Sabbath are more in touch with this reality than we care to admit. They stand among the hills shaped by millennia of fire and ice and recover a true perspective on life formed by another hand.

In the Deuteronomic tradition, the Sabbath was a reminder that for four hundred years they had been slaves.⁴ Eugene Peterson suggests that because this slavery dehumanized the Hebrew people, the Sabbath was a reminder to treat our neighbours in ways that gave them dignity. 'Sabbath-keeping is elemental kindness. Sabbath-keeping is commanded to preserve the image of God in our neighbours so that we see them as they are, not as we need them or want them to be.'⁵

There is a growing expectation among younger people that the workaholic lifestyle should give way to patterns of life that allow time for friendships and family. The 24/7 lifestyle is being questioned and people are asking for leisure-time that re-humanizes us. Part of the current quest for spirituality is a search for ways to detox the adrenaline addicts. God smiles.

TWO JOURNEYS

The journey through my parish

A theology of entertainment and leisure suggests two journeys – one through my parish and the other through my Bible.

First, let me take you on a journey through part of our parish in the West End of Edinburgh. We stand at the corner of Lothian Road and Princes Street. On the right is No. 1 Rutland square, a pub and eating place, packed on Friday and Saturday evenings. Next to it is the Caledonian Hotel, which stands as one of Edinburgh's top class hotels – top class suites at £800 per night. Move up the street and we pass several pubs – all offering sports matches on a large screen.

Show Business (London, 1987), p. 70.

³ Exodus 20:8-11.

⁴ Deuteronomy 5:15.

⁵ Eugene H. Peterson, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2000), p. 71.

A THEOLOGY OF ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE

The Nightclubs are packed from 11pm till 3am. The owner of one runs a local sauna and another has a reputation for easy sex. Move around the parish and you will find lap dancing and full striptease on offer.

Until recently we had two cinemas – the popular ABC and the Filmhouse for the connoisseur, with its film club attached. The Usher Hall has been reopened for concerts and the Royal Lyceum offers a wide range of plays. You can eat Scottish, Italian, Thai and Chinese food, with a range of business sandwich bars to serve that non-existent lunch hour for the massive business sector. Our parish has a '2,10,20 Profile' – 2,000 live in it, 10,000 work in it and 20,000 come into it each weekend for some kind of entertainment. That sector is discreetly, but firmly policed.

What does God have to do with all that? In the first weeks of arriving in the parish I walked the parish by day and by night, feeling more and more anxious. I now call it 'ecclesiastical agoraphobia'. I was out of my security zone. The turning point came when I was walking one evening and heard in my mind the words that Paul heard as he experienced the cross-cultural angst of Corinth: 'Do not be afraid.... I am with you.... I have many people in this city' (Acts 18:10).

Those words threw a switch in my mind. I had X-ray vision. I was able to look through the walls of the businesses and the pubs and clubs and see 'God's people'. That shift of perspective, a gift of God, was the beginning of our mission. Mission is the mother of theology.⁶

That was the beginning of a desire to plant a church for the nightclub culture, to which we will return – to a theological quest that challenges many of our inherited assumptions.

The journey through my Bible

The second journey means taking a Bible and flicking through it for clues to a theology of entertainment. I begin at Genesis and end at Revelation, taking a quick survey of surface impressions. My tour through the Old Testament faces me with the opening poetry of Genesis and the reminder of the oral traditions of the patriarchs that must have held people enthralled as the stories were told and retold. Soon I stumble on songs of Miriam and Deborah, not to mention David entertaining Saul and soothing his agitated mind.

Artists, architects and artisans are commissioned for the creation of the Tabernacle and the Temple. Festivals are described with colour and music and engaging participation. Turn to the prophets and we are in the realm of

⁶ Kaehler, quoted by Orlando E. Costas, *Liberating News: A Theology of Contextual Evangelisation* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1989), p. 1.

prophetic imagination – from the almond tree and the potter’s house of Jeremiah to indescribable visions of Ezekiel’s heavenly charioteers.

Of course, the Old Testament tour tweaks another strand. Our eye lights on Sodom with all its reputation for evil, the dancing before the Golden Calf and other altars. The prophetic denunciations of idolatry are about trivial and superficial living where the people have exchanged the weight of God’s glory for the weightlessness of the false gods, and the lifestyles that flow from that de-centred worship. We see very quickly the age-old idols of money, sex and power now re-incarnated and paraded on the screens and stages of our entertainment culture. The dark side is cool.

Move to the New Testament and the sense of recoil is strengthened by the letters that floated across the Mediterranean area to advise new followers of Jesus Christ how to live in a culture shaped by other gods. The circular letter of Ephesians calls for a practical spirituality that is clearly ascetic about any area of immorality and sees life in terms of spiritual conflict with the principalities and powers.

The recurring themes of light and darkness in Paul and John remind us that there is a call to distinctiveness. The famous call to the Corinthians to ‘Come apart and be separate’⁷ has echoed through the Christian world. We may have forgotten the make up of that first Corinthian congregation – women and men whose lives had been enmeshed in destructive lifestyles. This policy of separation was good advice for new converts who have to break the habits of a lifetime and be apprenticed to a new tradition of the Way of Christ.

However, it is doubtful if that was the whole story. How can there be any mission without engagement? Has a corrective and targeted comment become normative and universal, embedding itself in the consciousness of generations of Christians? Has this created in many evangelical Christians a fundamental paranoia that has emasculated our evangelism, turning a good news encounter of celebration into an anxiety-ridden exercise in extraction?

Let me end this scriptural tour in the Gospels. Here we listen to the master of the story and the sound bite. We watch a man who could have people travel in their thousands to hear him on a hillside or by lakeside. His miracles caught the people’s attention. In the life of Jesus we are faced with a holiness that is not a separation from people, but a deep involvement with people. Much of his ministry is around tables with the friends of financial crooks and pliers of the sex trade. This man entertained

⁷ 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

A THEOLOGY OF ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE

in both senses of the word: he captured their attention with the word of God and made them feel at home in the presence of God.

THE CHURCH AND THE CLUBS

The story of entertainment is as old as humankind. The interaction of the church and the arts has varied with the doctrinal seasons. There have been seasons of great patronage of the arts by the church, and seasons when art, music and dancing have been expunged from the life of the church. There have been times when all art forms were seen as God's gifts and times when it was thought to be an act of Christian deviation to engage with the everyday entertainment by entering a pub, a club or dance-hall. These were evil places and Christians did not go to evil places.

The divide continues. Since 1999 we have been exploring church for the club culture in Edinburgh. For some that is a contradiction for the nightclubs are seen as centres of recreational drugs and casual sex. An e-mail from a lady in the United States highlights the issues as she speaks of how the 'trend is towards the dark side'. She writes:

I have yet to hear of a society that flourished by answering to their darkest shadow side. It's one thing to recognize that you have one. It's another to 'live there', nurturing it, feeding it, fertilizing it, expanding it, and educating it.⁸

She is deeply concerned about the effects of the club scene on young people and wants to create a 'Get real' club in which she can 'make the Light cooler than the darkness'. There is a passion here that resonates with many of us.

Let me set that against the reflections of one of our club team, currently completing his MTh in Media and Communication at New College. He is equally aware of the darkness in the club scene, but feels it as pain, solidarity. He sees in the club life a search for transcendence and for the intimacy of belonging. He senses its loss of roots and futility about the future. He longs to see a church that would be led by the DJs and the musicians of the culture. There are aspects of the clubbing community that he senses are closer to real church than our inherited patterns of church. He believes that the club culture has as much to teach the church as vice versa.

He speaks of a move from the visual culture to a sonic culture where people pick up information through their bodies. He quotes Tex Sample, 'I

⁸ Letter received from Cynthia Berger Parent, 4 November 1999 about 'The Get Real Club'.

vibrate, and therefore I am.' He longs for an emerging spirituality and community that heals the age-old schizophrenia between body and spirit, and lets the body dance the truth of the gospel. As a South African theologian said, 'If I can't dance it, it can't be true.' His prayer is for discernment for he says that discernment in an electric culture is survival.⁹

TELEVISION: SEEING THROUGH WHAT WE SEE

Discernment is a good theme as we move to the next major area of the entertainment culture. Today we do not need to choose to visit places of good or evil. We have to choose as these places visit us through the all-pervasive medium of television.

Laying aside the issues of explicit pornography and violence, there are many who claim that the entertainment milieu in general, and the television medium in particular, has eroded our capacity to believe and our understanding of belief. William Kuhns has argued that the very concept of faith is threatened by a TV-informed mindset accustomed to incessant visual impact. The notion of absolutes has been eroded by the 'tentative and elastic epistemology of the media'.¹⁰

William Fore draws on the image of boats on the river to describe the undermining effects of television. Fore warns against simply examining the behaviour in the boat while being 'unaware that *all of us are being moved by the river itself*'. He claims that we are 'being changed from what we are to what we will become, by the *process of television itself*'. Television is providing us with a worldview, *which not only determines what we think, but also how we think and who we are*.¹¹

In 1999 the London School of Economics published research on the use of TV, video, books, computer games, music and personal computers by young people aged 6 to 17. The study found that they interact with the media for around five hours each day and pointed to the dominance of a 'screen-entertainment culture'. Television occupies about half of this time and is named as the medium they would miss most.

According to Fore, television has become the 'cultivator of our culture, the great mythmaker of our time'. The key myths are: seeing is believing, life is simple, information overload is inevitable, and there is a free flow of

⁹ I am indebted for these observations to Paul Thomson and, in particular, his unpublished paper entitled, 'God in 3D: Technology and Religious Imagination in Club Cultures'.

¹⁰ Quoted in Chris Arthur (ed.), *Religion and the Media* (Cardiff, 1993), p. 6.

¹¹ William F. Fore, *Television and Religion – the Shaping of Faith, Values and Culture* (Minneapolis, 1987), pp. 21-2.

information. The myths about society are: efficiency is the highest good, the fittest survive, power comes from the centre and happiness is about limitless consumption.¹²

Where a culture buys into these myths, what happens to faith, mystery, responsibility and truth? What happens to failure as a fact of life, service as a way of life and generosity as a response to life? In other words, what is the place for the Way of the Cross? What kind of Christian community has the capacity to see through the myths and help us live with God's reality? Are we training one another in the art of discernment of these subtle powers or are we still locked into reacting to the sexy scenes and bad language? Or have we even become inured to that?

In contrast to Fore and Postman's pessimism, Professor Stewart Hoover believes that the world of the media and mass entertainment has overtaken the role of the church as the forum of public religious discourse. While the church lives out its privatized gospel, the world is going public on religion. We are entering a 'new paradigm':

In the culture at large, questions of faith and spirit seem to have gone public: TV programmes, novels, magazine stories and newspaper articles now give serious attention to the spiritual and religious questions of a generation that grew up suspicious of the faith and morality handed down to them by their elders.¹³

He issues this challenge to the churches: 'Religious communities do not manage to reproduce the popular modes of community searched for by some and they do not manage to create the meaningful contrast in terms of community that is sought for by others. Religious communities and religious institutions thus become trapped in modernity.'¹⁴

Here is a fundamental theological challenge. Has the arena of religious debate moved beyond our church walls to the cinema and public media? Are we as Christians going to keep our distance or engage and begin to challenge the myths and discern the truths? Instead of holding numerous church meetings, should we not rather visit the local cinema with our friends and chat about the film afterwards in the pub or in a Starbucks café? Is our God big enough – or humble enough – to speak through Hollywood?

¹² William F. Fore, 'The Religious Relevance of Television', in Arthur, *Religion and the Media*, p. 59.

¹³ Stewart Hoover and Knut Lundby (eds), *Rethinking Media, Religion and Culture* (London, 1997), p. 224.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

SCOTTISH BULLETIN OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

A recent Christmas sermon was based on the film called: 'The Truman Show'. It illustrates the core themes of redemption through grace and truth.

THE TRUMAN SHOW

Truman Burbank does not know it, but from birth he has been enclosed in a TV studio set. Every aspect of his life is being broadcast to the world. It is the ultimate 'real-life docudrama' in which the star is the only one who does not know he is on screen.

His name is an oxymoron (Truman, a true man? Burbank – the home of Hollywood). As the story unfolds we are struck by the superficiality and the strange conventional repetitiveness. Even his wife and best friend are being fed their lines by the Director.

As he begins to suspect something and break through the veneer, his friend is telling him that he could never lie to him – as the Director feeds his words into his earpiece.

There is one incident that disrupts his life. A young woman tries to tell him that it is all a lie. Apparently she has broken on to the set and is promptly removed. However, she has been around long enough for Truman to fall in love. The remainder of the film is his search to get back in touch with this love, which first touched him. It looks like a battle to the death as the Director does everything to prevent him escaping. We are caught up in the drama. Will he? Won't he?

Truth and culture are now artificially controlled and contrived – be it the little worlds of the Teletubbies, Madonna or Rupert Murdoch's media empire. There is a cry for escape... to find reality beyond the artificiality... reality in the face of a love that first loves us....

A DISCERNING RESPONSE

Learning from history

Living Christianly within a media-conditioned entertainment culture is new and yet not new. First it was a Jewish culture, then Greek culture, and then Roman culture and so on through the centuries of missionary engagement.

The glory of the Good News of Jesus Christ is his unique universalism. As once 'the Word became flesh and lived among us' in a Jewish culture of the first century, so he has expressed himself in every culture known to us throughout history. These multicultural translations of the eternal Word always share the same fragile vulnerability of the first incarnation. Often Christ can be hidden in the cloak of the culture.

A THEOLOGY OF ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE

In every case, Christ affirms, challenges and transforms the particular cultural expression of our humanity. In the end the culture may crucify him, but he is indestructible and returns in resurrection power. 'In the beginning was the Word.... He came to his own and his own did not receive him.... In him all things hold together.... I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died and behold I am alive for evermore...' (John 1:1, 11; Col. 1:17; Rev. 1:17).

The translation goes on. Today the struggles range from the African recovery of a gospel stripped of its colonial clothing to the Western Enlightenment's rationally organized version of Christianity struggling to connect with a fluid, 'feelings', fragmentary culture. As Peter Horsfield reminds us, we have moved from an original rural context for the gospel to an urban-global-technological context for our task. We must now move to an understanding of expressing the faith and life of the gospel in our media-shaped environment.¹⁵

Marshall McLuhan argues that we have underestimated the effects of our technologies on our psychic and social wellbeing. Just as Postman saw how the invention of the telegraph in the early nineteenth century combined with the invention of the photograph in the late nineteenth century to produce the television to create 'new ways of knowing',¹⁶ so McLuhan sees that two key technologies have affected our sensory priority. Printing catalyzed the visual priority of the eye and electrification catalyzed the sonic priority of the ear. McLuhan suggests that over the last century, much of the West has flipped from left-brain dominance to right brain dominance, from the logical sequential analysis of the West to holistic pattern recognition.¹⁷

That 'holistic pattern recognition' is one reason for the allergic reaction of nearly all people under forty-five to the contemporary church. They react to the sonic 'vibe' of the community long before they hear 'the Word'. That sonic vibe carries messages of power, hierarchy, gender ambivalence of a male institution populated by women, linear thinking, order and control, passivity and conservative collusion with status quo. In short the body language of church contradicts the relational and radical call of Jesus Christ to 'follow me'. Without a relational reformation for this 'Friends Generation', the Word will remain a disembodied irrelevance. Jesus spent

¹⁵ Peter Horsfield, *Teaching Theology in a New Cultural Environment*, in Arthur, p. 46.

¹⁶ Postman, *Amusing ourselves to Death*, p. 70.

¹⁷ McLuhan, Marshall, *The Medium and the Light: Reflections on Religion* (Toronto, 1999), p. 53. Quoted in Thomson's paper, *op. cit.* p. 4.

30 years of silence before his three years of ministry. That proportion of 10:1 may be the guide to the proportion of our body language as a community to our verbal communication.

Today's generation learn by participation, amuse themselves in the story line of a film or docusoap, immerse themselves in a world of music and dance or find virtual community on the Internet. To let the word become flesh in this generation will mean reclaiming the powers that have been created by Christ and for Christ,¹⁸ but have been hijacked into trivial entertainment. That way we will not amuse ourselves to death, but catch the attention of people with the embodied word of life and invite them into the hospitality of the Trinity, which is eternal life.

Learning from Paul

The key to our response to a culture of entertainment lies in spiritual discernment. We turn to Athens for our role model of response. Like Paul at Athens our first reaction may be one of distance and hostility. Paul saw the Greek idols and 'he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols' (Acts 17:16). Like William Fore, in his passionate outburst, Paul saw the prevailing culture full of signals that went against the grain of his love for God revealed in Jesus Christ. He began reasoning and preaching about Jesus and the resurrection, with little response beyond the Greek fascination with novelty religion.

However, by the time he speaks on the Areopagus, Paul is standing, as it were, alongside Hoover's 'new paradigm' of religious experience, saying: 'I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription, "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD"'. Now, what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you' (Acts 17:22, 23).

What follows is a speech that affirms the God who has made them, their common humanity and their cultural distinctiveness. He even quotes from their literature, their contemporary media. Only then does he challenge their views on moral accountability and the destiny of history in Jesus Christ. Into the Greek pluralism of multiple choice mystery and philosophy, he introduces the 'scandal of particularity' about a man called Jesus who has been raised from the dead, and will judge the world.

Learning from Ignatius

In *Clashing Symbols: an Introduction to Faith and Culture*, Michael Paul Gallacher suggests that between Paul's initial reaction to Athenian culture

¹⁸ Colossians 1:16.

A THEOLOGY OF ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE

and his famous speech on the Areopagus, he underwent a kind of conversion. He asks: 'How did Paul move from disgust to generosity?'

Drawing on the Ignatian Tradition of spiritual discernment, Gallacher asks, 'Towards what are our hearts moving? That is the key question for spiritual discernment. It asks about the directional flow of our lives: is the culture leading us towards what is profoundly humanizing and creative of love or pushing us towards what is imprisoning, destructive and closed to compassion?'

In another article, on *Theology, Discernment and Cinema*, Gallacher offers a list of key questions that fill out this discernment of 'directional flow'. While written to address particular films, they could equally be applied to the whole entertainment culture:

- Does it open or close our hearts to compassion?
- Does it seduce us into feelings or lead us into mystery?
- Does it help us recognize our vulnerability or feed our fantasies?
- Does it show reverence for the human as in the Incarnation?
- Does it offer a quality of looking and receiving that leads to confession and silence?¹⁹

Gallacher pleads that we adopt a kind of 'double expectation' that 'there will be conflict, ambiguity, anti-values enthroned, but there will also be signs of hope and real hunger, fruits of the Spirit.... Ultimately, discernment means sharing that conversion of disposition of Paul in Athens, and thus being able to recognize smoke signals of hope rising from what may at first seem like a burnt-out desert.'²⁰

If we learn to fine-tune such discernment, we will be better equipped to keep the inner eye of the moral imagination clear without being superficially moralistic. Such discernment will lead not so much to calls for repentance in society, as signs of repentance in the church, as we recognize our imprisonment in modernity and endeavour to relate to the new paradigms of religious expression in our culture. The Unknown God waits to be named.

¹⁹ Michael Paul Gallacher, *Theology, Discernment and Cinema*, in John R. May (ed.), *New Image in Religious Film* (Kansas City, 1997).

²⁰ Michael Paul Gallacher, 'Looking Down on Athens', *Third Way* 20 (1997), pp. 12-14 – an extract from his book *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture* (London, 1997).

REVIEWS

New Dictionary of Biblical Theology

T. D. Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (eds)

IVP, Leicester, 2000; xx+866pp., £29.95; ISBN 0 85111 976 X

The *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* will be welcomed by all who have an interest in understanding and teaching the message of the Bible. The Dictionary, which is the product of a joint venture between the Biblical Theology Study Group of the Tyndale Fellowship and Rutherford House, Edinburgh, provides a scholarly and accessible introduction to biblical theology as a discrete discipline, and to many significant biblical topics.

Part One contains twelve major articles: 'Biblical Theology' (B. S. Rosner); 'History of Biblical Theology' (C. H. H. Scobie); 'Challenges to Biblical Theology' (P. Balla); 'The Canon of Scripture' (R. T. Beckwith); 'Scripture' (E. J. Schnabel); 'The Unity and Diversity of Scripture' (C. L. Blomberg); 'New Testament Use of the Old Testament' (C. A. Evans); 'Relationship of Old Testament and New Testament' (Graeme Goldsworthy – one of two Consulting Editors); and 'Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology' (D. A. Carson – the other Consulting Editor). Philip Satterthwaite's article on 'Biblical History', Kevin Vanhoozer's article on 'Exegesis and Hermeneutics', and P. Adam's article on 'Preaching and Biblical Theology' are particularly valuable.

Part Two consists of a thematic study of groups of biblical books (for example, 'Genesis to Kings' (Desmond Alexander) and 'Paul' (Douglas Moo – in which he advises caution in accepting E. P. Sanders' view in its entirety) followed by a description and discussion of the *theological* emphases of each of the biblical books. Authors who contributed to this section include Richard Hess (Joshua); Murray Gow (Ruth); Geoffrey Grogan (Psalms); John Oswalt (Isaiah); Donald Hagner (Matthew); Douglas Moo (Romans); Anthony Thistleton (1 Corinthians); Howard Marshall (Philippians and Thessalonians); Paul Ellingworth (Hebrews); Peter Davids (James) and Gregory Beale (Revelation).

Part Three, which is the longest section, focuses on topics which, in the editors' opinion, are of importance for understanding the Bible's unity and theology. Attention is given to such themes as Abraham (Desmond

Alexander); Atonement (Robert Yarbrough – Jesus' death is both an expiation and propitiation); Blessing/curse (Mary J. Evans); Covenant (P. R. Williamson); David (M. L. Strauss); Glory (Richard Gaffin); Gospel (Graeme Goldsworthy); Hell (P. S. Johnston); Jesus Christ (Howard Marshall); Land (an excellent discussion by J. G. Millar); Righteousness, justice and justification (M. A. Seifrid); Seed (Desmond Alexander) and Sin (Henri Blocher).

The editors and publisher of this *Dictionary* are to be congratulated for producing another publication that exhibits the qualities of clarity, presentation and scholarship that we have come to expect of IVP productions. Each article contains cross-references to related articles and is concluded with a select bibliography for further study. Not all readers will concur with the post-script to the article on the Sabbath, and I was disappointed that no article by John Goldingay was included (though his work is referred to in a number of articles). Nevertheless, the *Dictionary* is both stimulating and valuable. Indeed, should I be cast away on the BBC's mythical desert island, and asked to choose a dictionary to take with me – then this is it!

Ian D. Glover, Livingston Free Church of Scotland

The Starting Point of Calvin's Theology

George H. Tavard

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids and Cambridge, 2000; 199pp.; ISBN 0-8028-4718-8

The value of this book lies primarily in its being one of the very few works on Calvin's first theological treatise against soul sleep, *Psychopannychia*. Most students of Calvin think of his unsuccessful commentary on Seneca, *De Clementia* (important because of its being the prototype of his future commentaries on the books of the Bible), as being, in 1532, his first excursion into literature. This was followed in 1536 by the more readily received first version of the *Institutes*, revised in 1539 and in the French version in 1541, a year after his commentary on Romans was published. He had, however, written *Psychopannychia*, possibly at the same time as he was writing *Institutes 1*, while sojourning at the Angouleme mansion of Canon Louis du Tillet, with its extensive library. Intended for publication in 1536, *Psychopannychia* does not seem to have been printed until as late as 1542 and has been clearly overshadowed by the greater works. Calvin had been persuaded to write the treatise in an attempt to refute the increasingly widespread Anabaptist teaching that at death, the soul falls asleep, or even dies with

the body, until it is either awakened or resurrected on the Day of Judgement.

The Starting Point of Calvin's Theology was not written as an academic examination of *Psychopannychia*, although George Tavard, formerly Professor of Theology at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio, provides a thorough criticism of the work and its relationship with *Institutes I*. He argues that Calvin's theology, moulded around this period shortly after his conversion to the Reform Group (the precise circumstances of which are uncertain), was deeply pietistic. He compares Calvin's piety to that of the great Catholic mystics, especially St Bonaventure, and also that of St Augustine. It is at this juncture, Tavard argues, that there is to be found common ground for dialogue between the Reformed Churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

Calvin's pietistic theology is unfolded in his approach to the immortality of the soul. He was well aware of the teachings of Aristotle and Plato on the subject and of the widespread debates of the Renaissance humanists. For Calvin, however, philosophical arguments were merely speculative and he lays the foundations for his case on what, for him, was the firmer ground of the Holy Scripture. In support, he cites many biblical references, such as Christ's promise to the penitent thief and, more especially, the story of Dives and Lazarus, to which he devotes fifteen subsections.

Yet the full force of his argument is theological. The immortality of the soul can only be meaningfully perceived with regard to the redeemed. After death, the lot of the reprobate, like that of Dives, is to face the first judgement of God, finally to be sealed on the last day. But that is not our affair. As far as the redeemed person is concerned, he enters immortality at conversion. God the Father, through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit, makes his abode in his soul, of which he remains conscious, uninterrupted by death, ever increasingly receiving grace and gifts until the final sealing of his Redemption on the Day of Judgement. Calvin compares the lot of the soul of the redeemed after death with that of Israel when, crossing Jordan, the Israelites came out of the wilderness into the promised land to await the building of Jerusalem, the figure of the New Jerusalem in the New Heaven and New Earth yet to be realised.

All this hinges on the knowledge or existential apprehension of God in Christ and of oneself, which is the beginning, for Calvin, of wisdom and of sound theology, and, for George Tavard, of worthwhile ecumenical dialogue.

Peter Cook, Alston, Cumbria

Pilgrimage to Puritanism: History and Theology of the Marian Exiles at Geneva, 1555-1560

Dan G. Danner

Studies in Church History 9, Peter Lang, New York, 1999; 168pp., £26.00; ISBN 0-8204-3884-7

It is a virtual truism of English Reformation studies that the impact of exile upon the shape of the various conflicts that dogged the Anglican settlement throughout the sixteenth and well into the seventeenth centuries was profound. While the various English exiles under Henry VIII helped to shape not only Bible translation (Tyndale and company) and debates about ecclesiology under Edward VI (e.g. John Hooper), those who went to the continent during the reign of Mary brought back agendas on vestments, discipline, and church-state relationships which effectively shaped debates within the Anglican church for over a century. This book by Dan G. Danner is thus to be welcomed as a contribution to unpacking the troubled years between 1553 and 1557 and thus helping us to see more clearly why church policy under Elizabeth I was shaped as it was.

The book is divided into four chapters dealing with historical background (chapter 1), the earliest members of the Geneva refugee church (chapter 2), bishops and notable Puritans who were members of the Genevan refugee church (chapter 3), and the theology of the Genevan exiles (chapter 4). While the book is brief, it is nonetheless packed with useful information.

What comes through so clearly from Danner's analysis is the self-conscious international flavour of much of what was to become distinctively Puritan theology. I have felt for some time that Anglicanism is exactly that: a narrow church settlement designed to create a distinctive form of church order specifically linked to the interests of the English state; while Puritanism, for all of its bad press, was actually a movement which was attempting to retain a catholic, international vision for what the church should be. This whole debate is played out in miniature in the clash between John Knox and Richard Cox, to which Danner alludes in chapter 1, and is reinforced by the experience of the more radical exiles in Geneva. Danner's book provides additional material for exploring this thesis further.

Theologically, Danner is not as sure-footed as he should be. A wedge is driven between Luther/Calvin on Scripture and the exiles on p. 105, where the former are portrayed as more kerygmatic, the latter more Erasmian. No footnotes are provided for this, presumably because it is considered to be self-evident; the real state of affairs is, of course, far

more complex than such slogans can intimate. The same thing occurs with relation to tradition on p. 105, where the Puritans are presented as more iconoclastic towards tradition than Calvin. Again, the question is more complex than Danner makes it: the Puritans were profoundly sensitive to tradition (see how often they self-consciously cite the early church creeds as in some sense authoritative) and one cannot, as Danner does, attempt to drive a wedge between Puritans who considered themselves to be restoring apostolic simplicity and Calvin who did not. My reading is that both regarded themselves as restoring early church simplicity – indeed, it would have been ideologically difficult for them to consider themselves as doing anything else and remaining true to their basic project.

There are other similar faults throughout the theological chapter, which is weak and apparently based on the tired old clichés of the Barthian from the 50s and 60s which we now really do have no excuse for taking particularly seriously. This should not detract from the usefulness of the historical sections, however – though it may mean that the price is a little too steep for a personal purchase.

Carl R. Trueman, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia

Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission

Andreas Köstenburger & Peter T. O'Brien

Apollos/IVP, Leicester, 2001; 351pp., £12.99; ISBN 0-85111-519-5

This volume provides a useful and welcome addition to the literature dealing with the biblical theology of mission. After a very brief introduction, the authors survey the teaching of the Bible as a whole, providing useful outlines of the teaching of each section of Scripture on the theme of mission before presenting a concluding synthesis and a comprehensive bibliography. The book will make a very valuable text for students and it fills an obvious gap by providing us with a biblical survey written from a Protestant and Evangelical perspective. It is, therefore, warmly welcomed.

That Köstenberger and O'Brien are abreast of contemporary biblical and missiological scholarship is evident in the range of questions discussed within these pages. These include issues such as the character of second-temple Judaism and its relation to the mission of Jesus, and the question as to whether Christ limited his own ministry to Israel or included Gentiles in his mission. Such issues are helpfully, if briefly,

discussed and the authors make valuable practical applications of the biblical material throughout their text.

Although this volume runs to over 350 pages, it is disappointing to discover a degree of superficiality in the treatment of some aspects of the subject. For example, the Old Testament is dealt with in a single chapter covering a mere forty-six pages, an approach that invites invidious comparison with existing works of this kind from Roman Catholic sources. Elsewhere the authors state what is true but fairly obvious, failing to recognise the dynamic missiological relevance of, say, the book of Revelation. While it is certainly true that John's Apocalypse contains 'a vision of the results of the Christian mission at the end of time' it surely does far more than that? Some reference to the purpose of Revelation's symbolism and the role given to the Christian imagination by this book would have been helpful.

Despite these reservations, this book makes a most valuable addition to the literature dealing with the biblical foundations of mission and it can be warmly recommended, especially as a text for undergraduate students of the Christian mission.

David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford

Thomas Gillespie and the Origins of the Relief Church in 18th Century Scotland

Kenneth B. E. Roxburgh

Bern, Peter Lang, 1999; xvi+272 pp., £26.00; ISBN 3 906762 19 X

Thomas Gillespie is remembered, if at all, as the founder of the Relief Church that in the later eighteenth century gathered those Presbyterians who objected so strongly to the exercise of patronage that they felt compelled to worship outside the Church of Scotland. Kenneth Roxburgh, the Principal of the Scottish Baptist College and editor of this journal, has taken pains to illuminate the origins of this Evangelical denomination, demonstrating the reasons for the formation of its early congregations. But the main subject of these pages is Gillespie himself. Although he wrote only two books and there is little surviving correspondence, there are many allusions to him in the records of the church courts and he left several volumes of sermons. Inferences can also be drawn from the testimonies of converts during the Cambuslang revival of 1742 whose narratives he edited so as to exclude references to visions or fainting spells. This elimination of experiences that might be considered dubious is one of the symptoms of Gillespie's relationship with the age of reason in which he lived. A central theme of the author is

the extent to which Gillespie was himself shaped by the Enlightenment. After a university course at Edinburgh where he was open to contemporary intellectual influences, he went on to the theological hall of the Secession Church, a bastion of unsullied confessional theology from the previous century. Gillespie stayed only ten days; instead he went to Northampton, where he assimilated the teaching of the Independent Philip Doddridge, fully accommodated to the Enlightenment, and there he spent several months. The author is careful to explain that Gillespie did not follow Doddridge into a moderate form of Calvinism, preferring a full-blooded Westminster federal theology, but the legacy of Northampton lingered, for example in his rejection of the Confession's teaching about the power in religion of the civil magistrate. Gillespie stressed light, reason and liberty; he upheld a version of the idea of progress in his expectation of the worldwide growth of the church; he had no reservations about the free offer of the gospel; he maintained a strong doctrine of assurance; he took an interest in medical science, personal ethics and reform. Although the author observes at one point (p. 171) that it is doubtful if the Evangelicalism of his subject was allied with the Enlightenment, he gives ample evidence in the conclusion (pp. 246-9) that this was, in fact, the case. Gillespie's enlightened stance undergirded his ecclesiastical politics. He condemned the way in which great men could impose ministers of their choice on unwilling congregations as a form of oppression. Yet the Relief Church reflected the views of its founder when it insisted that the Lord's Table should be open to all true Christians, even Episcopalians. The book is an admirable study of a man who might appear to be a schismatic, but in reality cherished unity in the gospel.

D. W. Bebbington, University of Stirling

Law and Gospel: Philip Melancthon's Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over Poenitentia

Timothy J. Wengert

Baker Books/Paternoster, 1997; 232pp; ISBN 0-85364-855-7

In this contribution to the *Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought*, Professor Timothy Wengert of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia provides an overwhelmingly detailed study in the development of two men's theologies. One man is the celebrated Philip Melancthon, the grand systematic theologian of first-generation Lutheranism, biblical humanist par excellence, and devoted friend of both Martin Luther and John Calvin. The other is the

now forgotten John Agricola (1494-1566). Agricola was a student of Luther's at Wittenberg, but his ardent Protestantism soon took an independent direction, which brought conflict with Luther over the relationship between law and gospel. In order to escape the possibly ruinous consequences of this 'antinomian' controversy, Agricola left Wittenberg in 1540 to become court preacher to Joachim II of Brandenburg. What Wengert examines with meticulous care is the role played by Melanchthon in the controversy, and the shifting nuances of theological thought in both Melanchthon and Agricola as they crossed swords over the place of the law in God's dealings with sinners.

The theological issues involved were weighty and complex. Essentially Agricola saw no positive function for the law. Its sole purpose is to restrain people from evildoing through the fear of punishment; and this has absolutely no connection, for Agricola, with conversion or true repentance, which flow exclusively from gospel-evoked faith. In the course of responding to Agricola's arguments, Melanchthon in 1534 took a momentous doctrinal step, by expanding his previous twofold notion of the law's role to a threefold concept. Prior to this, Melanchthon had followed Luther in holding to two offices for the law, the 'political' (restraining sin in the world) and the 'theological' (convicting the conscience of sin before God in order to drive the sinner to Christ). Melanchthon's new third use of the law was as a positive guide to justified Christians concerning how they should live their lives to God's glory. This meant that whereas Luther had one ground of complaint against Agricola (*viz.*, Agricola's denial of the 'theological' use of the law), Melanchthon now had a second ground of complaint (Agricola's refusal to see the law as having a positive use in Christian obedience). Melanchthon was brought to embrace this third use of the law in order to underscore the necessity of good works in the faith-justified sinner, against the threat of practical antinomianism that he perceived in Agricola's minimalist approach.

Paradoxically, Melanchthon's threefold formulation of the uses of the law found a far more congenial soil in the Reformed tradition than it did in his native Lutheranism, which remained rather ambivalent about the third use. Nevertheless, Melanchthon's general polemic against Agricola helped to prevent the latter's voice from exercising a serious influence toward a gospel 'monism' within the emerging Lutheran tradition. The second use of the law in convicting the conscience of sin as preparatory to faith in Christ was assured of its place in Lutheran theology and piety, while the third use of the law was taken up and developed much more fully by the Reformed Churches.

Wengert's book, although illuminating and significant, does not make for particularly easy reading. This is simply because it is so finely detailed, devoting (for example) substantial space to analysing changes in successive editions of primary source material, in the manner of a textual critic. The result is a book more for specialists than for the general reader.

Nick Needham, Highland Theological College, Dingwall

The Face of Old Testament Studies. A survey of contemporary approaches

David D. Baker and Bill T. Arnold (eds)

Apollos, Leicester, 1999; 512pp., £27.99; ISBN 0-85111-774-0

Apollos (and Baker Books) are to be congratulated on the production of this survey of contemporary approaches to many – though not all – of the most significant aspects of OT studies, a worthy evangelical successor to earlier surveys produced under the auspices of the British Society for Old Testament Studies. Undergraduates will find here a whole series of helpful overviews of significant areas of study from a largely evangelical perspective, which many of the rest of us could have wished for during our own undergraduate days! How thankful we ought to be for the great strides that have been made in evangelical OT scholarship in the past thirty years. Postgraduates and hard-pressed tutors in Biblical Studies, who may have to teach or examine outwith the particular areas of their research, will also be grateful for these state-of-the-art summaries, although it would have been even more useful had all the chapters presented a review of the most important contributions in the field as well as the most significant theories. In addition, many older divinity graduates who retain an interest in biblical studies will find here helpful overviews of recent approaches to the interpretation of the OT which they may not have encountered in their own undergraduate days, e.g., the literary and social scientific approaches found in chapters 4 and 15 respectively.

The sixteen chapters – covering subjects such as text, archaeology, historiography, Israelite religion, and theology; as well as focusing on literary sections of the OT such as Pentateuch, Prophets, Wisdom Literature, Psalms, and Apocalyptic; also on historical periods such as Early Israel, the Monarchy, the Exile and After – have been written by eighteen contributors (some of the chapters are co-authored), the vast majority of whom are North American, with the UK being represented by Gordon Wenham (Pentateuch), Hugh Williamson (Exile and After) and Walter Moberly (OT Theology).

The chapters focus on developments from 1970, though previous research is sometimes presented to provide needed context. They 'attempt to sketch the contours of our ever-changing discipline' and recognise that maximum benefit will be reaped by readers who 'follow the trajectories set by these essays'.

Inevitably, in such a survey, there is a measure of overlap between some articles, particularly with respect to Early Israel. Equally, as indicated above, the survey is not exhaustive, and while there is clearly a limit to what one can include, the lack of a distinct chapter on OT ethics is regrettable, particularly in the light of the wealth of research and writing in this area in recent years.

The chapters raise many matters of significance, which will require further debate in – as well as beyond – evangelical circles. With such conservative scholars as Waltke pointing out that the idea of 'original autographs' may have to be modified to accommodate the possibility of two equally inspired editions of the same biblical book or pericope, Al Walters (pp. 36f.) is surely right in insisting that this is one issue to which evangelicals working in the discipline of OT textual criticism will have to give greater attention in the twenty-first century.

Hector Morrison, Highland Theological College, Dingwall

Living in God's Presence (The Present Tenses of Christian Life)

F. B. Meyer

Gwasg Brynterion Press, Wales, revised edition 1997 (first published by Morgan and Scott); 144pp., ISBN 1 85049 134 8

This is a reprint of the book originally published under the title, *The Present Tenses of the Blessed Life*. It comes to us under a new title but very much as a voice from the past. F. B. Meyer (1847-1929) is one of the spiritual giants of the early days of the Keswick Convention, admired and respected as a Bible teacher.

There has been a real attempt to recognise the changed culture that the book now addresses, with biblical quotations from the New International Version (previously the Authorised Version) and, as the preface indicates, 'some archaisms of language have been removed...'

There is a certain reluctance on the part of this reviewer to be ultra-critical of the work of a man of such spiritual stature with a well-deserved place in the history of Christian piety. At the same time, there is no doubt that in a time of new interest in spirituality, there is need for those insights from the vaults of Christian spirituality that are both orthodox

and challenging. This book, which is seeking to move us to a deeper relationship with God, is both orthodox and challenging in many ways. There are powerful correctives of a distorted view of the gospels. They are God's word to us here and now; 'we more often look on the evangelists as historians of the past than as chroniclers of the present'. We are challenged to remember that Jesus Christ is the same today: 'What He was, that He is. What He said, that He says. What He did, that He does.'

Nevertheless there are a number of questions to be asked about the relevance of the book for the twenty-first century, not so much in terms of its subject matter as its style, its intended readership and its cultural appropriateness. It is widely inconsistent in its style of language and writing. Not all archaisms have been removed, and when they occur they irritate rather than edify. The sentence structures are often complex and wordy. I am not persuaded that there is a market in today's Christian community or, indeed, beyond it, that the book will really touch. For example, there is an assumption that twenty-first century Christians are rooted in a regular practice of what orthodox evangelicals know as a 'quiet time'. It may be regretted but my experience is that it is not so, and this book will not reach those who may need to be called back to such a worthy practice. In an age of storytelling and concrete imagery, Meyer's style is much too conceptual to be compelling reading.

There are Christians with a foot in a previous pietistic individualism who may find the book both warmly affirming and spiritually helpful but I have a sense, sadly, that this is a great voice from the past that will not be heard or truly understood in the present.

Norman Maciver, Newhills Parish Church

Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous

W. Jay Wood

Apollos, Leicester, 1998; 216pp., £9.99; ISBN 0 85111 195 5

Jay Wood has written about the theory of knowledge in a way which is genuinely introductory while yet advocating a distinctive approach to epistemological issues which is resurgent (after many centuries' neglect), and promising. This asks us to treat our cognitive activities and attitudes as virtuous and/or vicious, and to recognise that the central concerns of the theory of knowledge in more recent times are well illuminated by such treatment.

Other authors, most notably Linda Zagzebski in her *Virtues of the Mind* (Cambridge, 1996), have been pursuing this approach; but Wood's treatment commends the approach to beginners in the field, and does so in

a way which is engaging, rich in telling examples, and Christian (but not exclusively so) by indicating in how many respects a virtue-epistemology coheres with Christian Scripture.

Since Descartes, philosophers of knowledge in the West have characteristically addressed the challenges of scepticisms, have sought firm foundations for the edifice of our knowledge, have argued about what are necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge, and about how a person can be justified in her claim to know. But the modern (i.e. post-Descartes) debates have made little or no reference to wisdom, honesty, humility, teachableness, persistence in pursuit of the truth, nor to many many other of the virtues of the mind. Yet these virtues have, from the beginning of the subject (whenever we take that to have been), and properly, been thought to be central concerns of philosophy (love of wisdom).

Why the neglect of these in recent epistemology? Perhaps the central place accorded for much of this period to the natural sciences as suppliers of knowledge, and of the paradigms of what knowledge properly is, together with the conviction that science deals in value-free facts, led people to neglect the connections between theory of knowledge and broadly evaluative matters of character and virtue? Wood's concern is less to explain how things got this way than to repair the situation.

He is not disparaging of recent epistemology, nor skimping in the attention he gives to it; nor does his distinctive angle on its concerns distort what he says about it: he is able fully to set out the issues raised by and for, e.g., foundationalism, epistemic justification, and reliabilism, in their own terms, and so to make clear to the new student what is the central point and what the strengths and weaknesses, of each of these doctrines. As far as modern epistemology goes, it is ingenious and frequently is helpfully perceptive. But, of course, Wood aims to go further: 'It will... be a motif of this book that study of some of the traditional concerns of contemporary epistemology illuminates powerfully our understanding of certain intellectual virtues, and vice-versa. The old and the new thus complement one another' (pp. 75f.).

He leads us along in a way that is easy and pleasurable to follow; by reason of the wealth of apt illustration, from literature (Dickens, Dostoevsky, *etc.*) and life (politics, scientific discovery, *etc.*) he grasps our interest and makes the point luminous.

As one would expect in a series entitled 'Contours of Christian Philosophy', the case of religious belief is given particular attention, with the enterprise of so-called Reformed Epistemology, which Alston, Plantinga, Wolterstorff, and others have advanced so forcefully, taking

centre stage. Wood is well aware of these developments, which have contributed to making the philosophy of religion the field in which the most conspicuous intellectual advances in the advocacy of Christian belief have taken place in the last thirty years.

In a thoughtful final chapter, Wood carries forward his own distinctive interest as he reflects on the role of the emotions and virtues in proper cognitive functioning. This is a fine introductory text, which yet contains plenty to stimulate readers who are already epistemologically initiated.

J. Houston, University of Glasgow

A Cloud of Witnesses: 20th Century Martyrs

Susan Bergman (ed.)

Fount Paperbacks, Glasgow, 1998; 336pp., £9.99; ISBN 000 628034 X

The rather sombre covers of this book from America enclose a multi-faceted challenge from the lives of eighteen martyrs of this century by twenty writers, including the editor. These male and female contributors are briefly described in a final short chapter and they bring a rich and variegated view of historical situations, political and social factors, theological positions, and inner struggles of the martyrs as well as recording something of the impact made upon themselves.

The eighteen central chapters are neatly sandwiched between two contributors. One, the editor, provides a stimulating introduction on the nature of martyrdom from an initial personal challenge of the lives of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King, Jr, and the other provides a thought-provoking complement to the introductory themes, ending with a note of the ecumenical effect of martyrdom and a quote from Pope John Paul II.

Many of the contributors are Roman Catholics and describe Roman Catholic martyrs so giving some insights into a particular theology of martyrdom, though not exclusively so. Susan Bergman's definition of martyrdom is not so restricted.

Each main chapter has a very useful list of publications for further study.

A great attraction of this collection is its breadth. Not only is there the stimulus of different treatments and styles of writing but also that of having such a range of geographical sites represented (Russia, Africa, USA, Latin America, Africa, Europe, China, and Japan). Add to this the differing socio-political situations in which these martyrs found themselves and then the diversity of human characters described here and the result has to be a rich multi-coloured picture. The humanity of this

book is real. The suffering experienced by some of the contributors enhances this.

The mixture of catholic and protestant theologies, including liberation theologies, is a part of the diversity but the emphasis on the processes leading up to the climax of martyrdom has the sharper focus. It is to the credit of the contributors that the horrors of torture, suffering, and murder are not treated as some grotesque entertainment but with sensitivity and didactic purpose. There is sufficient detail to do more than inform.

The time scale of 1993 to 1900 for the events of this book yields another perspective. Since the book works backwards in time the Christian thinking described as typical of, say, the time of the Boxer rebellion reminds that there have been changes in missiology, and other disciplines, during this century. The challenge of 'how much – if any?' remains.

Whatever agreement is reached as to the martyrs described here, indeed, whether they were Christian martyrs at all, the research represented in the introduction alone is of enough weight to make it a challenging and worthwhile read.

Ralph W. Martin, St George's-Tron Parish Church

After Our Likeness. The Church as the Image of the Trinity

Miroslav Volf

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1998; iix+314pp.; ISBN 0 8028 4440 5

It is a brave person who goes head-to-head with the most formidable theologian of the Vatican hard right. And it is another brave person who does the same with the most brilliant luminary of Eastern Orthodoxy. Hats off, then, to Miroslav Volf for writing a book that engages so competently with both of these giants at once. Volf contends on behalf of a 'Free Churches' ecclesiology (Independents not Scottish Presbyterian) using the early English Baptist John Smyth as his champion. Volf rattles the cages of the mighty – Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and Metropolitan John Zizioulas, Greek Orthodox patriarch of Pergamum. At the same time the author uses the occasion to challenge individualism in Protestantism and to take from the dialogue a renewed respect for the concept of God's community, the Church.

The first part of the book critically scrutinises Ratzinger and Zizioulas in turn. Volf carefully draws out the assumptions of both writers, presents them in the most persuasive light and then aims carefully at the

proverbial crack in the armour. His chief criticism of Ratzinger is that he projects an Augustinian pure unity of the Trinity upon the relationship of Christ with the Church. This allows for Christ to be the real, one subject of the Church. Of course, Christ is one subject through what else but the apostolic office and before we know where we are the classic, Roman hierarchical view of the Church has risen once again, triumphant over its many critics. Volf coolly alerts us to the fact that although Ratzinger's handling has the appearance of relativising the hierarchical structure, in reality 'it merely gives a free hand to power of the hierarchs'. He contests the use of a particular, much controverted, exposition of the Trinity to provide a shaky foundation for hierarchy and catholicity.

With Zizioulas, the situation is very different. Rather than start with the universal and impose it on the local church, for Zizioulas it is the local church (=metropolitan congregation gathered for eucharist) which is primary and the metropolitan bishop who is central. Volf is more sympathetic to the orthodox Trinitarian basis. According to Zizioulas the very meaning of 'person' is communion and a 'going' out. It is not a 'relation' but is *before relation, making external relation possible*. The same is true of human person but there personhood can only be realised supernaturally in communion with Christ – that is, in eucharistic communion with Christ in the local church. The argument is too detailed to condense into a review. Suffice to point out two alleged contradictions spotted by Volf: a) the idea of divine person as communion somehow preceding relations, since such terms as 'generation' presumably *define* the nature of that same communion and b) the self-contained completeness of metropolitan churches somehow able to be in catholic association with other such self-complete churches.

In the second part the author turns to a 'Free Churches' solution – an ecclesiology based on confession. Christology, commitment and confession provide the basis for a right view of the church. He believes this to be better than both alternatives examined and also superior to the episodic, passive, clerico-centric Barthian ecclesiology together with other 'kerygmatic' models of the church. The church 'is not a club of the perfect but rather a communion of human beings who confess themselves as sinners'. The defence of this simple principle from many aspects is the main contribution of the book and, whilst inviting many questions, makes it a powerful new element in ecumenical ecclesiology. His mentor, Jürgen Moltmann, declares that Volf 'is a match for his dialogue partners' and it seems so. Volf should also be read because of the foundation he lays for ecclesiology fit for an era of mission. However, even Volf probably has some way to go yet before his account of church

catholicity and association is made watertight. If there are responses from his 'dialogue partners' we can be sure they will not lack cogency and spirit. And some of the criticisms of Zizioulas were not as weighty and convincing as those of Ratzinger. It is critical that none of this should hinder an epoch-making book being taken seriously in all quarters at a time when the idea of the 'gathered church' is back on the rise and being taken seriously in practice even if not always in theology. And that in some unexpected places too! A highly significant book, which is required reading for anyone concerned with the doctrine of the Church.

The book is not a casual read and, sometimes, technical Latin and Greek words appear without explanation or reminder of meaning. All the same, determination will be richly rewarded!

Roy Kearsley, South Wales Baptist College/Cardiff University

From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought 100-1625

Oliver O'Donovan and Joan Lockwood O'Donovan (eds)

Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1999; 838pp., £45 (cloth) £30 (p/b); ISBN 0-8028-3876-6 (cloth) 0-8028-4209-7 (p/b)

This book is a collection of excerpts from a huge range of scholars, in the attempt to identify a recognisable 'Christian political tradition', albeit that the editors define these words very carefully. The aim of the book is to inform and to challenge. It is directed to theologians, with perhaps particular reference to those who are writing in the area of political theology whom the editors feel might be basing their work too firmly on recent theological and political reflection while being unaware of the older tradition. It is also aimed at Christians who work as lawyers or politicians in the hope that they will take into these professions some sustained thought and reflection, based on this very long tradition of Christian political thought.

The book is divided into five sections: first, the Patristic Age; second, Late Antiquity and Romano-Germanic Christian Kingship; third, The Struggle over Empire and the Integration of Aristotle; fourth, Political Community, Spiritual Church, Individual Right, and *Dominium*; fifth, Renaissance, Reformation, and Radicalism: Scholastic Revival and the Consolation of Legal Theory. Within these sections there is a huge number of well-known authors, from Tertullian, Origen and Augustine to Justinian, Aquinas and Wyclif; from Luther, Calvin and Knox to Cartwright, Perkins and Grotius. There are also authors who will be

unknown to most readers. Indeed, some of the selections are available for the very first time in English.

As well as a general introduction, explaining the structure and layout of the book, with some analysis and defence of its content and purpose, each section begins with a scholarly introduction and appended bibliography.

This is a huge tome and is rightly described as a 'sourcebook'. Although it is fascinating to read on from section to section, the sheer range and variety of material makes this difficult. Far better either to study in detail one section at a time, gaining thereby some understanding of the political ideas and theological reflections of that age and region, or to use the book like an historical dictionary and reference volume.

Those who have an interest in politics or in developing a theological response to political issues will find this book to be a treasure trove. Above all, it underlines the point that the critical interaction between church and state, between theology and politics, is not some new diversion created by late twentieth-century Christians but has been one of the main preoccupations of the church in all ages.

A.T.B. McGowan, Highland Theological College, Dingwall

John Calvin's Rhetorical Doctrine of Sin

Don H. Compier

Texts and Studies in Religion, vol. 86. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston NY, Queenston Ont., Lampeter UK, 2001; 154pp., h/b \$79.95; ISBN 0-7734-7619-0 (TSR Series ISBN 0-88946-976-8)

When the reviewer was offered this book it was described as being on a rather obscure aspect of the writings of John Calvin. While the title would seem to suggest this, the monograph soon turned out to be unfolding a very important but often disregarded side of Calvin's works amongst theological scholars of the great Reformer's rhetoric.

Don Compier, an assistant Professor of Theology in the Pacific Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, is lodging a protest that so many students of Calvin overlook, the fact that Calvin was essentially a political theologian, using persuasive rhetoric as a principal tool. Among the chief culprits appears to be Professor Richard Gamble, formerly of the Henry Meter Centre for Calvin Studies, who has argued that the mature Calvin 'threw over rhetorical persuasion in favour of an appeal which throws readers back on objective truth' (p. 23). Emphatically not, Compier maintains. 'Virtually every page of the great work [Calvin's *Institutes*] resonates with the tenor of epideictic oratory'

(p. 25). This is also true of the great part of Calvin's writings in Compier's view, but in a short monograph he has to confine his examination to Calvin's principal work, and even then limit it to a consideration of the doctrine of sin.

The book is divided into four chapters with an introduction and conclusion, and also a foreword and an appreciative preface.

In the introduction Compier charges many scholars with having been too ready to view Calvin through the eyes of a modern systematic theologian, and consequently having reduced the contents of his voluminous writings into a cold systematised form. They have not been ready to come together with literary critics of Calvin's works, and again have disregarded the plethora of rhetorical devices used by him on almost every page to persuade whomever he may be addressing. With regard to the doctrine of sin, they have defined it chiefly with regard to the first table of the law almost ignoring Calvin's passion for the second table, underlining sin against one's neighbour.

In the first chapter, 'Calvin as a Rhetorical Theologian', Compier traces the influence that the great classical rhetorical writers had on him, especially Cicero, Quintillian, and Seneca, as part of his earlier education in Paris. Calvin's later education was in law, not theology, where he was trained for advocacy by the contemporary jurists, Pierre de l'Estoile at Orleans and Andreas Alciati at Bourges, masters of legal rhetoric in their day. Calvin could not have thrown off his training in rhetoric even had he wished to do so!

In chapter 2, 'The Political Purpose of the Institutes of the Christian Religion', Compier shows how the *Institutes* was a unique work, which, although it became a theological handbook for pastors, maintained its original aim of persuading the French Monarchy of the need for reform in church and state.

Chapter 3, "'No excuse.'" Sin, Knowledge, and Moral Action', shows how although man in Calvin's view is naturally religious, on account of his depravity his religion degenerates into idolatry and superstition from which springs social injustice.

Chapter 4, "'A wicked spoilation.'" Calvin's Attack on the Papacy', pointing to Book 4 of the *Institutes*, shows how human depravity in religion found its epitome in the medieval Papacy. The latter had disregarded the divine authority of Scripture, distorted its teachings and implanted its own myths, was riddled with idolatry and superstition sustaining itself by tyranny. Consequently its false teachings, especially on redemption, denied believers of 'any solid foundation for assurance and

comfort' (p. 120), and robbed the poor of sustenance by its lust for luxurious living.

Compier's conclusion is that while Calvin's call to the Monarchy and aristocracy of France fell on deaf ears on account of their own vested interests it found a degree of fulfilment elsewhere in Europe, and even more so in the New World.

The value of the monograph will be found in any success it may have as a catalyst for students of Calvin to make a new examination of the great Reformer as a political, rhetorical and ultimately persuasive theologian.

Peter Cook, Alston, Cumbria

Dictionary of Christian Biography

Michael Walsh (ed.)

Continuum, London, 2001; 1250pp.; ISBN 0 8264 5263 9

This new dictionary contains brief biographies of more than 6500 Christians from a wide spectrum of backgrounds. It comes from Heythrop College in the University of London, but with a remarkably small number of contributors (forty-six in all); they are predominantly English.

In the introduction to the work, the editor explains the criteria by which he chose those to be included. There are three: first of all, everyone included has lived since the close of the New Testament era; secondly, they are all dead; and thirdly, 'professional' Christians (i.e. theologians and saints) are 'interspersed with people whose professional lives may well have been fundamentally affected by their Christian faith'. This last criterion means that lawyers, politicians, and artists of all kinds have found their way into this work. There are many entries that one would expect to find in these pages, as well as some others that might be thought surprising in a Dictionary of *Christian Biography*. There are 2 indexes at the back of the book, which, intriguingly, arrange the entries first of all by the date and secondly by the place, of death of the individual concerned. Continental Europe is most heavily represented.

By the very nature of a work like this, it is selective. The compilers have made their selection, which I'm sure would introduce the Scottish reader to a wide variety of new Christian biography. It would be churlish to concentrate on those who are not included, but one of the frustrations with this book is that, from a Scottish viewpoint, it is quite light. If you are looking for a thorough overview of Scottish Christian biography, you will need to look elsewhere.

Equally, the entries are short. The information contained in each entry is limited to between 100 and 200 words, which means that each individual is covered in summary fashion. If this is a fault, it is compounded by a lack of 'further reading' resources; having the appetite whetted, there is no menu provided to direct the serious student to more substantial fare! There is a feeling that the reader has scraped the surface of a life, but is given no help in digging deeper.

I'm sure that the content of this book would be useful as an introduction to Christian biography for people who are unfamiliar with the idea. However, for any serious student who wishes to glean detailed information about Christians of the past in any depth, you will need to look elsewhere. Even as a route-map on that journey, it comes up short.

James S. Dewar, Juniper Green Parish Church, Edinburgh

Christ and the Spirit. The Doctrine of the Incarnation according to Edward Irving

Graham W. P. McFarlane

Paternoster, Carlisle, 1996; 204pp.; ISBN 0 85364 694 5

Theology from the nineteenth century is not exactly hip at the moment, even less hip hip hooray. The choice too often lies between Christianised romanticism and a German liberalism kicked into touch by today's postmodern onslaught. So we should be grateful that Graham McFarlane has come up with a snapshot of the neglected Edward Irving containing some thoughtful constructive content. The foreword comes from Colin Gunton, the author's doctoral supervisor, a sympathetic though not uncritical re-interpreter of Irving. The value of this book is that it implicitly provides a connection between Irving's serious theological writing and the 'charismatic' outbreak in his church long before the modern Pentecostal and charismatic renewal movements. For McFarlane's chief interest is in the place of the Holy Spirit in Irving's Christological thought, particularly the way in which a Spirit-Christology feeds a theory of transformative salvation. There are obvious affinities here with Irenaeus and Athanasius, and these compel a fair reader to give the approach a hearing.

All the same, the author does not really explore some of the problems that arise from Irving. While not quite sycophantic the tone is certainly reverential and rarely questioning of Irving's approach. And there *are* problems to be explored. For instance, if Christ's human *will* is holy, as Irving says, what can it mean for the Son to have assumed fallen human nature as Irving also claimed (so scandalising his time)? An

'anhypostatic' Christology does not answer the question since that idea was not meant to delete the human will from Christ but only to stress the origin of his human centre from the Word. The transformation of human nature through the Christological union *is* in line with patristic orthodoxy, but to blend in the assumption of a fallen human nature was novel. Nor did early Christians mean anything like this by the celebrated axiom 'what is not assumed is not healed' because they saw in Christ a fresh start, a new humanity.

All the same, the slapping of a heresy label on Irving is, to most eyes today, harsh. McFarlane is right to disregard Irving's trial for heresy, for the real problem with Irving's position is not notoriety but obscurity. We are never quite sure what it is. Take the statement (p.145) that Irving regards Jesus as 'possessing a fallen nature... whilst remaining sinless'. Presumably this translates into 'possessing a fallen (human) nature... whilst remaining sinless (in the fallen [human] nature)'. What can this conundrum mean? What is human nature here? What does 'fallen' mean? The statement is not heretical – for we simply cannot nail its meaning and condemn it. Those who say that Irving did not intend to ascribe sin to Christ are almost certainly right, but the innocence is too often obscured by the rhetoric.

It would have been helpful, and perhaps groundbreaking, to have explored more of the nineteenth century background to Irving's way of thinking about transformation of substance. Did prevailing scientific theories of substance have anything to do with it? What about evolutionary optimism and the transforming of human nature? Eschatology?

McFarlane helpfully spotlights an esteemed soteriology of human transformation through Christ and reminds of connections between Christology, teaching about the Spirit, sanctification and church life. We may, however, need to be choosy about what in Irving's approach merits immortality.

The style of the book is fairly wordy and repetitive with echoes of Irving's own cadence, but still worth the effort.

Roy Kearsley, South Wales Baptist College/Cardiff University

Systematic Theology, Volume 3

Wolfhart Pannenberg

Eerdmans/T&T Clark, Grand Rapids/Edinburgh, 1998; xvi+713 pp.; ISBN 0 5670 9599 1

Admittedly, the German edition of this work was published five years before its English translation; nevertheless, we may be forgiven for

feeling that, with this contribution, the curtain falls on the second theological millennium. The swan song is shared with Moltmann, whose 1995 volume on eschatology also looks like a conclusion to his studies in dogmatics. Since the 1960s, Pannenberg, along with Moltmann, has been a dominant influence in German Protestant theology but the domination of German Protestant influence over Western theology ended some years ago. Hence the *fin-de-siecle* atmosphere (with millennial vengeance) that engulfs this volume and its reader.

The qualities that we associate with Pannenberg all feature: erudition, vigour, independence, a high view of the dignity and importance of the theological enterprise. Ecclesiology is at the heart of the work. The second of its four chapters, dealing with 'The Messianic Community and Individuals' is longer than the other three put together. These successively treat 'The Outpouring of the Spirit, the Kingdom of God, and Church', 'Election and History' and 'The Consummation of Creation in the Kingdom of God'. The church may be central, but it must be understood in the context of the kingdom of God. In lapidary statements, Pannenberg announces early that '[t]he church... is nothing apart from its function as an eschatological community and therefore as an anticipatory sign of God's coming rule and its salvation for all humanity' (p. 32) and that it is 'a sign of the kingdom's future of salvation' (p. 37). This orientation is familiar in modern theology.

All through the work, the author is eager to do justice to both individual and corporate aspects of the Christian life. In treating the church, considerable space is therefore given both to the phenomena of faith, hope and love and to the sacraments. Before, then, getting on to the doctrine of election, Pannenberg has shown his concern to treat individual regeneration with dogmatic seriousness, which is important to note as he interprets election principally in terms of historical calling. When he comes on to eschatology, he closely knits together personal and cosmic destiny, typically bucking any trends to avoid being committed to theses about individual resurrection. In his first volume, Pannenberg had set out his understanding of the way questions of God and truth must steer dogmatics and he keeps this in sight to the end.

Pannenberg's work impresses by its integrity and comprehensiveness. There is nothing trivial here and a genuine sense of the greatness of God pervades the opus. Luther is always in there at ground level and Lutheran Orthodoxy is not neglected or disdained. The edifice itself is hewn out of biblical, ecumenical and rational materials. Ultimately, our evaluation must pivot on the question of the use of Scripture in theological construction. Pannenberg's discussion of the sacraments is especially

illustrative of this and III.2, on 'The Lord's Supper and Christian Worship', is a particularly good example. For historical-critical reasons, we cannot be sure what Jesus said at the Last Supper, so we 'have to evaluate the tradition of Jesus' last supper with his disciples before his crucifixion in the context of the meals he had with them in the preceding period of his earthly ministry' in order to ground our eucharistic theology in the Synoptic accounts (p. 284). But suppose that we agree (as the reviewer does not) with Pannenberg's perspective on the Gospel reports and suppose that we agree (as is plausible) that Jesus' recorded meals with his disciples have a potential hermeneutical role when it comes to interpreting the Last Supper. There is still a logical hiatus in the claim that *because* we cannot be sure what Jesus said at it, *therefore* we must interpret it in the wider context. This surely exemplifies a serious methodological difficulty in the use of Scripture in theology.

Nevertheless, Wolfhart Pannenberg deserves our gratitude for keeping alive, and treating seriously and profoundly, many biblical and traditional themes in theology which are scarcely on the map of much contemporary Christian thought. Careful engagement with this volume is amply rewarding.

Stephen N. Williams, Union Theological College, Belfast

Can we believe Genesis today? The Bible and the questions of Science

Ernest Lucas

Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 2001; 192pp., £6.99; ISBN 0 85111 658 2

'I never read a book before reviewing it; it prejudices a man so' wrote Sydney Smith who was, in 1802, a founding father of the Edinburgh Review. Your reviewer has not only read the book before (when first published as *Genesis Today* by Scripture Union in 1989), but has reviewed it before, although elsewhere. How prejudiced can one get?

This book is basically a re-issue of the author's *Genesis Today*, revised and enlarged, with a new chapter on creation, chaos and design and a slightly different title. It takes up and tackles the questions that arise in the minds of thinking readers who turn to the first eleven chapters of Genesis.

The author makes the simplest of beginnings by disentangling 'how?' questions from 'why?' questions. He examines the nature of scientific truth and the role and function of theory in science. He then examines the Bible, discusses the ways in which we interpret it and proceeds to lay

down ways toward a proper understanding of Scripture. The first third of the book deals with such basic issues.

The author now turns to his major theme, Genesis 1 to 11, and considers the literal approach to interpretation. He adduces reasons for dissatisfaction with it and so he outlines alternative approaches. Of these variants, he chooses the literary-cultural approach as the most compelling, and contrasts it with the literalistic approach. This middle section of the book concludes with a consideration of design and other matters.

In the final third of his book the author turns from chapter 1 of Genesis to the events of chapters 2-11. He ends as he began by looking at the overall picture. The scientist may look at the world in terms of mechanism. The Christian has a differing but complementary view, which is concerned with meaning.

This is a popular presentation, which will be easily read and readily understood by senior pupils at school. It will also be useful for the general reader and for those who are drawn into these areas of discussion through contact with the younger generation. If one has heard only strongly literalistic interpretations of these chapters of Scripture, the range and variety of alternative explanations could come as a shock, or as a relief. Guidance for further reading is provided at the end of each chapter.

When it appeared in its first format, I gave a welcome to this book. I welcome it anew in its revised and up-dated format.

Your reviewer is not the A. McIntosh cited in the text (pp. 75, 90 and Index).

Alex McIntosh, Olivet Evangelical Church, Falkirk

Accuracy of Translation

Robert Martin

Banner of Truth Trust, 1997; 89pp.; £4.95; ISBN 0 85151 735 8

Subtitled 'The Primary Criterion in Evaluating Bible Versions with special reference to the New International Version', this book purports to establish the ground rules whereby we can evaluate the plethora of English versions of the biblical text which are available. That, of itself, is a helpful aim, for there is a clear need for pastors to be able to ensure that the versions they recommend (or do not recommend) to their people, are evaluated as objectively as possible, and are not merely a result of personal preference and/or prejudice. As the author says, 'The Bible is the touchstone of our faith and practice. We cannot afford to be careless and uninformed in these matters.'

However, the fact that the book eschews the translation of the Hebrew and Aramaic text of the Old Testament greatly diminishes its scope and value. After all, the Old Testament makes up the major part of our Bible, and is important, especially in setting out the covenantal nature of the biblical revelation. 'All scripture is God-breathed.' God has provided us with two testaments not one, so a book which purports to provide us with a means of evaluating different English versions of the Bible must surely address the translation of the Old Testament as well as the New. It is not enough for the author to say, 'My knowledge of Hebrew is not such that I can remark with equal confidence on the translation accuracy of the NIV Old Testament', and then sail on regardless. He ought surely to have sought out and collaborated with someone who was competent in the Old Testament languages in order to provide us with a book which would do what he claims: viz. provide 'the Primary Criterion in Evaluating Bible Versions...'

When we turn to the content of the book, the lynchpin of the author's argument is chapter 3 – 'The Nature of the Bible's Inspiration'. In it he argues that 'The Bible is inspired in such a way that its very words are inspired (i.e., 'verbal' inspiration); and that inspiration extends to all the words of Scripture (i.e. plenary inspiration). The nature of the Bible's inspiration is such that what it says is what God has said.' Now, that in itself is not controversial, but the author then develops his argument to seek to demonstrate that 'the fact that the Bible teaches a doctrine of verbal-plenary inspiration must influence the work of the translator. ... The translator must keep in mind that he is dealing with truth exactly expressed.' Again this is not controversial. The conclusion he draws, however, is that the only appropriate method of translation is that of 'formal equivalence' where the translation 'attempts to say 'what' the original text says by retaining 'how' it says it.'

However, the author's argument fails to take into account how words are actually used to communicate: they are generally used together – in context. So, God uses words to communicate. But the 'words' are not isolated. Rather they are embedded in a context of other words which are required for any sense to be communicated. Similarly, when translation is made, that context must be taken into account, for it can radically affect the way in which a 'word' is rendered in another language. Anything else reduces translation to a mechanical process of word substitution, forcing on the receptor language the thought forms and even the syntax of the original language. Whatever that process is, it is not translation. However, even the so-called formal equivalence translations are not literal translations, as the author is forced to concede (though it doesn't impinge

on his argument). They are all to some extent dynamic; they have to be, for language is dynamic. And this is something that the author fails to engage fully with in his argument. Instead he devotes the rest of the book to demonstrating at every turn the NIV's departures from strict formal equivalence; and all with the ultimate aim of showing that 'the NIV is not worthy of becoming the standard version of the English-speaking world'.

In conclusion, if what you want is a stick to beat the NIV with then this might just do. However, if you are looking for a tool with which to help you to evaluate as objectively as possible the bewildering choice of English versions on offer today, then look elsewhere.

Alan Macgregor, Banff Parish Church

Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2

R. P. Martin & Brian J. Dodd

WJKP, Louisville, 1998; x+169pp.; ISBN 0-664-25619-8

This volume is a very useful collection of essays by able scholars on a fascinating and important portion of the New Testament. Although the title appears hopelessly inaccurate to anyone with a concept of biblical theology – the issue is noted and an attempt to justify it is made (p. 3) – our real interest lies in what is within the cover.

A brief orientation to the book by Ralph Martin is followed by two essays by Colin Brown and Robert Morgan who consider two classic contributions to the discussion of Philippians 2:5-11 by E. Lohmeyer and E. Käsemann respectively. These two substantial analyses account for just less than half the content of this book and by themselves make the book indispensable to the serious student of this passage since Lohmeyer's book has not been translated from German and Käsemann's essay is highly inaccessible.

The views on the pre-existence of Christ expressed by James Dunn in the brief fourth chapter, entitled 'Christ, Adam and Preexistence' will surprise no one who is familiar with Dunn's more substantial writings. The editors are to be commended, however, for including a point-by-point response to Dunn's view by Lincoln D. Hurst. This allows the reader immediate access to two important perspectives in the debate.

A lexical study by Gerald Hawthorne of the Greek phrases in Philippians 2:6 translated 'in the form of God' and 'equal with God', while useful in itself as a brief survey of recent discussion, ultimately adopts the position argued by N. T. Wright.

The latter verses of Paul's profound passage are the focus of Larry Kreitzer's essay. Kreitzer notes that scholarly debate has centred on the first part of the passage, and that many interpreters believe that Paul is presenting the self-humbling act of Jesus as a model for Christian behaviour. The eschatological portion (verses 9-11) of the passage, however, appears to sit uncomfortably with such an interpretation.

Building on a substantial body of his own previous research and publication, Richard Bauckham takes up the matter of the worship of Jesus in chapter 8.

Stephen Fowl's essay considers the significance of the passage for Christian ethics, concluding that Paul issues 'a call to adopt Paul's manner of practical reasoning, a practical reasoning based on what they see in Christ Jesus' (p. 148).

In the brief closing essay, Brian Dodd argues that at the foundation of Paul's concerns lies not imitation of Christ – legitimate though that is in its place – but soteriology.

There is a tendency in these essays to regard the pre-Pauline, hymnic character of the passage as established. Kreitzer recognises that this is not the view of all interpreters (p. 122, footnote 1, citing scholars such as S. Kim, D. A. Carson and G. D. Fee) but there is little debate with the alternative position. Hawthorne shows most caution in his adoption of the term 'hymn' (p. 105, footnote 2) but I would have liked to have seen a little more recognition of the debate in this book.

The articles are generally thoroughly referenced. For example, Brown's essay is followed by over eleven pages of notes while Hurst's six-page article is followed by five pages of notes.

The book closes with a modest bibliography that includes a number of classic studies plus some more recent monographs and articles. It will be most useful as a supplement to the bibliographies in the second edition of Martin's *Carmen Christi* for those who do not wish to purchase the recently published third edition (now called *A Hymn of Christ*).

Alistair I. Wilson, Highland Theological College, Dingwall

Changing Youth Worship

Patrick Angier

National Society/Church House Publishing 1997; 114pp., £5.95; ISBN 0 7151 4892 3

Patrick Angier attempts a rather monumental task within the covers of a relatively short book. Within 114 pages, he seeks to give a basic outline

of the thinking and practice of a range of diverse groups who loosely come under the umbrella term of 'alternative worship'. In writing his book, he sets himself a number of objectives: to give the reader a 'feel' what goes on in 'alternative worship', to explain the rationale behind its various and disparate manifestations, and to explain why so many people feel the need to depart from mainstream church and explore different avenues for expressing their faith.

Angier succeeds admirably in the first of his objectives. In a concise first chapter, he outlines the contours of a number of different styles of 'culturally-specific' worship, as he prefers to call it. At the same time he gives valuable insights into the thoughts and feelings of the people involved. Throughout the book, Angier seeks to avoid falling into the trap of criticising those who benefit from more traditional forms of worship, stating that; '*It is important that we recognize and affirm their place in the Church and their spirituality*' (p. 59).

One of the areas of the book that will potentially arouse controversy in the minds of many is the section on the theological rationale of many 'culturally-specific' worship groups. Angier is at pains to point out that many 'culturally-specific' worship groups exist within mainstream evangelicalism. However, the very mention of the theological indebtedness of some groups to Liberation Theology or Matthew Fox and his Environmental Theology would cause concern for many readers. Likewise, the patchy treatment of issues such as post-modernism will leave some wishing for considerably more information before making decisions about the merits of 'culturally-specific' worship.

The following two chapters also leave the reader looking for more; Angier's discussion of 'church' is fairly cursory and draws fairly sweeping conclusions on the basis of sketchy argument. Similarly, his discussion of reasons why so many young people leave the church, in which he bases his argument on theories of faith development, although interesting, will probably do little to convince anyone who does not already subscribe to his view.

Although Angier's reflection on the thinking that underpins 'culturally-specific' worship leaves something to be desired, his penultimate section on developing a worship event which has meaning for those involved, and which they can take ownership of, is very helpful. Some useful advice is coupled with warnings about the dangers of confusing form and substance in worship. Angier concludes with a useful list of contacts for further information as well as a brief, but valuable, bibliography.

Overall, perhaps the greatest asset of Angier's book is that it imparts a clear understanding of the rationale and motivation behind many of the common features of 'culturally-specific' worship services. Not everyone will agree with the underlying theology, but Angier's concise and lucid book would be a valuable addition to the library of any church leader or youth worker who seeks a starting point for an informed opinion about this rising trend within Christian youth work.

Neil Pratt, International Christian College

Paul, the Jewish Theologian

Brad H. Young

Hendriksen, Peabody, Massachusetts, 1997; 164pp.; ISBN 1 56563 248 6

The argument of this book is designed to show that Paul's thinking remained thoroughly Hebrew despite his belief in Jesus as Messiah. Accordingly, it is mostly concerned with a study of Paul's view of Torah. The apostle is a Jewish theologian who anchored his beliefs in the Hebrew Bible, which is spiritual and good, and reveals God's plan for all people.

The book is a strange mixture of the scholarly and the popular. It is well researched, has extensive bibliography, and adequate indexes. However, it is strange, to say the least, to find Paul described as having a 'bubbly personality'. The Acts accounts are accepted unquestioningly. Scriptures are discussed without references being given, and strictly speaking, the use of rabbinic examples to illuminate Paul's thought is, of course, anachronistic, fascinating though this may be.

Those interested in the debate as to the continuity between Paul and Judaism will find little that is new. Many have already been convinced that Paul has a high view of Torah, that the Judaism of his day was a religion of grace, and that his ethics were based upon his training as a Pharisee. Nevertheless, the examination of the Jewish nature of Paul's mode of thinking is interesting and stimulating. Young argues that Paul's thought is circular and interactive rather than linear, i.e. Jewish rather than Gentile. Torah is the epicentre, from which all other theological motifs are developed. However, Jesus has invaded that epicentre, and ideas such as grace, flesh, righteousness and so on must constantly interact with this theme. In Hebrew fashion, clusters of associated concepts are connected with each other in continuous motion.

When the contours of Pauline thought are considered in a cycle of interactive concepts rather than in a straight line where each new idea

supersedes and eliminates the previous one, the apostle's conceptual approach to God is given fresh vigour. It is a Jewish way of thinking. Paul, for instance, does not annul Torah by the preaching of grace. Was not the giving of Torah a powerful manifestation of divine grace? In reality, grace and Torah are interrelated (p. 42).

The idea of the 'Jewish way of thinking' cries out for further definition and discussion. More, for example, on the 'Hebrew mind' as 'filled with wonder at the mystery of God' and as thriving 'on the inconsistencies and contradictions of the one awe-inspiring God' could bring new insights into the apostle's thinking. A footnote tantalisingly suggests a similarity in this respect between Paul and the modern theologian Herschel, but does not go into more detail.

The book is also a valuable contribution to Jewish Christian dialogue. On the basis of the olive tree image, Young insists that the Christian church should 'reject the path of arrogance concerning God's people the Jews'. It is good, too, to see a Jewish writer providing a preface to the work, although I am not convinced that Young intended to argue that Paul invented a wholly new religion, as he suggests.

Marion L. S. Carson, Glasgow

Nelson's New Christian Dictionary

George Thomas Kurian (ed.)

Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 2001; 977pp.; ISBN 0-7852-4300-3

The *Nelson's New Christian Dictionary* is designed as a bold project to identify the multi-faceted character of Christianity. The dictionary contains over 10,000 entries in a compressed but comprehensive format. This means that the publication is intentionally a dictionary and not an encyclopaedia. All the entries are brief with no authorship listed for each entry. The *NNCD* provides 'up-to-date information on a host of topics, including its doctrines, creeds, key events and people, worship, music literature, history, arts...' (Preface, ix). Yet the Preface reminds the reader that the *NNCD* is written for the lay person and not the academic. The lay person will find topics that cover Protestant, Anabaptist, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox subjects.

The Appendices are a fascinating collection of twenty-two articles with a wide variety of data on church history, theology, and statistics. The Appendices confirm that there is a thread running through the dictionary. The thread is identified as 'evangelical, interdenominational,

and ecumenical, emphasising the Lordship of Jesus Christ' (Preface, ix). Appendix 14 comprises twenty-five pages of 'Notable Christian Missionaries'. The reason for such a list is not clear since many of the 'notable missionaries' are not included in the dictionary entries. Along with Appendix 14, other appendices that deal with evangelism have not been limited to Protestant work but include Roman Catholic and Orthodox material.

The more controversial appendices will be those that create a ratings system. Appendix 15 rates the '100 Most Important Events of Christian History'; a person may wonder how the Jesus Movement of the 1960s rates above the Salvation Army. At the end of Appendix 16 the '100 Greatest Christians in the Twentieth Century' are rated. It is not clear how this has been done; Karl Barth is rated number 1 and Billy Graham is rated number 2. Appendix 23 rates the '25 Greatest Hymns of the Christian Church'. It should be noted that 'All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name' receives positions 5 and 19.

Since this is a dictionary no biographical material exceeds one page. The sections on John Calvin and Martin Luther provide the largest amount of information yet the information is presented with a broad overview. These biographical summaries are well done although the 'John Wesley' article is somewhat carelessly written implying that he travelled to North America after 1738, 'where he deputed Thomas Coke to superintend the fledgling church'. Also, the use of the word 'call' in the Wesley article indicates a cross reference to the article on 'call', yet the definition of 'call' does not fit the reference in the Wesley article.

The question is, who is going to use the *NNCD*? Students beginning in theology will find the dictionary useful as a first step of discovery, and Church libraries may find it useful for educational purposes due to the comprehensive material. It is hard to know if individual lay people will purchase the dictionary although it appears to be marketed in that direction.

David Rainey, Nazarene Theological College, Didsbury

Hellenism in the Land of Israel

John J. Collins, Gregory E. Sterling (eds)

University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 2001; ix+343pp.; ISBN 0268030529

This fine book provides a welcome update on current research into the relation between Greek and Jewish culture in the land of Israel in antiquity. The topics discussed here cover the range of ways in which

Greek civilisation influenced Judaism: language, architecture, education, architecture, scholarship, social customs, literature and more. The focus is the Second-Temple period, although some of the essays range earlier and later. The authors are internationally acknowledged experts in the field of Jewish studies, and the quality of the essays is extremely high.

Martin Hengel begins the volume with an essay revisiting, but not, he emphasises, *revising* the thesis of his monumental work *Judaism and Hellenism*. He maintains that he was essentially correct in arguing that Palestinian Judaism was as thoroughly hellenised as diaspora Judaism in the period immediately before the emergence of Christianity. A number of the essays in this collection discuss to some extent the 'Hellenistic reform' movement, which attempted to transform Jerusalem into a Greek city-state in 175-164. It is interesting to see, in this connection, the different positions taken by Hengel and John Collins. Hengel sees the 'violent break with ancestral law' as being instigated by the Jewish high priest Menelaus ('Judaism and Hellenism Revisited', pp. 19-20), while Collins notes that the primary sources all ascribe primary responsibility to the foreign king, Antiochus Epiphanes ('Cult and Culture', p. 51). Collins also focuses not just on the influence of Greek culture, but also on the *limits* of that influence. There was some distinctiveness in Palestinian Judaism which made it less tolerant of un-Jewish forces than the diaspora was. (Witness the hostile response to Herod's introduction of gladiatorial contests.) Again, Erich Gruen's article, 'Jewish Perspectives on Greek Culture and Ethnicity', focuses not only on the adoption of Hellenism by Jews, but also emphasises the way in which Jewish portraits of Greece and Greeks continued to be very hostile.

Two other issues of wider interest are touched on by several of the essays. The first concerns the status of Greek as a second language among Jews in Palestine. Sterling notes that while 'Aramaic probably continued to be the main language... Greek was the second language for many Jerusalem Jews' ('Judaism between Jerusalem and Alexandria', pp. 272-3, 274). This is echoed by James VanderKam ('Greek at Qumran') and P. van der Horst, who concludes that 'alongside the vernacular Aramaic, Greek was widely used and understood' ('Greek in Jewish Palestine in the Light of Jewish Epigraphy', p. 166).

The second issue touches on a question which a number of scholars have raised recently. In using the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha to reconstruct the Judaism of Jesus' and Paul's day, scholars tend to privilege the *Palestinian* non-biblical sources. The criteria for judging which texts are from Palestine tend to be a Jerusalem focus and an original language of Hebrew or Aramaic. Texts originally written in

Greek tend to be assigned to the Diaspora, especially Egypt, and most especially Alexandria. Several of the contributors here question these assumptions. Gregory Sterling doubts whether Greek works should not be assigned to Jerusalem, as does Martin Goodman in his epilogue. Together, they wonder whether Philo the Epic Poet, Eupolemus, 2 Maccabees, *Lives of the Prophets* (Sterling, p. 279) as well as Demetrius the Chronographer, Ezekiel the Tragedian, *Wisdom of Solomon*, and the *Orphic Fragments* (Goodman, p. 303) might well be assigned to Jerusalem. If correct, this would have far-reaching implications for the study of Palestinian Judaism.

There is, unfortunately, not room to discuss all the articles here. Two essays on the honorary decree for Simon the Maccabee (in 1 Macc. 14.25-49) come from Edgar Krentz and Jan Willem van Henten; Robert Doran offers an interesting, though by his own admission, speculative analysis of Greek and Jewish educational practices; Shaye Cohen gives three case studies, in my view unconvincing, of the influence of Greek scholarly technique on Jewish writing ('Hellenism in Unexpected Places'); Tessa Rajak's 'Greeks and Barbarians in Josephus' explores where Jews fit in this binary opposition fundamental to Greek thought (see also Gruen, pp. 84-5).

The book is beautifully produced, though suffers slightly from not having a bibliography at the end. Most of the essays are surprisingly accessible (though Sean Freyne's article, 'Galileans, Phoenicians and Ituraeans' is not for the faint-hearted) and there is not a significant amount of repetitive overlap in the different chapters. The pagination in the contents page is not quite right, and the book's usefulness is slightly diminished by the lack of a subject index. But nevertheless, as a state-of-the-art collection of essays on this subject so important for Jewish and New Testament studies, it is an excellent resource for scholars.

Simon Gathercole, University of Aberdeen

Reformed Confessions: Theology from Zurich to Barmen

Jan Rohls. Translated by John Hoffmeyer

Columbia Series in Reformed Theology. Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 1998; xxiii+311pp.; ISBN 0-664-22078-9

This monograph is a study of Reformed confessional literature from its heyday in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the later writing of 'Neo-Reformed' confessions in the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment era. It is a translation of a German-language original, published in 1987. This goes some way to explaining the very dated feel

of the arguments presented. Indeed, it sheds more light on the theology of certain twentieth-century systematicians who dabble in church history than on the theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The book is very poor, primarily because of its serious methodological flaws. The most significant of these is the author's confusion of theological controversies with the history of Reformed confessions. Thus, the chapters draw primarily upon confessional documents for their theological content and yet the historical introduction pits Calvin against Beza on predestination, talks in general terms about the impact of Ramism on dogmatic formulation, opposes Cocceius to Voetius on covenant versus scholasticism, and discusses the debates surrounding the Academy of Saumur. This is all highly problematic. For a start, the first three positions have been subject to heavy, if not devastating criticism, in the last decade. One wonders why anyone should go the effort of translating a book which fails to grapple with the now sizeable amount of literature which has emerged in the last few years on these topics. More important, however, is the fact that none of these debates (with the exception of Saumur) had any impact whatsoever on confessional formulation, indicating quite clearly that Rohls does not really have any understanding of how the confessions were formulated or the ways in which they were understood and used in their times. On Rohls' account, it would be impossible to explain why, for example, theologians such as Richard Baxter and John Owen could both regard themselves as standing in the line of Dort and Westminster. But, of course, to discover that would involve study of a wide-range of historical documents, not simply the prediction of what should be the case based upon isolating the confessions from their historical context. Indeed, at the heart of Rohls' book is a basic and elementary failure to understand the history (and hence, one might add, the theology) of the very confessions with which he claims to deal. As for the controversy of Saumur, anyone working within the field of seventeenth-century theology knows that, for the most part, this debate was regarded at the time as an intra-confessional dispute. These are basic points which any competent writer on this subject would presuppose.

This problem is, of course, ultimately a problem with anachronistic criteria. Rohls has a clear 1950s neo-orthodox agenda that distorts even the historical readings of the documents. One can, if for some reason one still wishes to do so, make a case for Barth and the theology that flows from his writings, but one should not do so on the back of pseudo-historical scholarship. To write any kind of plausible history of the theology of Reformed confessions, however, one needs to separate

confessional history from the history of non-confessional theological controversies; and one also needs to understand how confessions functioned within their various historical contexts, bearing in mind that, e.g., an issue such as subscription in the modern sense of the word is essentially a post-seventeenth-century issue. This should alert the student to the fact that the documents may well do different things at different points in history. Rohls, a systematician, makes none of the necessary historical distinctions and the resulting work, while interesting as an historiographical artefact, is of radically limited interest to intellectual historians.

While it may well be the fault of a politically correct translator, the claim that the Westminster Confession uses the phrase 'Godself' is a metaphor for the historical insensitivity and anachronistic nonsense of the whole.

Carl R. Trueman, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia

Space, Time and Incarnation

Thomas F. Torrance

T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1997; 92pp.; £ 9.95; ISBN 0 567 08583 X

This book is vintage Torrance, not only very like what readers familiar with his work have come to welcome, but in fact a reissue of the 1969 classic of the same title, published by Oxford University Press. It would be odd, then, if Torrance's long-standing commitments both to the enfleshment of God in Christ and to the unity of the still divided Christian church, anchored by his tireless commitment to the ecumenical resources of Nicene-Constantinopolitan theology, were anything but central in this slender book.

Unsurprisingly, *Space Time and Incarnation* is both simple and profound, with Torrance's remarkable intelligence showing itself clearly but not in such a way as to fatigue the reader or undermine the book's interest in accessibility. The book is, in fact, pretty easy to navigate. In addition to an index of centrally important names and subjects (a short perusal of which will reveal Torrance's principal theological debts), the book deprives itself of detailed documentation and other technicalities, and thus makes it easier to follow Torrance's argument without abstraction or distraction. The argument itself is dense but fairly straightforward, in both clarity and cumulative force. It has three movements, each intelligible on its own but together creating something more compelling: an incarnational (Nicene) interpretation of the Christian faith that strips space/time concepts of their philosophical baggage in sustained

engagement with some of the auspicious developments of scientific thinking in the modern era, such as relativity theory (p. 58), unitary field theory (p. 76), and Gödel's theorem (p. 88).

After a preface outlining the threefold purpose of the book amounting, essentially, to a critique of unhealthy dichotomies in theological thinking and 'a positive account of the relation of the incarnation to space and time... within the context of modern scientific thought' (p. v), Torrance turns in chapter 1 to the problems of spatial concepts in Nicene theology. Torrance hopes to clarify as well as deepen basic theological concepts, not simply the concepts of space and time but indeed all (human) concepts with spatial and temporal ingredients (p. 6), and this, he tells us, will involve a critique of the way medieval and modern (especially Lutheran) theology has uncritically taken over from Aristotle a receptacle notion of space (p. 25). But first he must construct the foundation – i.e. reconstruct the foundation – in Patristic thought, beginning with Origen and culminating with Athanasius (pp. 10-21). The Patristic achievement, simply, is the articulation and development of a *relational*, rather than a *receptacle*, conception of space, in which creation and incarnation figure decisively.

The Nicene Fathers were anxious to maintain the transcendence of God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, over the space and time that are relations within God's creation; but they were no less insistent that in becoming man the Son of God really entered not only the poverty of the human condition but also the space- and time-conditioned circumstances of human existence. The substance of the Nicene achievement, then, is, negatively, an intrepid denial of all container notions of space and, positively, an assertion and development, conditioned by God's presence in Jesus Christ, of a dynamic 'differential' and 'essentially open-ended' concept of space (p. 18), 'brought to its sharpest focus in Jesus Christ as the place where God has made room for Himself in the midst of our human existence and as the place where man on earth and in history may meet and have communion with the heavenly Father' (p. 24).

In chapter 2 Torrance shows how, with respect to the *extra Calvinisticum*, the hypostatic union, and the eucharistic *parousia*, German Lutheran theology, representative of too much modern theology, squandered the Patristic insight, and created a number of 'damaging dichotomies' in the theological concepts of space, time and incarnation (pp. 30-51). In chapter 3, the final one of this fine book, Torrance develops his constructive proposal. It amounts, in short, to a recovery of the Patristic insight articulated into, and allowed to come to articulation

within, the context of modern science, thereby attesting both the scientific and the ecumenical relevance of the incarnation (pp. 77-90).

These relatively simple claims, taken together, are intended to cultivate a deeper and more unitary understanding of the Christian faith within which to navigate God's world and interpret it Christianly, in fidelity to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. And that is both the simplicity and profundity of Torrance's argument. In other words, Torrance's incarnational theology is subtle and articulate, but because of the ease with which he makes his case, one may be tempted to think that he is doing neither serious theology nor serious science. The temptation should lose sway on closer reading.

There is some repetition in Torrance's argument (the chapters were originally given as lectures on different occasions), but the recapitulations contribute to the overall coherence of the book and thus to the coherence of the scientific (incarnational) theology it promises. *Space, Time and Incarnation* should be welcomed in a climate where too much theology is either arid or anaemic. Indeed, it would be a happy and deserving fate if Professor Torrance's book remained in print in perpetuity.

Jeffrey S. Privette, Columbia, South Carolina, USA

Theology in Rabbinic Stories

Chaim Pearl

Hendrickson Publishers, Massachusetts, 1997; 180pp.; ISBN 1 56563 285 0

In this fascinating and highly readable book Chaim Pearl presents lively translations of fifty short stories drawn from a range of rabbinic teaching – parables, folklore, and legend (known as *aggadah*). Some develop familiar themes from the Old Testament, others describe events and teaching linked to Jewish sages of the first few centuries AD. What they all have in common is that they have a moral lesson to teach, a lesson that is often as relevant today as when it was first written. Pearl helpfully supplements each one with his own commentary, setting the story in its historical context and drawing out various ways of interpreting each one. Material is grouped around certain key themes: the beginning of things; Torah; aspects of Jewish history; ethics; mysteries (which includes discussion of miracles and the Messiah); the nations; and a few miscellaneous stories at the end. As a whole, the book provides an excellent introduction to rabbinic theology.

The work, however, is far from being of only historical interest. Throughout his commentaries, Pearl consistently interprets the meaning

of the stories for modern, post-Holocaust Judaism, drawing out eternally relevant aspects of the nature of God, his relations with the world, and the proper human response to him. Readers not familiar with modern Jewish thought will gain a much deeper appreciation of some of its key themes.

Every reader will have his or her own favourites amongst these charming and very human stories. I was particularly interested to read Jewish interpretations of Old Testament passages, some of which had quite different slants to traditional Christian readings (for example the creation of humans which has no concept of any kind of 'original sin'); stories set during the Hadrianic persecution brought what is often a little-known area of Jewish history vividly to life; and discussions of anti-semitism showed that the rabbis were faced with similar concerns to Jewish people living in our own century. On a lighter note, the images of Potiphar's wife inviting her friends round to marvel at Joseph or God forbidding the angels from singing in heaven at the destruction of the Egyptians in the Re(e)d Sea will stay with me for a long time to come.

My only criticism of Pearl's book is that, having kindled our interest in rabbinic texts, he gives us no suggestions for further reading, no indications as to which translations or collections would be appropriate as a second step. Although he acknowledges the source of each story in abbreviated form, without a list of abbreviations it might be difficult to locate extracts of particular interest. The lack of an index also makes finding a specific section again rather more difficult.

Overall the book will appeal to anyone who wants to explore the traditions common to Judaism and Christianity, and to gain an insight into Jewish doctrine and ethics through a rich collection of legend and folklore.

Helen K. Bond, University of Aberdeen

Spes Scotorum, Hope of Scots

Dauvit Broun and Thomas Owen Clancy (eds)

T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1999; xv+314pp., £15.95; ISBN 0 567 08682

8

The title of the book grabbed my interest and is obtained from a fragment of a medieval prayer on the island of Inchcolm: 'O Columba, hope of Scots, by your merits' mediation, make us companions of the blessed angels.' It appears that the 'spes Scotorum' (hope of Scots) was readily invoked at times of plague and war in the fourteenth century. With Celtic spirituality in fashion, I wondered whether historians would be tempted to underwrite a modern re-interpretation of the Gael.

This collection of essays is dedicated to the Scottish Catholic Historical Association (the academic credentials of the ten contributors are impressive) and offers the latest research on the saint. Divided into three sections, they explore Columba's historical and written world (along with that of his biographer Adomnan) and offer a critical assessment of his legacy for the modern world. The presentation of Columba is of a robust figure who has survived successive attempts to reinterpret him in the image of the times. His Gaelic culture and ascetic lifestyle is difficult to combine with contemporary forms of Christianity – whether it be the Iona Community or the consumer spirituality from North America. He is no plaster-cast saint and his reputation for being environmentally friendly comes in for critical comment. The authors serve us well by attempting to demythologise the saint, and the final essay bravely provides a profile of him 'between faith and folklore, between preaching and propaganda, between saint and symbol'.

In these uncertain post-modern times, Columba has become an icon of spiritual identity, but ritualistic use of the saints, as recommended by his biographer, is not something to which we need to return. It is possible to appreciate them from afar as 'holy' people of their time. Unlike other saints, Columba has always inspired more fascination in his reputation than in his remains. Indeed, it seems that his cult was created by medieval poets whose interest in history was, at best, secondary. Today those who live among the foothills and paths between Iona and Lindisfarne may be fascinated by the analysis of place-names with his seventh-century associates. The close relationship between the church and the monarchy established by Columba together with the use of Dunkeld as the source of Scottish identity is immensely interesting.

In the end, I found the book to be somewhat uneven, which is what one might expect from a project that draws five unpublished papers, two recent conference papers and two specially prepared studies from so many authors. With the exception of the final chapter by Donald Meek, it is more a case of historical scholars writing for each other than for the general public. However, a book of this scholarly stature is needed to outline the limits of investigation as well as the sober impossibility of attempting to reconstruct Celtic Christianity... like trying to put Humpty Dumpty together again!

Robert Calvert, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

BOOK REVIEWS

T. D. ALEXANDER & BRIAN S. ROSNER (eds): <i>New Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i> (Ian D. Glover).....	90
GEORGE H. TAVARD: <i>The Starting Point of Calvin's Theology</i> (Peter Cook).....	91
DAN G. DANNER: <i>Pilgrimage to Puritanism: History and Theology of the Marian Exiles at Geneva, 1555-1560</i> (Carl R. Trueman).....	93
ANDREAS KÖSTENBURGER & PETER T. O'BRIEN: <i>Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission</i> (David Smith).....	94
KENNETH B. E. ROXBURGH: <i>Thomas Gillespie and the Origins of the Relief Church in 18th Century Scotland</i> (D. W. Bebbington).....	95
TIMOTHY J. WENGERT: <i>Law and Gospel: Philip Melancthon's Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over Poenitentia</i> (Nick Needham).....	96
DAVID D. BAKER & BILL T. ARNOLD (eds): <i>The Face of Old Testament Studies. A survey of contemporary approaches</i> (Hector Morrison).....	98
F. B. MEYER: <i>Living in God's Presence (The Present Tenses of Christian Life)</i> (Norman Maciver).....	99
W. JAY WOOD: <i>Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous</i> (J. Houston).....	100
SUSAN BERGMAN (ed.): <i>A Cloud Of Witnesses: 20th Century Martyrs</i> (Ralph W. Martin).....	102
MIROSLAV VOLF: <i>After Our Likeness. The Church as the Image of the Trinity</i> (Roy Kearsley).....	103
OLIVER O'DONOVAN & JOAN LOCKWOOD O'DONOVAN (eds): <i>From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought 100-1625</i> (A. T. B. McGowan).....	105
DON H. COMPIER: <i>John Calvin's Rhetorical Doctrine of Sin</i> (Peter Cook).....	106
MICHAEL WALSH (ed.): <i>Dictionary of Christian Biography</i> (James S. Dewar).....	108
GRAHAM W. P. MCFARLANE: <i>Christ and the Spirit. The Doctrine of the Incarnation according to Edward Irving</i> (Roy Kearsley).....	109
WOLFHART PANNENBERG: <i>Systematic Theology, Volume 3</i> (Stephen N. Williams).....	110
ERNEST LUCAS: <i>Can we believe Genesis today? The Bible and the questions of Science</i> (Alex McIntosh).....	112
ROBERT MARTIN: <i>Accuracy Of Translation</i> (Alan Macgregor).....	113
R. F. MARTIN & BRIAN J. DODD: <i>Where Christology Began: Essays on Philipians 2</i> (Alistair I. Wilson).....	115
PATRICK ANGIER: <i>Changing Youth Worship</i> (Neil Pratt).....	116
BRAD H. YOUNG: <i>Paul, the Jewish Theologian</i> (Marion L. S. Carson).....	118
GEORGE THOMAS KURIAN (ed.): <i>Nelson's New Christian Dictionary</i> (David Rainey).....	119
JOHN J. COLLINS, GREGORY E. STERLING (eds): <i>Hellenism in the Land of Israel</i> (Simon Gathercole).....	120
JAN ROHLS. Translated by John Hoffmeyer: <i>Reformed Confessions: Theology from Zurich to Barmen</i> (Carl R. Trueman).....	122
THOMAS F. TORRANCE: <i>Space, Time and Incarnation</i> (Jeffrey S. Privette).....	124
CHAIM PEARL: <i>Theology in Rabbinic Stories</i> (Helen K. Bond).....	126
DAUVIT BROUN AND THOMAS OWEN CLANCY (eds): <i>Spes Scotorum, Hope of Scots</i> (Robert Calvert).....	127