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Editorial

In biblical perspective, endings are beginnings. True, it's not always an easy matter to discern that vantage point, nor to assess the relative value attached to starting and finishing. Consider the wisdom of Ecclesiastes: 'Better is the end of a thing than its beginning...' (Eccl. 7:8a). So actually getting to the end is better than simply starting out, not knowing what the end might be—or whether that end will ever arrive. And yet, only a moment later we read: 'Say not, "How is it the former days were better than these?" For it is not from wisdom that you ask this' (Eccl. 7:10). One way of understanding this enigmatic verse is to see it posing the contrasting vantage point to the earlier one (a common enough occurrence in biblical wisdom). The present, in fact, is no worse than the past, the days of 'endings' no better than those of 'beginnings'.

Similarly, Jesus' teaching about 'last days' gives us a curious mix of intertwined endings and beginnings. So, in Mark 13:7 we read: 'And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet.' So there are signs of the 'end', and yet those very signs of 'ending' are but a beginning (v. 8): 'There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.'

Endings and beginnings are inextricably linked—although often not in the way we might be accustomed to think. Our rhythm of life is 'start-to-finish', but the biblical pattern seems rather to be what we would think of as 'finish-to-start'. Consider here the vantage point of the psalmist. We package time in 'morning-to-evening'—we start the day, we end the day—but not the psalmist. In the Psalm 3 (v. 5) we read: 'I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the Lord sustained me.' It's not 'day-and-night', but 'night-and-day'! And just in case we think it is the sleep that is important to the psalmist, Psalm 4 continues the reflection on the evening (v. 8), 'In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety', while Psalm 5 carries on with the morning (v. 3): 'O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.'

This really shouldn't surprise us. After all, in the account of creation in Genesis 1, we don't read, 'And there was morning and there was evening, the first day', but rather: 'And there was evening and there was morning, the first day'. In fact, once you notice it, this finish-to-start pattern—of endings being beginnings—is everywhere in the Bible. Pick an 'ending', just about any ending (there are exceptions, to be sure), and what you discover is that, through the sheer grace of God, it is also a beginning.

Adam and Eve, expelled from the Garden of Eden, and facing death for disobedience. Yet in their very expulsion, God clothes them and cares for them, gives them meaningful work as stewards of his (now spoiled) creation, and graciously allows and enables them to fulfill the commission he originally gave that first couple to: 'be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it ...' (Gen. 1:28). Or consider the fratricide of Abel by Cain. Despite warnings, and after the murder, Cain receives a divine mark of protection. As he is sent out, 'east of Eden', he becomes the founder of cities, and his descendents shape civilization as herders, farmers, musicians, metal workers (Gen. 4:17-22). Out of death, comes life.

What, in biblical terms, could arrive with more finality as an 'ending' than the flood, as God tells Noah that he has 'determined to make an end of all flesh' (Gen. 6:13)? But again, through the trauma of cataclysmic punishment on the human race, one small remnant is preserved—through divine grace and Noah's faithful response—to emerge and find in a rain shower not a reason to fear destructive floods and death, but a rainbow to signal divine mercy and life. We've only come to Genesis 9; could we be finished? No! We've only just begun!

There are many more dramatic endings-that-are-beginnings: Abraham's precious child of promise is demanded by God as sacrifice, and Abraham complies—thinking what? That the God who fulfilled a promise when Abraham was 'as good as dead' (so Romans 4:19) could keep a promise beyond death? But that 'ending', too, was met with gracious provision, for the sacrifice was substituted, and the promise truly was in God's own hands, and not Abraham's. We could include in our brief compendium individuals such as the prophet Isaiah, whose glimpse of the divine throne left the prophet 'undone'—but only at that point, ready for service, or the line of David with an 'end' foretold in Jeremiah 22:30, but a future promised in Haggai 2:23. Or beyond individuals, think of the people of God, Israel and Judah. Exile and scattering—the death-knell of a nation—called forth one of the most dramatic 'ending-as-beginning' passages in the entire Bible: Ezekiel's vision of a valley of dry bones, capturing the mood of the scattered people whose hope was lost: 'We are indeed cut off' (37:11). But Ezekiel prophesied to the wind of God which breathed new life into the slain army: 'I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live' (v. 14).

This isn't just an Old Testament phenomenon. We have already noticed Jesus' words in Mark, but beyond that, Jesus himself embodies this dynamic. When the 'Greeks' wished to 'see Jesus', his reply was to describe himself as the 'grain of wheat' which 'falls into the ground and dies', because 'if it dies, it bears much fruit' (John 12:24). The only way to fruitful life was through death. But as J. C. Ryle commented on this

passage, 'It is as true of Christians as it is of Christ—there can be no life without death', and so Jesus went on (v. 25): 'Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life'. Paul articulated this same principle at several points in his letters. 'I have been crucified with Christ', he wrote to the Galatians. 'It is no longer I who live'—there is the ending—'but Christ who lives in me'—and there the new beginning (Gal. 2:20). As if to cap it all, how does the New Testament bring Christian Scripture itself end? It all ends ('Of course!', we might now say) with a new beginning: a new heaven, a new earth, a new Jerusalem, and One on a throne saying, 'Behold, I am making all things new' (Rev. 21:5).

The Bible truly is a book in which endings are beginnings, a dynamic which captures something of central importance concerning the gospel, and it is especially relevant at just this moment. It seems we have entered a season in Scotland in which churches are facing 'endings' of various kinds. There is no denying the pain, and dying really does result in death. Yet every believer facing such trauma knows something better. The seed has died? By God's grace, the fruit will come.

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There is an 'ending' of a different kind to mark in this number of the *Bulletin* as well. For three years James Merrick has served as an indefatigable Review Editor, arranging for rich and varied fare from recent theological literature for our enjoyment, education, and edification. We're grateful to James for his labours on our behalf, and wish him all the best as he re-settles in the United States after his period of doctoral studies in Aberdeen. He passes the baton to John Ferguson—minister in Inverness, and an erstwhile fellow PhD student of James's in Aberdeen—who begins his tenure in the role in 2013.

David Reimer

The reflections in this editorial began life as a graduation address for International Christian College, Glasgow, at Harper Memorial Church, 3 July 2010.

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In order to meet the rising costs of producing the *Bulletin*, regrettably it will be necessary in 2013 to raise the annual UK subscription (covering two issues and including postage) to £17. At an average of only £8.50 an issue for subscribers, this we believe is still very good value and compares well with other journals. Overseas subscriptions will be £19.00 for Europe and also for global surface mail. Airmail subscriptions will be £22.00. The annual subscription for SETS membership will continue to include provision of *SBET*.

     Fergus Macdonald, Chair, Scottish Evangelical Theology Society

Confessions of an Evangelical Pietist

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Back in the mid-1970s, my colleague Nicholas Wolterstorff—we were both teaching philosophy at Calvin College at the time—delivered an address, sponsored by a Christian Reformed congregation in Grand Rapids, in which he set forth a typology of different 'minds' within the conservative Dutch Calvinist community in North America.[1] He employed three labels: the 'doctrinalist', the 'pietist' and the 'Kuyperian'. These labels signified, for him, three different perspectives on the kind of book the Bible is. For the doctrinalist, the Bible primarily sets forth religious teachings—*doctrines* to which we must give our assent. For the pietist, on the other hand, the Bible tends to be treated as a devotional handbook, the reading of which is meant to generate certain godly experiences and to form important subjective dispositions. And for the Kuyperian, the Bible is meant to give us our cultural marching orders, instructing us in the ways of discipleship in the collective patterns of life in the larger human community.

These three views of the Bible, Wolterstorff argued, generate three different basic tests for what it means to be faithful to what the Bible means to convey. For some, the fundamental question has to do with what truth claims we accept about God and God's will for humankind. For others, the test is an experiential one: Have I appropriated what I learn from the Scriptures in the deep places of my own personal being? For still others, the most important question is whether a person is aligned with God's culture-transforming purposes in the world.

Wolterstorff's typology has wider application than simply to Dutch Calvinism, a fact that George Marsden recognized when he adapted it for broader use by substituting the label 'culturalist' for Wolterstorff's 'Kuyperian'[2]—thus recognizing the reality of the kind of evangelicalism

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[1] The published version of this lecture appeared as Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'The AACS in the CRC', *Reformed Journal*, 24/10 (December, 1974), 9-16.

[2] George Marsden, 'Reformed and American', in *Reformed Theology in America*, ed. by David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), p. 3. Marsden rightly notes that these designations function as 'ideal types'. As they actually function, he says, 'all three groups typically embody the traits dominant among the other two'.

that emphasizes working for cultural renewal without linking that theologically to the influence of 19th century Dutch writers.

This broader applicability of the typology is evident in the fact that most of us can easily imagine a conversation in which one Christian makes much of the importance of doctrine and another challenges that person by warning of the inadequacy of 'mere head knowledge' for entering the Kingdom; after all, the pietist will remind the doctrinalist, the Devil has a fairly orthodox theology, but he still is a citizen of hell. The doctrinalist will then respond that our feelings, our subjective states, can be misleading unless they are grounded in a solid grasp of the truth. Suddenly a third party enters the conversation to point out that a person can have an orthodox theology and a strong personal piety and still be a racist or a perpetrator of economic injustice. At that point, predictably, the doctrinalist and the pietist together will respond with a warning against 'works righteousness'. And the arguments go on and on.

'NEAR UNTO GOD'

Wolterstorff was certainly correct, then, in identifying some obvious strands that often stand in tension. But I do have my own problems with his use of the 'Kuyperian' label. For Wolterstorff it was a shorthand for characterizing what he would advocate in subsequent writings as 'world-formative Christianity'.[3] I certainly have strong affinities with that kind of culturalist emphasis; indeed I have been much influenced by it. But in the final analysis, I am a pietist.

And truth be told, I think Abraham Kuyper was also a pietist. I do not see Kuyper as a 'Kuyperian' in Wolterstorff's sense of the term. This is not to deny that the great 19th century Dutch theologian and activist called for the kind of Christianity that takes cultural transformation seriously. Many folks who know very little about Kuyper's life and thought can at least quote some version of his famous bold declaration that 'there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry "Mine!"'[4] But Kuyper also actively opposed the liberal theological teachings of his day—to the point that he even led a major exodus from the large mainline Reformed denomination in the Netherlands. And during his many decades as an important public and ecclesiastical leader, he regularly wrote profound, and very pious, meditations on Biblical themes, the spirit of the these

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3   See, for example, his *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), p. 4.

4   Abraham Kuyper, 'Sphere Sovereignty', in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. by James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 488.

meditations being nicely captured by the title of the large volume containing many of those meditations, almost 700 pages in length—*To Be Near Unto God*, a very 'pietist' title, taken from the final verse of Psalm 73: 'But as for me, it is good to be near God.'

My main purpose here, though, is not to give a detailed exposition of Kuyper. Rather, I want to offer some pietst confessions of my own. Then I also want to express some of my own worries about some of the defective tendencies that seem constantly to plague a pietist kind of Christianity, as well as pointing to ways that a pietism that guards against these defects can enrich our doctrinal and cultural explorations.

For those of us who identify with the pietist tradition, there is no better example of what we are about than John Wesley's well-known testimony regarding his 'Aldersgate experience'. As Wesley told the story, he attended, on May 24th, 1738, a meeting at Aldersgate, where someone read from Luther's *Preface to the Epistle to Romans*. Wesley reported that at the point where Luther in his text 'was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.'[5]

The kind of very direct and datable experience that Wesley was describing has a link in my own spiritual journey to the fundamentalist 'altar calls' of my youth. Typically there would come a point in an evangelistic service when the preacher would intone, 'Every head bowed, every eye closed. No one looking around, please'. And then the people present would be asked to search their individual hearts. Those who had not yet come to faith in Christ were urged to accept him right then. But it was also a time of self-examination for the rest of us, who were given the opportunity to look into our hearts anew and reflect honestly about our relationship to the Lord.

And in those moments we sang hymns as well. 'Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?' 'I surrender all.' 'Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me.' 'Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe.'

Those moments, and those hymns, were a crucial element in my own spiritual formation. They were occasions for me when I stood—in ways that I have never quite experienced elsewhere—face to face with eternity. Whatever else the 'sawdust trail' meant to me—not all of it positive—it was for me in those moments, a sacred space, of the sort that I have not

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[5] Journal of John Wesley, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.vi.ii.xvi.html>.

been able to find with the same profundity in other regions of the Christian world.

WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS

Ernest Stoeffler was a scholar who devoted his life to the study of pietism in its many forms: Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, Moravian, Puritan, Wesleyan, and the like. His magnum opus, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, still stands as the best overall survey of pietism as an international movement. Stoeffler not only chronicled the various manifestations of pietism in great detail, he did so with an obvious love for his subject matter, which meant, among other things, that he drew attention to strengths in pietism that are often ignored by others. Indeed, in his study of American pietism he insisted that there was not only a social conscience at work in many pietist subgroups, but that the movement in general was an influential force for creating the environment for important 20th century gains in the promoting of social justice. He was convinced, he said, 'that the Pietist understanding of life, which regards every fellow believer as "sister" or "brother," helped to begin the process of breaking down the rigid barriers associated with ethnic origin, race, and sex, which Americans originally inherited from Europe.'[6]

While he did much to highlight pietism's strengths, Stoeffler was not insensitive to the movement's weaknesses. He specifically singled out three of what he described as its 'less admirable' traits or tendencies, namely: an 'escapist' mentality that puts 'the emphasis on blessedness in the hereafter rather than justice for all in the here and now'; 'a certain anti-intellectual atmosphere'; and a 'pronounced tendency toward sectarian fragmentation'.[7]

Stoeffler is right to point to these tendencies in pietism, but he clearly does not think than they are inevitable or intrinsic traits of a pietist orientation. And he is right about that also. As I read, for example, Carl Henry's 1947 jeremiad, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, I see Henry as focusing on these very traits. He clearly condemns the 'escapist' mentality that had come to dominate the evangelical mood. He also worried much about a lack of nuanced evangelical engagement with the important intellectual issues of the day. And he certainly also regretted the separatistic patterns that had produced a fragmented evangelical movement.

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6   F. Ernest Stoeffler, 'Epilogue', in *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), p. 271.
7   Stoeffler, 'Epilogue', pp. 270-1.

Henry was joined in looking for remedies to these defects by Harold John Ockenga, who wrote an introduction to Henry's book in which he emphasized the same concerns.8 Particularly on the point of countering the fragmentation of evangelicalism, it is no accident that Ockenga and others who founded the National Association of Evangelicals chose to name the Association's magazine 'United Evangelical Action'—a motif that also came to characterize Billy Graham's program of 'cooperative evangelism'.

Stoeffler's list of the defective tendencies that often plague pietism is helpful. Indeed, I have spent a good part of my own participation in the evangelical movement working to remedy those defects. This is still an important agenda today, even though the defective tendencies—and their attempted correctives— may show up in new ways in our present context.

Having said all of that, I have to immediately add that it would be a very bad move to try to remedy these defects by moving in a completely opposite direction. We do not correct anti-intellectualism as Christians simply by slipping into a thoroughgoing rationalism. Nor is an uncritical accommodation to the dominant cultural patterns of this present world a proper antidote to other-worldliness. And an 'anything goes' ecumenism is not the right way to counter the spirit of separatism.

In saying that, I am affirming what I consider to be the spirit of a proper sort of pietism. Our intellectual lives, our cultural engagements, our relationships with others in the Body of Christ—all of these must be guided by a personal and communal godliness, by hearts that desire the kind of holiness without which none shall see the Lord.

LOCATING 'HEART'

I do want to dig a little deeper, though, in explaining why I want to insist on the priority of piety, of the religion of the heart that in turn must then given direction to our heads and our hands.

Actually, there are some doctrinalists who make it clear that they are not opposed to seeing the heart as the primary locus of religious faith. Rather, they think that the pietist is misusing the word 'heart'. This comes out clearly, for example, in some comments made by Elizabeth Clark George, the daughter of the late evangelical philosopher Gordon Clark, in a published reminiscence of her father's anti-pietist orientation. She takes note of what she sees as '[t]he aggravatingly careless use of the terms "heart" and "head" which are tossed about in Christian conversation

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8   See Ockenga's Introduction to Carl F.H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1947), pp. xx-xxii.

today'. What many people don't realize, she says, is that, properly speaking, when people disparage 'the "head" they are actually denouncing the "heart"' since 'the "heart" is not superior to the mind... [because] the heart *is* the mind'. She continues:

> The mind is not dry, dull, and spiritually detached; nor does the heart produce some emotional frill that supposedly substantiates salvation. The head and the heart are synonyms, regenerate in some people, unregenerate in others. And out of the abundance thereof, the mouth speaketh.[9]

Needless to say, the real issue here often gets clouded by some unfortunate rhetoric on both sides. Elizabeth George reports, for example, that many evangelicals accused her father of 'All "head", no "heart",' even intending thereby to call his eternal salvation into question.[10] She, in turn, finds it easy to dismiss those who want to posit a distinction between 'heart' and 'head' as grounding their salvation in 'some emotional frill'.

My own reading of this kind of rhetorical exchange is that Clark was rightly reacting against the kind of 'less admirable' traits that, as Stoeffler shows, often show up in pietism, especially the unnuanced anti-intellectualism. At the same time, however, Clark's insistence on the merging of 'heart' and 'mind' has to be challenged from the perspective of theological reflection on the nature of the human person and the interaction of human faculties within the person.

John Calvin, for one, clearly refused to conflate mind and heart. Calvin takes it as obvious 'that faith is much higher than human understanding', such that 'it will not be enough for the mind to be illuminated by the Spirit of God unless the heart is also strengthened and supported by his power'. Calvin insists that those philosophers and theologians 'go completely astray, who in considering faith identify it with a bare and simple assent arising out of knowledge, and leave out the confidence and assurance of the heart'.[11] 'The Word of God', Calvin writes, 'is not received by faith if it flits about in the top of the brain.' It must enter into 'the depth of the heart', so that the intellect's 'real understanding is illuminated by the Spirit of God', who 'serves as a seal, to seal up in our hearts

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9   Elizabeth Clark George, 'Life with Father, Part 1', in *Gordon Clark: Personal Recollections* ed. by John W. Robbins (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1989), pp. 22-3.

10 George, 'Life with Father', p. 23.

11 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), III.ii.33, pp. 580-1.

those very promises the certainty of which it has previously impressed upon our minds'.[12]

We can apply this to John Wesley's account of what happened at Aldersgate. He had for a long time given intellectual assent to the truths of the Gospel, but when as a result of his 'strangely warmed' experience, he could testify now that 'an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death' (emphasis added). The Spirit had taken truths that had previously only been presented to his mind, and now brought about what Calvin describes as the Spirit's 'sealing up' operation in the depths of the heart.

TRUSTINGS

When I was engaged in doctoral studies in philosophy at the University of Chicago in the mid-1960s, one of the hot topics for those of us addressing issues in what was then called 'the philosophy of mind' was the question of 'minds and machines'. Could a computer ever come to a point in its operations that we would say that it was actually capable of *thinking*? Could such a computer so closely approximate human patterns of reasoning that we would have to decide that it had a *mind*?

Some philosophers had no problem with the idea of a thinking machine, since they has a rather low—a naturalistic/reductionistic—view of the human person. One rather flippant way in which some of them put it at the time was that human beings are simply 'machines that happen to be made of meat'.

Others, however, were concerned to maintain the uniqueness of the human person by insisting on a qualitative difference—an unbridgeable metaphysical gap—between human minds and the bearers of so-called 'artificial intelligence'. What both sides of the debate agreed upon, however, is that what fundamentally defines the human person is rationality—with the only important question being whether the human kind of rational intelligence could be replicated in a computer.

I was always uneasy about that shared assumption, and the grounds of my uneasiness became clear to me when I got around to seeing Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In it, the crew members of a Jupiter space mission rely on the deliverances of a computer they have named Hal. There is no question that Hal, as depicted in the film, is

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[12]   Calvin, *Institutes*, III.ii.36, pp. 583-4. For a more extensive discussion of Calvin's views, see James E. McGoldrick, 'John Calvin: Theologian of Head, Heart, and Hands', *SBET*, 29 (2011), 177-95.

highly intelligent. But what is more important for me is the fact that Hal is devious. He rebels against the crew, and plots their demise.

Again, that is science fiction. But as such it provides an important insight. A computer would finally come close to being like us, not simply in being able to *think* like us, but in having the capacity to *elicit trust* and to betray that trust. To put it in explicitly biblical terms, it was not so much Hal's capacity for rational understanding that made him so human-like, but rather that he was the kind of entity to which one could legitimately preach, 'Trust in the Lord in all thine heart, and lean not on your own understanding' (Proverbs 3: 5).

To cut to the chase: the heart, in the biblical sense, is the place where we form our fundamental trustings. It is where we set the direction of our lives. We are either devoting our whole being toward obedience to God, or we are rebels against God. We are either covenant-keepers or covenant-breakers. As Herman Bavinck put it:

> Man tries to give direction to his life by his consciousness, but that life itself has its origin in the depth of his personality. It must not be forgotten... that though reason is necessary to guide the ship of life, feeling is the stream that propels it. Beneath consciousness there is a world of instincts and habits, notions and inclinations, abilities and capacities, which continually sets on fire the course of nature. Beneath the head lies the heart, out of which are the issues of life.[13]

This view of the heart points us, as I see it, to the kind of theological anthropology that can serve as the basis for understanding pietism at its best. As sinners, our hearts are the seat of our rebellion against God. Only the Holy Spirit can enter into that most intimate place of our being—the place in which our most fundamental trustings are formed—and direct our thoughts and actions anew toward the service of the living God. How we pursue our doctrinal reflections and our efforts at cultural engagement, then, will depend on the condition of the hearts out of which our thoughts and actions flow.

DOCTRINE AND PIETY

Having briefly set forth that way of seeing things, I want now to look more closely at the relationship of piety to both doctrine and to cultural engagement. First, some thoughts about the relationship to doctrine.

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[13] Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation* (London: Longmans Green, 1909), p. 215.

What I am going to say about piety and doctrine will make some evangelicals nervous, so it is important that I begin with some appeals to the authority of three of my heroes, all theologians with impeccable orthodox credentials, each of them a staunch defender of historic Calvinism.

The first of these heroes is Charles Hodge, the great theologian of the 'Old Princeton' of the 19th century. One thinker whom Hodge regularly singled out for criticism in his three-volume *Systematic Theology* was the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher. When Hodge had studied in Germany in his younger years, he had seen first hand the influence of Schleiermacher's liberal theology. Hodge was deeply disturbed by the German theologian's embrace of the rationalist critique of biblical authority, which had the effect, Hodge insisted, of undermining the most fundamental tenets of the historic Christian faith.

At one point where Hodge is setting forth his critique of Schleiermacher—who had by this time been dead for several decades—Hodge offers, in a footnote, a brief personal comment about the person whose theology he has been criticizing. He tells how, as a student, he had frequently attended services at Schleiermacher's church. He was taken, he says, by the fact that the hymns sung in those services 'were always evangelical and spiritual in an eminent degree, filled with praise and gratitude to our Redeemer'. He goes on to report that he had been told by one of Schleiermacher's colleagues that often in the evenings the theologian would call his family together, saying: 'Hush, children; let us sing a hymn of praise to Christ'. And then Hodge adds this tribute to Schleiermacher: 'Can we doubt that he is singing those praises now? To whomever Christ is God, St. John assures us, Christ is a Saviour.'[14]

My second hero, also from the 19th century, is the Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck. In his systematic writings, Bavinck frequently criticized Roman Catholic theology, not in the least because of what he saw as the Catholic emphasis on salvation by good works. But here is a comment he offers at one point about that element of Catholic thought:

> [W]e must remind ourselves that the Catholic righteousness by good works is vastly preferable to a protestant righteousness by good doctrine. At least righteousness by good works benefits one's neighbor, whereas righteousness by good doctrine only produces lovelessness and pride. Furthermore, we must not blind ourselves to the tremendous faith, genuine repentance, com-

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[14] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), p. 440 n. 1.

plete surrender and the fervent love for God and neighbor evident in the lives and work of many Catholic Christians.[15]

My third example is from a personal conversation with the late Cornelius Van Til, longtime professor of apologetics at Westminster Seminary. I visited him once in his Philadelphia home, shortly after I graduated from college, and I asked him some questions about his stern rejection of Karl Barth's theology. While others in the evangelical world were welcoming many of Barth's contributions as a clear step back toward traditional orthodoxy, Van Til was insisting that Barth's theology was nothing more than 'the new modernism' in disguise.[16]

In posing a question to Van Til about this, I began with these words: 'As someone who does not see Karl Barth as a real Christian, what...'. Van Til cut me off sharply right there, and in an excited voice, he said, 'No! No! I have never said Barth is not a Christian. Never! What I have said is that his *theology* is not genuinely Christian. If all that a person knew about the Gospel is what they learned from his theology, they could not come to Christ!'

Van Til was saying something here that is simple and straightforward: a person can have a highly defective theology and still have a heart that has been transformed by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Barth, from Van Til's perspective, was setting forth a theological system that fell far short of biblical fidelity. But that did not mean he was not a genuine Christian. Hodge was making the same point about Schleiermacher: bad theology, he said, but we can tell from the hymns that he sang that he longed to be with his Saviour in heaven. And Catholicism in Bavinck's portrayal: Righteousness by good works? Not a doctrinal formulation that a good Calvinist can live with. But in spite of that, some folks who believe that kind of thing clearly exhibit a 'complete surrender and the fervent love for God'.

We don't have to look very far in the evangelical world to find persons who would disagree with what I am setting forth here. An obvious case would be John MacArthur, who has been an outspoken opponent of the 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together' group and particularly of the group's document justification by faith, drafted on the evangelical side by, among others, James Packer and Timothy George. In his critique, MacArthur took the evangelical participants to be saying 'that while they believe

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[15] Herman Bavinck, *The Certainty of Faith*, trans. by Harry der Nederlanden (St. Catherines, ON: Paideia Press, 1980), p. 37.

[16] See Van Til's *The New Modernism: an Appraisal of the Theology of Barth and Brunner* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1947).

that the doctrine of justification as articulated by the Reformers is true, they are not willing to say that people must believe it in order to be saved. In other words, they believe that people are saved who do not believe the Biblical doctrine of justification."[17]

Needless to say, Macarthur's assessment of the views of the Catholics involved in the project is open to challenge. The late Father Richard Neuhaus, one of the conveners of Evangelicals and Catholics together, long had argued that the key issue at the time of the Reformation was justification by faith, and that his own move from Lutheranism to the Catholic priesthood was necessitated by his conviction that it was now possible for him to preach justification by faith alone within the Catholic context.

Be that as it may, my argument with MacArthur is on a more basic point. Unlike him, I do believe that it is possible for people to be saved without subscribing to the doctrine of justification by faith. Not that I deny the truth of that doctrine. I believe it with all my heart. True salvation is by faith alone, faith made possible by the sovereign grace that sent the Saviour to the Cross to accomplish for us what we as lost sinners could never do for ourselves. But I believe it is possible to *be* justified by faith without being clear about the *doctrine* of justification by faith.

I will argue that passionately with anyone who denies that doctrine. But with those who show a genuine faith in Christ in spite of what I take to be a defective theology, my argument will go along these lines: Is your theology adequate to explain the saving grace that has transformed your inner being? Is that theology capable of sustaining the kind of faith that you claim? And Van Til's question to Barth: Is your theology, when spelled out as an evangelistic appeal, capable of presenting the Gospel in such a way that people will come to Christ?

ATTENDING TO HYMNS

One reason why I am especially fond of Hodge's expression of appreciation for Schleiermacher's love of the evangelical hymns is that I am convinced that our theology would often be in much better shape if we paid careful attention to what we are expressing in the hymns that we sing.

So I want to conclude with a personal illustration about the connection between hymnody and our engagement with the important issues of the larger culture. Here, for me, there is a very special connection between our piety as expressed in our hymnody and the call to pursue justice and peace as agents of Christ's Kingdom.

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[17]   John MacArthur, Jr., *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes like the World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), p. 250.

I was once asked by a group on a secular university campus to serve on a panel addressing the past, present and future involvement in American culture of four faith communities: Judaism, Catholicism, mainline Protestantism and evangelicalism. The four panelists—a rabbi, a priest, a mainline theologian and myself—each spoke at three sessions throughout the day: in the morning, on the past involvement of each of our respective communities; early afternoon, the present; late afternoon, projections about the future; then in the evening, interaction with each other and with the audience.

When we turned to questions from the large audience in the evening session, the first question was addressed to me. A young man asked: 'Dr. Mouw, I did not know much at all about evangelicalism before today, and I think I have made some progress listening to what you have said. But I have a simple question that would really help me get much clearer if you would give me a straightforward answer: What do you believe that the other three people on the platform do not believe?'

My friend George Marsden says that 'whenever Mouw gets backed into a theological corner he quotes of hymn to get out'. And that's exactly what I did on this occasion.

The previous Sunday in our home congregation we had concluded the service singing 'It is Well with My Soul', and the third verse of that hymn had been running through my mind:

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

So I quoted it that evening, and then I explained. The rabbi certainly is not going to say that his sins have been covered by the blood shed on the Cross. And the Catholic—if he holds to the teachings and practices that led the Reformers in the 16th century to depart from the Roman church— is not going to celebrate the once-for-all character of the sacrifice at Calvary—that I can say here and now that because of the Cross it is forever more well with my soul. (I was pleased that the priest told me afterward that he could indeed sing that verse—a wonderful testimony to what the Lord has been bringing about in Catholicism in recent decades!) And the liberal Protestant—who had made much that day of his preference for a 'moral example' theory of the atonement—is not going to insist on the Cross as sacrifice, as payment for sin.

The hymn writer was offering a profound evangelical testimony, that because of the shed blood of Calvary a sinner who has embraced the

promise of salvation can say that his or her sins have been nailed to the Cross and that here and now it is forevermore 'well with my soul'. That is marvellous evangelical piety—and it is solid evangelical theology.

But that testimony, properly grasped, must also lead us in the paths of discipleship. While it is forevermore well with my soul today, it is not well in the larger creation that Jesus came to rescue. It is not well in Haiti today. It is not well in the prisons of North Korea. It is not well in the barrios and ghettos and reservations of North America. It is not well on Wall Street, and in Hollywood, and in the corridors of power in Washington, D.C. It is not well in the kitchens and bedrooms of Deerfield, Illinois.

The God who right now looks into every one of our hearts and says that it is well with these souls is also the God who grieves over the injustice, the environmental damage, the superstition, the abuse of women and girls in the international sex trade, the war-ravaged regions of the Iraq and Afghanistan.

And the God who grieves over all of that—and more—calls those of us whose eternal destinies have been made secure at Calvary, not only to share in his grief, but to act as grieving ones in his name—taking up the cause of his Kingdom in anticipation of that great Day when Jesus will return and announce, 'Behold, I make all things new'. And then it will be truly well with the whole creation that God still loves.

What we desperately need in our challenging times is a piety that inspires and motivates us to an active discipleship in the wounded and broken places in our world, a piety that can sustain us through the difficult times of serving the cause of the Gospel, because we have the confidence also to sing:

And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

ALL ARE ELECT, FEW ARE ELECT: UNDERSTANDING NEW TESTAMENT ELECTION LANGUAGE

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The challenge of understanding the election language of the New Testament is evidenced by the diversity of approaches.[1] Traditional approaches to election language understand it as focusing on the concept of 'selection'.

In the Arminian-Wesleyan tradition election language is understood as describing God's selection of individuals for salvation based on a foreknowledge of who will believe. [2] A modern Arminian-Wesleyan alternative is to understand election in corporate terms, i.e. individual believers become elect as they are incorporated into the people of God.[3]

Each of these approaches has significant problems. Interpreting election as based on a foreknowledge of who will believe requires understanding *foreknowledge* in Romans 8:28 and 1 Peter 1:1 as 'prior knowledge of who will believe' and then using this as the key to unlocking the meaning of all uses of election language in the New Testament. This approach downplays the evidence which suggests the word *foreknowledge* itself is another way of speaking about *election*.[4] The other difficulty is that this

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[1]   For an excellent presentation of traditional views, cf. Chad Brand, ed., *Perspectives on Election: Five Views* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006).

[2]   E.g. Jack W. Cottrell, 'The Classical Arminian View of Election,' in *Perspectives on Election*, pp. 70-134.

[3]   E.g. William Klein, *The New Chosen People: A Corporate View of Election* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); Clark Pinnock, 'Divine Election as Corporate, Open, and Vocational', *Perspectives on Election*, pp. 276-314. Roger Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove/Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2006), pp. 181-5, points out that Arminius and many in this tradition affirm both an unconditional corporate election and a conditional personal election based on foreknowledge. It appears that modern exponents of the corporate view eliminate the element of individual election based on foreknowledge.

[4]   cf. Thomas Schreiner, *Romans* (BEC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 451-2; Douglas Moo, *Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), pp. 532-3; I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter* (IVPNTC; Downers Grove/Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1991), p. 31: 'Foreknowledge...has the sense of choice and love rather than knowledge.' Grant Osborne, *Romans*

understanding of election eviscerates the grace component of election language by reducing it to God's ratification of human decisions which he foresees.[5] The corporate framework is attractive but lacks exegetical support. The most important election texts focus on the believer as the object of God's election, though within a corporate context. In the New Testament believers are the object of God's adoption, justification, sanctification, redemption, reconciliation, glorification and election. The corporate framework involves reading a great deal into the text in order to make the hypothesis work.

Those within the Calvinist tradition interpret election language as describing the unconditional selection of a subset of humanity for salvation. [6] This seems plausible since the word group conveys the meaning of *choice/selection*. However this approach is implausible in light of two widely attested theological affirmations in the New Testament: (1) God

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(IVPNTC; Downers Grove/Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2004), pp. 221-2, acknowledges the strength of the case for this view but argues for the meaning 'prior knowledge of'.

[5] Pinnock, *Divine Election*, p. 281: 'Seeing in advance our future conduct, God sets us on the way to salvation or perdition on the basis of our own free and foreseen decisions. Divine election rests on God's knowledge of the future free choices of human beings. In effect then, God endorses our self-election. We choose God and God returns the compliment....it reduces the meaning of election as an unconditional act of God's grace....It turns God's election into a human act of self-election.'

[6] E.g. Paul Jewett, *Election and Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985); Bruce Ware, 'Divine Election to Salvation: Unconditional, Individual, and Infralapsarian,' in *Perspectives on Election*, pp. 1-58; For a volume of representative essays arguing a Calvinist perspective cf. Bruce Ware and Thomas Schreiner, eds., *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

desires the salvation of the whole of humanity; [7] (2) apostasy is a real possibility.[8]

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[7]   Matt. 22:14; Luke 2:10; John 1:7, 9, 29, 36; 3:16; 4:42; 5:23; 6:45; 11:48; 12:32; Acts 17:30; 22:14; Romans 5:15-19; 10.11-13; 11.32; 2 Cor. 5:14, 19; Phil. 2:11; Col. 2:20; 1 Tim. 2:4; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2; Rev. 22:17. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, 'For all, for all my Saviour Died', in *Semper Reformandum: Studies in Honour of Clark H. Pinnock*, ed. by Stanley Porter and Anthony Cross (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003), pp. 322-46. Calvinist interpreters readily acknowledge that the texts affirming God's universal salvific will represent a challenge to their understanding of election but at times do not acknowledge the challenge posed by the warnings against apostasy. Thus, for example, Jewett, *Election*, pp. 102-5, 115-20, addresses the challenge posed by 'universal texts' but not the warning texts. Cf. also Ware, *Election to Salvation*, pp. 26-42, who responds to five objections to the Calvinist understanding of election without mentioning the warning texts. The irony of this is that there are more texts which assume the possibility of apostasy than ones affirming God's universal salvific will.

Calvinist interpreters use a variety of strategies to deal with the texts stating that God desires that all be saved: (1) restricting the 'all' to 'all the elect'; (2) defining 'all' as 'all kinds of people' from every sector of society; (3) interpreting the intention as being that salvation is not just for the Jew but also the Gentile; (4) distinguishing between what God 'desires' and what he 'ordains'. For this last approach cf. Thomas Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman, 2003), pp. 380-83. Schreiner acknowledges that 2 Peter 3:9 and other New Testament texts affirm that God desires that the whole of humanity be saved. However he argues that while God does indeed *desire* the salvation of all but that he *ordains* to make salvation possible only for a limited number. Cf. also Ware, *Divine Election*, pp. 32-5. John Piper, 'Are There Two Wills in God?', in *Still Sovereign*, pp. 107-13, has developed the fullest defence of this construct. For an analysis and critique of Calvinist determinism cf. Roger Olson, *Against Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011); Jerry Walls and Joseph Dongell, *Why I Am Not A Calvinist* (Downers Grove/Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Glen Shellrude, 'Calvinism and Problematic Readings of New Testament Texts', *Journal For Baptist Ministry and Theology*, 8/1 (2011), 69-85.

[8]   I. Howard Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God: A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1969), is the best analysis of the relevant texts. Stephen Ashby, 'A Reformed Arminian View', in *Four Views on Eternal Security*, ed. by J. Matthew Pinson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), pp. 137-87, has an excellent, concise discussion of the issues (cf. pp. 170-80 for a summary analysis of the Biblical texts). For a Calvinist perspective cf. Thomas Schreiner, *The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Falling Away* (Downers Grove/Leicester, InterVarsity Press, 2001).

ELECTION AS GRACIOUS INITIATIVE

This paper will argue that New Testament election language focuses not on the concept of *selection* but rather on the idea of *gracious initiative* as the basis for one's status as a believer.[9] Election language affirms that in his love and grace God has taken the initiative to reach out, to invite, to extend the grace that enables a response of faith, and brought into his family all who say yes to his gracious invitation, to his election. Since the New Testament affirms God's desire that all come to him, in principle all are elect. However election language is only applied to those who have responded to God's gracious initiative, to his election. It will also be argued that the election texts are applied to those who are already believers and there is no suggestion in the contexts that unbelievers are unbelievers because God has not elected them. The primary intent of election language is to emphasize the utter gratuity of God's taking the initiative for the believer's salvation. Election language also affirms the related truths that believers are deeply loved by God and stand in a special relationship to him.

FOUR SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

There are a number of arguments which support the conclusion that election language is not about the selection of a subset of humanity for salvation but instead affirms the gracious initiative of God as the basis for the believer's status.

First, the use of election language by Jesus and the early Church has been shaped by the election language of the Old Testament. In the Scriptures Israel is the object of God's election (e.g. Deut 7:6; Isa. 41:8-9). Within this context election was a purely corporate concept and did not speak to the issue of the salvation of the individual Jew. The early church took this Scriptural language of election and applied it to the soteriological status of individuals in a way which was not done in the Old Testament. This is in line with the appropriation of Scriptural language to describe believers in a new covenant context.[10] In the Old Testament context election

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9   I owe this approach to understanding election language to I. Howard Marshall: 'The Problem of Apostasy in New Testament Theology', in *Jesus the Saviour: Studies in New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove/Leicester: IVP Press, 1990), p. 320. Cf. also I. Howard Marshall, 'Predestination in the New Testament,' *Jesus the Saviour*, pp. 290-305, for a related essay.

10   Believers can be described as 'the twelve tribes' (Rev. 7:4; Jas. 1:1; cf. 1 Pet. 1:1), the 'Israel of God' (Gal. 6:16; cf. Eph. 2:12f), a 'holy nation' (1 Pet. 2:9), 'a temple' (1 Cor. 3:16f; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21), 'a kingdom and priests' (Rev. 1:6), 'a Jew' (Rom. 2:28), 'a holy/royal priesthood' (1 Pet. 2:5, 9); 'the circum-

language did refer to God's unconditional selection of Israel from among the nations as those who would constitute his people.[11] Calvinists assume a straightforward transference of meaning so that election language in the New Testament describes God's unconditional selection of a subset of humanity for salvation. Instead of God choosing one nation from among all the nations, God now chooses some individuals to the exclusion of others. However as already stated, the New Testament emphases on both the universal scope of God's salvific will and the possibility that the elect can commit apostasy are evidence that this was not how the early church understood its use of election language.

Two factors would have provided the catalyst for reshaping how the election language of the Old Testament was understood within a new covenant context. One was a new understanding of God's redemptive initiative. In the Old Testament election was not a possibility open to all nations since God had chosen Israel. The gracious initiative of God had a single nation as its object. In the New Testament God's gracious initiative is now universal in its scope rather than focused on Israel. God desired that all become part of his people. The broadening of God's redemptive initiative from Israel to the world would naturally be accompanied by a broadening of the understanding of election language. Since God's gracious initiative now extended to all, the status of being one of the elect was now a possibility open to all who responded to the Gospel.[12]

The other factor requiring a new understanding of election language was that the people of God were now defined not on the basis of national

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cision' (Phil. 3:3), 'Abraham's seed' (Gal. 3:29), 'beloved' (e.g. Rom. 1:7; Col. 3:12), 'saints' (e.g. 1 Cor. 1:2), 'called' (e. g. 2 Pet. 1:10). In many cases where language fashioned to describe the nation of Israel is re-applied to Christians there is a shift in meaning when used in this new context. Thus, for example, believers in a new covenant context are not 'the twelve tribes', 'the Israel of God', 'a temple', 'a holy nation', 'a Jew', 'a holy/royal priesthood', 'Abraham's seed' or 'the circumcision' in precisely the same way that was true when this language was originally used with reference to historic Israel.

[11] While Israel's election (selection) as the covenant people is presented as an unconditional act, God had specific expectations for how Israel was to function as his people. Furthermore there was the expectation that God would act through Israel to bring blessing to the world.

[12] In the Second Temple Period provision was made for those who were not Jews by birth to embrace Judaism through conversion and thus benefit from all the blessings that attached to being part of God's elect people. One could argue that Jesus and the early church inherited an implicitly more open understanding of election in that Gentiles, 'the non-elect', could become one of the elect people through a decision to embrace the Jewish faith.

identity but on the basis of those who responded positively to the Gospel. In the Old Testament being one of the elect was a matter of birth not choice. However now being one of the elect was premised on a person's faith response to the Gospel. The question is how election language would be understood in this new context. The Calvinist answer that election language now means that only individuals unconditionally selected by God could respond positively to the Gospel is impossible for reasons given. The argument here is that within the context of new covenant realities election language was retained because it expressed the fact that God's gracious, loving initiative was what enabled every response to the Gospel.

Second, election language is part of a broader vocabulary whose intention is to speak of God's special love for and relationship with his people as well as his initiative in the entire process of salvation. Believers are described as 'beloved' (e.g. Rom. 1:7; Col. 3:12), 'sheep' (John 10), 'saints' (e.g. Col. 1:2), 'adopted' (e.g. Eph. 1:5), 'called' (e.g. Rom. 1:7), 'heirs' (Rom. 8:17), and 'elect'. Jesus and the early church proclaim that this special relationship to God is available to anyone who responds positively to God's grace.

The New Testament describes believers as 'beloved' of God (e.g. Rom 1.7; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; Col. 3:12). It would be wrong to infer from this that unbelievers are not loved by God, especially in light of the explicit affirmation that God loves all without distinction (John 3:16). However the status of 'beloved' is reserved for those who respond to God's love.

When the NT describes believers as 'adopted', one could infer that God decided to adopt some and not others. However this inference is never drawn. It is more likely that this is one of several terms used to express the fact that the special status of believers is rooted in God's grace. This status in turn is available to all who respond to the Gospel.

The New Testament also describes believers as those who have been 'called'. If the language is taken literally, the conclusion could be drawn that unbelievers are those who have 'not been called'. But this would be an unwarranted inference. As already stated, the early church believed that 'all are called', that all are invited to embrace the Gospel (e.g. Matt. 22:14; in Rom. 10:11-13 the opportunity is there for 'all to call upon him'). However the status of being one of the 'called' is applied to those who have responded positively to the Gospel. Unbelievers are not those whom God has decided not to call. The point is that the status of being 'adopted', 'called', 'beloved' and 'elected' are possibilities open to all who respond to God.

It is significant that a number of these terms used to describe believers express the concepts that their status 1. is based on God's loving initiative, 2. is an utterly gracious gift, and, 3. entails a special relationship with God.

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This is true for the terms 'adopted', 'called', 'beloved' and 'heirs'. This is contextual evidence that election language has these concepts in view, especially when there are cases when election language and concepts are related to these other terms and concepts in some texts: calling and election (Rom. 8:28-29; 9:11-12, 23-24; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 1 Pet. 2:9; 2 Pet. 1:10; Rev. 17:14), love and election (Eph. 1: 4f; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 9:25; 11:28), adoption and election (Eph. 1:4-5), grace and election (Eph 1:4-6; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 2:9f); heirs and election (Eph. 1:11, 14). The focus of this language is to affirm that the gracious initiative of God is the basis for their loved and special status. The contextual evidence does not suggest that it also indicates the 'non-selection' of unbelievers.

It is true that some terms such as 'beloved', 'called', and 'saints' are more easily understood as open categories (for all men and women) than is the case for the word 'elect'. At the level of human usage the language of election suggests that some have 'not been selected'. However it needs to be kept always in mind that the language of election is used for believers in the New Testament because it was a 'Scriptural term', i.e. it was widely used in the Old Testament for God's people. Given that the early church was using a Scriptural term in a new way, i.e. to describe the soteriological status of individual believers, it is not surprising that the category of 'the elect' is also an open category in that anyone can become 'one of the elect'. The question as to whether the 'elect' is an open category or a closed, fixed category needs to be determined not by the normal meaning of the word in non-theological usage but by contextual indicators in New Testament texts as to how the early church was using this language to describe a theological reality.

A third consideration, related to the previous one, is that language of election is part of a broader category of soteriological terms. In most instances soteriological terminology in the New Testament is applied to those who are already believers. However there are texts which indicate that the following soteriological categories are open to each and

every person: reconciliation,[13] justification and life,[14] being a recipient of God's mercy,[15] the confession of Jesus as Lord,[16] the gift of eternal life,[17] salvation,[18] and the benefits of Christ's sacrificial death.[19] In view of this

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[13]   In Colossians 1:23 Paul says to the Colossian believers that 'he has reconciled you'. This follows on the statement in 2:20 that God's purpose in Christ was 'to reconcile *all things* to himself' (also 2 Cor. 5:19: 'God was reconciling the *world* to himself in Christ'). The assumption is that the potential is there for 'all to be reconciled'. However one only becomes 'one of the reconciled' when there is a response to the Gospel. P. T. O'Brien, *Colossians-Philemon* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1982), pp. 56-7, and Douglas Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Pillar; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), pp. 136-7, follow F. F. Bruce in arguing that universal reconciliation is a reality because there are two kinds of reconciliation: (1) a positive restoration of relationship; (2) a subduing of enemies. This interpretation keeps their Calvinist assumptions intact, i.e. God's purposes are always realized. But where is the evidence that reconciliation language was ever used to describe the defeat and subduing of enemies? When Paul says in 2 Cor 5:19 that 'God was reconciling the world to himself' does he mean both that he restores some to a positive relationship and pacifies or subdues those who do not believe? For a study of reconciliation language cf. I. Howard Marshall, 'The Meaning of "Reconciliation"', *Jesus the Saviour,* pp. 258-74.

[14]   In Romans 5:15-19 Paul says that on the basis of what Christ has done 'justification' and 'life' come to 'all'. The context of Pauline theology indicates that this potential is only realized in those who respond to the Gospel. But the possibility is there for all to embrace the gifts of 'justification and life'. Cf. also 1 Cor. 15:22: 'For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive'; Rom. 3:23: 'all have sinned...and are justified'. This text is often used to support a theology of universal salvation, e.g. Thomas Talbot, 'Universal Reconciliation and the Inclusive Nature of Election,' in *Perspectives on Election*, pp. 231-35. This is only possible if one reads these statements in isolation from the total context of Pauline theology.

[15]   In the New Testament believers are normally described as the recipients of God's mercy. However Romans 11:32 affirms that *all* are the objects of God's merciful purpose.

[16]   In Pauline idiom it is believers who acknowledge Jesus as 'Lord'. However Philippians 2:11 states God's purpose and desire is that all acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

[17]   In the Gospel of John 'eternal life' is promised to believers. However John 3:16 affirms that the possibility of eternal life is open to all.

[18]   The language of 'salvation' is normally applied to believers. However other texts state that God desires that all embrace his salvation (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

[19]   In Romans 3:25 it is believers who benefit from Christ being a *hilastērion* (a wrath averting, sin cleansing sacrifice in fulfilment of what the mercy seat represented). 1 Cor. 5:14 states 'one died for all'. In 1 John 2:2 the author says

it follows that, by extension, all soteriological categories in the New Testament are in principle equally universal in their scope, e.g. redemption, new creation, adoption, sanctification, election and predestination. The status of being one of the elect is open to all who respond to God's grace.

Fourth, one must also take into consideration the metaphorical and analogical character of language that is drawn from the context of human experience and used to express theological concepts.

To take one example, with respect to the language of being an *heir* there are multiple points of discontinuity. In human experience receiving the inheritance follows the death of the one from whom the inheritance comes, but at a theological level it is the recipient of the inheritance who must first die. In human experience an inheritance only goes to carefully selected individuals while at a theological level the opportunity of being an heir is open to all. At the level of human usage receiving an inheritance is not premised on agreement to being an heir while at a theological level one must say yes to the offer of an inheritance.

There are also discontinuities in the use of *adoption* language. In human experience parents are selective in who they adopt, but at a theological level the status of adoption is open to all. In human experience being adopted does not require the consent of the baby or child, but at a theological level one must say yes to the invitation to an adopted status.[20]

In the case of election language it is true that the word normally signifies a selection or choice which necessarily excludes other possibilities.[21] Furthermore the word election does not normally take into account the

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that Christ is a *hilasmos* (wrath averting, sin cleansing sacrifice) not just for believers but for the 'the sins of the whole world'.

[20] To take another example, in the context of Pauline theology the forensic language of '*justification/acquittal*' assumes a cluster of ideas that would be without precedence in the use of this language in normal human experience: (1) the acquitted person is in fact guilty; (2) someone else provides the basis for the person's acquittal; (3) forgiveness of the wrong doing is foundational to acquittal; (4) the acquitted person is brought into an enduring relationship with the 'judge'. It would be a mistake to define the theological use of *acquittal language* on the basis of how this language works in human experience. The scriptural context for the language must guide how one understands its use when applied to God's acquittal of the believer.

[21] Jewett, *Election and Predestination*, p. 26, states that 'Election obviously implies rejection'. This assumption fails to take account of the full context of New Testament theology for understanding how the early church used election language.

response of the one selected or chosen. [22] However contextual evidence
suggests that these concepts are not carried over into the theological use
of New Testament election language with reference to believers. This
should not surprise us given the analogical character of theological lan-
guage drawn from human experience and, in this case, of the use of Scrip-
tural language fashioned to describe corporate Israel and now re-applied
to individual believers. We should be prepared to follow the evidence and
explore other options for understanding New Testament election lan-
guage which does not create contradictions within the text. [23]

Fifth, the word 'elect' is often used simply as a way of designating
those who belong to God without saying anything about the 'mechanics'
as to how they came to have this status. I Timothy 5:21 speaks of the 'elect
angels' as a way of describing 'God's angels'. It is unlikely that there is an
intended contrast between angels whom God selected to remain faithful
to him and those that were not selected. It would also not make sense to
apply the interpretation of election language as 'gracious initiative' to the
expression the 'elect angels'. In Luke 18:7 Jesus says that 'God will answer
the prayers of his elect', i.e. his people. [24]

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[22]   As has been pointed out, this is also true for the terms 'adoption' and 'heir'.
       In normal usage these are not conditioned upon the response of a person.
       However in its theological use these soteriological realities are, like election,
       conditional upon responding to and persevering in God's grace.

[23]   Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians* (BEC; Grand Rapids: Baker), p. 187, fails both to
       recognize any discontinuity when O.T. election language is applied to indi-
       vidual believers and to recognize that one cannot transfer all the meanings of
       a word from one context to its use in another. He does acknowledge that one
       of the intentions of election language is to affirm that the initiative in salva-
       tion lies entirely with God.

[24]   Other examples: Rom. 8:33: 'who will bring any charge against the elect of
       God'; Mk. 13:22: 'deceive the elect'; Mk. 13:27: 'gather his elect'; Matt. 22:14:
       'many are called, few are elect'; Col. 3:12: 'clothe yourself as the elect of God';
       Rom. 16:13: 'Greet Rufius, elect in the Lord'; 2 Tim. 2:10: 'I endure everything
       for the sake of the elect'; Titus 1:1: 'for the faith of God's elect'; Rev. 17:14:
       the elect come with Jesus. While in this usage the 'elect' is simply a way of
       identifying God's people, the term may well have been selected because of its
       associations with God's grace as the basis for their existence and the special
       status and loved character of believers. The other reason for the use of the
       term is that this was Scriptural language for believers. With respect to the
       phrase 'few are elect' in Matt. 22:14, R. T. France, *Matthew* (TNTC; Grand
       Rapids/Leicester: Eerdmans/InterVarsity Press, 1985), p. 314, notes that the
       term 'elect' is simply a designation for believers, '...the emphasis being on the
       fact of membership, not the means of achieving it.' For a contrary perspective

SURVEY OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS

The ultimate test of this hypothesis is whether the election texts of the New Testament can be naturally interpreted by focusing on the concept of *gracious initiative* without reference to the concept of the *selection* of some in contrast to others. It is not only possible to read the texts in this manner, it is also a natural interpretation which does not involve creating a contradiction with those New Testament texts affirming God's universal salvific will and the possibility of apostasy. This can be demonstrated in a review of the key election texts in Paul, Petrine literature, the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Matthew.

Pauline Texts. In Ephesians 1:4, 11, Paul states that believers are those whom God has resolved to elect and predestine to salvation on the basis of Christ's redemptive work ('in Christ'). The language is applied to those who have already responded to the Gospel and functions to emphasize the utter gratuity of God's grace.[25] These statements affirm that from the beginning God has always had loving and redemptive purposes towards those whom he creates. As God takes the initiative to draw people into relationship and when they respond to his call, this eternal purpose is actualized and they become one of the elect.[26] In this context Paul also affirms that God has acted in Christ to 'redeem', 'to forgive sins', 'to

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cf. Peterson and Williams, *Not an Arminian*, pp. 48-9; Jewett, *Election and Predestination*, pp. 24-5.

[25] Charles Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossians* (Paideia; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), pp. 49-52; Romans (Macon: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2002), pp. 232-4, suggests that the language of election and predestination can be seen as primarily as a confessional affirmation that the initiative in salvation lies entirely with God. He points out that an emphasis on the divine initiative would have been especially important in a Gentile context where '...the pervasive principle of reciprocity would tend to subvert the Christian view of divine initiative' (*Ephesians*, p. 52).

[26] In several other Pauline texts election is traced back to a time before the world was created (2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2). This can be seen as a way of affirming that it had always been God's intention to act in this manner. God's decision to act in love was not an afterthought, not a 'Plan B or C'. It was 'plan A' in that it has always been his intention to act in love and grace towards those he brings into existence. It is likely that the prefix 'fore' in 'foreknowledge' is another way of grounding election in God's eternal purpose. There is a parallel to this idiom in Ephesians 2:10 where Paul says 'We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.' The point here is that it was always God's intention that those who embraced his redemptive work would 'do good works'. It is likely that Revelation 13:8 should be translated 'the Lamb that was slain from

reveal his will', to give 'the Spirit', to bring 'salvation', 'to make alive', to manifest 'love and mercy', and to hold out the promise of eschatological hope. These statements express the initiative of God to extend his grace on those who are in Christ. The language of election and predestination is in alignment with this purpose as it affirms that the initiative in salvation lies entirely with God.[27]

Romans 8:28 affirms that in the present circumstances of the believer, God is always at work to conform them to the image of Christ (=the good). This affirmation is grounded in the confidence that God has at every point taken the initiative to enable the believer's salvation. He has from eternity taken the initiative to draw them into relationship (=foreknew), he has determined the goal towards which they will move ('predestined to be conformed to the image of his son')[28], he has called and justified them and he will glorify them. These statements focus on the gracious initiative

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the creation of the world'. This would again be an idiom saying that Christ's redemptive work was always part of God's intention, i.e. it was 'plan A'.

[27] This emphasis on the initiative of God in salvation would have been especially important for Christians with a pagan background because in the various expressions of Graeco-Roman paganism the initiative in religious matters lay entirely with the person rather than the gods. In fact the Pauline emphasis on justification by faith without works may have been motivated more by the need to demolish the consistent and uncompromising legalism that characterized Gentile assumptions about how one related to the 'gods' than any expression of 'soft legalism' that may have characterized some Jewish thinking.

[28] To the modern ear the term 'predestination' has a strongly deterministic meaning. However the context of Pauline usage indicates that Paul himself does not use the word in a deterministic manner. In Romans 8:29 Paul says that God has predestined believers to eschatological conformity to the image of Christ. However as is argued elsewhere, the realization of this goal is conditional upon persevering in the faith (cf. the main text and note 28). In Ephesians 1:12 Paul says that God predestines believers to live to bring glory to God. In Ephesians 2:8 Paul says that God 'prepared in advance' (= predestined) the good works of Christians. The realization of these purposes is conditional in that believers must respond to this purpose of God and in their daily life bring glory to God and do good works. The fact that many believers do not bring glory to God or do good works is evidence that the language of predestination must be understood conditionally rather than deterministically. On Calvinist assumptions when believers fail to do good works or bring glory to God this would be because God ordained disobedience in those circumstances.

of God as the ground for confidence in his intentions for the believer in the present circumstances of life.[29]

Calvinist interpreters argue that Romans 8:29-30 is clear evidence for the absolutely unconditional character of election. Those whom God has selected for salvation will be effectually called and can be assured of persevering in grace until they reach the goal of eschatological glorification. This approach fails to take account both of the reason for Paul's one-sided emphasis on God's initiative and the broader context of Pauline theology. It would have been inappropriate to the point Paul is making to break up this powerful statement of God's work on behalf of the believer by introducing conditional clauses.[30] However the broader context of Pauline theology makes it clear that this is a one-sided statement which has a conditional component. Paul clearly believes that not all who are 'called' respond with faith and are 'justified' (e.g. Romans 10:8-15, 16-21). He also believes that eschatological glorification is conditioned upon persevering in the faith and that perseverance is not guaranteed for any believer.[31] Both the statement of the God's initiative and purpose as well as the condition of human response are stated together in Colossians 2:22-23: 'But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.'

Romans 11:5-7 is one election text which is often read as meaning that God selects some and hardens others: 'So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened.' This statement must be read within the context of Paul's entire argument

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[29] Craig Keener, *Romans* (NCCS; Eugene: Cascade Books, 2009), p. 110, argues that Paul '...apparently refers to God's choice mostly to emphasize the initiative of God's grace rather than human works (9:11).'

[30] E.g. by writing 'those who he called and who responded, he justified, those he justified and who persevered, he glorified.'

[31] Paul expresses himself in various ways which indicate he believed that apostasy or falling away is a real possibility: (1) statements which affirm that arriving at the goal of eschatological salvation is conditioned on 'remaining in the faith' (Col. 1:23; 1 Cor. 9:27 & 10:6-10; 15:1; Rom. 8:17); (2) warnings that severe ethical or doctrinal failure can result in eternal loss (Gal. 4:19; 6:8; 1 Cor. 3:17; 6:9f; Rom. 8:13; 11:22; Phil. 3:18f; cf. 1 Cor. 10:6-10); (3) statements assuming that falling away can nullify the benefits of conversion (Gal. 4:11; 5:4; 1 Thess. 3:5; 1 Cor. 15:1; 2 Cor. 6:1). Other relevant texts include 2 Cor. 13:5-7, 1 Tim. 1:19-20, 4:1, and 2 Tim. 4:3f; 10.

in Romans 9-11. Paul is responding to the twin objections that if the promises to Israel were indeed realized in Jesus then 1. God was under obligation to ensure that the covenant people recognized and responded to this reality and, 2. it would be wrong for God to allow Gentiles to be the primary beneficiaries of the promises to Israel.[32] In 9:6-23 Paul is arguing 1. that God has no obligation to turn up the heat of irresistible grace so that Israel will respond to what he does and as a result he is free to act in judgement towards Jews who spurn his grace; 2. that God is free to show mercy to responsive Gentiles, those who were not the primary recipients of Scriptural promises. In response to the Jewish demand for preferential treatment Paul wants to affirm God's freedom in the exercise of his mercy and judgement.

Romans 11:1-10 must be read within this context. Here Paul affirms that God has not rejected Israel. The evidence for this is that there are some Jews who have responded to the Gospel. However Paul wants to make it clear that the existence of Jewish believers is not due to any obligation on God's part to ensure that some Jews believe. Their status as believers is due entirely to the grace of God rather then to God's acting out of obligation to them. He expresses this in 11:6 by saying that their status is not based on 'works' (=God acting out of a sense of obligation) but on 'grace' (=the utter gratuity of God's initiative and call). In 11:7 he distinguishes between the 'elect', i.e. those who responded to God's gracious initiative, and the 'rest who were hardened', i.e. those who rejected God's gracious initiative and who God was free to harden rather than obliged to turn up the heat of irresistible grace until they believed. It is clear from 11:20-23 that these categories of 'the elect' and the 'the hardened' are not fixed. There is the possibility 1. for the 'elect' to 'be cut off' (=become one of the hardened); 2. for the 'hardened' to 'be grafted in' (=become one of the elect). Contextual indicators such as this in Romans 9-11 render implausible the reading of 9:6-23 and 11:1-10 as an expression of theological determinism.

Petrine Texts. Turning to the Petrine literature, in 1 Peter 1:1f the author addresses his audience as 'elect aliens of the diaspora'. He then says that this status is based on 'the foreknowledge of God the Father'. As is the case in Romans 8:29, the word 'foreknowledge' can be seen as describing the gracious initiative of God as the basis for their status as believers, i.e. the elect[33]. This fits a recurring theme in this letter that God's calling or

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32   Glen Shellrude, 'The Freedom of God in Mercy and Judgment: A Libertarian Reading of Romans 9:6-29', *Evangelical Quarterly* 81.4 (2009), 306-18.

33   Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* (BEC; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), pp. 68-9, interprets election language in 1 Peter 1:2 along the lines proposed here, i.e. as an affir-

initiative is foundational to the faith response of the believers to whom Peter writes (1 Pet. 1:3, 15, 23; 2:9f, 25; 3:9; 5:10).

2 Peter contains an explicit statement that God desires the salvation of all (3:9) and warnings against apostasy (3:17-21; 3:17). To these twin challenges to the Calvinist understanding of election can be added the author's use of election language in 2 Peter 2:10: 'make your calling and election sure'. The language is hardly consistent with an understanding of election as the unconditional and irrevocable selection of specific individuals for salvation. However the imperative makes sense if the author assumes that election is conditional in the sense that the believer can either forfeit or retain their elected status. This understanding of the statement is consistent with the interpretation of election language as a way of speaking of God's gracious initiative and the loved status of those who respond. The point would be that believers owe their status entirely to God's drawing (calling, election). But this is a status which can be lost, so believers are encouraged to persevere in God's grace and thereby ensure that they will experience the eschatological realization of their 'calling and election'.

Gospel of John. The Gospel of John makes frequent and powerful use of election language and concepts: 'All whom the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away' (6:37); 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them' (6:44); 'No one can come to me unless it has been granted him from the Father'(6.65); 'You did not choose me, but I chose you' (15:16); 'I have chosen you out of the world' (15:19); 'For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him' (17:2); 'I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me' (17:6).[34]

When Calvinist interpreters read these statements within the framework of a theological determinism where God scripts every detail of history in advance, they naturally find a theology of unconditional election.[35] However if Jesus and John shared these theological assumptions, it is hard to explain why the Gospel of John repeatedly affirms the universal scope of God's salvific will (John 1:7, 9, 29; 3:16; 4:42; 5:23; 12:32)

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mation of God's gracious initiative as the foundation for the believer's life and hope. The discussion of election language in this verse is not framed with reference to traditional Calvinist and Arminian categories. These issues are raised in the exegesis of 2:8 (pp. 155-6) where she appears to conclude with a non-Calvinist perspective.

[34] Cf. also John 1:13; 3:3, 7; 10:26-30; 17:9-10, 24.

[35] E.g. Robert W. Yarbrough, 'Divine Election in the Gospel of John', in *Still Sovereign*, pp. 47-62.

and warns about the danger of apostasy (John 15:2, 6). Furthermore the entire Gospel is written with a view to challenging everyone to respond in faith to Jesus. Why would John write *as though* it were possible for all to respond positively when *in reality* this was not the case? The assumption undergirding the language of John is that both Jesus' hearers and the readers of the Gospel possess the 'libertarian freedom' to respond with either faith or unbelief to Jesus. While God's antecedent grace is always the basis for a positive response, it is never said that this grace is 'irresistible'. Where people respond negatively, it is never said that this outcome was ordained by God and therefore there was insufficient grace to enable a response.[36]

Interpreting election language in John as expressing the idea that salvation is entirely due to God's gracious initiative and draws attention to the loved and special status of those who have responded to the Gospel works well for all these texts.[37] This approach also fits the emphasis in John on the importance of responding to Jesus with faith rather than unbelief. While God's grace enables a positive response, it is never said to be the sole cause. Furthermore where there is a negative response to Jesus, the focus is on the person's unbelief without any indication that God is the source of that unbelief.[38]

Gospel of Matthew. Matthew 22:14 is a particularly interesting election statement at the conclusion of the parable of the Wedding Feast: 'Many are called, few are elect/chosen" (22.14)'. Within the context of the parable the point is while all are invited to salvation, not all respond appropriately and are thus saved. It is generally recognized that 1. 'many' reflects Semitic

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[36]   For an exceptional analysis of these issues cf. Grant Osborne, 'Soteriology in the Gospel of John,' in *The Grace of God*, pp. 243-60.

[37]   Neither the traditional Arminian-Wesleyan view of election as based on a foreknowledge of who will believe or the purely corporate approach works well for the Gospel of John.

[38]   Calvinists commonly juxtapose the concepts of divine sovereignty and human responsibility so as to affirm both that God ordains all human choices and that people are fully responsible for their decisions. A more relational construct which is truer to Scripture is to distinguish 'God's initiative' and the 'human response'. The New Testament assumes that where people respond positively to God, it is God's initiative which enables the positive response, though this grace is never understood as irresistible. However the Scriptures do not state that a negative response to God can be explained by a limitation in God's initiative towards those individuals, i.e. that there was insufficient grace to enable a positive response. The New Testament affirms that there are different responses to the same grace but does not try to explain the why and how of this phenomena.

usage and means 'all'; 2. 'few' means a smaller number than were invited; 3. 'elect' in this context simply points to the status of being a believer and does not mean that 'the few' have been 'unconditionally selected'.[39] The first clause affirms both the universal scope of God's redemptive purpose (all) and that God takes the initiative to draw everyone into relationship with himself (are called).[40] In the larger context of Jesus' message and the immediate context of the parable, the 'few who are God's People' are those who respond to God's call, to his gracious initiative, with faith and a life of discipleship. This statement again points to the conclusion that being one of the 'elect' is a possibility open to all. God invites all to relationship, but only the responsive can be described as 'the elect'.

CONCLUSION

Is election unconditional (Calvinism) or conditional (Arminianism)? The intent of election language in the New Testament is to focus on the absolute, unconditional grace of God as the basis for the existence of God's People. Thus the *intent* of election language is unconditional. However election language is only applied to believers, to those who have responded positively to God's gracious initiative. Thus from a different perspective one could argue that election language is conditional. One must say yes to God's election, to his gracious initiative, in order to become one of the

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[39] Cf. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 3 vols. (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark: 1997), 3, pp. 206-7, for an excellent discussion of the interpretive issues.

[40] Calvinists defuse the meaning of texts such as this by distinguishing between God's 'general call' and his 'effectual call'. The 'general call' is God's invitation to salvation to those who are utterly incapable of responding because God withholds the grace that would enable a response. Those selected for salvation, i.e. the elect; are 'effectually called'. For a full defense of this construct cf. Bruce Ware, 'Effectual Calling and Grace,' in *Still Sovereign*, pp. 203-27. On this view the assumptions underlying Matthew 22:14 are that 14a describes a 'general call' and 14b describes those who received an 'effectual call'. Moo, *Romans*, p. 530, n. 126, cites Matthew 22:14a as an example of a 'general call'. Jewett, *Election*, p. 99, points out with respect to Matthew 22:14 that '...Augustine argued that while God calls many through the proclamation of the gospel, only a few respond because only a few have been chosen in his secret will.' This interpretive distinction between a general and effectual call is based on the requirements of the Calvinist system. The New Testament assumes a single call with different responses. Those 'effectually called' are those who embrace God's initiative and the enabling grace inherent in the call. The New Testament distinguishes between two kinds of 'responses' to God's call, not two types of 'calls'.

elect. However the conditional side of election is not the focus of the New Testament.[41] The focus of election language is instead on the utter gratuity of God's initiative as the basis for the status of believers.[42]

Finally, since God calls and invites all to relationship with himself, the potential is there for 'all to be elect'. The New Testament never describes unbelievers as 'elect in principle' for the obvious reason that the language of election is part of the vocabulary used to describe believers. It is best to follow the lead of the New Testament and reserve election language for those who have responded to God's call. But as a means of reminding ourselves to think of election as an open, inclusive reality it is worth keeping in mind that from a theological perspective in principle 'all are elect' in that God invites all to embrace that status.

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41 The statement in 2 Peter 1:10, 'make your calling and election sure', is the one statement which clearly brings out the conditional element of election language. Jesus' statement in Matthew 22:14 that 'all are called, few are elect' also implies the condition of human response. But the condition of human response is not found in most election texts. Once again the reason is that the language is being used of those who have already responded to God's grace.

42 While the emphasis of election language in the New Testament is on the gracious initiative of God as the basis for the believer's status, one can also argue that the idea of choosing or 'selecting' is not completely absent. If God takes the initiative to draw people into relationship, then this implies that he has chosen to do so and can thus be said to have 'selected' those he invites to respond to the Gospel. The New Testament emphasis on God's universal salvific will means then that he has chosen or 'selected' all for salvation. However while election language assumes that God has made a choice, the focus remains on the expression of that choice in the gracious initiative which undergirds and enables every response to the Gospel.

'THE CONDUIT TO CONVEIGH LIFE': JAMES USSHER'S *IMMANUEL* AND PATRISTIC CHRISTOLOGY[1]

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James Ussher (1581-1656) was an influential Renaissance churchman and theologian but those familiar with him today only know his famous chronology.[2] Yet Alan Ford, Ussher's twenty-first century biographer, catalogues accolades like that of the French theologian Alexander Morus (1616-1670) who nominated Ussher as 'the Athanasius of our century'.[3] He was a prolific writer—the nineteenth-century collection of his *Works* consists of seventeen volumes dealing with church history, the Septuagint, politics and catechetics.[4] As Archbishop of Armagh he was primate of Ireland and thus deeply involved in politics with a close connection to leaders in England like the Archbishop of Canterbury and even the king. As broad as his interests and influence were, studies of Ussher's patristic writings typically terminate at his work on Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35-c. 107).[5] While his text-critical discovery is important, other avenues of Ussher's historical thought need exploring. This essay asks how a small part of Ussher's work was shaped by his patristic studies. In 1638 he wrote *Immanuel, or The Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God*, an exposition of the incarnation framed in patristic language. To consider this influence on *Immanuel* we begin with historical concerns with the

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[1]   I am thankful to Michael A. G. Haykin, Dennis Ngien and Crawford Gribben who supervised the thesis that this article comes from.

[2]   Recent studies include Alan Ford, *James Ussher: Theology, History, and Politics in Early-Modern Ireland and England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Jack Cunningham, *James Ussher and John Bramhall: The Theology and Politics of Two Irish Ecclesiastics of the Seventeenth Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Crawford Gribben, *The Irish Puritans: James Ussher and the Reformation of the Church* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2003); and R. Buick Knox, *James Ussher: Archbishop of Armagh* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967).

[3]   Ford, *James Ussher*, p. 1.

[4]   C. R. Elrington and J. H. Todd eds., *The Whole Works of the Most Rev. James Ussher*, 17 vols. (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1847-1864).

[5]   J. E. L. Oulton, 'Ussher's Work as a Patristic Scholar and Church Historian', *Hermathena* 83 (November, 1956), 3-11.

text, and then turn to a summary of its core argument, concluding with an examination of the theological language Ussher uses to highlight how history shaped his Christology.

Provenance

Questions of why and to whom Ussher wrote *Immanuel* are hard to answer. Externally there is no mention of *Immanuel* in his published letters dating from 1638.[6] Nor is there much discussion of it in biographical material. Ford mentions it once and Ussher's Victorian biographer, Charles R. Elrington, sheds a little light when he says that the treatise consists of sermonic material preached some time previous in Drogheda. They are 'as simple as the nature of the subject would permit; it consists principally of a collection of texts from Scripture skilfully arranged. There does not seem any thing peculiar in his view of the subject'.[7] Within the text there is no reference to debate, though at its time Socinianism was proving to be a problem. R. Buick Knox mentions a visit to London in 1646 where Ussher stopped in Gloucester and visited the Universalist John Biddle (1615/1616-1652), but this occurred after the 1638 printing of *Immanuel*.[8] Due to Ussher's stature as an apologist, the uniqueness of *Immanuel* to his corpus is its non-polemical character.

A potential allusion to an audience is found in its dedication to the Laudian Thomas Wentworth (1593-1641) upon his becoming Lord Deputy of Ireland; Ussher gave him a copy as a new year's gift. This olive branch could be interpreted as a political move extended to Wentworth whose political and theological vision was different than Ussher's. The tract's concluding citation of Philippians 3:8 is curious—is it possible that *Immanuel* is a meditation on Christ during a time of suffering? Ussher lost political and ecclesial power to Wentworth and John Bramhall (*bap.* 1594-*d.* 1663) who became Bishop of Derry in May 1634. Bramhall's encroachment on Ussher's authority would not have been immediate, thus placing the writing of *Immanuel* around the time of Ussher's erosion of power. Elrington cites a letter from William Laud (1573-1645) to Wentworth where the Archbishop complains that Ussher did not send him a copy of *Immanuel*.[9] Could it be that Ussher quietly sought to demonstrate faithfulness to Christ in the face of losing power to the Laudians? There is

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6   Ussher, *Works*, vol. 16.
7   Ford, *James Ussher*, p. 206; C. R. Elrington, *The Life of the Most Reverend James Ussher* (1847), in *The Whole Works of the Most Rev. James Ussher*, ed. by C.R. Elrington and J.H. Todd (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1847), 1, pp. 201-2.
8   Knox, *James Ussher*, p. 68.
9   Elrington, *Life*, 201.

no solid evidence to give a clear answer, but it is reasonable that he wrote to show fidelity under duress.

IMMANUEL—A SUMMARY

As *Immanuel* is based on sermons, there is a structure that moves from the person to the work of Christ; it argues that the Mediator must have two natures to be Immanuel. While there is a lack of polemic in *Immanuel*, its apologetic substructure is evident. The treatise is a 'soteriological argument' for the two-natures of the Redeemer who saves sinners.[10]

The Mystery

The subtitle is *The Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God*. From this a twofold aim is evident: to give clarity where possible and to let mystery reign when reason reaches its limit. Ussher follows scripture, tradition, and reason, though at key points he submits to the supra-rationality of the incarnation.

He begins with the question asked by the 'holy prophet' in the sayings of Agur (Prov. 30:3, 4) about how God can be known: 'Who hath ascended up into Heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the winde in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his SONS name, if thou canst tell?'[11] The answer, based on John 3:13, is the person whom the prophet calls 'the Son' and Isa. 9:3 calls 'Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace' (1). Ussher asks, if this is so, how the Son can converse from heaven with those on earth. How is it 'that the *Father of Eternity* should be *born in time*? and that the *Mighty*

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10 For this type of argument, see Serge S. Verkhovsky, 'Some Theological Reflections on Chalcedon', *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, 2.1 (1958), 3.

11 James Ussher, *Immanuel, or The Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God* (London: 1653), p. 1. *Immanuel* was published individually seven times in Ussher's lifetime: 1st ed., (Dublin, 1638); 2nd ed., (London, 1638), 3rd ed., (Oxford 1643); 4th ed., (London,); 5th ed., (London, 1647); 6th ed., (London, 1649). It was also published appended to *A Body of Divinitie* four times: 1st ed., (London, 1645); 2nd ed., (London, 1647); 3rd ed., (London, 1649); 4th ed., (London, 1653). Cf. James Ussher, 'Immanuel, or The Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God' in *Works*, 4:573-617. For a critical edition see Ian Hugh Clary, '"The Conduit to Conveigh Life": An Evaluation of James Ussher's *Immanuel* in Light of Patristic Christology' (Unpublished master of theology dissertation, Toronto Baptist Seminary, 2010). This essay uses the 1653 edition which is identical in both its individual and *Bodie of Divinity* publications. Page references for citations to this edition will be included in the body of the essay.

God should become a *Childe*; which is the weakest state of Man himselfe?' The answer is found first in the name that Isaiah gives to the Son: '[T]he first letter of this great Name, is WONDERFULL.' Second, that the Son is wonderful is proven by the christophany to Manoah (Judg. 13:18, 19) where he is called wonderful and his deeds wondrous.

While the works of the Son in both testaments are wonderful, they pale in comparison to the incarnation—that Ussher says happened by virgin conception—'a thing so wonderfull, that it was given for a signe unto unbeleevers seven hundred and forty yeares before it was accomplished' in the prophecy of Isa. 7:14 (2). This is the wonder 'that the Son of God should be "made of a Woman;" even made of that Woman, which was made by himselfe' (John 1:36; Col. 1:16).

The Mystery (Partially) Revealed: Person

Ussher asks how these paradoxical realities can be true. How can the Son speak from heaven yet be on earth, how is he inferior yet equal to his father, how is he both David's Son and Lord? The answer is classical Christology: 'The untying of this knot dependeth upon the right understanding of the wonderfull conjunction of the divine and humane Nature in the unity of the person of our Redeemer' ... 'For by reason of the strictnesse of this personall union, whatsoever may be verified of either of those Natures, the same may be truly spoken of the whole Person, from whethersoever of the Natures it be denominated' (3). How the fullness of God can dwell richly in the person of Christ, is answered by *unio personalis*; 'a personall and reall union', that does 'inseparably and everlastingly conjoyne' the infinite Godhead with Christ's 'finite Manhood' in the unity of his person.

After explaining how God relates to the created order Ussher spends the rest of *Immanuel* on the nature of the union in terms of person and nature. He in whom the fullness dwells is the 'person' and the fullness that dwells in the person is the 'nature'. The nature relates to the person in 'that the divine Nature did not assume an humane Person, but the divine Person did assume an humane Nature'.

Ussher maintains the integrity of the Trinity in his discussion of person and nature. While the incarnation is an *opus commune* of the three persons, it was necessarily the Son, not the Father or Spirit, who assumed a human nature. Nor did the Godhead dwell in the human nature. It was not the Father because the incarnation fixed a mediator between sinners and the Father, and it was not the entire Godhead because 'there should then a fourth Person necessarily have been added to the Godhead'. It had to be the 'Son' who was incarnated, if not 'there should have been two Sons in the Trinity'. In this classic view, there is thus 'no alteration ... made in the relations of the Persons of the Trinity'.

For proof of the *assumptio carnis*—that sinners might receive sonship by adoption—Ussher cites Galatians 4:4-7 so 'that what relation Christ hath unto God by Nature, we being found in him have the same by Grace' (4). Christology gives way to soteriology so that adoption is possible. Though Christ is distinct from those adopted into his family, they are yet in and for him; they are firstborns—like Israel in Exodus 4—'by the grace of adoption' and are heirs by incorporation into Christ.

Of the nature, Ussher argues that it is rooted in concrete, historical reality. It is 'the seed of Abraham', 'the seed of David', and 'the seed of the Woman'. It is the Word made flesh who is really 'the fruit of her wombe'. The Son did not only assume the substance of human nature but also its properties and qualities. Ussher quotes James 5:17 and compares the Son to Elijah who was subject to human passions—his footnote says, Ἡλίας ἄνθρωπος ἦν ὁμοιοπαθὴς ἡμῖν. The Son was subject to human weaknesses and infirmities; he was made like his brethren but without sin. To support Christ as *impeccabilitas* Ussher quotes Augustine on impeccability in Psalm 29: '*Mediator factus est homo non iniquus*'. However, Augustine also says that Jesus was '*sed tamen infirmus*'.[12] Ussher is careful to distinguish between what he calls 'personal infirmities' and 'general infirmities'. The Son in his *status humiliationis* does not suffer 'madnesse, blindnesse, lamenesse, and particular kinds of diseases, which are incident to some onely and not to all men in generall'. Rather, he was susceptible to 'hungring, thirsting, wearinesse, griefe, paine, and mortality'—things common to humankind generally.

How it is possible that the two natures could come together in the unity of the one person Ussher is happy to confess ignorance: it 'is an inquisition fitter for an Angelicall intelligence, then for our shallow capacity to looke after … these are the things which the "Angels desire to stoop and looke into".'[13] The burning bush is an example of the need to draw back before mystery; when Moses came close to the bush he trembled and hid his face and let mystery be mystery. If speculation about the *dualitas naturarum* gets too close, the response must be the awe of Moses. Such a wonderful mystery, according to Ussher, reminds people of their

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[12] Ussher's footnote of Augustine: '*Inter Trinitatem, et hominum infirmitatem, et iniquitatem, Mediator factus est homo non iniquus, sed tamen infirmus: ut ex eo quod non iniquus jungeretur Deo; ex eo quod infirmus, propinquaret tibi.* Aug. Præf. in enerrat. 2. Psal. 29.' For a modern edition see Augustine, *Opera Omnia* (Paris: 1835), p. 191.

[13] Cf. Ussher, 'A Sermon Preached Before the King's Majesty, 20th June, 1624, on the Universality of the Church of Christ', in *The Whole Works of the Most Rev. James Ussher*, ed. by C.R. Elrington and J.H. Todd (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1847), 2, pp. 472-3.

dust and ashes (6). This is not fideism but recognition of the limits of human knowledge. The incarnation is knowable according to what has been revealed. The purpose of this revelation is salvific and doxological— Abraham rejoiced to see this day. God set his habitation among his people and indwells them by the Spirit as though they were temples. This is the foundation of the promise that he will be their God and they will be his people, and the foundation of Christian unity. Though the mechanics of this wonder are beyond human means of discovery, Christians should not be indifferent; they should marvel at the wonder.

The Mystery (Partially) Revealed: Work

The Dual-Nature Mediator. Ussher ends his discussion of the two natures and transitions with the *opus theandricum* of mediatorship: the Mediator must be 'God with us'. It is by his *munus* that he is Immanuel, for to be Mediator between God and humans he must 'partake' of both. The Mediator is 'from all eternity consubstantiall with his Father' and 'must at the appointed time become likewise consubstantiall with his children' to reconcile the two (7).[14] *Reconciliatio* is crucial because God and sinners are at enmity; for the Son to mediate 'he must have an interest in both the parties'. In his mediation he turns the Father's 'favourable countenance towards us'. In the words of 1 John 2:1-2, sinners have an advocate with the Father, Christ Jesus, the propitiation of God's wrath against sinners (8). Just as there is one God, so there is one Mediator between God and humans, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5). This Mediator gave himself as a ransom for all and 'in discharge of this his office of mediation, as the onely fit umpire to take up this controversie, was to lay his hand aswell upon God the party so highly offended, as upon Man the party so basely offending'.

Threefold Office: Priest, Prophet and King. After establishing the two-nature necessity of Immanuel, Ussher considers the Mediator's *munus triplex* of priest, prophet and king in the final section of the tract. Taking each in turn, he explains the intercessory nature of Christ's priesthood in its relation to God, his intercessory role as prophet in respect of humans, and the dominion of his kingdom.

The Dual-Nature Priest. Christ's priesthood receives the longest treatment, likely because this office relates to God, whereas the other two to humans. It could be that Ussher emphasizes the priestly office against

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[14] Ussher argues that Christ is mediator in both natures. Cf. Carl Trueman, 'From Calvin to Gillespie on Covenant: Mythological Excess or An Exercise in Doctrinal Development?', *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 11 (2009), 378-97.

Roman Catholicism, indicating that only the priesthood of Christ is nec-
essary.[15] Ussher distinguishes two functions in the *munus sacerdotale*.
The first is the *satisfactio Christi* and the second the *intercessio Christi*:
'The former whereof giveth contentment to God's *justice*; the latter sol-
liciteth his *mercy*, for the application of this benefit to the children of God
in particular' (8). Of *satisfactio* Ussher speaks of the Mediator's role as a
propitiation (*hilasmos*) for sin. God's '*love* to justice, and *hatred* to sinne'
was such that he would not have justice swallowed up in mercy, nor would
sin merely be pardoned without restitution (8-9). God's wrath must be
appeased and a ransom must be paid (*lytron anti pollōn*). The Mediator
must take upon himself the role of 'Advocate' in order 'to plead full *satis-
faction* made by himselfe' (9). As for *intercessio*, the Mediator stands in the
presence of God on behalf of sinners and makes requests for them. The
two natures of Christ are important for true intercession to take place.
Heb. 4:16 speaks of Christ as the High Priest who shares in his people's
temptations, yet without sin. To do so, the Mediator must share in the
nature of those for whom he intercedes.

The Mediator must also be human due to covenantal obedience.
Adam, the party of the first covenant, was 'tyed to this obedience' yet
failed; his disobedience made his offspring sinful. Another man is needed
to perfectly obey the stipulations of that first covenant. As it was a human
representative who disobeyed the first covenant, so it must be a human
mediator that obeys. Yet, 'being God, as well as man, he by his owne "eter-
nall Spirit" preserved himselfe without spot: presenting a far more satis-
factory obedience unto God, then could have possibly been performed by
Adam in his integrity.'

Ussher discusses the *sanctificativa* of the human nature of Christ.[16]
Adam was unable to sanctify himself; rather his holiness was deriva-
tive—received by virtue of being *imago Dei*. Had he obeyed in the
Garden, Adam could only say, 'I am an unprofitable servant; I have done
that which was my duty to doe'. But Christ, whose human nature was
sanctified by the divine, was able to obey God's law 'and so out of his
owne peculiar store did he bring forth those precious treasures of holy
obedience, which for the satisfaction of our debt he was pleased to tender
unto his Father'. Because of the human nature's sanctification, 'the Son

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[15]   I owe this insight to Michael A. G. Haykin.
[16]   The sanctification of Christ's human nature is not new, W. G. T. Shedd cites
       Augustine, John of Damascus, Anselm of Canterbury, Francis Turretin,
       Westminster Larger Catechism Q. 37, John Gill, and Jonathan Edwards who
       taught this. William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zonder-
       van, 1969), pp. 296-308.

advanced our nature into the highest pitch of dignitie, by admitting it into the unitie of his sacred Person' (10). Christ is a better Adam because in his humanity he dignified human nature.

The Son's works of obedience include circumcision and baptism. The apostle Paul said that a man who is circumcised is a debtor to the whole law. Similarly, John's baptism—that Jesus underwent—was one of repentance. Jesus had no moral requirement due to his sinlessness, but submitted to both to fulfil all righteousness (11). These were works of supererogation 'which would be put upon the account of them whose debt he undertooke to discharge; and being performed by the person of the Sonne of God, must in that respect not onely be equivalent, but infinitely overvalue the obedience of *Adam* and all his posteritie'. The merit earned by Christ would purchase the righteousness for those whom he represented.

Sinners not only have a debt of obedience that must be paid, they also suffer the debt of 'forfeiture and *nomine pœnae*'. Obedience is owed due to sin that Ussher likens to a 'default' on a loan or promise. The payment comes by nomine poenae, where a lessee (sinner) would owe a lessor (God). Christ is the surety 'who standeth chargeable with all our debts, as he maketh paiment for the one by his *Active*, so must he make amends for the other by his *Passive* obedience: he must first suffer, and then enter into his glory'. The *obedientia Christi* is the payment that sets debtors (*opheiletai*) free from the legal ramifications of not being able to make good on what is owed. The Captain of salvation paid the debtors' penalty by suffering on the cross.

Ussher asks how the suffering of the Son relates to the doctrine of divine impassibility. He says that 'the Godhead is of that infinite perfection, that it cannot possibly be subject to any passion'. However, the Son suffered and died on the cross. His answer alludes to the *communicatio idiomatum*: the Mediator has more than just a divine nature. Suffering was requisite for the payment of the debt, so the Mediator must be human. It was the human nature that suffered because it was human nature (generally) that transgressed. What happens to the nature can be predicated of the person, so it can be said that the Son did suffer while not denying divine impassibility.

The work of Christ on the cross purchased and conveyed redemption for the sons of men; its price was the blood of the Son. 'But', Ussher inquires, 'what should the purchase of a stranger have been to us?' (14). In his human nature, the Son so identifies with the redeemed that Ussher likens him to kin. In the Old Testament a person who was 'the next of kinne' had the right to be called 'the Redeemer'. In Job 19:25-27 Job appeals to God as his 'Goël' or 'Redeemer'. Ussher says that 'we may easily understand, that his and our Redeemer was to be the invisible God; and yet in

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his assumed flesh made visible even to the bodily eyes of those whom he redeemed'. For the invisible God to be the Redeemer of humanity he had to assume flesh and blood in order to be their kin, otherwise, 'how could he therein have been accounted our *next* of kinne?' There must be a natural link between the Redeemer and the redeemed in a community of race not only because of Old Testament familial teaching, but also due to the origin of sin and redemption. '[T]he guilt of the *first man's* transgressions is derived unto us by the means of carnall generation' (15). Thus redemption can only come to sinners by 'spiritual regeneration'. The Saviour did not disdain calling the redeemed his children, so new birth is possible 'for who else was able to make this 'new creature', but the same God that is the Creator of all things?' (15-16). These 'new babes' are born of the Spirit who 'proceeds' from the Father and the Son (16).

Ussher further opens the mystery of the incarnation by speaking of two of its effects: '[I]n every perfect generation the creature produced receiveth two things from him that doth beget it: *Life* and *Likenesse*'. In some contexts creatures do not necessarily carry the likeness of their creator—such as a painting or creatures bred out of mud—but in the 'proper course of generation' every creature begets its like.[17] Ussher argues from various New Testament texts that if obedience and sufferings were experienced by a bare man, even though this man was perfect, they would 'be to no purpose'. The healer would approach the sinner who is dead and the balm would be of no use. The 'Physitian' must not only be able to restore sinners to health, but to life (16-17). None can do this 'but the Father, Son, and holy Ghost; one God, blessed forever' (17). A fitting summary is 1 Corinthians 15:45: 'The last *Adam* was made a quickning spirit'. His comment on this conjures an image of an instrument that transmits life: 'An *Adam* therefore and perfect Man must he have been; that his flesh, given for us upon the Crosse, might be made the conduit to conveigh life unto the world'. The crucified flesh of the Son is the pipeline through which life is conveyed to dead sinners.

Adam's fathering of a son in his own likeness shows that what is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit. Citing 1 Corinthians 15:48, Ussher says that the change from the earthly to the heavenly will occur when Christ returns and fashions his people into his perfect image. Though a future event, it does not negate the need for conformity to Christ's image in the present. Christians are called to put off the old man and put on the new. Just as man is the image and glory of God and woman

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[17] Ussher quotes Horace's *Odes* 4.4: 'nec imbellem feroces Progenerant aquila columbam', translated 'nor do savage eagles produce a peaceful dove'.

is the image and glory of man, so too is Christ the image of God. Christians are to be conformed to his image.

Image and likeness go beyond the individual to the corporate church; in the words of John 11:52 and Ephesians 1:10, Christ gathers into one the children of God from all over—those in heaven and earth—to bring them under one Head. Ussher likens the unity between the church triumphant and the church militant to the veil in the tabernacle and 'as farre the one from the other as Heaven is from Earth, yet is made but one Tabernacle in Jesus Christ' (18). They are a habitation of God in the Spirit who unites them to Christ in a 'mysticall union' bringing all under one Head that is 'of the same nature with the Body which is knit unto it' and the body derives life from it (19). The *unio mystica* is expanded in three ways. First, Christians are truly joined to Christ. Second, the union is made immediately with the human nature of Christ. Third, the body and blood of Christ is made 'fit food for the spirituall nourishment of our soules'. The union that Christians have with Christ grounds their boldness to enter into the most holy place because they can by his blood. The vision of Jacob and the ladder spanning heaven and earth—applied by Jesus to himself— is a fitting image. Mixing metaphors, Jesus is the bridge over which sinners pass into heaven.

The Dual-Nature Prophet. In the next two sections Ussher pays comparatively less attention to the offices of prophet and king, though this does not mean that what he says is less significant. Christ's *munux propheticum*, like the *munux regium* and unlike the *munux sacerdotale*, relates to things concerning humans. As prophet, Christ's role is to 'openeth the will of his Father unto us' (20). While priests in the Old Covenant instructed people in the law, prophets are distinguished from them as their office was for instruction. The same is true for prophets in the New Covenant.

Ussher gives 'singular preheminence' to Moses above all other prophets because God said that he was 'faithfull in all mine house;' God spoke with Moses 'mouth to mouth'. Christ, as Mediator, is 'in a more peculiar manner likened unto *Moses*' regarding his prophetic office. God says in Deut. 18:25 that he will raise up a prophet in the midst of Israel who is like him. This prophet will be come from his 'Brethren the *Israelites*' and so must be a human (21). As a mediator Moses could only speak to God on behalf of Israel indirectly, therefore a Mediator is needed who can go into the presence of God as an equal. Christ abolishes the veil that separates God and his people, so that through him God's glory can be revealed. In the image of Christ, God's people can approach him without fear. This is 'daily effected by the power of the Ministry of the Gospell, instituted by the authority, and seconded by the power of this our great Prophet'. Christ

is worthy to have more glory than Moses, for just as Moses was faithful in God's house, Christ is the Son over his own house, the church. Christ is the Lord of the church, is its only builder, and so receives more glory.

Christ is greater than the other prophets for two reasons. First, no one knows the Father but the Son who reveals and declares him. This knowledge of the Father is qualitatively better than what comes from the prophets, who need the Spirit to guide them, because Christ himself gives the Spirit. Second, prophets and apostles can only plant and water but it is God alone who 'can give the increase' (22). Apostles and prophets have derivative authority that comes by Christ via the Spirit. Only God is able to breathe the breath of life and raise the dead; the natural man is blind and cannot perceive the things of the Spirit. The ministry of life that the apostles discharge comes from the power of God, 'and consequently, [Christ] in this respect also, must be *God* as well as *Man*' (23).

The Dual-Nature King. The final section of *Immanuel* concerns the *munux regium*; the kingdom of Christ that is the rule and protection that he exercises over his people. Isaiah described Christ's kingdom in Isaiah 9:7 as everlasting, Davidic, and ruled in justice. Daniel 7:13 explains that the Ancient of Days gives the Son of Man dominion, glory, a kingdom and a people from every language and nation that will not be destroyed. In the New Testament, the angel Gabriel tells Mary that she shall conceive a son who will be called Jesus who 'shall be great', and called the 'Son of the highest' who will be given the throne of David by God from where he shall reign over a kingdom that will have no end (23). The church can say of Christ, like Israel did of David, that 'we are thy bone and thy flesh'. She can 'sing' of Christ, as did David, that 'The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, untill I make thine enemies thy foot-stool'. Christ the king is the fulfilment of the *protoevangelium* (Gen. 3:15).

Following the Reformed orthodox Ussher affirms a two-fold, rather than a three-fold, distinction in the kingdom of Christ. There are '[t]wo speciall branches' of his kingdom: the first is 'the one of *Grace*', and the second 'of *Glory*' (24). Grace is the branch whereby Christ governs the church 'which is Militant upon Earth'. Glory is the branch that governs 'that part which is Triumphant in Heaven'. On earth, and under grace, Christ in his prophetic office works upon the mind and understanding, but by his kingly office he works upon the will and affections.

The God who gives grace also gives glory. Ussher again uses an instrumental example when he speaks of Christ's humanity as 'the golden pipe' that conveys life by resurrection. He argues that the people of God, even sacramentally in the Eucharist, are nourished by Christ and will be raised up with him at the last day. He shall return and be glorified in his saints

and be made marvellous in them. In turn, he will change their base bodies
and fashion them in the image of his glorious body, 'according to the
working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himselfe'. He
then concludes with a benediction taken from Revelation 1:5-6.

THE PERSON OF IMMANUEL AND CHALCEDONIAN CHRISTOLOGY

In *The Method of the Doctrine of the Christian Religion*, published in
1654 but written around 1603, Ussher asks: 'How many natures be there
in Christ?' The answer: 'Two; the Godhead, and the manhood; remain-
ing still distinct in their substance, properties and actions'. He elaborates
asking: 'How many persons hath he?' The answer: 'Only one; which is the
person of the Son of God'.[18] The *Irish Articles*—written largely by Ussher
in 1615—concur 'that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the
Godhead and Manhoode were inseparably ioyned in one person, making
one Christ very God and very man' (6.29). This reflects Chalcedon's state-
ment, '[W]e apprehend this one and only Christ—Son, Lord, only-begot-
ten—in two natures'.[19] Chalcedon is also echoed in the *Irish Articles* as
they affirm 'this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man'.[20]

Such quotations mirror what we have seen in *Immanuel*. Early on
Ussher writes, 'Now there dwelleth in him not onely the fulnesse of the
Godhead, but the fulnesse of the *Manhood* also' (3). And again, 'he in
whom the fulnesse of both those natures dwelleth, is one and the same
Immanuel, and consequently it must be believed as firmly, that he is but
one *Person*'. Ussher explains what he means by person and nature when he
says, '*Hee* in whom that fullnesse dwelleth, is the *PERSON: that* fulnesse
which so doth dwell in him, is the *NATURE*'. *Immanuel* describes the
traditional understanding of how the two natures relate in the one person.
Ussher explains that the divine nature, in relation to the Father, and the
human nature, in relation to human beings, are 'consubstantiall'. Christ
is the Son 'being from all eternity consubstantiall with his Father' (7). In
his divine nature Christ is the Father's equal and shares in the essence of
the divinity with the Father. As Chalcedon says, 'He is of the same reality
as God as far as his deity is concerned'.[21] Chalcedon expresses 'of the same
reality' with the word *homoousios*; a word that also describes the Son as

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18 James Ussher, 'The Method of Christian Religion', in Ussher, *Works*, 11,
    p. 208.
19 'The Definition of Chalcedon' in John H. Leith, *Creeds of the Churches: A
    Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present* (Louisville: John
    Knox, 1982), p. 36.
20 'Definition of Chalcedon', p. 35.
21 Ibid.

being 'of the same reality as we are ourselves as far as his human-ness is concerned'.[22] Ussher agrees when he says, 'he must at the appointed time become likewise consubstantiall with his children' (7) and that the Son is 'made of the substance of his Mother in the fulnes of time' (3). This explains how his Father should be *greater* than he. Christ is fully a human person who shares in all that is common to people, sin excepted. The *Irish Articles* say, 'The Sonne, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from euerlasting of the Father, the true and eternall God, of one substance with the Father, tooke mans nature in the wombe of the blessed Virgin, of her substance'.[23]

How do the two natures relate to one another? Ussher—unlike some church fathers[24]—was happy to use the word 'conjunction' to express the *unio personalis*: 'The untying of this knot dependeth upon the right understanding of the wonderfull conjunction of the divine and humane Nature in the unity of the person of our Redeemer' (3). Ussher explains the *unio personalis* as a *unio realis*: '[T]hat is to say by such a personall and reall union, as doth inseparably and everlastingly conjoyne that infinite Godhead with his finite Manhood in the unity of the selfe-same indi-viduall Person'. Though he distinguishes between the two, Ussher clearly affirms the union of divine and human in Christ's person. In *A Bodie of Divinitie* Ussher calls the union of natures both 'The hypostaticall or per-sonall union of both into one *Immanuel*'.[25] Union is understood by Ussher as a kind of perichoretic coinherence of natures.[26] It is the assumption of

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22 Ibid.

23 *Irish Articles*, 6.29.

24 For instance, Cyril of Alexandria, *On the Unity of Christ*, trans. by John A. McGuckin (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), pp. 73-4.

25 James Ussher, *A Body of Divinitie* (London: Thomas Downes and George Badger, 1653), p. 160. Ussher asks, 'Was this union of the body and soul with the Godhead, by taking of the manhood to the Godhead, or by infusing the Godhead into the manhood?' His answer distances Ussher from Nestorian-ism: 'By a divine and miraculous assuming of the humane nature (which before had no subsistence in it self) to have his beeing and subsistence in the divine; leaving of it one naturall personship which otherwise in ordinary men maketh a perfect person; for otherwise there should be two Persons and two Sons, one of the holy Virgin *Mary*, and another of God, which were most prejudiciall to our salvation.' Ussher, *A Bodie of Divinitie*, p. 165.

26 Crisp refers to this as 'nature-perichoresis' and points to its patristic pedi-gree in Gregory of Nazianzus, Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus and is related to, though not to be confused with, *communicatio idiomatum*, Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity*, pp. 4-5. I am indebted to Dennis Ngien for clarification on this point.

the human nature by the divine so that the human is drawn into the one-ness of the divine person, without the commingling of natures. Ussher speaks of a human nature that is 'assumed into the undivided unity of Gods owne person' (6). The human nature is brought close to God by the Spirit. Ussher teaches a nature-perichorersis in Christ; the asymmetrical relation between the natures where the divine penetrates the human but the human does not penetrate the divine.[27] For human redemption to be possible, Christ had to be the sinner's next of kin. Therefore the union had to be personal and inseparable: 'For if he had not thus assumed our flesh; how should we have been of his blood, or claimed any kindred to him?' (14). The incarnation establishes the community of race so that true redemption is be made possible. How such a union of extreme opposites is possible Ussher does not know, due to the limits of his human under-standing, it 'is an inquisition fitter for an Angelicall intelligence, then for our shallow capacity to looke after' (5). He reflects the Reformed apho-rism *finitum non capax infiniti*, though he does not elaborate how the limitations of human knowing have an effect on the human nature.

While the union is real, so that Christ is not a double-person, Ussher does not dispense with the two natures as though they were mere abstrac-tions in the person. The natures constitute a concrete reality and are in such a real union that what is predicated of either nature can be predi-cated of the whole person. Because the union is real, 'whatsoever may be verified of either of those Natures, the same may be truly spoken of the whole Person' (3). This is the patristic, even Antiochene, understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* that the Reformed orthodox inherited. The *idiomata* are the things that are proper to a nature, so Ussher could say in regard to the human nature, 'Neither did he take the substance of our nature onely, but all the properties also and the qualities thereof' (4). Each 'nature remaineth entire in it selfe, and retaineth the properties agreeing thereunto' (6). In patristic theology the *communicatio idiomatum* was a means of stressing the humanity of Christ that did not lose its integrity after its assumption by the second Person of the Trinity.[28] When Jesus experienced hunger, he did so in his human nature, yet hunger could be ascribed to the whole Person. Likewise, when Jesus calmed the sea, he did so in his divine nature, but the action is that of the Person. Ussher fol-

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[27]   See Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity*, p. 19, who says, 'This asymmetry is in part due to the fact that the divine nature exists prior to the Incarnation, whereas the (individualized) human nature does not. Moreover, this penetration of the human nature by the divine nature of Christ does not involve the transfer of properties from the divine to the human nature.'

[28]   See Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon* (451) (London: Mowbray, 1965), pp. 473-4.

lows the Reformed orthodox in affirming the *communicatio idiomatum in concreto* by speaking of what is 'denominated' of the natures and by locating the communication of properties in 'the strictnesse of this personall union' rather than the natures themselves.[29]

Ussher cites the heart of the Definition of Chalcedon when he speaks of the unity of the two natures that are distinct in their integrity. Using the Trinity as an analogy he says, 'as the distinction of the Persons in the holy Trinity hindereth not the unity of the Nature of the Godhead' likewise the two natures do not hinder the unity of Christ. '[S]o neither doth the distinction of the two natures in our Mediator any way crosse the unity of his Person, although each nature remaineth entire in it selfe, and retaineth the properties agreeing thereunto'. Yet these properties are 'without any conversion, composition, commixion, or confusion'. In Ussher's footnote he provides the original Greek rendering from the Definition: Ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως and the Latin: '*inconfuse, incommutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter*' (6). Chalcedon maintains that the natures are without division or separation in the *actus unionis* in response to Nestorianism. It also affirms that the natures are united without change or confusion in response to the *confusio naturarum* of Eutychianism. Ussher does not deviate from this creedal balance. As he wrote earlier, '[T]herefore we must hold, that there are two distinct *Natures* in him: and two so distinct, that they doe not make one compounded nature: but still remaine uncompounded and unconfounded together' (3).

Ussher argues that the Son assumed a nature not a person. In *The Method of the Doctrine of the Christian Religion* he writes, '[F]or the second person in the Trinity took upon him, not the person but the nature of man; to wit, a body and a reasonable soul; which do not subsist alone, (as we see in all other men) but are wholly sustained in the person of the Son of God'.[30] He reflects Chalcedonian language when he writes that Christ has 'a rational soul and a body'.[31] More than that, Christ is one person because the Son assumed a human nature. That is, he assumed a body and a soul that subsists as the one person; he did not assume a person, he assumed a nature. The subsistence is sustained by the person of the eter-

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[29] Cf. Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), s.v. 'communicatio idiomatum/communicatio proprietatum', 72. See also Stephen R. Holmes, 'Reformed Varieties of the *Communicatio Idiomatum*', in *The Person of Christ*, ed. by S. R. Holmes and M. Rae (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2005), pp. 70-86.

[30] Ussher, *Works*, 11, pp. 208-9.

[31] 'Definition of Chalcedon', p. 35. Cf. Cyril of Alexandria, *On the Unity of Christ*, pp. 64, 67, 88, 109.

nal Son. Were this not the case, and the Son assumed a human person, not a nature, as with Nestorianism, there would be two persons. In *A Bodie of Divinitie* Ussher elaborates on the necessity of Christ singular personality: 'By a divine and miraculous assuming of the humane nature (which before had no subsistence in it self) to have his beeing which otherwise in ordinary men maketh a perfect person, for otherwise there should be two Persons and two Sons, one of the holy Virgin *Mary*, and another of God, which were most prejudiciall to our salvation'.[32]

This 'soteriological argument' for the two-natured Christ explains why he is necessarily the God-man due to the need for human salvation. The ultimate moment of salvation came in the stretch of three days when Jesus of Nazareth was crucified and then resurrected. The larger part of *Immanuel* deals with Christ's mediatorial role as it demonstrates the 'necessity' of the incarnation soteriologically.

At one place in his argument Ussher refers to Anselm of Canterbury's *Cur Deus Homo* (c. 1097-8) in a footnote (7).[33] He does not provide a citation for any piece of the work, but draws attention to its whole. It corresponds with Ussher's aims as the medieval scholastic sought to prove soteriologically that God necessarily had to become a human in order to save sinners. The language of necessity in *Cur Deus Homo* is apparent in *Immanuel*. Anselm argues that for a human person, who has offended God's honour, to have a relationship with God, a human Mediator is needed. He must not only be human, or God's character would not be honoured, but also God's equal to pay the ransom for sinners.[34] Ussher says, 'An *Adam* therefore and perfect Man must he have been; that his flesh, given for us upon the Crosse, might be made the conduit to conveigh life unto the world: and 'a quickning spirit' he could not have been, unlesse he were *God*, able to make that flesh an effectuall instrument of life by the operation of his blessed Spirit' (17).

As with 'conjunction', Ussher uses 'union' in both Christological and soteriological senses. He speaks of a union between Christ's two natures, but also of a sinner's relationship with Christ—this is the doctrine of *unio cum Christo* or *unio mystica*—he calls it the 'mysticall union betwixt Christ and us' (18). Ussher argues that Christ's purpose in salvation was 'to "bring all unto one head by himselfe, both them which are in Heaven and them which are on the Earth".' The corporate element of this is in the

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32 Ussher, *Bodie of Divinitie*, p. 165.
33 Cf. Anselm of Canterbury, 'Why God Became Man', in *The Major Works*, ed. by Brian Davies and G.R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 260-356.
34 Anselm, 'Why God Became Man', p. 321.

church militant and triumphant who, although separated just as earth and heaven are, will come together finally in Christ. Using John 6:63 Ussher explains that the bond of the *unio mystica* is the 'quickning Spirit'. The Spirit is in Christ who is the Head of the body and the Spirit 'is from thence diffused to the spirituall animation of all his members'. Ussher cites his 1620 sermon before parliament where the Holy Spirit's role in union with Christ is more fully explained.[35] Ussher preaches about the Spirit as the 'ground and foundation of this spiritual union'.[36] The mystery of union with Christ consists in 'the selfsame Spirit which is in him, as in the Head, is so derived from him into every one of his true members, that thereby they are animated and quickened to a spiritual life'.[37] The response of the quickened sinner, Ussher says in *Immanuel*, is 'faith' (18).

CONCLUSION

Reformed orthodoxy had a rich Christology, as recent studies have shown.[38] Many evangelicals today fail to appreciate their heritage, and as a result, their theology. Ussher's *Immanuel*, as it provides a non-polemical and historically informed Christology, is representative of post-Reformation expositions of the incarnation and serves as a helpful introduction to those fearing to get lost in denser works by thinkers from this period. As we have demonstrated, Ussher maintains a careful Chalcedonian orthodoxy, and plainly explains the person and work of Christ as revealed in Scripture.

Immanuel also serves as a fitting introduction to the theology of one of the post-Reformation's great thinkers. William Chappell (1582-1649) said of him, 'His excellent Holiness; continuall diligence in Reading writing & preaching; Choicest skill in Antiquity Theology, and euery kind of more man like learning, matcht ith equall Humilitie there is not any need of larger praises nor haue I a mind (or power) there vnto'.[39] With such words from an Arminian opponent in Ireland, the value of studying Ussher, whatever one's theology, is indeed high.

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[35] James Ussher, 'A Sermon preached before the Commons House of Parliament, 18th February, 1620', in Ussher *Works*, 2, pp. 415-58

[36] Ussher, 'Sermon', p. 432.

[37] Ibid.

[38] For example Mark Jones, *Why Heaven Kissed Earth: The Christology of the Puritan Reformed Orthodox Theologian, Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680)* (Reformed Historical Theology, 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010); Alan Spence, *Inspiration and Incarnation: The Coherence of Christology in John Owen* (London: T & T Clark, 2007).

[39] Leeds University Library, Brotherton MS Lt 91. I owe this source to Crawford Gribben.

Seeing, Thinking, and Living: Adolf Schlatter on Theology at the University[1]

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What is the role of theology at the university today? How can theology remain relevant for the university, the church and society? In our current post-modern climate of increasing relativisation and secularisation, theologians run the risk of becoming an endangered species if they hesitate to provide substantial answers to these urgent questions. In a letter to the *Independent*, Richard Dawkins recently compared theology to 'the study of leprechauns'.[2] He doubts that '"theology" is a subject at all' and demands that a 'positive case now needs to be made that it has any real content at all, and that it has any place in today's universities'.[3] I am convinced that Swiss theologian Adolf Schlatter, though a voice from the past, offers a vital contribution towards confronting these claims even today. Adolf Schlatter, even today, assists us in making a case for theology's rightful place in the university. In inviting us to adopt a holistic-salvific perspective, Schlatter is certain that only in this way will theologians be able to legitimise their membership of the academy. I wish initially to introduce briefly Adolf Schlatter before we turn to his holistic-salvific perspective in relation to theology in the university.

WHO WAS ADOLF SCHLATTER?

Swiss theologian Adolf Schlatter (1852–1938)[4] stands out as one of the most prolific and influential scholars of the late nineteenth and early

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[1]   The present contribution is the modified version of a paper originally presented at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Francisco, CA, November 16, 2011.

[2]   Dawkins, 'Letters: Theology has no place in a university', *The Independent*, October 1, 2007, <http://richarddawkins.net/articles/1698-letters-theology-has-no-place-in-a-university> (accessed November 18, 2011).

[3]   Ibid.

[4]   Robert Yarbrough has translated Werner Neuer's short biography, *Adolf Schlatter: A Biography of Germany's Premier Biblical Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995). Neuer's extensive Schlatter biography is, unfor-

twentieth century.[5] As theology professor, focusing both on New Testament and dogmatics, Schlatter lectured for one hundred consecutive semesters in Bern (1881–88), Greifswald (1888–93), Berlin (1893–98), and Tübingen (1898–1930), and thereby influenced several generations of pastors and theologians (among them, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Erich Seeberg, Paul Althaus, Paul Tillich, Ernst Käsemann, and Otto Michel). Schlatter lived in turbulent times, both historically and theologically. Growing up in rural Switzerland, Schlatter experienced the character of Wilhelmine Prussia; he lived through the First World War in which he lost a son; he then became a citizen in the Weimar Republic, and subsequently witnessed the rise of National Socialism until he passed away on the verge of the Second World War. Theologically, he was raised and rooted in Protestant Reformed orthodoxy; he was influenced by German philosophical Idealism, had to answer liberal claims around the *fin de siècle*, and was finally in dialogue with 1920s dialectical theology, in particular with his former student Karl Barth.

Adolf Schlatter pursues a comprehensive theological approach. In doing so, he seeks to overcome any tendency to segmentation and isolation in theological departments.[6] Theology, Schlatter underlines, has to be concerned with the whole of reality.

> The territory that the theological task has to stride across ranges over the whole revelatory work of God. That endows it with a direction to the whole [*Richtung auf das Ganze*]... In the idea of God [*Gottesgedanke*] is included the sentence that all being stands in relation to God and that it somehow visualises his power and his will.[7]

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tunately, still untranslated, *Adolf Schlatter: Ein Leben für Theologie und Kirche* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1996).

5   Nonetheless, the name 'Adolf Schlatter' does not reverberate in the halls of the theological ivory tower. Andreas J. Köstenberger remarks that 'until this day, Schlatter's incisive theological work has remained something of a well-kept secret among the English-speaking theologians'. 'Translator's Preface', in Adolf Schlatter, *The History of the Christ: The Foundation of New Testament Theology*, transl. by Andreas J. Köstenberger (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), pp. 9-15 (quote from pp. 11-12).

6   See 'Adolf Schlatter: Selbstdarstellung', in *Die Religionswissenschaft in Selbstdarstellungen*, ed. by Erich Stange (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1925), pp. 145-71 (quote from pp. 157-8; cited as 'Selbstdarstellungen' in the following) and *Das christliche Dogma*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1923), p. 44; cf. p. 370 (cited hereafter as *Dogma*).

7   *Dogma*, p. 13.

On this foundational assertion Schlatter builds his comprehensive, three-fold theological agenda. True theology with a universal scope, says Schlatter, consists of exegetical seeing, dogmatic thinking and ethical living. This forms his theological triad of 'seeing-act' (*Sehakt*), 'thinking-act' (*Denkakt*), and 'life-act' (*Lebensakt*). These three acts are organically inter-related, in particular, as they share a common vanishing point in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Thus, Schlatter develops a Christ-centred approach to theology, in which he moves from exegetical observation in the seeing-act to dogmatic elaboration in the thinking-act and existential assimilation in the life-act. In what follows we shall, *first*, examine Schlatter's interpretation of the theologian's vocation on basis of this threefold distinction and then, *second*, test whether this conception may be relevant for today's debate on the role of theology within the university context.

1. THE THEOLOGIAN AS SEEING EXEGETE

Through his father and through influential teachers, such as Johann T. Beck, Schlatter was encouraged from an early age to forge a 'connection with nature'.[8] A close, empirical perception of reality became then an integral element of his theology. Schlatter asserts:

> I, for my part, consider the formula 'perception' as appropriate for my method and my goal; it characterises what I have in mind... I would... not reject the label 'empirical theology'.[9]

All 'knowledge', notes Schlatter, 'begins with empiricism'.[10] 'Observation' is 'the root of all knowledge',[11] for 'the eye awakens the thinking'.[12] Schlatter is convinced that theologians do not need any special epistemology in order to 'do' theology. We 'need neither a theory of seeing, in order to see',

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[8] Similarly to Schlatter's father, Beck, the 'friend of analogies' as Schlatter called him, emphasized creation as the locus of God's revelation. See Schlatter's essay, *J. T. Becks theologische Arbeit*, Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie (in what follows, BFChTh) 8,4 (1904), p. 30.

[9] *Briefe über das Christliche Dogma*, BFChTh 5,5 (1912), p. 85, p. 11 (emphasis original, in what follows, *Briefe*).

[10] 'Geschichte der speculativen Theologie', p. 1 (unpublished; Schlatter Archive, Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart, Germany, No. 183/II).

[11] *Die christliche Ethik*, 3rd edn (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1929), p. 252.

[12] 'Selbstdarstellungen', p. 164. On his empirical-realist framework see also his *Metaphysik*, ed. Werner Neuer, *ZThK*, Beiheft 7 (1987) and Walldorf, *Realistische Philosophie: Der philosophische Entwurf Adolf Schlatters* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), pp. 51-146.

he opines, 'nor a theory of epistemology, in order to know'.[13] 'Every true theologian is first and foremost an observer'.[14] It is exactly this empirical-realist act of seeing which renders theology a science (*Wissenschaft*), on a par with other academic specialities.[15] For '[s]cience', Schlatter famously writes, 'is first seeing, secondly seeing, thirdly seeing and again and again seeing'.[16] Basically all forms of science use the same empirical method of observation. This applies to both the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) and to theology. 'The first and foremost task of the dogmatician is, as in every scientific profession, observation, which shows him on the basis of reality the processes that bring us into relation with God and mediate the divine works through which God reveals himself to us'.[17]

Schlatter took the scientific-empirical nature of theology very seriously. When, at celebrations on his seventy-fifth birthday, a colleague described him as 'religious genius, [but] scientific nil', (*religiöses Genie, eine wissenschaftliche Null*), Schlatter retorted, 'There is no religious genius in this room, that does not exist!–A scientific nil, well, we will have to see about that'.[18] This process of observing God's work in nature, in history, in the human consciousness, in the Scriptures, and of course,

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[13] *Dogma*, p. 42. Schlatter writes, 'There is no deduction that can work with any other material than the one that is observed; even the most audacious apriorician [*Aprioriker*] has never skimmed through his material and the most assiduous spurner of seeing has never produced a thought other than by means of seeing'. *Jesu Gottheit und das Kreuz*, 2nd edn (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1913), p. 37.

[14] *Die philosophische Arbeit seit Descartes: Ihr ethischer und religiöser Ertrag*, 4th edn (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1959), p. 12.

[15] In this context, it might be helpful to clarify some central terminology. The German term *Wissenschaft* differs from the English term 'science'. Etymologically, the continental term denotes the creation and composition of knowledge in a broad sense. 'Science' (going back to Latin *scientia*, meaning 'knowledge') is most commonly understood in a narrow sense, referring mainly to natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*). However, in this study, 'science' is meant in the broad sense of *Wissenschaft*, as Schlatter understood it, i.e., as also including the so-called *Geisteswissenschaften*, the humanities. Wilfried Härle notes that '*Wissenschaft's* function is to expand knowledge in a revisable manner'. *Dogmatik*, 2nd edn (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), p. 4. Understood in this sense, Schlatter argues that theology can indeed count itself among the sciences.

[16] 'Atheistische Methoden in der Theologie', BFChTh 9,5 (1905), p. 240.

[17] *Dogma*, p. 12.

[18] Kittel, 'Adolf Schlatter: Gedenkrede', in *Adolf Schlatter: Gedächtnisheft der Deutschen Theologie* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1938), pp. 6-17 (quotation from p. 8).

in the person and work of Jesus Christ,[19] Schlatter calls the 'seeing-act
[Sehakt]'.[20] The application of this principle to hermeneutics means that
the theologian's agenda must be to expose what the text itself says, in
order to find out what 'actually happened'.[21] 'The first task of New Tes-
tament theology', writes Schlatter, 'consists in perceiving the given facts
of the case [Tatbestände]'.[22] Theology, he argues, has therefore to begin
with attentiveness, with—as his student Dietrich Bonhoeffer later put it
—"silence before the Word'.[23] For Schlatter, the seeing-act is essentially
a historical task.[24] 'The historical task of the Bible', Schlatter reminds us,
'can be by no means anything other than an intense hearing for what
the bible contains and what it renders visible; anything contrary to that
is not "science".'[25] The theologian thus works as an observing historian,

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[19] In his works, Schlatter deals extensively with God's revelation in creation (see
      for example his *Metaphysik* or the anthropological treatment in his Dogma).
[20] *Dogma*, p. 23; *Rückblick auf meine [seine] Lebensarbeit*, ed. by Theodor Schlat-
      ter, 2nd edn (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1977), p. 208; *Erlebtes: Erzählt von D.
      Adolf Schlatter*, 5th edn (Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1929), p. 102; *Philosophische
      Arbeit*, p. 12; cf. Walldorf, *Realistische Philosophie*, pp. 51-73.
[21] *History of the Christ*, p. 17.
[22] 'The Theology of the New Testament and Dogmatics', in *The Nature of New
      Testament Theology*, ed. and transl. by Robert Morgan (London: SCM Press,
      1973), pp. 115-66 (see pp. 136 and 139).
[23] Bonhoeffer, *Christology*, transl. by John Bowden (London: Collins, 1966),
      p. 27.
[24] 'Because we receive God's revelation through history and become what we are
      through it, there can be no knowledge about it which is independent of his-
      torical observation'. 'Theology of the New Testament and Dogmatics', p. 153;
      see also *Erlebtes*, p. 59; 'Selbstdarstellungen', p. 162.
[25] 'Der Glaube an die Bibel', in *Heilige Anliegen der Kirche: Vier Reden* (Calw
      & Stuttgart: Verlag der Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1896), pp. 34-46 (see p. 42).
      See also 'Theology of the New Testament and Dogmatics', pp. 149-50. When
      Schlatter emphasises the 'hearing' or the rendering 'visible' of the bible's
      content, he is, beside historical studies, concerned with linguistics, with the
      relationship between language and cognition ('Selbstdarstellungen', p. 164).
      'History means linguistics', says Schlatter. 'Erfolg und Mißerfolg im theolo-
      gischen Studium. Eine Rede an die evangelisch-theologische Fachschaft in
      Tübingen', in *Zur Theologie des Neuen Testaments und zur Dogmatik. Kleine
      Schriften*, ed. Ulrich Luck (München: Christian Kaiser, 1969), pp. 256-72
      (p. 261). For a detailed discussion of Schlatter's emphasis on language see
      Joachim Ringleben's essay, 'Exegese und Dogmatik bei Adolf Schlatter', in
      Arbeit am Gottesbegriff, Vol. 2, Klassiker der Neuzeit (Tübingen: Mohr Sie-
      beck, 2005), pp. 350-385.

examining 'what was once true for others [the New Testament people]'.[26] Schlatter maintains that hermeneutics must be rooted in the historical givens and is therefore essentially dependent on historical and linguistic research.[27] Pursuing this empirical-historical agenda, Schlatter ventures into elaborate studies of the historical setting of the New Testament, and forged significant advances in first century Judaism and linguistic studies.[28]

For Schlatter then, faith and science are not opposed to each other, it is not 'either or', but 'both and'. Most importantly, the seeing-act has its essential focal point in Jesus Christ. Seeing the history of the Christ, his words and works, is the ultimate purpose of the empirical process, as the appearance of Jesus Christ constitutes the goal of history.[29] 'In my view', writes Schlatter, 'there is no higher calling for the human eye than perception which apprehends what Jesus desires and claims'.[30] The seeing-act is organically related to the thinking-act.[31] In other words, the receptive act of observation cannot do without the productive act of interpretation. Looking to the past in historical research and looking to the present in theological interpretation are for Schlatter two sides of the same coin.[32]

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[26]   'Theology of the New Testament and Dogmatics', 118; 'Die Bedeutung der Methode für die theologische Arbeit', *Theologischer Literaturbericht* 31,1 (1908), p. 7; 'I consider New Testament theology to be a historical task', notes Schlatter. *History of the Christ*, p. 17.

[27]   'Selbstdarstellungen', pp. 164-5. See also 'Die Entstehung der Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie und ihr Zusammenhang mit meiner theologischen Arbeit zum Beginn ihres fünfundzwanzigsten Bandes', BFChTh 25,1 (1920), p. 76 (in what follows, 'Entstehung der Beiträge').

[28]   See 'Selbstdarstellungen', p. 162.

[29]   As Peter Stuhlmacher correctly observes. 'Adolf Schlatter (1852-1938)', p. 233.

[30]   Schlatter in his 'Foreword' to *Das Wort Jesu* (in *History of the Christ*, p. 17).

[31]   See 'Entstehung der Beiträge', p. 58; 'Theology of the New Testament and Dogmatics', p. 126; *Rückblick*, p. 102. He underlines that *Rezeption* demands and necessitates *Produktion* (*Briefe*, p. 19)—'first reception, then production' (*Briefe*, p. 23). Unfortunately, Schlatter does not clearly define his *Denkakt*. In some passages, Schlatter refers to the thinking-act as a cognitive judgment (*Urteil*; see 'Atheistische Methoden', p. 235; 'Entstehung der Beiträge', pp. 31, 53), while in others, he summarises under the *Denkakt* both observation and judgment (*Dogma*, pp. 89-93; 'Bedeutung der Methode', pp. 5-6). This obviously indicates the close relation between *Sehakt* and *Denkakt* according to Schlatter.

[32]   According to Schlatter, the empirical-historical act necessitates and informs the dogmatic thinking-act ('Bedeutung der Methode', pp. 7-8), for, as he put it, '[b]efore our own production stands the receiving [*das Empfangen*], the process we call seeing' ('Selbstdarstellungen', p. 153). 'Every true theologian',

2. THE THEOLOGIAN AS THINKING DOGMATICIAN

Moving, secondly, to the thinking-act, Schlatter is convinced:

> The religious question is never settled by simply handing on what Scripture says. The question is always: what does Scripture mean *for us*? This 'us', with all it involves, takes us into the realm of dogmatics.[33]

The implications of historical research in the seeing-act are thus organised and processed in the dogmatic task, where the dogmatician delivers a judgment.[34] The dogmatic task requires the 'whole dogmatician', with his own personality and his life-story, as a person who is embedded in the wider historical context.[35] 'The manner', Schlatter claims, 'in which he [the dogmatician] participates with his observation and experience in the experience of Christendom, shapes his dogmatic judgment'.[36] Hence, the theologian needs to be aware of his own particular presuppositions, his personality and his individual history, in order to secure the truth (yes, Schlatter believes that there is an absolute truth out there that can, to a certain degree, be discovered!). The Swiss critical-empirical realist is eager to note that this almost paradoxical subjective objectivity is not a stumbling block in the way of proper science. Subjectivity does not, argues Schlatter, undermine the scientific nature of theology. On the contrary: Schlatter counters objections that this importing of faith into the theological task might obstruct his goal of scientific work (*scientifische Arbeit*, as he puts it).[37] He points out that faith is actually instrumental for accurate access to theology, as only in the mode of faith, as it were, does one achieve an elementary congruence between the God-made observed object (e.g. the Scriptures) and the God-made observing subject, the theologian.[38]

During Schlatter's time, and maybe this tradition is still in vogue today, it was common to distinguish clearly faith and science. If theology wanted

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says Schlatter, 'is an observer, not a designer; he reasons on basis of the given [*des Gegebenen*], not "a priori".' (*Philosophische Arbeit*, p. 27; emphasis original).

[33] 'Theology of the New Testament and Dogmatics', p. 133 (emphasis original). See also 'Bedeutung der Methode', pp. 7-8 and *Briefe*, pp. 50, 57.

[34] See *Dogma*, pp. 373-4; *Briefe*, p. 33.

[35] 'Atheistische Methoden', pp. 234-5; *Dogma*, pp. 5-6.

[36] *Dogma*, p. 5.

[37] Letter to Hermann Cremer 29/12/1894, in Stupperich, ed., *Wort und Wahrnehmung: Briefe Adolf Schlatters an Hermann Cremer und Friedrich von Bodelschwingh* (Bethel: Verlag der Anstalt Bethel, 1963), p. 18.

[38] See 'Selbstdarstellungen', p. 15 and *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*, 2nd edn (Calw/Stuttgart: Verlag der Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1896), pp. 9-10.

to be taken seriously, it had to ignore faith in the pursuit of proper science. In 1905, Paul Jäger published an essay entitled 'On Atheistic Thinking in recent Theology'.[39] In this article, Jäger demands that scientific theology must pursue 'the atheistic method'.[40] That is, for the sake of pure, authentic scientific observation, the theologian, as every other scientist, must perform his research under the presupposition that God does not exist. The intention behind Jäger's approach is to explain reality through empirically observable reality alone, excluding the allegedly unscientific transcendental idea of God in the process. Only in this way, Jäger argues, will theology be taken seriously by its fellow (natural) sciences. Only after completing the scientific process may the theologian assume again the role of the religious individual and re-embrace the notion of transcendence. Schlatter, at that point professor of New Testament in Tübingen, discards the intrusion of any 'Atheistic Methods in Theology'—this was the title of his published refutation of Jäger's arguments.

In his reply, Schlatter turns the tables and points out that the positivist atheistic approach in theology is fundamentally misguided. The allegedly neutral, secular approach is in fact not objective at all, but rather a subjective, idiosyncratic presupposition that leads to inexact science. Schlatter stresses that theologians, like all scientists, approach their subjects as people of faith with special personal commitment and particular presuppositions.[41] For the theologian, this means that faith must not be, as Jäger demands, excluded as unscientific from the scientific process but is *de facto* central to his profession and thus must be taken seriously.[42] Only as a coherent individual, with his life-act intact, can the theologian, like the natural scientist, work properly and accurately. The dogmatic task can therefore only be adequately performed when the theologian is at the same time an individual of faith. Schlatter calls this mode of dogmatic thinking 'faith-based thinking'.[43] With this we are touching upon the existential life-act, to which we now turn.

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[39] 'Das "atheistische Denken" in der neueren Theologie. Zur Verständigung', *Christliche Welt* 25 (June 1905), 577-82.

[40] Ibid., p. 578.

[41] This is echoed by Stanley Grenz who notes: 'Scientists are theologians, then, in that personal stance affects, even directs, their research . . . Like theologians, scientists engage in their discipline as persons of faith. They bring a certain type of personal commitment—that is, faith—to their work'. 'Why do Theologians need to be Scientists?', *Zygon* 35,2 (2000), 348.

[42] Cf. Thomas F. Torrance, *Christian Frame of Mind* (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1989), p. 75.

[43] 'Die Unterwerfung unter die Gotteswirklichkeit', *Die Furche* (Oct-Nov 1911), pp. 11, 47-8.

3. THE THEOLOGIAN AS ETHICIST: EXISTENTIAL *ANSCHLUß AN CHRISTUS*

The exegetical seeing-act and the dogmatic thinking-act organically usher in the existential life-act (*Lebensakt*) where the individual assimilates the observed and processed material.[44] Schlatter thereby takes Schleiermacher's and Kierkegaard's existential emphasis on the subjective and devotional element in theology seriously, while, obviously, developing his own existential approach. Adolf Schlatter speaks of an existentially relevant 'connection with Jesus' (*Anschluß an Jesus*) by faith[45] which has concrete ethical bearings for the theologian's personal conduct of life.[46] 'Theology', contends Schlatter, 'that declines to create an ethic, does not fully carry out its duty'.[47] 'For the *Dogma* is given to us so that we would have an ethics.'[48] The energetic Swiss theologian thus calls for a 'completion of the Reformation'[49] as he observes a significant neglect of ethics in post-Reformation Protestantism.[50] 'To me', writes Schlatter, 'observation was then valid as the process that gave us the dogmatic knowledge and that created the duty [*Pflicht*]'.[51] Thus, seeing-act, thinking-act and life-act

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44   Schlatter student Paul Althaus was receptive to his teacher's concept of the life-act. Althaus notes, 'There is, for us, no theoretical, objective concept that allows us to cognitively associate the Divinity and Humanity in Jesus Christ, but only an existential, subjective way: "I believe in Jesus Christ".' This, argues Althaus, echoing Schlatter, is not a concept, but an act, 'one cannot think it, but only live it'. *Die christliche Wahrheit: Lehrbuch der Dogmatik*, 7th edn (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1966), p. 460.

45   This is *Anschluß an Jesus* is central to Schlatter's thinking, appearing in virtually all his publications.

46   Schlatter speaks of the 'Vollzug des Lebensakts'. *Dogma*, p. 107; *Ethik*, p. 275; 'Gotteswirklichkeit', p. 11.

47   *Briefe*, p. 45. Schlatter argues that '[t]he New Testament knows of no concern with the divine which does not produce ethics'. 'Theology of the New Testament and Dogmatics', p. 165. This ethical agenda was not simply a theoretical construct for Schlatter but had a concrete impact on his personal *Lebensakt*. Schlatter was, for instance, closely connected with Christian relief organization 'Bethel', which was founded by his close friend Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, offering care for socially disadvantaged people. Bodelschwingh's son, Friedrich Jr., praised Schlatter's vital support for the 'Betheler Anstalten' in his moving speech at Schlatter's funeral. See Neuer, *Adolf Schlatter*, pp. 819-20.

48   'Entstehung der Beiträge', p. 78.

49   'Selbstdarstellungen', p. 150.

50   *Becks theologische Arbeit*, p. 34, pp. 41-42; *Rückblick*, p. 67, p. 107.

51   'Entstehung der Beiträge', p. 44. Schlatter underlines that the 'thinking-act cannot be completed without a movement of our will' (*Briefe*, p. 20), p. 45; see

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belong together just as New (and Old) Testament theology, dogmatics and ethics form an inseparable unit[52]–in particular, as the three acts converge in their mutual Christological focus. Schlatter asks:

> Where did I find the reason for my faith? Like Luther not in the church, but in Christ alone, not within me and my work, but in Jesus' grace alone. What gave me the authority in the pulpit... and the lectern... ? The word, only the word, not the arts, not science, not the law, but Jesus' word. Was I not seriously the servant of things, seriously determined to *see*, to *think*, to *will* and to *do* what the situation showed and required?[53]

The New Testament question of the history of the Christ, the dogmatic question of Christology, and the existential, ethical question of what human beings become (and are called to do) through their connection with him are one. Every theologian is, in this sense then, an exegete, a dogmatician as well as an ethicist, who has a personal point of contact (*Anknüpfungspunkt*), as Schlatter's contemporary Emil Brunner would have said, with Jesus Christ. For Schlatter, therefore, the theological task is not complete when one merely 'sees Christ' in history and 'thinks him' in dogmatics. Rather, the theologian's goal, as that of any individual, is to experience fundamental experiential change driven by a significant ethical impetus through the encounter with Jesus Christ.[54] Only in this holistic, Christocentric way can both the theologian as a person, and his scientific work become relevant. Any ethics must 'display', says Schlatter, 'the glory of divine grace in that it makes us an instrument of God with a free movement of our knowledge and love at the place that is assigned to us'.[55] This includes Christian theologians. Theologians are 'instruments of God', displaying the 'glory of divine grace' at the university, at college, at conferences, in seminars and lectures.

In an influential speech, delivered in 1901 at the University of Tübingen, Schlatter asks the question, 'What is the religious duty of the universities today?' He answers: The religious duty of *all* the sciences at the university consists in their common purpose of ascertaining the truth (*Wahrheitsfindung*). That is, all scientists explore God's truth as it is

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also 'Entstehung der Beiträge', p. 55 and *Rückblick*, p. 102.

[52]   See 'Entstehung der Beiträge', p. 8.

[53]   *Rückblick*, pp. 201-2 (emphasis mine).

[54]   This existential trajectory might have influenced his student Rudolf Bultmann in the formulation of his existential exegesis. See Bultmann, 'Das Problem der Hermeneutik', in *Glauben und Verstehen: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, II (Tübingen: J.B.C. Mohr, 1961), pp. 211-235 (see p. 217).

[55]   *Erlebtes*, pp. 117-18; see also *Ethik*, p. 87.

revealed in creation, in history, in the Scriptures, and, of course, in Jesus Christ. In doing so, the sciences naturally perform a worship service (*Gottesdienst*) to the glory of God. Schlatter put it like this,

> The religious dignity of our vocation [*Beruf*] depends on the canon of truth...
> Correctly exercising obedience [to this canon], keeping this commitment unharmed, this is what constitutes the worship service [*Gottesdienst*] that is innate to the labour at the university.[56]

All in all, the theologian stays true to his vocation when he, with scientific accuracy, as a seeing exegete, faith-based thinking dogmatician and ethical Christian, discovers and displays God's truth, above all the grand truth of the gospel that salvation is to be found in no other name than Jesus Christ's, thereby performing at the same time an act of worship to the glory of God.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we ask: In what ways may Adolf Schlatter's holistic-salvific approach be relevant in today's debate about theology's role in the university? To begin with, one must admit that Schlatter obviously lived in his own unique historical context that created its own particular challenges for theology's place in the university. Nevertheless, when we look at our situation now, over a hundred years later, it seems that the general positivist mind-set of nineteenth century Prussian Culture Protestantism is not too remote from today's charges proposed by the new Atheism movement. Contrary to contemporaneous thinking, Adolf Schlatter underlined that theology is indeed a proper science, not concerned with the 'study of leprechauns', but involved with hard empirical facts. Schlatter reminds us that we are, as theologians, empirically working scientists, strenuously devoting our efforts to see, to see, and to see again.

Pursuing this goal of seeing God's truth as it is revealed in reality, theology honestly and persistently points to the common task of all sciences, namely, the exploration of God's truth in all reality to the glory of God alone. This constitutes theology's inherently integrative role in the academy, and, as Stanley Grenz observes, 'several prominent theologians have returned to... the idea that theology brings the sciences together into a unified whole'.[57] In order to do so, Schlatter's holistic salvific perspective offers essential guidance. If *the* integrative role at the university falls

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[56] 'Was ist heute die religiöse Aufgabe der Universitäten?', BFChTh 5,4 (1901), p. 77.
[57] Grenz, 'Why do Theologians need to be Scientists?', p. 342.

to theology, and if theology intends to remain relevant for the church and for the society today, then theologians need to grasp the content of their vocation, and embrace it in a holistic way. Theologians, according to Schlatter, must be exegetes, dogmaticians, and ethicists who are not only members of the academe, but also members of the church, disciples of Jesus Christ who enjoy an existential connection with their Saviour.

This issue of a personal *Anschluß an Jesus* might be less pressing for those of us who are working in a confessional institution. However, if I consider my own background, studying at a theological faculty within a British secular university, things look rather different. Clearly, the position of theology at the university is weakened when ecclesiastical ties are severed. In a recent editorial to the *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, Dr Paul T. Nimmo, Lecturer in theology at Edinburgh's New College, expresses the difficulty he experiences as a confessing Christian teaching at a secular university. He laments the

> [t]ension between practicing what is a deeply confessional discipline and having to teach it in a non-confessional manner. At times, this is an opportunity for creative, if veiled, apologetics; at other times, it is a matter of rather deep frustration.[58]

Despite chronic frustration, we are called to make a case for the *raison d'être* of our profession. In order to survive in the university context, Schlatter's voice from the past must not only be heard, but must be rearticulated today with singular conviction and clarity.

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[58] Nimmo, 'Editorial', in *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 13,3 (2011), 249.

John the Baptist as Witness Prototype in Karl Barth

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THEOLOGICAL CONSTRUAL OF TESTIMONY—A LESS EXPLORED TERRITORY

Literature on Jesus' resurrection since the 19th century has explored the tension between theology and historical criticism; the grounds upon which the resurrection can be legitimately considered a historical event have been often debated. In the New Testament, the facticity of the resurrection and its meaning is communicated by a specific method—eyewitness accounts, and secondary witnesses based upon these first reports. Apparently biblical authors considered 'witness' both a legitimate means to account for the resurrection as a historical fact, and simultaneously to communicate its theological meaning. However, 'witness' as a biblical concept is not often seen being used theologically, especially in recent literature, to elucidate the relation between the resurrection and history.

The first part of this paper draws attention to latent drawbacks of philosophical construals of the concept of witness in biblical studies and theological writings. An alternative approach is to understand testimony (and the act of witness) as a theological category. The second part of this paper explores the shape and substance of Karl Barth's theological reflection on John the Baptist as the witness prototype. John's type is significant as a blueprint of the witness concept in *Church Dogmatics*, where Barth revisits the Baptist's model from time to time. Where Christian witness is concerned, I intend to draw attention to the importance of balancing philosophical traditions and construals of witness with a theological understanding of the concept, which begins with a proper emphasis on the role of divine agency in both the constitution and operation of human testimony.

From the 1950s onwards, contemporary with the emergence of the New Quest, where the notion of testimony is invoked in debates of the resurrection, it is rarely understood as a theological category. This indicates two things. First, the discussion of testimony has a confined scope; it begins with and also stops at the historical plausibility of the resurrection. The relevance of testimony is exclusively its capability (or incapa-

bility) to mediate evidence of the event. In fact, Lessing's ditch is never crossed, and it is common for these discussions to halt at a re-description of the unresolved tension between faith and historical evidence.[1] Second, the concept of testimony presupposed is predominantly anthropocentric, with minimal consideration of the Triune God as the 'Witness'. Conceivably, scriptural passages that speak of the divine Persons as witnesses are rarely referred to.[2]

Both Selwyn in the mid 1950s and Glasson in the late 1960s claimed that 'martyria' had received less attention than it deserves, especially in contrast to the concept of kerygma.[3] Their suggestions met with limited positive response, and it was not until the emergence of the work of Trites, Brueggemann, and Lincoln that the concept received in-depth treatment.[4] Without detailing these works here, one point should be highlighted: working in a postmodern intellectual context, both Brueggemann and Lincoln pitch the category of testimony exclusively in the realm of human rhetoric. By using a perspective which is either sociological or literary rhetorical (or both), their projects trade on the metaphor of courtroom, in which the character and acts of God and Jesus are put on trial in the arena of human opinions. Particularly in Brueggemann, the question of history and ontology is eschewed from the beginning. Though these projects are exemplary in deploying testimony in biblical interpretation, their concept of testimony is predominantly sociological and rhetorical.

Another notable attempt at deploying the concept is Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*,[5] which is oriented toward meeting the challenge of form criticism. Where form criticism displaces the centrality of eye-wit-

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[1]   A. L. Nations, 'Historical Criticism and the Current Methodological Crisis', *SJT*, 36 (1983), 59-71; H. Staudinger, 'The Resurrection of Jesus Christ as Saving Event and as "Object" of Historical Research', *SJT* 36, (1983), 309-26; T. S. Garrett, 'Recent Biblical Studies and Their Doctrinal Implications', *SJT* 7, (1954), 225-32; D. E. Nineham, 'Eyewitness testimony and the gospel tradition', *JTS*, 9 (1958), 13-25, 243-52, 253-64; and G. Theissen, 'Historical Scepticism and the Criteria of Jesus Research or My Attempt to Leap Across Lessing's Yawning Gulf', *SJT*, 49 (1996), 147-76.

[2]   For examples, John 8:18; Acts 5:32; Rev. 1:5, 22:20.

[3]   T. F. Glasson, 'Kerygma or Martyria?' *SJT*, 22 (1969), 90-5.

[4]   A. A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); W. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997); and A.T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000).

[5]   R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

ness reports and testimonies, Bauckham seeks to reinstate this category as a legitimate mode of transmitting the history of Jesus. Although in the concluding section Bauckham advocates 'testimony' as both a historical and theological category, throughout his book treatment of the category is devoted predominately to vindicate it as the former. Testimony is argued as a proper tool for the undertaking of historiography concerning Jesus; and a legitimate means to transmit theological truth. While Bauckham acknowledges the intervening factor of divine agency that connects the theological event of Jesus' history to the theological quality of eye-witnesses attestations,[6] his analysis of this factor is not substantial and readers are left with a notion of testimony that is theologically underdeveloped to be serviceable.

The etiology of an anthropocentric construal of testimony might be traced back to philosophical understandings of witness, which somehow find their way into biblical and theological studies. The concept of testimony receives considerable attention among philosophers; the works of Coady, Ricœur and Lévinas are notable examples.[7] What seems to be the case is that in borrowing insights from philosophies of testimony, theology and biblical studies have to a greater or lesser extent affirmed the centrality of an autonomous and reflective human subject.[8] For us, this affirmation precisely heightens the need to rethink the concept in an adequately theological sense. In particular, Christian testimony essentially points away from the human plane to the resurrection, which an adequate account cannot be achieved without reference to divine activity. Testimony narrowly construed in forensic, sociological and rhetorical terms would not suffice to address divine agency, which is core to the event. Grounded in human subjectivity and sociality, testimony presupposes a natural capacity to read off meaning from the surface of history. Confidence in this proficiency is questionable even when it comes to uncommon events in mundane experience,[9] let alone in giving statement

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6 *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, p. 508.

7 E. Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969); Lévinas *Otherwise than Being, or, Beyond Essence* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998); P. Ricœur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); Ricœur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004); and C. A. J. Coady, *Testimony: A Philosophical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

8 Such philosophical influence on the construing of the category of testimony can be identified in the works of Lincoln, Brueggemann and Bauckham.

9 Coady, *Testimony*, pp. 179-99.

to divine acts in history, assuming that divine activity is not automatically precluded in the first place. It is perhaps no accident that Lincoln intriguingly circumvents the historicity of the resurrection, and instead systematically accentuates the importance of Jesus' death.[10] In fact, how one construes the notion of testimony has direct impact on how one speaks of Jesus' resurrection, and as Sonderegger ably illustrates in her comparison of Jenson and Barth, a shift from a firm grasp of an attitude of being a witness towards a stance of an interpreter of ecclesial traditions can readily alter not only one's recounting of the resurrection, but subsequently the shape and material of one's dogmatic work.[11]

THE WITNESS PROTOTYPE AND BARTH'S THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF TESTIMONY

Barth's theological concept of witness is multifaceted and a full view of it would require combing through several doctrinal areas (e.g. proclamation, Holy Scripture, ecclesiology and vocation), which cannot be achieved in this paper. As a starting point, an investigation of Barth's idea of prototypical witness is advisable for two reasons: first, this prototype of human witness is thoroughly theological as it will be shown later on that it is a derivative of the prototype of divine self-witness. Second, it contains the conceptual structure and basic features that a full account of Christian witness required.

Our exploration begins with Barth's portrayal of the Baptist in *Witness to the Word*.[12] Ideas from his exegesis are organized into three blocks: the ontology, the history, and the appropriation of witness. Not only are these three helpful as a way of depicting the type of John's ministry, Barth's reflection on him in *Church Dogmatics* can also be organized accordingly under these headings. Given the rich details of his treatment of the case, a thorough analysis of the Baptist's portrait in *Church Dogmatics* would require a separate project. What can be achieved here is a con-

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10 See A. T. Lincoln, 'The Beloved Disciple as Eyewitness and the Fourth Gospel as Witness', *JSNT*, 85 (2002), 25-26; Lincoln, '"I am the Resurrection and the Life": the Resurrection Message of the Fourth Gospel', in *Life in the Face of Death*, ed. by R. N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 127, 131; and Lincoln, *Truth on Trial*, p. 433.

11 K. Sonderegger, '*Et Resurrexit Tertia Die*: Jenson and Barth on Christ's Resurrection', in *Conversing with Barth*, eds. J. C. McDowell and M. Higton (England: Ashgate 2004), pp. 191-213.

12 K. Barth, *Witness to the Word: A Commentary on John 1*, ed. by W. Fürst and trans. by G. W. Bromiley (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003).

cise and probably not exhaustive enumeration of theological resource in Barth's thinking of the prototype.

ONTOLOGY OF WITNESS

In Barth's commentary on John 1 we discover a paradigmatic model of witness in the Baptist, which overlaps the Evangelist's self-understanding.[13] The ontological connection between witness and the pre-existing Logos is made at the very beginning of the commentary, though Barth admits that such connection is not entirely obvious on the textual surface. Interpreting John 1:3 he asserts,

> [A witness] has no independent existence or function over against him who is called *houtos* in v. 2. All of them have their existence and function only *di' autou*... The witness is not the Revealer, nor is he a witness to himself but to the Revealer.[14]

This relation between witness and the Revealer is elucidated with the concept of light (*phōs*) and life (*zōē*). Beginning with his understanding of 'life,' Barth decides to read 'light' as a subordinate concept of 'life', such that the way to ascertain the meaning of 'life' is also applicable to the notion of 'light'. Barth's proposal is that 'life' essentially directs us to think of redemption; while 'light' should be taken to mean revelation.[15] It is common among exegetes to read verse 4 as an explanation and follow-up of the previous verse. Noting that Augustine and Calvin also adopted this approach, Barth counter-proposes,

> Always in this Gospel the term *zōē* ... has soteriological-eschatological significance.... [*Zōē*] is not the life that is already in us or the world by creation; it is the new and supernatural life which comes in redemption and has first to be imparted to us in some way.[16]

This reasoning is applied to the subordinate concept of 'light' in verse 4–5. Similar to 'life' which does not hark back to verse 3, the 'light' con-

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13   Barth, *Witness*, pp. 15, 55-6. Concerning how the Evangelist positioned himself in connection to the Baptist (Matt. 11.11), Barth's definite answer—the Baptist is a paradigm with which the Evangelist derives his self-understanding. See also pp. 58, 102 for arguments against the common view among exegetes that the awkward statement of John 1:8 could have betrayed criticism against the Baptist sect.

14   Barth, *Witness*, p. 35.

15   Barth, *Witness*, pp. 35-6.

16   Barth, *Witness*, p. 39.

cept thrusts forward to a new thought that points to the whole complex of reconciliation and revelation. It refers not to the eternal light that exists always, but a light of revelation that is now new to humankind. It is not something that has presence in the creation; rather it comes fresh with redemption.

In brief, both 'light' and 'life' refer to reconciliation which is in principle a future that comes to humankind. Witness stands alongside revelation as a reflection. Where 'light' is the revelation of the incarnate Logos, it is an un-borrowed light; while human witness is the instrument in which this light bounces on and reflects. This metaphor points to the necessity of testimony, as implied in John 1:14. Referring to the incarnation, Barth writes,

> [because] the Logos became flesh, the witness is worthwhile and divinely necessary. Because the Logos became flesh the witness is possible and has an object. On this ground it has also its human necessity.[17]

This necessity comes forth as the eternal Logos spread His tent and dwelled among us in time.[18] In this specific history, for those who beheld and perceived revelation, there is of them a necessity to give witness, God has spoken and a human echo must be heard.

In *Church Dogmatics*, Barth revisited the ontological issue by way of the concept of 'divine delivery'[19] (*paradidōmi* or *Überlieferung* in *Kirchliche Dogmatik*), as he deliberates the delivery of John and Jesus into the hands of enemies. To Judas' betrayal there was a parallel and corresponding form of delivery in Saul's persecution of Christians before his conversion, and also in his later ministry as the apostle Paul.[20] That is to say, even the antagonistic kind of delivery of the Jews, of Judas and Saul, which consists in ignoring, setting aside and nullifying the Word of God, is to be understood in the light of God's prototypical act of delivering and the 'handing over' of His Son into the world.[21] Judas' act was not original.

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17 Barth, *Witness*, pp. 95-6.

18 Barth, *Witness*, pp. 12, 94.

19 K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (referred to as *CD*), ed. by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. by G. W. Bromiley et al., 13 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1947-68). Delivery is 'the handing-over or transfer of a free or relatively free person to the confining power of those who wish him harm, and from whom he must expect harm' (*CD* II/2, pp. 481, 490).

20 See *CD* II/2, pp. 481, 501 for a contrast of Judas' delivery and apostolic delivery.

21 Doubt may arise whether Barth entertains a positive correspondence between Judas' betrayal and apostleship. See *CD* II/2, pp. 484, 505 for a discussion.

What Judas took from Jesus, or the freedom he stole, is but a pale reflection of the divine freedom in which God denied Jesus Christ. In a fundamental sense, delivery is nothing other than the reality of the incarnation of the Word and a proper way to understand divine omnipotence.[22] Here we move decisively from John's prototype to a more fundamental prototype of divine self-delivery, which constitutes the basis of all acts of witness. Witness shares the same semantic meaning with 'delivery,' and the act of witnessing consists in the faithful and complete transmission, into a second set of hands, of the message of Jesus.[23]

The delivery enacted by the apostolate and the delivery of the betrayer are both reproductions of a divine prototype.[24] Resembling the notions of light and life in John 1, Barth attaches soteriological significance to delivery. The content and material of divine self-delivery is precisely the creation of condition for the things we receive in faith, that is, the removal of our trespasses.[25] This act of handing over underscores the eternal decree of God's love.[26] The ectypal character of Christian witness is succinctly spelt out,

> From the positive divine παραδοῦναι we now look back at the concept of the apostolic παράδοσις... this action undoubtedly has its origin in the act of God Himself... the saving apostolic tradition is not a new or strange thing, an independent reality. It is simply the human transmission of that which God has divinely given. It is not a productive, but only a reproductive [activity].[27]

In *CD* IV, the passivity of the Baptist as witness is further accentuated. Barth speaks of his history being absorbed by Christ to an extent that John is now alluded to as a 'rock face' and a reflector of divine speech.[28] This

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22 *CD* II/2, p. 490.

23 *CD* II/2, p. 482. Connecting Judas's delivery with that of the apostles, the latter has the judgment of the former as its background and context, and while being judged, its form is taken up again as 'the delivery which calls the Church into life'. See p. 483.

24 Cautiously Barth thinks that the negative models of Judas, Saul and the Jews are 'active participation in the positive task of the apostolate', yet such participatory correspondence in negative human delivery must be understood in terms of delivery of humans in divine wrath, see *CD* II/2, p. 488 for elaborated arguments.

25 *CD* II/2, p. 489.

26 *CD* II/2, p. 491.

27 *CD* II/2, p. 497.

28 Barth writes, Jesus 'Himself is primarily, originally, immediately and directly the Witness who introduces the voice of the friend and makes him His witness by His own attestation' (*CD* IV/3, p. 612; see also, *CD* IV/3, p. 232).

passivity of human agents is reflected also in the predestinarian language Barth uses to describe the selection and the inauguration of apostleship.[29] Barth presses on to purge John's positive identity; even his water baptism becomes only a marker by which to differentiate him from Jesus.[30] The purpose of this move is to clear the way for a more rigorous and exact theological rendering of the structure of witness. Having delimited the Baptist's ministry, Barth proposes a tripartite structure of witness[31] which cannot be detailed here. Suffice to note that John's prototypical structure of witness preceded Jesus, and yet soon to be surpassed by Him. In this surpassing, the definition of witness extends to cover eye-witness in the Fourth Gospel, and eventually the succeeding generations of witnesses.

HISTORY OF WITNESS

For Barth the Baptist's story is a paradigmatic history of witness. None-theless, where Jesus is the Light, the Baptist as witness is a rather empty and shadowy figure. The restrained character of this paradigm is evident in John 1:19–34, marked by his refusal to be identified as Christ, and not even any of the traditional secondary figures. The only positive note of John's identity is perhaps his voice crying in the wilderness, which brought both anonymity and enigma. The paradigmatic history of John also contains what Barth calls 'witness proper'[32] (John 1:29–34), in which statements were made to give direct witness to the Lamb of God. It is clear from the Baptist's confession that without himself being told by 'He who sent me,' the Baptist would never recognize the 'Spirit descending as a dove'. Materially, this human witness was a medium, yet divine revelation does not come about through it, as a divine act revelation takes place without reliance on human mediation. Thus, through the human medium, what comes through is not revelation but faith in it.[33] Human words can perform a mediatory role solely because the divine Subject is precisely on the scene, speaking about Himself, and not just *Deus Dixit*.[34]

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[29]   *CD* IV/3, p. 585.

[30]   *CD* IV/3, p. 611. Regarding the water baptism of John, Barth also sees in it the significance that he is not utterly a figure of the Old Testament, but 'at least one foot in the Christian community, as a kind of apostle before the apostles'. See *CD* IV/2, p. 205.

[31]   *CD* IV/3, pp. 611-12.

[32]   Barth, *Witness*, p. 134.

[33]   Barth, *Witness*, p. 52.

[34]   Barth only speaks of humans and human words as medium of revelation in a qualified way, see *The Göttingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion, Volume One*, ed. by R. Hannelotte and trans. by G. W. Bromiley (Grand

Analyzing Barth's earlier writings on this point, McCormack observes progress in his thinking in that Barth's former reliance on divine act in creating a 'single mathematical point' in which the unintuitable becomes intuitable, has been buttressed (not replaced) by an ontology of the divine, which underlies both his Christology and soteriology. On this secure ontological ground human witness finds God intuitable, and relaying the divine Word becomes a possibility.[35] Towards the end of McCormack's analysis the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in the presence of the risen Christ is mentioned, though not elaborated. The operation of the Holy Spirit coincides with the *Christus Praesens*,[36] 'The Holy Spirit is the power whereby Jesus...attests and imparts himself as crucified and risen', it is in *Christus Praesens* that human witnessing as a qualified kind of mediation becomes a possibility, as such human mediators can come upon provisional discoveries of divine self-witness.[37] To the question of how correspondence comes about in the mediation of divine attestations with human witnessing, the answer lies with the analogy of faith. This analogy names the proper relation between a human person and divine revelation. Human apprehension and replication of the divine Word is an act of conformity. McCormack observes that in faith human hearing has a content that conforms to divine speaking, without being an exact replication. This analogy works strictly from above to below, making human witnessing provisional, derivative and yet sufficient. Also, '[the] analogy is highly actualistic in character, meaning that 'it is effective only in the event of revelation'. The analogy, though established, 'does not become the attribute of the human subject'.[38]

Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), pp. 58-9, 67. In *CD*, the mediatory role is performed in a definitive way by Christ alone.

[35] B. McCormack, 'Revelation and History in Transfoundationalist Perspective: Karl Barth's Theological Epistemology in Conversation with a Schleiermacherian Tradition', *JRel*, 78, (1998), 18-37.

[36] *CD* IV/2, pp. 322-3.

[37] G. Hunsinger, 'The Mediator of Communion: Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit', in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. by J. Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 181-2; E. Busch, *The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth's Theology*, trans. by G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), p. 146.

[38] B. McCormack, 'Historical-Criticism and Dogmatic Interest in Karl Barth's Theological Exegesis of the New Testament' *Lutheran Quarterly*, 5 (1991), p. 219. For Barth's idea of sufficiency of human assertions of the divine, see also G. Hunsinger, 'Beyond Literalism and Expressivism: Karl Barth's Hermeneutical Realism', *Modem Theology*, 3 (1987), 209-23.

The Baptist's history has another paradigmatic dimension—he joined together the apostles and the Evangelist. The Evangelist portrayed the Baptist to represents a category—'[what] is true of him is true of all those who with him, classically represented by him, fall under the concept of "witness".'[39] It has been deliberately brought together in the Gospel the inauguration of apostleship with the ministry of the Baptist. John 1:35–51 is in sharp contrast to the Synoptics regarding the calling of the Twelve; what stands out is the deliberate positioning of the event 'in the middle of the Baptist movement in Perea' instead of Galilee.[40] The Baptist stood at in the beginning of the line of apostleship and 'sets the ball rolling'[41] by instructing his own followers to turn to Jesus, and thus Barth discerns that he was the one 'who is the first to know, what the apostles know'.[42]

The significance of John's history is also established by his location on the threshold between the Old and New Testament, marking the turn of the two aeons.[43] The Baptist's message proclaimed two things simultaneously, one being the fulfilment of the Old Testament, and the other being the promise of the One who will come and baptize with the Holy Spirit. John as a typification of witness indicates that biblical witness is both pointing back to the earlier covenant and forward to the future of Christ;[44] continuity of the two Testaments is presupposed in witnessing. It is unequivocal in the Baptist's message that 'the new thing in the *kerygma* of Jesus is also the old, the oldest of all—the incarnation of the eternal Word'.[45]

The history of witness is further understood with the concept of Christ's contemporaneity. In *CD* I, Jesus' history is spiritually contemporary with the Old Testament figures as well as the New Testament church,[46] whereas in *CD* III, more nuanced ideas of the resurrected Christ as contemporary with witnesses are introduced. To state the problem, John's prototypical witness focused on the incarnation and the point-

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[39] Barth, *Witness*, p. 57.
[40] Barth, *Witness*, p. 147.
[41] Barth, *Witness*, p. 147.
[42] Barth, *Witness*, p. 137.
[43] *CD* I/1, p. 112; *CD* I/2, p. 75; *CD* II/2, p. 426.
[44] *CD* I/2, p. 120.
[45] *CD* IV/2, p. 207.
[46] Barth's concept of contemporaneity is reflected in his disagreement with Cullmann, contemporaneity stipulates a relationship that exists in the particular and historically unique words of the fathers and the history of Jesus (*CD*, III/2, pp. 481-2). This presence of Christ to both aeons is grounded firstly in His self-declaration which is precisely His revelation; and secondly in the awakening of faith wrought by His Resurrection.

ing out of the Lamb, whereas the apostolic witness noticeably shifted the emphasis to the risen Christ. Barth tackles this shift by suggesting that in the apostolic testimony, there is a strong affinity to the theophany of the pre-Easter transfiguration.[47] There stands a tradition that weaved together Jesus' transfiguration, his baptism and the infancy narratives. As such these events underscored the reality of incarnation, and also in unity they anticipated and prefigured Jesus' resurrection.[48] The risen Lord was spoken of in terms of the transfigured Jesus; the Jesus in His pre-Easter earthly past is the same One revealed in His Resurrection. The same reasoning is applicable to other salient passages such as Jesus' baptism and infancy narratives. All these accounts shared the basic elements of divine epiphany (e.g. the opening of the heaven and a voice from it, indicating no ordinary miracle). The baptism of Jesus 'belongs to the same cycle of tradition as the transfiguration'.[49] The hour of His baptism is also an hour of revelation; as such it is the same as the revelation in His Resurrection. The witness of John merges with the apostolic message forming a unified whole and within its boundary Christian witness can move its focus from the Incarnation to Resurrection without being incoherent.

Christ's Resurrection and its implications on creaturely time are tackled in detail in CD III.[50] Dawson offers an in-depth analysis of it, and he reframes Christ's presence as His 'contemporaneity'.[51] Using this concept, we may conceive of the Baptist's testimony and that of the apostles as pointing at the same Christ. True testimony is based not on the amount of empirical data that one eye-witnessed, but rather on Christ who as the true revelation of God also elects His witnesses. The historicity of the man Jesus is opaque. The chief priest and Pontius Pilate had seen, heard and

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[47] CD III/2, p. 478.

[48] For Barth, 'the transfiguration is the supreme prefigurement of the resurrection'. Substantiating this claim he refers to 2 Peter 1:16, in which the apostolic witness is tied to the transfiguration with no mention of the Resurrection, as if the transfiguration is more central. Barth also discerns in Saul's conversion his encounter with the Lord had a strong allusion to the pre-Easter transfiguration. These examples illustrate that the pre-Easter Jesus was in a state of concealment, yet even as such, 'He was actually and properly the One He was revealed to be in His resurrection' (CD III/2, p. 478).

[49] CD III/2, p. 479.

[50] CD III/2, pp. 438-512.

[51] R. D. Dawson, The Resurrection in Karl Barth (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). See also, K. A. Richardson, 'Christu Praesens: Barth's Radically Realist Christology and Its Necessity for Theological Method', in Karl Barth and Evangelical Theology: Convergences and Divergence, ed. by S. W. Chung (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), pp. 136-48.

been involved in things that happened to Jesus, but they are not His witnesses in the way the bible uses the term. Where human testimony can be taken up by Christ and be placed alongside His revelation as a true reflection of it, it is Christ who solely determines His witnesses. So even from the time of the Baptist to that of the apostles, there is a noticeable development in the kerygma; both testimonies are properly pointing to the same revelation. The authenticity of their testimony has been wrought by the risen Christ,[52] who is contemporaneous with all moments of created time. Dawson understands the Resurrection doctrinally as an 'outward vector'[53] of the risen Christ: in Resurrection He moves towards all moments of history as the contemporary One. Barth's Christ does not only have a definite period of earthly time, He is also the representative of all humans before God. Christ's time is in relation to all three modes of time in which humans populated or will populate.

APPROPRIATION OF WITNESS

In his exegesis of John 1:10-12, Barth offers a close-up view of human knowing, receiving and believing, which elucidates how witness is appropriated. Barth has no interest in psychological theories as suggested by Bauer, Holtzmann and Zahn,[54] which offer to explain how knowing generates beliefs, or to give a temporal structure to the sequence of knowing, receiving and believing. These proposals seek to account anthropologically the mechanism of knowing, believing and receiving, through which the authority to be God's children is routinely transferred. The Evangelist's text warrants no such theorization. What is allowed instead is to speak of a 'coincidence or personal union; those who believe in his name are the same as those to whom the Word gave *exousia*'.[55]

Barth describes knowing, receiving and believing theologically with a strong adherence to the plain meaning of the text.[56] These terms are related

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[52] The idea of God speaks as the ground for human testimony to become a possibility is present in Barth's *Witness to the Word* (p. 134). In *CD* III (p. 435), Barth refers to John 3:27, James 1:17 and Psalm 20:6 to substantiate his point.

[53] Dawson, *The Resurrection in Karl Barth*, p. 67.

[54] Barth, *Witness*, p. 79.

[55] Barth, *Witness*, p. 79.

[56] In verses 10-12, knowing, receiving and believing refer primarily to the incarnate Logos instead of testimony about Him, yet in the context of the entire prologue where the Logos who became flesh has made it a necessity for human to give witness, we have reason to think of knowing, receiving and believing are also suitable concepts for describing what happens in the communication of witness.

as follows: the Greek text offers different words that convey the sense 'to receive', however there is no discernable shift in meaning. To properly interpret its nuance, Barth suggests referring back to the 'knowing' in verse 10. To receive is not separable from knowing the Logos who comes into the world, the sense of receiving is primarily a receptive knowing. There emerges another category in verse 12—'believing', and the inter-relationship between the three requires clarification. In John's Gospel, believing may be put before or after knowing, and Barth tends to see both positions are valid. What mediates between this dynamic relationship of 'knowing' and 'believing' is the notion of 'receiving'.[57] To the question whether these three are chronologically distinguished, Barth's answer is negative because such distinction is not given in the text. If we ask how the receivers of witness came to receive, the answer is supplied in verse 12 that 'to them he gave authority to become sons of God'.[58] In contrast to this usual translation, Barth renders the phrase 'to them he gave them the possibility'.[59] The 'possibility' given is not about our having authority and might, but rather a legitimation of becoming children of God.[60] Contrast to philosophical models of testimony, for instance, Coady's natural-istic view, for Barth a proper concept of witness is not about investing in a technical explanation of human intellect moving from knowing into believing, nor a microscopic view of how human receptivity is mediated. What really needed is a theological understanding of the reality of the possibility that comes to us, and our recognition that 'the Word creates its own hearers.'[61]

Another decisive aspect of appropriation is that the death of Jesus guaranteed the transmission of witness. The earlier concept of 'delivery' shows yet another facet of witness appropriation. Jesus' death is the necessary and sufficient guarantee of this transmission. In Judas's betrayal there was the sinful intention to nullify the Word. Now with Jesus' death this risk is neutralized, the earlier sinful form of delivery has been dis-

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[57] To 'know' is to be enlightened; to 'believe' is a state of brightness; and to 'receive' is the aptness that describes our receptivity. Barth, *Witness*, p. 71.

[58] Young's Literal Translation.

[59] In text B in which the English translation is based, Barth renders the term *exousia* as power; while in text A he uses 'possibility' instead. In subsequent discussions, he inclines to the sense of 'possibility' instead of 'power' or 'authority'. Barth, *Witness*, pp. xi, 11, 72-3.

[60] Barth, *Witness*, pp. 72-3. The giving of this *exousia* is neither a movement commencing directly from heaven, nor mediated through humans. Rather, it is given by Christ out of His decision and act (*CD* IV/4, 14).

[61] Barth, *Witness*, p. 74.

armed, and Jesus' death creates a new faithfulness and purity.[62] Thus in the New Testament church the grave risk of handing over Jesus once again into corrupted human tradition is removed, the danger is eliminated as Christ dies no more (Rom. 6:9). The power of resurrection now wrought a 'new, authentic, redemptive delivery of Jesus'.[63] The New Testament presents this danger as one that has been 'banished and overcome, as one which is in practice non-existent',[64] not because the apostles acquired a superior position, but rather with the juxtaposition of Jesus' death the risk had been removed before it could take form.

A third theme of the appropriation is that witnessing is at once taking offence in Christ and a joyful ministry. Barth highlights 'being offended in Christ' (*ärgert*) as a prominent feature of John's prototype.[65] This idea is directly tied to Barth's critique of modern efforts to delineate revelation from history.[66] In respond to Brunner, Barth queries if there is any chance at all that one can happily accept revelation without being offended. Referring to Matthew 18:7; 26:31 and Luke 17:1, Barth asserts that humans as self-seekers are bounded to offend and be offended in their encounter with revelation. The type of existence that Israel demonstrated by the crucifixion of Jesus was 'a drastic attempt to get clear of the offence of revelation, to make God's time the same as our time...'.[67] Although human appropriation of witness is permeated by this negative theme, Barth picks up the theme of 'friend of the Bridegroom' in John's ministry, which he repeatedly returns to in *CD* II and IV.[68] On the one hand, Christ made Himself alien, incomprehensible and repugnant even to the Baptist and His own disciples. On the other hand, there is genuine joy in hearing Him, a joy of discipleship that is permitted and commanded by Christ. In John 3:29 we see a jubilant ministry that counterbalance the negativity of offence.[69]

Finally, witness appropriation is a problem of salvation.[70] In this regard salvation is a matter of existence or non-existence of preachers,

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[62]   *CD* II/2, pp. 499-500.
[63]   *CD* II/2, p. 482.
[64]   *CD* II/2, p. 499.
[65]   *CD* I/2, p. 57.
[66]   See *CD* I/2, pp. 56-8 for Barth's refutation of both a general phenomenon of history and a presupposition of knowledge in what the normal structure of time is like. He also protests against the methodological decision to problematize revelation and to force it into the strictures of human history.
[67]   *CD* I/2, p. 62.
[68]   *CD* II/2, p. 588; *CD* IV/2, pp. 168, 182; *CD* IV/3, pp. 613, 629.
[69]   *CD* I/2, p. 279.
[70]   Romans 10:14.

and the event of proclamation is apparently connected with sending of messengers. What Barth seeks to establish is the legitimacy of indirectness in the hearing and proclaiming of the Gospel. All those being sent are witnesses or fundamentally apostles;[71] this sending however, does not rest on a direct encounter with God but with an indirect one.[72] In contrast to the concern of the global reliability of testimony transmission, which is a core concern for philosophical models of testimony, Barth's thinking of indirectness of witness is theological. Likened to the Baptist, all witnesses that come afterwards are concretely limited in their situation, and are determined and characterized by it. This limitation is not only because of divine transcendence, but also 'immanently by His becoming man', it is the self-witness of Jesus that dictates the content of the proclamation, and as such human words cannot 'crowd out the *kerygma* of Jesus'.[73] The foundation of the authority of human witness lies in the sameness of content in human proclamations as they repeat Jesus self-witness, such that '[he] who listens to you listens to me' (Luke 10:16). Also, in Rom. 16:25 what Paul called 'my gospel' is identical to the '*kerygma* of Jesus Christ'. Barth is firm in the view that '[there] is no place, therefore, for any appeal to the undoubted philosophy, scholarship, eloquence, moral impeccability and personal Christianity of the preacher, or for any notion that there is in his preaching any immanent power or value or salvation, or that the Christian *kerygma* is a self-sufficient and self-operative hypostasis'.[74] Thus, the focal point 'indirectness' does not rest on the idea that later generations hear the message indirectly from their predecessors. Rather, indirectness is thought of theologically in terms of humans are being delimited by God's transcendence, and simultaneously by the immanence of His becoming flesh.

CONCLUSION—BALANCING DIVERSE MODELS OF TESTIMONY

The Baptist's significance lies in the fact that he demonstrated a law by which all proclamations are 'inflexibly controlled'.[75] As a prototype, John is of every relevance to the church. He represents a demeanour and humility that the Church ought to follow—to take to its heart John's self-denial and to set for itself similar limits.[76] To outline John's prototype is a

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71 *CD* IV/2, p. 207.
72 *CD* IV/2, p. 208.
73 *CD* IV/2, p. 208.
74 *CD* IV/2, p. 208.
75 *CD* IV/2, p. 209.
76 Barth repeatedly sees ecclesial ministry in the light of John's prototype, see *CD*, IV/3, pp. 629, 836, 854; *CD* IV/4, p. 33.

beginning towards working out a thoroughly theological concept of witness. Recapitulating main themes in the three blocks of ideas explored so far: the ontology of witness consists in the prototypical divine self-delivery, to which Barth attaches soteriological significance. Second, the paradigmatic history of the Baptist is about his position on the threshold of the two Testaments; and his pacesetting role in the apostleship. Moving from John's paradigm to the history of apostolic witness, a slight shift in the focus of proclamation is noticeable: what brings together John and the apostolic witnesses is the contemporaneity of the risen Christ. Lastly, the appropriation and transmission of testimony commences with the possibility of knowing, receiving and believing, which is a gift of grace. The appropriation process itself is guaranteed by the death of Jesus and characterized by indirectness, as humans are delimited by divine transcendence and immanence.

In Barth's theological understanding of testimony, divine agency is definite, preemptory and uncompromised; it has precedence and predominance in the constitution of witness, as well as in its transmission and performance. Christian witness in its different junctures is held in unity neither by the continuity in creaturely subjectivity nor by practical mutual trust in the organic social body. But in other conceptual proposals about the nature of testimony, such a stance is not always clear. For instance, in *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, at one point Bauckham comes close to a theological understanding of testimony. In explaining the 'we' of John 12:38 and 21:24 as an authoritative source of testimony,[77] human testimony is anchored to Jesus' self-witness. Bauckham reasons that John acknowledged and repeated the authoritative testimony of Jesus, which in turn Jesus had heard from the Father—the dimension of divine agency in witnessing comes into sight. This thought is so briefly stated, and in what follows Jesus and the Paraclete are placed on a par with five other exemplary (human) witnesses,[78] thereby giving an impression that these seven were giving qualitatively the same kind of testimony; a differentiation of Jesus' (and the Paraclete's) witness from other human words is not accentuated. Where a theological concept of witness is not operating in full strength, the conceptual space tends to be filled in by sociological and epistemological considerations. In fact, Bauckham's appropriation of Coady and Ricœur shows more attention to the social and epistemological aspect of testimony.[79] This interest in the communal and practical value of testimony follows through to his drawing of a parallel between

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[77] Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, pp. 382-3. Cf. chapters 14-15, and 18.
[78] Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, p. 387.
[79] Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, pp. 473-90.

the Gospel and the Holocaust.[80] The rhetorical force of the comparison encourages readers to develop empathetic understanding of 'uniquely unique' events in history to which fellow humans have borne witness to. To have faith in this sense can be intriguingly similar to having natural faith in others because of the shared need to dwell together, and because none of us is self-sufficient.[81] In contrast, Barth's witness prototype signals an alternative plane in which testimony operates. It offers conceptual structure and materials, with which humans testifying the Resurrection are essentially connected back to the divine Word and agency as their proper origin. The prototype and more fundamentally a theological definition of witness is necessary for balancing proposals of Christian testimony, which have drawn their conceptual resource from philosophy and other disciplines.

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[80]   Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, pp. 493-508.
[81]   Coady, *Testimony*, pp. 16-7.

BACK TO (THEO-DRAMA) SCHOOL: THE PLACE OF CATECHESIS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH[1]

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PROLOGUE: IMPROVISING SHAKESPEARE IN CHICAGO

Every Friday night at Chicago's iO, the resident theatre company performs two ninety-minute Shakespeare plays with one striking difference from the RSC: the complete absence of a script. The show begins with the cast of the Improvised Shakespeare Company asking the audience for a title on which they improvise a play replete with iambic pentameter, rhyming couplets, and authentically Shakespearian vocabulary, character development, and plot. Each show is unrehearsed and unrepeatable.[2]

However, to speak of an absent script is to overstate. Whilst the show is improvised, it comes from the players' deep knowledge of the Bard of Avon's plays. When an actor joins the company, they sign up not only to perform, but also to a rigorous regime of study. The first lesson is the correct use of Elizabethan pronouns, then, every month, the company gathers for a graduate seminar-style discussion of a Shakespeare play. They are given vocabulary pop-quizzes, and engage in detailed study of Shakespearian character development, plot, and themes. To gain a deeper understanding of the doctrines that shaped the political and philosophical milieu of Elizabethan England, they also study texts such as Plato's *Republic*.

The purpose is not simply the pleasure of knowledge: the goal is performance. Without performance there would be no theatre; but without detailed, attentive study, the performances would be at best inauthentic, halting, and thin. To perform a Shakespearian improvisation something

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2   For more information see <http://www.improvisedshakespeare.com> (last accessed May 16, 2011) and especially the various reviews and articles linked there.

more than native talent is required. The performers need a deep immersion in the canonical scripts, in Shakespearian doctrines.

The Improvised Shakespeare Company thus provide a vivid illustration of the value of Kevin Vanhoozer's canonical-linguistic conceptualization of Christian doctrine.[3] Substitute the church for the company of improvisers, the watching world (and God himself) for the audience, the Scriptures for the *Complete Works of Shakespeare*, and a life of discipleship for a couple of Friday night performances, and there are clear and precise parallels. The question then arises: where in the life of the church should one look for the seminars that inform the performance? Vanhoozer's answer in *The Drama of Doctrine* is found, centrally, in preaching. In this article, I shall argue that Vanhoozer's view of doctrine also requires a recovery of catechesis in the local church. As I use the term, catechesis refers broadly to the Christian instruction of adults and children, new and seasoned Christians. Good catechesis will recognize the different stages and needs of, say, an adult convert or enquirer from an unchurched background, a seven year old Christian child, and a mature believer of many years standing. Nevertheless, the same basic principles apply in each case: the goal of instruction is performance; the taproot of good performance is deep familiarity with the script.

SETTING THE SCENE: TOO COOL FOR (SUNDAY) SCHOOL?

In his preface, Vanhoozer cites Alan Wolfe[4] to the effect that 'doctrine no longer plays any meaningful role in the life and thought of ordinary Christians' (xi). David Wells has also examined at length this 'strange disappearance of doctrine in the church'.[5] In addition to Wells and Wolfe's

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3   K. J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005). Throughout this essay, all page numbers in the body of the text refer to this volume.

4   *The Transformation of American Religion: How We Actually Live Our Faith* (New York: Free Press, 2003).

5   *No Place for Truth: Or, Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993); *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in the World of Fading Dreams* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994); *Losing Our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover Its Moral Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999); *Above All Earthly Pow'rs: Christ in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005). John Frame has criticized Wells for overstating his criticisms, for harshness of tone, and for what Frame perceives as methodological inconsistency ('In Defense of Something Close to Biblicism: Reflections on *Sola Scriptura* and History in Theological Method', *WTJ*, 59 (1997), 269-91; 'Reply to Richard Muller and David Wells', *WTJ*, 59 (1997), 311-18; nevertheless, his main thesis appears sound.

analyses, one piece of evidence for this absence of doctrine is the neglect of serious catechesis in evangelical churches. In an article comparing early church catechesis with contemporary evangelical new Christians' classes, Clinton Arnold states that his experience of teaching one such class left him convicted of the superficiality of what they were doing, not least in comparison with the 'rigorous plan and commitment by church leaders in the first four centuries to ground new believers in their Christian lives'.[6] In their recent book on catechesis, J. I. Packer and Garry Parrett also decry the lack of serious teaching in the contemporary western church.[7] They claim that the rise of the Sunday School movement in the 1800s, 'effectively replaced pastor-catechists with relatively untrained lay workers and substituted an instilling of familiarity...with Bible stories for any form of grounding in the basic beliefs, practices, and ethics of the faith.'[8]

FLASHBACK: TOO (OLD-)SCHOOL FOR COOL

In contrast, the patristic and Reformation periods were both marked by deep catechetical seriousness.[9] In the early church, enquirers into the faith

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6   C. E. Arnold, 'Early Church Catechesis and New Christians' Classes in Contemporary Evangelicalism', *JETS*, 47 (2004), 39-54, p. 39.

7   J. I. Packer, and G. A. Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2010).

8   Packer and Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel*, p. 24.

9   There is a growing literature exploring catechetical practices in both eras. For an historical overview, see Packer and Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel*, chap. 3; J. H. Westerhoff, III, and O. C. Edwards, eds., *A Faithful Church: Issues in the History of Catechesis* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003). For the patristic period, see *inter alia*, Arnold, 'Early Church Catechesis'; T. M. Finn, 'It happened One Saturday Night: Ritual and Conversion in Augustine's North Africa', *JAAR*, 58 (1990), 589-616; W. J. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995); idem, 'Catechesis, Catechumenate' in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by A. D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 145-49; L. G. Jones, 'Baptism: A Dramatic Journey into God's Dazzling Light: Baptismal Catechesis and the Shaping of Christian Practical Wisdom', in, *Knowing the Triune God*, ed. by J. J. Buckley and D. S. Yeago (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), pp.147-77. For the Reformation and post-Reformation periods, see, e.g., L. D. Bierma, *et al*, *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005); D. B. Calhoun, 'Loving the Westminster Confession and Catechisms', *Presbyterion*, 32/2 (2006), 65-72; I. Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England*, c. 1530-1740 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); G. A. Jensen, 'Shap-

received months, often years, of instruction in the catechumenate prior to baptism. Following the Reformation, according to George Lindbeck, Luther's Small and Large Catechisms had 'semi-canonical status' among Lutherans, due to their inclusion in the Book of Concord, and because 'most Lutherans for hundreds of years memorized the Small Catechism as part of their confirmation instruction'.[10] The Reformed were similar, with the Heidelberg Catechism achieving confessional status among the continental Reformed, and the Westminster Shorter and Larger Catechisms among Presbyterians. Indeed, the Reformation and post-Reformation periods saw an explosion of catechism writing. The patristic catechumenate and the Reformation catechism are not the only way of grounding believers in the faith; nevertheless these doctrinally and biblically rich models stand in striking contrast to the relative lack of doctrinal teaching in the contemporary evangelical church.

Equally striking is the devotion of many of the church's greatest theologians to the task of catechesis. Arnold notes that it was a priority for what he calls the 'top Christian scholars' of the early church, citing Origen (Alexandria; 185-254), Clement (Alexandria; 150-215), Tertullian (North Africa; c. 160-c.220), Hippolytus (Rome; 170-236), Ambrose (Italy; 339-97); Cyprian (North Africa; d. 258), Gregory of Nyssa (Asia Minor; 330-395), John Chrysostom (Byzantium; 347-407), Theodore of Mopsuestia (Asia Minor; 350-428), Cyril of Jerusalem (Palestine; b. 349), 'and many others'.[11] To these we should add Augustine (North Africa; 354-430). A similar inventory of sixteenth and seventeenth century theologians could be made, including Luther, Calvin, Ursinus, the Westminster Divines, Richard Baxter, and John Owen. Arnold contrasts this with today's theologians, asking, 'How many seminary professors are teaching in the functional equivalent of a catechumenate?'

This article brings the wisdom of previous generations of theologians into conversation with *The Drama of Doctrine* to explore the shape of a theo-dramatic catechesis for the twenty-first century church. The genius of this catechesis is both its rootedness in the covenantal drama of Scripture, acknowledging its authority as the 'supreme norm for Christian

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ing Piety Through Catechetical Structures: the Importance of Order', *Reformation & Renaissance Review*, 10 (2008), 223-246; W. D. Persaud, 'Luther's Small and Large Catechisms: Defining and Confessing the Christian Faith from the Centre in a Religiously Plural World', *Dialog*, 46 (2007), 355-62; T. J. Wengert, *Martin Luther's Catechisms: Forming the Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009).

[10] Quoted in Persaud, 'Luther's Small and Large Catechisms', p. 356.
[11] Arnold, 'Early Church Catechesis', p. 45.

doctrine' and catechesis (113),[12] and its goal of performance. The aim of catechetical study is action: 'fitting participation in the ongoing drama of redemption (112).[13] We shall also consider how this kind of catechesis might be reborn, arguing that, although scholars may play a part, the most fitting directors for theo-drama school are pastor-theologians. In this way, under the supreme direction of the Holy Spirit, formed by the Scriptures, 'informed by great performances from the past and from other parts of the world, guided by confessional dramaturgical[14] traditions', we can once again hope that the contemporary church might be transformed into a 'localized instance of God's masterpiece theater' (457).

ACT ONE. IN WHICH WE DISCOVER A TRADITION OF CATECHETICAL SAPIENTIA WITH WISE PERFORMANCE AS THE GOAL

Scene I. Doctrine 1.0: Catechesis as Downloading Knowledge?

In *The Drama of Doctrine*, Vanhoozer repeatedly and rightly distances himself from a purely propositional view of doctrine. He seeks a holistic approach: 'what doctrine communicates...involves the whole person: cognition, affection, and volition alike.' (100) Doctrine is not simply a summary of biblical propositions, systematically ordered with their interconnectedness more or less tightly displayed. 'The ultimate aim of doctrine is, as Calvin knew, pastoral: not simply to picture or conceptualize the divine drama but to *perform* it.' (103) Doctrine is direction for participating 'more deeply, passionately, and truthfully in the drama of redemption.' (107) Thus, 'Doctrinal direction has a properly catechetical function.' (103) However, to be truthful, this performance must also be *fitting*. Just as dialogue and action from *Madmen* would be out of place in a Shakespearian improvisation, jarring and disrupting the action, so demons participate in the theo-drama, but 'as opponents who block the way to life and truth.' (108) Language shapes us, but 'Some shapes accord to reality better than others.' Therefore, it is important that our performances are shaped by the canonical Script, but also that our performances then fit with the new situations in which we find ourselves; there must be contextual as well as exegetical fit. Catechesis should serve this end. 'The criterion for correct [catechesis][15] is not simply logical but *dra-*

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12   In Vanhoozer's terminology, we can refer to this as the *scientia* of catechesis.
13   The *sapientia* of catechesis.
14   On 'dramaturgy', see below.
15   The original here reads 'doctrine'.

matic consistency'. It should 'help us discern what, in light of the drama of redemption, is fitting language and action for Christian disciples'.[16] (109)

However, for many, catechesis, and in particular catechisms, have precisely the connotations of mere doctrinal propositionalism. On this understanding, to learn a catechism is simply to absorb by rote a set of propositions drawn from Scripture with no obvious practical outcome. Yet this was never the goal of historic catechesis. Following Vanhoozer's courtroom metaphor (234), where the theologians of the past function as expert witnesses (Scripture alone being the judge in theological controversy), the catechetical defence calls Zacharius Ursinus.

Scene II. Catechetical Preparation for Understanding the Script?
Ursinus (1534-1583) was the principal writer of the Heidelberg Catechism.[17] He can thus claim to be one of the most enduring catechetical influences on the Protestant churches. In his lectures on the Catechism, he offers a three-fold typology of the theological disciplines: catechesis, commonplaces, and the reading of Holy Scripture.[18] Catechism ('a brief summary and simple exposition of the principal doctrines of the Christian religion') is the most basic of the three and is necessary for all believers. Common places are lengthier explanations of each doctrinal point, loosely identifiable with what we would call systematic theology. This is appropriate for theological schools. However, for Ursinus these first two methods are preparatory for the third: 'careful and diligent reading of the Scriptures...is the highest method in the study of the doctrine of the church.' The goal of catechesis is right hearing of Scripture.

Scene III. Catechetical Training for Performance
Ursinus's typology is good as far as it goes, and in its coherence, order, integration, and the supreme place it gives to Holy Scripture, a great improvement on the contemporary fragmentation of the theological sub-disciplines. Nevertheless, it is incomplete. A canonical-linguistic approach would add a fourth term, for the goal is not simply to *hear* the

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[16]   Again, in the original, Vanhoozer is speaking of doctrines rather than catechesis, but the point is essentially the same.

[17]   The catechism was produced by a committee, but Ursinus was probably the principal writer. For a summary of older and more recent scholarship on the roles of Ursinus and Casper Olevianus and conclusions favouring Ursinus as the primary author of the catechism, see L. D. Bierma, 'The Purpose and Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism', in Bierma, *et al, Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism*, pp. 49-74.

[18]   *The Commentary of Zacharius Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. by G. W. Willard (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1985), pp. 9-10.

script. The goal is performance. The fruit of the theo-drama school's seminar room can only be seen when the curtain is raised, the Improvised Gospel Company steps onto the stage, and the performance begins.

In fact, although Ursinus does not emphasize this in his typology, simply *hearing* Scripture is not his ultimate goal. As John Webster notes, for Ursinus learning Scripture has a practical goal: the promotion of godliness and the establishing of Christ's kingdom.[19] 'The end of theology is practical knowledge of God, that is, knowledge which aims at the furtherance of the life of the Christian community, the salvation of humankind, and godly discipline.'[20] This much is obvious from the Heidelberg Catechism itself. From its beautiful opening, the Catechism is concerned with piety, with comfort in life and death, with discipleship, and above all with our relationship to Christ. In following the standard elements of teaching on the Creed, the sacraments, the Decalogue, and the Lord's Prayer, the Catechism gives plenty of attention to life. It is clear that Ursinus intends to inculcate a certain form of life, a certain type of performance, one shaped by grief, grace, and gratitude. In this, it corresponds to Vanhoozer's conception of doctrine as a prompt that 'fosters a certain *ethos*, or sense of the overall shape that one's life must take in order to realize the true, the good, and the beautiful.' (105)

Scene IV. The Greatest Love Story Ever Staged

Another way of stating this, following Augustine, is to speak in terms of love.[21] *On Catechizing the Uninstructed*[22] is the first patristic catechetical manual we have.[23] It is Augustine's response to Deogratias, a deacon of the church in Carthage who had requested the bishop's help in fulfilling his duty of catechizing enquirers seeking the rudiments of the faith. The work contains instructions in the aims of catechesis, considerations of how to catechize various types of beginner, wise pastoral counsel help

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[19] J. Webster, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 115. Webster is commenting on Ursinus's inaugural address at the Elisabeth-Schuler in Breslau (1558), but in that lecture Ursinus also employs the formulation we are discussing.

[20] Webster, *Holy Scripture*, p. 116.

[21] On Augustine's catechesis, see Finn, 'It Happened'; Harmless, 'Catechesis, Catechumenate'; idem, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*; Jones, 'Baptism: A Dramatic Journey'; B. Ramsey, '*Catechizandis Rudibus, De*', in *Augustine Through the Ages*, pp. 144-45;

[22] *De Catechizandis Rudibus*. The work was probably written sometime between 399-405. In this article I quote from the translation by S. D. F. Salmond, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 3, pp. 277-314.

[23] Ramsey, '*Catechizandis Rudibus*', p. 144.

Deogratias overcome his diffidence regarding his catechetical abilities, and two model addresses, a longer and a shorter. We shall return to Augustine's method below, for now we simply note his aim. Consistent with the overarching theme of his entire corpus, his aim in catechesis was to cultivate a twofold love—of God and neighbour—for this is why Christ came,

> to wit, that man might learn how much God loves him; and that he might learn this, to the intent that he might be kindled to the love of Him by whom he was first loved, and might also love his neighbor, in that He loved man when, instead of being a neighbor to Him, he was sojourning far apart.[24]

Deogratias is to make this his goal, and to refer all that he says to it, so that 'he to whom you are discoursing on hearing may believe, on believing may hope, on hoping may love'.[25] Thus, for Augustine, the drama of Scripture is a romance, the story of God's great love for us in Christ; the purpose of rehearsing this script is to evoke a fitting performance, a corresponding love in the hearer.

Augustine is aware, however, that love for God and neighbour is formed in competition with many competing loves. There are strong and persuasive cultural scripts competing with the divine script; the backdrop and scenery for the play, as well as many of the cast, are more appropriate for a different kind of production entirely. And so, in his model lectures, he addresses the need for catechumens to be furnished against enemies of the faith; he offers a very specific list of sins they should avoid; and he warns of the particular danger of being seduced into sin by the wickedness of some inside the church.[26]

In other words, this is a profoundly wise *sapiential* catechesis that is acutely aware of its context in late fourth century North Africa, and of the competing plotlines that threaten to corrupt the company of players, derail the action, and turn a romantic comedy[27] into a tragedy of lusts and concupiscence. Indeed, one of the marks of patristic catechesis in general was an emphasis on spiritual and moral formation that offered clear teaching on renouncing sinful behaviours and cultivating the virtues.[28]

However, if this goal of wise and fitting performance is to be reached, what should be our method?

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[24] *De Cat.*, 4.8.

[25] *De Cat.*, 4.8.

[26] *De cat.*, 25.48.

[27] Comedy in the original, Aristotelian sense.

[28] Arnold, 'Early Church Catechesis', pp. 49-51.

ACT TWO. IN WHICH WE SURVEY CATECHETICAL *SCIENTIA* AND OUTLINE A METHOD OF CORPORATE STUDY AND PERFORMANCE OF SCRIPTURE

Scene I. Studying the Script

Good improvisation is not accidental. The Improvised Shakespeare Company's performances grow from deep knowledge of the scripts of the Shakespearean canon. If the play were to begin not with a title from the audience, but with volunteers taking the stage, the performance would be at best halting, at worst a catastrophe.

If, in the thick of the action, we are to exercise wise judgments, and so put on fitting performances—performances that *fit* with who we are in Christ—the church needs a deep knowledge of her canonical Script(ures). 'Good theological judgment is largely, though not exclusively, a matter of being apprenticed to the canon: of having one's capacity for judging (a capacity that involves imagination, reason, emotion, and volition alike) formed and transformed by the ensemble of canonical practices that constitute Scripture.' (331) In Vanhoozer's canonical-linguistic terminology, this knowledge is *scientia*, 'the approach by which theology derives direction from the script.' (265)

If, for Vanhoozer, *sapientia* is a practical wisdom fitting to the present context, this wisdom is formed by exegetical *scientia*, 'the attempt to hear what the Spirit of Christ says through the word of Christ to the body of Christ.' (265). I shall argue, with the aid once more of the expert testimony of Augustine, that this therefore shapes the catechist's role. Like the theologian, the catechist's task is 'to study the playscript and prepare it for performances that truthfully realize its truth' (247).

In *On Catechizing the Uninstructed*, Augustine advocates a salvation-historical approach. He gives a Christ-centred, typological reading of Scripture that traces God's dealings with his creatures through creation, fall, and the history of Israel (particularly Exodus and Exile), climaxing in the events of Christ's incarnation, sufferings, death, and resurrection, and continuing to the present day in the church. In other words, Augustine follows a theo-dramatic approach. Whilst it was common in the early church to present the case for Christianity via the 'sweep of salvation history',[29] Boniface Ramsey suggests that Augustine does so here because this address was for enquirers into the faith who had not yet joined the

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[29] Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, p. 127.

catechumenate. For such hearers, the historical approach would be easier to follow than a more strictly dogmatic one.[30]

There may be some truth in this. For those admitted to the catechumenate, Scripture remained the 'textbook': 'It structured everything: whether individual sermons or a whole sequence'. But now, Augustine favoured depth to breadth, focusing on 'small fragments—single verses, even single words'.[31] However, we should note that Augustine was not beyond using a narrative approach in his more detailed dogmatic treatises.[32] Even were this not the case, a theo-dramatic approach is arguably faithful to the shape of the Script and to the performance tradition of catechesis. The basic content of catechesis, particularly in the era of the Reformation has consistently included, albeit in a variety of orders, the Apostles' Creed, the Sacraments, the Decalogue, and the Lord's Prayer. The Creed outlines the theo-drama (from Creation, through the drama of the Gospels in summary form to consummation, before locating the church within that drama), and introduces the *theo-dramatis personae* (God the Father Almighty, Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, the Holy Spirit, one holy catholic church). Similarly, God did not give the Decalogue in abstraction, but at a particular turning point in the unfolding covenantal drama of history.

Augustine argues that this method suits his goal of love for God and neighbour. We learn this love by witnessing the dramatic unfolding of God's dealings with us. We learn our role in the drama from the God who, in Christ, first loved us and gave us the instruction and the example to love our neighbour. This revelation of love is the main purpose of Christ's advent, but is also revealed in the OT Scriptures that 'presignify' Christ. Thus, Augustine's method is to teach the Old and New Testaments, because in the Old there is a veiling of the New, and in the New a revealing of the Old.[33]

Catechetical *scientia* should therefore include teaching on the broad sweep of the theo-drama's unfolding plot, and the identities of the major

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[30]   Ramsey, p. 144. Note also the significance of the *narratio* as one stage of six within a well-established classical tradition of the judicial speech with which Augustine, the former teacher of rhetoric, would have been intimately familiar: in using this form, he is making a case for Christianity (Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, pp. 123-30; see also the chart on p. 155).

[31]   Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, p. 236.

[32]   Witness Edmund Hill's comments on that most taxing of dogmatic treatises, the *De Trinitate*. ('Introduction', in Augustine, *On the Trinity*, trans. by E. Hill [Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1991], pp. 18-19). Although he doesn't use the term, according to Hill, Augustine was a theo-dramatic theologian.

[33]   Augustine, *De cat.*, 4.8.

players (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, church). However, another strength of Vanhoozer's approach is his recognition that Scripture contains diversity within its unity. The basic plotline of Scripture can be summarized in a coherent way. Nevertheless,

> The canon is a *complex simplex*—a chorus of diverse voices that nevertheless all testify to the same multifaceted reality: God's word-act in Jesus Christ. The theo-dramatic script is a rich dialogue between various genres that sometimes complement, sometimes contrast with one another, rather than a stable and static monologue that endorses a single system of propositions. Each biblical word view [*sic*] opens a different window on the canonical land-scape.' (287).

This suggests that thorough catechesis, perhaps particularly as we progress in the faith, will move from summary outlines to a rich and varied 'apprenticeship' to the text, one that takes into account the variety of literary genres and thus imaginative worlds contained within the text (285). Ongoing catechesis therefore requires 'the hard formation of following Scripture so that literary forms merge into forms of life' (285). To return one last time to the Improvised Shakespeare Company, in one interview the actors relate how intensive study of Macbeth transformed their next performance: it was darker, weirder, and more full of the supernatural than before.[34] What, then, should happen to Christians as they study a particular part of Scripture? How might their performances change as a result of deep familiarity with Ecclesiastes? What shape of performance would be accomplished by three months studying Leviticus, in contrast to three months studying Philippians? Recognition of the pluriform human authorship and range of literary genres in Scripture, and therefore the pluriform performance possibilities flowing out of these scripts, should shape not simply a church's preaching ministry, but also its catechesis.

Scene II. Performance Practice
(A Company of Players Performing...

In considering catechetical *scientia*, we have focused primarily on the content of catechesis. However, a comprehensive description of performance-oriented theo-dramatic catechesis would also account for the various contexts in which this study is set. Briefly: the central setting is the company of players, the church. The performances in view are not one-

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[34] K. Pang, 'Improvised Shakespeare Takes Time to Perfect: There's Rhyme, Reason, and a Method Used by Mad-About-Bard Improvisers, *Chicago Tribune*, March 30, 2009; available online at <http://www.improvisedshakespeare. com/press/writeup/li/PRESS-3-30-2009/> (last accessed May 16, 2011).

man shows, but ensemble pieces, therefore consideration of the role of Christian community is important. This is true not only of performance, but also of learning. Douglas Knight offers a rich account of Christian *paidea*, illustrating it using the analogy of learning tennis. You do not learn to play tennis sitting in a classroom learning the size of the court, the scoring system, the theory of how to hold a racket to impart topspin to the ball. Rather, you learn by playing. Within the context of the game you receive instruction in correct posture and foot-movement, how to score, which strokes to employ when. Commentary serves performance of the game, but performance also improves the player's physique, muscle memory, and the formation of the mind of a tennis player.

All this happens in relationship, with the goal of spending convivial time together.[35] Augustine's catechumenate took this into account by assigning to each catechumen a sponsor who would model the Christian life ('Christ announced through Christian friends.')[36] The catechumenate was an apprenticeship in Christian living, and part of that was imitation of more experienced actors. Entwined with the instruction was a 'gradual inclusion in the Christian community'.[37] The heavily ritualized final weeks of the catechumenate in Lent, leading up to baptism in the Easter Vigil also show his concern that performances be shaped not just by ideas, but also by practice.[38]

...for a Twofold Audience)

The audiences for the Improvised Gospel Company's performances are God and the watching world. Thus for a comprehensive account of catechesis, attention to the settings of worship and mission would also be necessary. The process is not linear: first, catechesis, then, and only when the script is mastered, performance. Rather, as with all great performers, mastery of the script comes, in part, through performance. A string quartet who have performed together for 20 years have learned much, not just in the practice room, but also in the act of performance. Knowledge of one another, the ability to flex and adapt a performance in the moment by sensing a cue from one of their number, insights into the meaning of a Bartok Quartet, have come as much through repeated concert performances as they have in private study of the score and hours in rehearsal. With regard to mission, to use Knight's second metaphor, Christian

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[35] D. Knight, *The Eschatological Economy: Time and the Hospitality of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), pp. 36-8.

[36] Jones, 'Baptism: A Dramatic Journey', p. 155.

[37] Jones, 'Baptism: A Dramatic Journey', p. 154.

[38] See especially Finn, 'It Happened'.

paidea is like building a house together with a gang of delinquent children:

> Whatever the children built or destroyed in the course of a day, the builder would have to integrate into the construction of a house. The builder must make good a building that does not suffer from the deficiencies of the efforts of children, or even the willful deconstruction caused by disaffected delinquents. It is not that the upbringing and education of the children is an interim goal, and the building of the house an ultimate goal. Neither goal can be subordinated to the together. The house must have the objective reality of a building; it must become the place in which they can live. It must also however, be the wherewithal by which they grow to be adults and are provided with support that increases and decreases at every stage as appropriate to each learner.[39]

With regard to worship, Augustine's catechumenate was also a place of liturgical formation. Most teaching took place in the context of public worship, drawing the catechumens into fitting performance through the drama of the liturgy.[40] Harmless describes Augustine's method with a dramatic metaphor. Noting that the classroom was Augustine's basilica, and so the context for his catechesis was liturgical and ecclesial and 'the rhythms of education moved to the rhythms of the liturgy itself', he says that the setting for the teaching 'offered entertainment as well as instruction, theatrics as well as worship: its drama was salvation history; its script was the Scriptures; and its actors included everyone.'[41]

In my pastoral setting, in a small Anglican church on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, our catechesis (called 'Discipleship Academy') seeks to account for each of the aforementioned elements. We also take into account our very busy and fairly transient congregation, which matches the busy transience of our location. We have developed a yearlong programme of five six-week modules. Mindful of Ursinus's model, we begin with a study of the Apostles' Creed, and include teaching on the Lord's Prayer and a Bible overview, before concluding with detailed exegetical study of Mark 1-8; ideally, we shall also add teaching on the Decalogue. These cognitive elements take place in the context of community: we teach cohorts of twelve members at a time; we ask each member to

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[39] Knight, *Eschatological Economy*, pp. 38-9.

[40] On the liturgy as 'a condensed and compelling ritual version of the drama of redemption', see *Drama of Doctrine*, 409-410. On liturgical formation more generally, see J. K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

[41] Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, p. 235.

commit to regular attendance for the entire year; and we share breakfast together before studying the day's topic. We also prioritise corporate worship: each week we pray Morning Prayer together before the lesson starts, and each member of Discipleship Academy is expected to attend Sunday worship faithfully. In this way, we aim for biblical and theological rigour in the context of community and liturgical formation.

Thus far, I have argued that a theo-dramatic catechesis will aim at *sapientia*: faithful, rich, contextually sensitive performances that advance the divine drama. A rigorous exegetical *scientia* in the context of ongoing performance is required, so that the church does not inadvertently play from the wrong script, and so that our improvisations are as rich and many-textured as the canonical script(s) from which we play.

This leaves a final question: who teaches us to move from script to performance? In the context of catechesis, who directs the theo-drama school?

ACT THREE. IN WHICH WE IDENTIFY WISE AND LEARNED CATECHISTS TO DIRECT THE THEO-DRAMA SCHOOL

Vanhoozer argues that the role of director belongs properly to the Holy Spirit (244). Nevertheless, the pastor is an assistant director, guiding (though not micromanaging!) the church's performance from the canonical script. According to Vanhoozer, he does this primarily, though not exclusively, by preaching, 'an obedient "listening to the text on behalf of the church.'" (448-9).[42] The theologian plays the role of dramaturge, whose job is to study the play and give exegetical and performance advice to the assistant director and the company (244-6).

However, in discussing catechesis, the training of the players, we are asking not simply who directs the performance, but who directs the drama school? The students/players? The director? The dramaturge? Or some combination of the three? I shall argue that, under the supreme direction of the Spirit and heeding advice from the dramaturge, the answer is, primarily, though not exclusively, the pastor-director. Best of all is when a director-dramaturge can take the lead.

As we saw, Packer and Parrett tied the decline of catechesis in the eighteenth century to the rise of the lay-led Sunday school, with teachers whose lack of theological training led to less competent study and teaching of the script. We can trace the same pattern for adults with the rise of the lay-led small group. This too involved a move away from the catechetical practices of Augustine, who preached four sermons a week of up to an

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[42]   Quoting William Willimon.

hour in length, or Calvin, with the daily sermon in Geneva, or Richard Baxter, with his house-to-house style of family catechizing. Instead of serious teaching from a pastor steeped in the Scriptures, the typical evangelical home group features an inductive Bible study led by a lay-leader from pre-packaged material. Sometimes these are well led and edifying. However, even at their best, the relative lack of training and knowledge of the script has deleterious effects on the study and therefore performance of the script.

The patristic and reformational history is one of rich, theologically informed catechesis, led by some of the greatest theologians in the church's history. We saw that Arnold, having listed many of the 'top Christian scholars' in the early church as catechists,[43] asked 'How many seminary professors are teaching in the functional equivalent of a catechumenate?'

The question is well taken; it would be healthy, not least for seminarians, if their professors were engaged in teaching the faith to new believers. However, what is striking from Arnold's list is *not* that these men were scholars in the modern sense of the term, but that they were *pastors*. They were not simply dramaturges; they were director-dramaturges. It was the greatest pastor-theologians of the church's history who were supremely committed to catechesis. Webster comments on Ursinus:

> Because the end of doctrine is nurture, there is for Ursinus no distance between the theological teacher and the church: called by God, the teacher's self-understanding is derived from his place in the community as Christ's kingdom, and the teacher's activity directed solely to its flourishing.[44]

If we follow a theo-dramatic model for doctrine, a directorial model for the pastor, and a dramaturgical model for the theologian, the principal catechists in the local church should be dramaturge-directors. It is striking that in seeking advice on catechizing the uninstructed, Deogratias turned to the Bishop of Hippo. We know Augustine as the writer of such profound and difficult texts as *De Trinitate*, but to his contemporaries he was known equally as a pastor, preacher, and catechist. The church's greatest theologian was also the most obvious adviser on instructing those with least knowledge of the faith.

All of this fits with Paul's blueprint for the church's growth to maturity. In Ephesians 4:11-16, the goal is undeniably practical and involves every member of the body of Christ being active in service, but the driving force is the ascended Christ's gift of ministers of his word (4:11).

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43 As we noted, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were no different.
44 Webster, *Holy Scripture*, p. 112.

Although the office of teacher appears to be distinguishable from that of pastor, the pastor is here viewed not least as a catechist.[45] Similarly, in the Pastoral Epistles, Timothy and Titus must ensure healthy doctrine to prevent the subversion of the divine drama, and ensure compelling performances of the gospel. They must therefore teach true doctrine themselves, and appoint elders whose own performances are fitting but who are also equipped to direct the performance by teaching healthy doctrine.[46] Packer and Parrett list Paul's exhortations to Timothy and Titus to exercise ministries in which teaching was central, and to set aside others to do the same (1 Tim. 1:3f; 4:6,11, 13, 16; 6:2-4, 20; 2 Tim. 1:13f; 2:2, 14-15, 24-25; 4:2f; Titus 2:1, 7-8, 15; 3:1; cf. 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9), asking, 'In light of this testimony from the pastoral epistles, what might Paul think of the state of affairs in too many of our churches today, with pastors who do not regard teaching as a central feature of their ministries[?]'[47]

This does not mean that only pastors should teach within a congregation,[48] nor that preaching and catechism is the pastor's only role: the terms shepherd and overseer indicate wider responsibilities. Nor is it to denigrate the centrality of preaching in the pastor's ministry of the word. However, in a contemporary church marked by widescale ignorance of our script and surrounded by a clamour of competing cultural scripts, if the church is to mount healthy 'masterpiece theatre', a return to pastor-led catechesis involving deep study and learning of the script, with the goal of performance, seems vital. Pastor-theologians of past centuries did not think that preaching alone could accomplish this; the Lord Jesus' multi-faceted catechesis of his disciples also suggests otherwise. In the conclusion to *The Drama of Doctrine*, Vanhoozer calls for pastors to return to doctrine, specifically to creedal theology, in order to enrich their direction, helping each player to understand the play and 'to grow into his or her part' (449). I am arguing that one important expression of

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[45]   Reading pastors and teachers as two overlapping roles, perhaps with the second being a subset of the first, but certainly with most pastors being teachers but not all teachers being pastors. Cf. H. W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), pp. 543-5; A. T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC; Dallas, TX: Word, 1990), p. 250; Peter T. O'Brien, *Ephesians* (PNTC; Leicester: Apollos, 1999), pp. 300-1.

[46]   As is often noted, the only qualification in the lists in 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1 that is not a qualification of character, is ability to teach.

[47]   Packer and Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel*, p. 48.

[48]   For example, parents are to teach their children (Eph. 6:4); mature women are to teach younger women (Titus 2:3); all Christians are to teach and admonish one another (Col. 3:16); there does appear to be a distinct office of teacher (Eph. 4:11; cf. 1 Cor. 12:28).

this performance-oriented return to doctrine in the local church should be a return to pastor-led catechesis. This is one of the lessons not only of our script, but also, as we have seen, of the great performances and the great directors of the past.

EPILOGUE: A CATECHETICAL PROMPT FROM WISDOM'S WINGS

Kevin Vanhoozer has served the contemporary church well by providing a vivid conceptualization of Scripture as authoritative Trinitarian theo-dramatic discourse: a divine script performed supremely by Jesus Christ, and to be performed by the church in the ongoing drama of redemption. Within this, doctrine has a directive role, providing dramaturgical resources to assist the church's performance of the Script.

Heeding these prompts from a contemporary master dramaturge, it is time for director-dramaturges to begin the task of recovering catechesis. If the church really is to produce masterpiece theatre for the twenty-first century, not simply aping ancient performances, but improvising afresh in a fitting, compelling way before a watching world that is, by and large, bored of this particular brand of theatre, then a recovery of deep knowledge of the script and of past performance traditions is vital. This is a call for study not for its own sake, but for the sake of fitting performance, not for entertainment, but for the life of the world. Nevertheless, as with the Improvised Shakespeare Company, deep study is required so that the church knows her scripts and so can improvise faithfully, rather than taking cues from the debased cultural scripts around us. To step off the stage and leave the metaphor behind: the church needs a recovery of catechesis aiming at godly discipleship. Therefore, we need pastors, and especially pastor-theologians who understand themselves not simply as preachers, but also as catechists.

REVIEWS

Hermeneutics: An Introduction. By Anthony C. Thiselton. Grand Rapids:
Eerdmans, 2009. ISBN978-08028-6410-9. xiv + 409 pp. £19.99

Anthony Thiselton is well known for his major studies in hermeneutics
and his many fine contributions to hermeneutical discussions in theol-
ogy. Hence, an introductory book from his pen promises to offer a great
instrument for teaching hermeneutics alongside a number of similar
books on the market today. In his preface, Thiselton tells the reader that
these other books are not really adequate.

In seventeen chapters the reader of this book is introduced to the
nature and development of hermeneutics. Thiselton encourages the new-
comer to hermeneutics to be prepared for fresh insights not only with
regard to the theory and practice of text interpretation, but also with
regard to the reader's own interpretative perspectives and horizons. Her-
meneutics, he writes, seeks to establish bridges between opposing view-
points. It is a process inspired by the to and fro movement between text
and reader/reading community, a process that demands from the reader
a subjective engagement which in the first place allows the text to dis-
close its objective communication. Thiselton illustrates well the inter- or
multidisciplinary nature of hermeneutics: biblical studies, philosophy,
theology, literary criticism, rhetoric, critical theory, historiography, social
sciences and other disciplines all can offer valuable insights into under-
standing how the hermeneutical process works. Moreover, he traces the
development of hermeneutics from antiquity to modern and postmod-
ern times and introduces major figures and periods in philosophy, theol-
ogy and church history. At times, however, these presentations tend to be
chatty, generalising and even distorting. His treatment of the Enlighten-
ment, for instance, lacks both focus and depth and is mostly dependent on
one source of secondary literature. Unfortunately, in spite of some good
passages and observations, Thiselton's overall presentation of the devel-
opment of hermeneutics cannot be said to be attractive. A newcomer to
hermeneutics would not be able to know how to navigate between what is
careless and what is thorough in this introduction.

Thiselton is clearly at his best when discussing the major influences in
contemporary hermeneutics, such as Schleiermacher, Bultmann, Barth,
Gadamer, Ricoeur, structuralism, and post-structuralism, although some
of his presentations again are massively dependent on secondary litera-
ture and not all details (names, dates of publication, editions etc.) are cor-
rect – a more thorough editing and proofreading would have been neces-
sary to make this introductory volume live up to its promise.

Thiselton deserves credit for paying particular attention to some newer developments in the discussion of biblical and theological hermeneutics, including liberation theology, post-colonial, feminist and womanist, more recent literary theories (reader-response and reception theories), and significant contemporary French thinkers. Yet, many of these sections still read like raw lecture notes—not fully worked through, not carefully edited, and with no explicit justification provided for the particular choice of primary and secondary sources.

Although this book assembles a great mass of important information on hermeneutics and its significance for theology, and opens a number of promising alleys in terms of recognition of plurality in actual interpretation and methodology, it cannot really fulfil the function of an introduction. It remains too uneven and confusing for the newcomer and sadly unreadable for the expert.

Werner G. Jeanrond, University of Glasgow

New Testament Theology: Extending the Table. By Jon M. Isaak. Eugene: Cascade, 2011. ISBN 13-978-1-55635-293-5. xix + 381 pp. £29.00.

Here is yet another exposition of New Testament theology. Its closest relative (and its inspiration) is G.B. Caird's conference model, in which he imagined the various New Testament writers expressing their thoughts in turn around a table on main themes identified from their own writings rather than on a set of dogmatic topics created by later systematic theologians.

The book begins like Caird's with the voices of the New Testament theologians, but whereas Caird presented their views on each individual topic, Isaak lets each of them summarise his own theology as a whole in a centre or vision statement. As in Caird's volume we hear each speaker present his theme in a sort of position paper, but no attempt is made to allow the participants to enter into dialogue with one another. The speakers appear in the order: Paul, the Synoptic Evangelists, the Johannine traditions, and the remaining canonical witnesses. The treatments are quite brief and a fair amount of space is devoted to questions of setting and authorship. This part of the book is the *descriptive* part of the task.

But now Isaak goes beyond Caird. Instead of comparing the theologians with Jesus himself, there is a brief intermission outside the conference room in the corridor which produces a very brief united conference statement. But the task is still not over. There must also be a *constructive* stage at which the speakers speak with one another about topics that they themselves raise. Rather than jumping over directly to systematic theologians to work the materials into a tight theological system, justice must be

done to the variety of voices that have been heard as they share together on major issues. There will be different aspects and understandings that must be allowed to remain side by side; and this will produce an interplay that is the setting for God's people now to do their biblical theology in the *theological space* provided for them. Their task is to resonate with the biblical voices: 'it is precisely the interplay between the points of tension in the biblical witness that creates the theological space within which successive faith communities are authorized to do their theological reflection and appropriation. The confession God's people have made from the start is that authentic life is only really discovered by resonating with the way God's people have always heard, experienced and participated in the life of God' (p. 229).

Seven topics are considered: christology, revelation, theology, anthropology, pneumatology, ecclesiology and eschatology. But we do not in fact hear the voices of the New Testament writers individually in these chapters; it sounds more like scholars concerned with analysing the differing ideas put forward. (So the statement that 'now we listen in to their deliberations' [p. 238] is not very apt.) The chapter on revelation quickly becomes a discussion of the varied hermeneutical methods for working out what we are to do if we follow Scripture (literal obedience; principlizing; transcendentalizing [which seems to be the redemptive-historical approach of W. J. Webb]; and analogical extension). The discussion of theology seeks to get beyond the traditional antitheses (determinism and freewill). The church chapter lists helpfully the many terms used to describe or refer to the church. 'The church is *not* like the soap that cleans a sink full of soiled dishes, but more like the orange-coloured tomato ring that remains after washing a load of spaghetti-stained dishes—the dregs give evidence of grime absorption, the mark of the church' (p. 319). At the end of each chapter there are detailed suggestions for 'Exercises' to carry the instruction and the discussion further.

The book is the work of a Mennonite theologian teaching in Fresno and expresses the insights that can be gained from his context. It does not go into great detail on the individual NT writings, and indeed some (e.g. Hebrews) get less attention than they deserve. But the author is outstanding in producing clear characterisations of the New Testament writers and in condensing sets of ideas into tables and diagrams. He follows Caird frequently but also L.T. Johnson and the Mennonite theologian C.N. Kraus. He devotes more space than might be thought necessary to matters of text and canon and Synoptic relationships. He regards the catholic epistles as works whose authenticity or otherwise cannot be established or else as works, originally of unknown authorship, which took a long time to get canonical recognition until they had been assigned to various lead-

ing early church figures. The Gospels are regarded as originally anony-
mous works to which the church gave apostolic titles or associations in
the second century. For my part, I cannot imagine for one moment that
when Theophilus received a codex that does not name its author in the
text he said, 'I just cannot imagine who has sent me this present'. Isaak is
good at presenting different approaches to problems very fairly and leav-
ing room for his readers to ponder where they would situate themselves,
and his book differs from any other on the subject by his determination to
make his readers think about how the New Testament should be used and
applied in their own theologizing. This, then, is an eye-opening book that
may be better suited for use as a textbook than any of the others that are
around, although it may need supplementation for fuller detail. Whether
or not the author has achieved his aim of getting the New Testament writ-
ers around a conference table rather than a group of different modern
interpreters, we can applaud what he has actually done, which is to bring
New Testament theology in all its variety and unity to life and to impart
some excitement into its study.

I. Howard Marshall, University of Aberdeen

Trinitarian Theology for the Church: Scripture, Community, Worship.
Edited by Daniel Treier and David Lauber. Downers Grove: InterVar-
sity Press, 2009. ISBN 978-18447-4380-3. 262 pp. £14.99.

The Trinity was forgotten for a period of 'centuries of doctrinal tragedy',
until suddenly in the middle of the twentieth century, theologians redis-
covered it. Several decades after that ecumenical rediscovery, evangeli-
cal theologians are finally catching up. 'So goes the standard story', say
the editors of *Trinitarian Theology for the Church*, but they are keen to
encourage some revision.

This excellent book is composed of 11 of the papers delivered at the
2008 Wheaton Theology Conference on the practical, ecclesial implica-
tions of trinitarianism. The volume's crisp editing reflects the way Treier
and Lauber coordinated the conference itself, careful to include a wide
range of contributors without losing the common focus. Some of the
authors in this book still stay fairly close to the standard narrative, while
others are sharply opposed to it. In their introduction, the editors warn of
'the sloppiness of much enthusiasm regarding a trinitarian renaissance',
but are not willing to dismiss the trinitarian revival as all hype. The tor-
rent of books and articles on Trinity in recent decades, after all, 'may be
a bit like the stock market: even if there are strong elements of hype, the
perception itself comes to influence reality'.

There are no weak entries in this line-up, but the first three chapters win the 'worth the price of admission by themselves' award. Chapters one and two are actually both by Kevin Vanhoozer, forming a sustained, sixty-page account entitled 'Triune Discourse'. Vanhoozer starts out with the somewhat puckish question of whether the doctrinal statement of the Evangelical Theological Society is incoherent, since it specifies exactly two points: that the Bible is the inerrant word of God, and that God is a Trinity. By the time he is done interrogating this 'extraordinary pairing', Vanhoozer has articulated an inner unity between triunity and revelation, between the identity of God and the communicated, inscripturated knowledge of that God, which rises to the level of what he has called 'first theology'. He concludes that the doctrine of Scripture is only truly 'at home' when located in the Triune God's economy of self-communication, and that the framers and revisers of the ETS doctrinal statement, perhaps despite their own intentions, have implied a great truth: 'The Trinity is our scripture principle.' Readers seeking a very brief introduction to the influential Vanhoozer way of doing theology may find this the best place to start. The other show-piece of the volume is Edith M. Humphreys' wide-ranging biblical-theological essay, 'The Gift of the Father: Looking at Salvation History Upside Down'. We tend to think of salvation history as starting with God the Father in the old covenant and then moving to the revelation and giving of the Son and then the Spirit in the new. Humphrey's suggests inverting that order. It is only in the revelation of the Son, after all, that God is known to us as Father. Humphreys succeeds in shaking up some settled expectations about precisely how the Trinity is the content of biblical revelation.

There are many other solid performances in the book: Mark Husbands versus John Franke on the status of social trinitarianism, Philip Butin and Leanne Van Dyk on proclamation, and Robert Lang on missions. The final word goes to John D. Witvliet, whose concluding chapter asks, 'What to Do with our Renewed Trinitarian Enthusiasm', which is certainly a live question whether the theological renewal has been over-hyped or not. Witvliet's own answer, aligning with many other voices in this collection, is that in a variety of ways the church should be about 'Forming Trinitarian Piety and Imagination Through Worship and Catechesis'. *Trinitarian Theology for the Church* is a fine resource to be used toward that very end.

Fred Sanders, Biola University, LaMirada, CA USA

Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham. By Russell L. Friedman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. ISBN 978-05211-1714-2. viii + 198 pp. £53.00.

Professor Friedman's treatment of Trinitarian thought in the 'Latin West' in the period 1250–1350 is a welcome addition to academic discourse exploring medieval theologians' understanding of this primary Christian doctrine. His style is clear and concise when dealing with complex ideas and intricate arguments concerning the formulation of the doctrine by different schools of thought. In particular he elucidates the distinctive approaches of the Dominicans and Franciscans, and helpfully the book includes an appendix detailing the crucial areas of divergence between the two approaches. The four chapters explore the construal of the doctrine of the Trinity in relation to four delineated areas which also to some extent overlap and provide the reader with a developing line of argument: the four areas are: The Trinity and (a) Aristotelian categories; (b) human psychology; (c) metaphysics; (d) divine simplicity and fideism. The book delivers a detailed exposition of the different ways the two schools of thought approach the construction of the doctrine of the Trinity and the roles which 'the psychological model', 'opposed relation' and the interplay of faith and reason have in the development of these constructions. In this way the reader is provided with a detailed analysis of these different 'takes' on Trinitarian doctrine.

Friedman has produced an exploration of medieval thought largely on its own terms, it is only in the fourth and final chapter that he engages with twentieth century writers in order to evaluate the medieval thinkers he examines, in terms of their reception today. In the final chapter his main focus for providing access to such an evaluation of the medieval thinks is on 'the Gilsonian paradigm'. He introduces Étienne Gilson's take on 'demonstrative knowledge' (e.g. see p. 136) in order to assess the difference of approach to epistemology pursued by Aquinas and Ockham, who disagreed about the possibility of whether the immortality of the soul (for example) could be proven or not. Gilson's take on fourteenth century theologians such as Ockham is to characterise their construction of epistemology as fideist. Friedman reveals only in the final pages of the book that in his view Gilson's take does not do justice to what he calls 'the immense vitality and creativity of later-medieval theologians' (p. 170).

Friedman provides his readers with a sympathetic and thorough enquiry into his chosen subjects. The nature of that enquiry is more concerned with the philosophical implications of Trinitarian theology, than with systematic theology broadly understood. For a reader seeking the implications of this enquiry in relation to systematic theology he or she

will need to take these findings and relate them to other discourses, such
as seen in the writers of the Radical Orthodoxy stable, or perhaps in the
writings of a philosopher such as John Caputo. This is not to question the
value of Friedman's contribution to the examination of medieval Trini-
tarian thought per se, but it is to say that further work is required on the
part of those seeking to bring that thought into the field of a systematic
study of the doctrine of the Trinity today.

Paul M. Collins, University of Chichester

God Incarnate: Explorations in Christology. By Oliver D. Crisp. London:
T&T Clark, 2009. ISBN 978-0-567-03348-2. viii + 192 pp. £19.99

This is a scintillating book written by one of the world's leading theo-
logians (recently of the University of Bristol, now at Fuller Theological
Seminary). This volume seeks to revisit some of the controversial topics
within the theological tradition, with a clearly defined method labelled
'analytic theology'.

In the Introduction Crisp sets out some of the assumptions of this
analytic theological method. Crucially, philosophical analysis is taken
to clarify rather than fill in the content of any particular doctrine; phi-
losophy thus very much performs an ancillary role. The first chapter
proper, also concerned with prolegomena, sets out among other things
the sources for christology. Scripture is defined in conventional Christian
terms as the *norma normans*, and Crisp then gives an interesting account
of the authority of the creeds: he defines them as having been produced
by the fathers 'under the guidance of the Holy Spirit' (p. 12) and as a result
of the 'oversight of the Spirit' are free of substantive error (p. 14); they are
nevertheless *norma normata*. It would be interesting to see more detailed
exposition of how the work of the Spirit is construed. The doctors of the
church and experience are given a place as well; we have already seen the
role which Crisp ascribes to reason/philosophy. The chapters in the main
body of the book, which are all case studies in the analytic method, cover
the following topics: the election of Christ; pre-existence; virgin birth;
the implications of the incarnation for the nature and personhood of the
human embryo; the *non posse peccari* question; materialist christology,
and the possibility of multiple incarnations.

This review will inevitably be selective. On election, Crisp helpfully
identifies a variety of opinions among post-reformation theologians, and
produces his own synthesis according to which 'Christ's election must be
intimately linked with the divine decree to elect' (p. 51). One outstanding
question perhaps remains: in what sense is it meaningful to use the same
dogmatic terminology of election of both God's people and the Son, when

election in the former case is taken to be election unto eternal life (p. 42) but in the latter case is something more like election to be mediator? It might also be asked whether it would make a difference is election were defined, as in Romans 8, as predestination to be conformed to the image of Christ. The three chapters on pre-existence and the virgin birth are elegantly executed: the first covers some of the inadequacies in Robert Jenson's account of the doctrine, and Crisp highlights how key aspects of Jenson's work are simply incomprehensible. Chapter 6, on whether Christ was impeccable (incapable of sinning) or merely in fact sinless, does an excellent job of explaining how on the impeccabilist view an account can still be given of Christ really feeling the 'pull' of temptation, while also exposing the cost of the alternative non-impeccabilist position, namely the implication that it is bound to say that Christ was capable of sinning both qua man and *qua* God. After a penultimate chapter making the case that there is more to be said for a materialist christology than has conventionally been thought, Crisp mounts a compelling argument (leading this reviewer to recant!) for the possibility of multiple incarnations; Aquinas's emphasis on the infinity of the Son and the impossibility of his limitation is revived in dialogue with the criticisms made by Brian Hebblethwaite.

As I hope is evident from this very short review, this is a remarkably wide-ranging book which has proceeded from an extraordinarily fertile mind. Crisp's skills both in the taxonomy of historical views and in doctrinal exposition are evident throughout, as in particular is the disciplined use of philosophy in the service of clarification and in the construction of productive 'thought experiments'.

Simon Gathercole, University of Cambridge

The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology. Edited by Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-19-928920-2. xii + 609 pp. £85.00.

Editors Thomas Flint and Michael Rea have gathered together twenty-six chapters ranging across a wide array of theological issues. The chapters are divided topically into five parts appearing in the following order: Theological Prolegomena; Divine Attributes; God and Creation; Topics in Christian Philosophical Theology; and Non-Christian Philosophical Theology. As one might expect in any multi-author volume the essays vary in quality and depth of insight, though most are penetrating and well-written. Each contributor demonstrates a keen awareness of the contemporary literature and issues touching his or her particular topic and most attempt to advance the discussion with an original thesis or a twist

on an older established perspective. Also, each chapter includes an excellent bibliography that should well facilitate further research.

Flint and Rea explain in their introduction that the resurgence of philosophical theology in the last fifty years has occurred primarily within the analytic tradition and not within the Continental. For this reason the volume is largely oriented in the analytic direction. In the last twenty years, the editors observe, philosophical theology has begun to expand its inquiry beyond the epistemological concerns of the 'nature, rationality, and meaningfulness of theistic beliefs' (p. 4) and to focus more attention on theological doctrines such as divine attributes, triunity, incarnation, and the atonement. Thus, the handbook incorporates these lines of inquiry as well. The editors have also included chapters that venture into points of Christian dogma that have hitherto been unexplored by analytic philosophers, including: intercessory prayer, original sin, the nature of heaven and hell, and the Eucharist.

Given the breadth of issues and perspectives represented in this volume it is beyond the scope of this review to offer a detailed assessment of each; but a few highlights and lowlights must be noted. It is interesting the editors choose to begin the tome with chapters on *theological* prolegomena and not *philosophical* prolegomena. The role of Scripture and tradition are emphasized and the chapters by Stephen T. Davis and William J. Wainwright are particularly excellent. Davis argues for the Calvinistic view that *all* revelation is accommodated to our human capacity. In this way he challenges the univocism that tends to mark the theologizing of many in the analytic tradition (including many of the other contributors in this volume). Wainwright also offers a corrective to analytic over-confidence by insisting that divine mystery, understood as God's incomprehensibility, be a centrepiece of any theological enterprise. Some contributors heed this advice while others do not.

In the section treating the divine attributes the outstanding chapter is that by Jeffrey Brower in which he defends the traditional doctrines of God's aseity and simplicity. He appeals to certain features of 'truthmaker' theory in which the final explanation of God's existence and attributes is God himself. This chapter is one of the most devastating arguments in print against the soft Platonism that infects so many modern accounts of the divine attributes. Also, Laura Garcia's argument for the Thomistic understanding of God's goodness is compelling. Some chapters disappoint. Edward Wierenga's article on divine omniscience is too much a survey, and William Lane Craig's on divine temporality is under-nuanced in its treatment of opposing viewpoints.

Part three treats us to three chapters touching the problem of evil as well as articles on providence, prayer, morality, and evolution. Flint's

argument for a Molinist view of providence is especially well-written even if one does not agree with his position. Davison's chapter on petitionary prayer is of one of the weakest in the volume, both theologically and philosophically. In part four Michael Rea makes an intelligent and orthodox case for a 'constitutional' view of the Trinity, refuting modalism and social trinitarianism along the way, and Oliver Crisp defends penal substitutionary atonement by stressing the metaphysical union and solidarity of the elect with Christ. It is not clear, though, why he assumes this metaphysical union must displace the older view of forensic imputation. Trenton Merricks makes a case for bodily resurrection though he treats it too mechanistically and fails to incorporate any redemptive-historical explanation of what the resurrection *means* theologically. In the final section of the volume three chapters explain the role of philosophical theology in modern Judaism, Islamic philosophy, and Confucianism. The conclusion seems to be that Islamic dogma is most agreeable to the aims and methods of philosophical theology while Judaism and Confucianism are generally non-dogmatic systems of morality and religiosity for which philosophical theology is an awkward fit.

Though the essays are not written at the introductory level neither are they written for the specialist. Most readers with basic systematic theology training and a smattering of philosophy should find these articles to be accessible, and in some cases, exceptional.

James E. Dolezal, Westminster Theological Seminary,
Philadelphia, PA USA

Darwin's Pious Idea: Why the Ultra-Darwinists and Creationists Both Get It Wrong. By Conor Cunningham. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. ISBN 978-0-8028-4838-3. xx + 543 pp. £22.99.

In this work Conor Cunningham has written an immensely erudite apology for a middle way between ultra-fundamentalisms of the right and the left. Both the Christian creationists and atheistic defenders of a Darwinianism that turns a biological theory into a totalizing metaphysic are the objects of his ire. Intelligent design fares no better as 'unintelligent theology' that is scientistic without realizing it (pp. 275-79). His aim is to help both the 'thinking Christian' as well as the 'thinking atheist' to 'move beyond the silly impasse brought about by fundamentalism' (p. xi). He is often witty, often scornful. Everywhere he writes with great verve. He has little time for Richard Dawkins and his 'vulgar-brand of atheism' (p. xvii), which Cunningham regards as a 'farce' (p. xvii). His arguments betray a thoughtful engagement with a plethora of academic disciplines that range from biology to philosophy. His own training is in theology, philosophy

and law. He draws extensively on the Fathers, the medieval theologians as well as more recent Roman, Orthodox and even Evangelical writers.

In his first chapter Cunningham aims to dismantle the idea that Darwin's theory of evolution represents an upheaval in thought. In chapters 2 to 4 he shows that Darwinianism is no monolith but highly variegated. It has its denominations. Chapter 5 tackles the story of how Darwinianism became social Darwinianism expressed in eugenics, sociobiology and evolutionary psychology. For Cunningham when the theory of evolution, which incidentally he affirms, is made into a totalizing discourse it becomes a 'universal acid' that dissolves all meaning. Chapter six addresses materialism and naturalism. This chapter is an incisive critique of reductionism. His last chapter endeavours to show that orthodox Christianity makes the best sense 'of life, death, existence itself and the phenomenon of the person' in ways that naturalism and eliminative materialism cannot (p. 376). The prose is extremely and unnecessarily dense. Furthermore, the constant parading of names can be off putting. For example, on page 76 he cites nine different writers with attendant endnotes for most of them. Turning from the citations and quotes to the endnotes and back interrupts the flow of argumentation. (There are almost a hundred pages of endnotes.) This is a pity. Cunningham has provocative ideas and writes with insight in many places but needed to write a book half this one's length. He provokes when he attacks the idea of an historic time-space Adamic fall as an event (pp. 384-92). (This author is not persuaded by him here.) He provides insight when in the very same chapter he points out how the rhythm of six days of work and one of rest in Genesis lifts 'Israel's sights above the ancient religions and their infatuation with the natural rhythms of time itself' (p. 386). He can also puzzle. What can it mean to claim that 'Christ himself is the two trees in the Garden of Eden' (p. 392, original emphasis)?

Even so, for the patient reader this work is a feast of quotes and arguments. It remains a great resource, even though Cunningham may not persuade at every point and his work constitutes a very demanding read.

Graham A. Cole, Beason Divinity School

The Market, Happiness, and Solidarity: A Christian Perspective. By Johan J. Graafland. London. Routledge. 2010. ISBN 978-04155-6127-3. xviii + 186 pp. £100.00.

The Market, Happiness, and Solidarity is a revised, edited, and translated version of Johan Graafland's 2007 Dutch book, *Hegoog van de naald. Over de markt, geluk en solidariteit.* Graafland is an economist who ventures into the realm of Reformed Christian Ethics. He does so with some con-

siderable skill. Anyone interested in the relationship between theology and economics should welcome his contribution. Graafland's argument is straightforward. He begins with the 2004 ACCRA statement on the economy by the General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and subjects its criticisms of 'neoliberal globalization' to scrutiny based on empirical economic research within the context of Christian ethics. The structure of the book is likewise straightforward. After an introductory chapter delineating the method, Graafland correlates market analysis and three ethical approaches: utilitarianism, justice and virtue, which constitute chapters two through four. He neither chooses among these approaches, nor among three economic theories he quickly but succinctly sets forth: neoclassical, neo-Austrian and Keynesian. Although his own sympathies appear to lie with Keynesianism, he claims 'elements of all perspectives are relevant' (p. 38) and his subsequent analyses and conclusions draw on elements from each of these theories. Each chapter follows a similar pattern. It begins with a discussion of an ethical theory, followed by biblical teaching. The Bible generates normative principles that are then used to assess the market's relationship to wealth, justice and virtue. Before that evaluative work occurs, however, Graafland refers to empirical research. This is the contribution his work makes to Christian ethics and economics. He does not want a theoretical argument devoid of empirical facts. He quantifies, in so far as he can, the market's outcomes on each of the ethical approaches he deems fitting to the Christian life—wealth (utilitarianism), justice and virtue.

Chapter two begins with utilitarianism as the ethical theory most consistent with market claims for the 'creation of wealth and welfare' (p. 15). Graafland first explains utilitarianism and addresses its critics, and then assesses how Scripture affirms and rejects utilitarianism's understanding of wealth. He uses Scripture by translating biblical texts 'to a higher level of abstraction, the level of ethical principle' (p. 12). In each of his chapters, Graafland makes this translation. Sometimes his interpretation comes off rather wooden, as for instance when he states Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 approves of entrepreneurship (p. 22); that type of abstraction borders on rendering Scripture infinitely malleable if not unintelligible. However, Graafland's use of Scripture does not merely baptize current economic theories and practices, he draws upon it to generate norms by which to assess, positively and negatively, market outcomes. After generating metaphors or principles from Scripture, such as 'stewardship', he then discusses empirical research and how it contributes or detracts from the Christian understanding of wealth. His arguments are always temperate. Utilitarianism seeks continued economic growth. He questions if this leads to wealth as happiness and cites mixed results from empirical economic research

that quantifies happiness. He concludes by arguing for a growth economy against an economy of sufficiency (or sustainability), but tempers this by a 'Christian view' that could not affirm growth at any cost, but only a 'selective growth' that maintains a Christian emphasis on the 'reduction of poverty' (p. 51).

Chapter three follows the same pattern with respect to justice. Once again the key question asked is what kind of justice the market propagates and how it fits with a Christian concern to reduce poverty. Empirical research is more mixed here than it is with the production of wealth. Graafland addresses the market's relationship to virtue in chapter four following the same pattern, concluding that 'empirical knowledge' on the market's role in virtues is 'fragmentary,' but the theoretical findings and empirical findings do not corroborate each other (p. 128). To substantiate his claim he lists virtues and what economists and moralists think the market does to them (theoretical knowledge) coupled with what the empirical evidence suggests. Graafland concludes that an ideological bias exists because half of the theoretical knowledge finds the market supporting virtues, but the empirical results suggests otherwise. He writes, 'Only in one-third of the cases do we find support for a positive impact of the market on virtues; in the other two-thirds the impact is negative' (p. 132). Graafland brings his findings to a conclusion in chapter five by using a flat tax rate as a test case.

Graafland's book is an enjoyable, quick read that does fulfil its purpose; it makes an interesting contribution to Reformed Christian debates on the market economy. His economics is more persuasive than his ethics, but that is to be expected. He begins with assumptions about Christian ethics and its relationship to economics that are controversial and contested, without acknowledging them as such. Three stand out. First, he assumes that ethics is the bridge between Christianity and economics. But much recent literature has set forth theology and metaphysics as the key that makes possible a productive discussion between Christianity and economics. This literature is absent from Graafland's work. Second, he argues that Christian ethics is more about commands than virtues. This, however, overlooks a broad tradition from Augustine to Aquinas and Wesley where law has its purpose within the virtues and beatitudes. Third, he assumes a smooth fit between secular ethics and Christian ethics because the former is derived from the latter. That too is a controversial and contested claim that he assumes without argument. Perhaps it is ready at hand for Graafland because he works exclusively from a Reformed perspective. In fact, he works from within the Reformed tradition in such a way that he would prove Weber's thesis correct. For instance, in explaining the factors that make for economic growth he

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includes 'Calvinistic frugality and industry' along with 'culture, the absence of destructive wars, the separation of church and state, the institutionalization of science and research, and military power' (p. 27). Perhaps that is correct, but here he offers no empirical evidence.

Graafland's constant appeal to empirical evidence raises questions. What do the numbers he cites actually measure? These measurements come to a crisis point in the chapter on virtue when he admits it is difficult to measure, but nonetheless seeks for empirical testing that can provide a measure of the market's outcomes on virtue. The temptation in the book is always to provide a table giving decisive empirical proof of the relationship between the market and ethics. He does this despite his recognition of Alasdair MacInytre's distinction between internal and external goods. Can this quantification of wealth, justice and virtue work? Where is a critical perspective on the ability to reduce existence to such commensurable measurements? Because he acknowledges that he, like nearly every other economist and econometric study, did not foresee the 2008 worldwide recession, a reader might expect more circumspection than is present as to what these empirical findings actually do. They did not have the ability to produce general laws with sufficient predictive power to avoid a near economic apocalypse. More than any other aspect of his work, his optimism about these measurements show how the economist gets the better of the Christian ethicist in his work. But it is precisely here that his work is also interesting. Surely we should expect Christian ethics to point to concrete, ethical material in everyday life that makes a difference.

Graafland rightly challenges Christian leaders, ethicists and theologians to make statements that at least show some relationship to the material reality of everyday life. To that end, his work is neither a rejection nor affirmation of the ACCRA statement. His work is a sober assessment of the claims made, and it deserves careful study.

D. Stephen Long, Marquette University

Adam Smith as Theologian. Edited by Paul Oslington. New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2011. ISBN 978-0-415-88071-8. ix + 146 pp. £85.00.

There is an obvious prescience in the instinct to return to theologically re-examine the legacy of the founder of modern economics in light of the current slow motion economic crash. This slim volume takes up this task on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the publication of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, collecting revised papers from a conference held in Edinburgh in 2009.

The book does not offer a fully digested account of how Smith's thought drew on theological precursors or reflected his contemporary religious climate, not least, as several authors remind us, because his own Christian faith was muted and ambiguous. Though he admired his friend Hume, he apparently had no compunction signing the Westminster Confession before the presbytery of Glasgow. This occasions a spirited and highly informative debate in the volume about how to read Smith's theology. The most substantial and detailed engagements with the book's main theme appear in the second part of the book rather than in the much more impressionistic first part, paradoxically entitled 'Smith in Context'. Though each of the chapters in the second part make a substantive contribution, the rival readings of Smith as theologian are most clearly on view in the chapters by Brendon Long and Adrian Pabst.

Taking him to be a consistent theist, Long argues that the moral mechanism holding Smith's system together is his account of the golden rule. The conscience is the locus through which the divine architect, by directing and shaping human sentimental attachment to others, leads society to just social and legal structures as well as the equitable distribution of goods. On this view excessive self-love is the root economic evil which makes us hate the poor who nevertheless remain God's concern (and who Smith invokes in the guise of the 'Impartial Spectator', which functions like an empirical version of the neo-Kantian 'veil of ignorance' now popularised by Rawls). If wayward self-love is restrained, then the natural desire to 'truck, barter, and exchange' is an expression of proper Christian self-love that can be counted on to incidentally and indirectly serve the distribution of the wealth of nations. 'The final cause of human happiness is effected by the efficient causality of human sentiments operating from the moral principles of sympathy and conscience...There are irregularities in our sentiments but they are overcome by the subtle Divine plan where we can admire the wisdom of God in the folly of men and women' (p. 101).

Theologically, however, there is a significant catch here, Long points out. A Stoic account of evil is imported in which there is no real radical evil, just partial evils which are in fact concealed goods. The delusions generated by false self-love and greed are not in the end threatening forces, only imperfections. Long astutely notes that what we have here is a question about the doctrine of God. If Smith thinks that the way God governs human affairs is through human sentimental attachments (through the locus of the conscience), and if he thinks that human evil is overwhelmed by the invisible hand of God which, in aggregate, brings net happiness for all out of mercantile activity, then this is an expression of faith in a God who is always directing human sentiments in a finally benevolent direc-

tion. Smith seems to rule out any hint that a majority in any given society could become trapped in the love of riches and grandeur fuelling a vicious cycle of predatory social and economic structures. Smith at this crucial point seems hopelessly optimistic. What is helpful in Smith, for Long, is that unlike the intentionally instrumentalist and value-free formulation of modern economic theories Smith does give morality and divine agency a place in economic theory. He has a place for evil in his economic theory, even if it is underdeveloped. Formally Smith is helpfully close to theology in distinction from modern economic theory even though materially his theology is underdeveloped at a decisive point.

A range of influential progressive and neo-conservative thinkers have been trying to recover Smith's theories in recent decades with the aim of showing how his account of the market is governed by non-commercial values like prudence and generosity rather than simply by profit seeking. In the most expansive and historically dense treatment of Smith in this volume, Adrian Pabst argues that any such reconstruction must overlook three dominant theological presuppositions of his work; his understanding of the nature and role of natural theology, his Jansenist Augustinianism, and the aforementioned Stoic understanding of evil (now substantiated by a detailed comparison with Leibniz). A close examination of these strands reveals that for Smith market exchange is the basic precondition for all human sociality, and furthermore, that he introduces an insurmountable split between private virtues and sympathies and the operative forces of commercial society. His marvellous location of Smith's presumptions about natural theology in relation to other early modern thinkers is itself worth the price of the book. His account of the Jansenist sources of Smith's Augustinianism are also important in substantiating the claim that Smith bifurcates private and public virtues as well as sharply separating the quest for happiness and the exercise of virtue in a manner more dualistic than Augustine himself would have allowed. But Pabst agrees with Long that a thicker and more theologically appropriate ontology of economic relations lies on the horizon of Smith's work, as hinted at in his comparison with the much more integrated position that was developing in the Italian Enlightenment. Pabst is especially prescient in noting the protological centrality of the market in Smith's anthropology and political theory, and it would have been nice to see some further discussion of what is entailed in the protological assumption that 'in the beginning was the market' as we see, for instance, in David Graber's recently *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*.

The core contributors to this volume are Roman Catholic, lending the volume as a whole (especially its second part) a refreshingly deep historical sensitivity to Smith's location in the theological tradition as well as

contemporary economic theory (a debt that is betrayed by the appalling text editing of the volume). It should perhaps not come as a surprise that the less penetrating contributions from the largely Protestant authors in the first part slant toward an ameliorist reading which seeks to recover Smith's legacy which, as Eric Gregory presents it, 'provides a prudent ethics for a society of strangers in a commercial society' (p. 40). Such an aim seems not only far removed from the debates of Long and Pabst, but from the realities of our economic present.

Brian Brock, University of Aberdeen

Doxologische Entzogenheit: Die fundamentaltheologische Bedeutung des Gebets bei Karl Barth. By Christine Svinth-Værge Põder. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009. ISBN 978-31102-0972-3. 315 pp. £84.97.

In his 1922 Elgersburg lecture, 'The Word of God as the Task of Theology', Karl Barth famously captured his sense of the fundamental problematic of Christian theology in these terms: As theologians, we ought to speak of God; as humans, we cannot. The task is to recognise *both* our unconditional obligation *and* our constitutional incapacity—and precisely therein to render God alone the glory. The formula conceals a further question: How can one render God glory if one cannot speak of God? More formally put: How can religious language refer while denying its own referential capacity? In this stimulating essay, a lightly reworked version of her 2007 Aarhus PhD thesis, Christine Svinth-Værge Põder offers an account of Barth's mature theology of prayer as a response to the question raised in this early lecture.

Her central argument may be rephrased as a threefold proposal. First, following Dietrich Korsch, she urges us to read the theology of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* as an extended exercise in *Selbstrezeption*, one in which Barth's early interest in the dynamics of religious experience, dialectically and actualistically construed, continues to preside. Correspondingly, second, she encourages us to approach the 'objectivising terminology' of Barth's mature work not as signalling an essentialist drift in his thinking but as a complex rhetorical device designed to do justice to the deep elusiveness of religious experience precisely by directing attention away from it. By explicitly denying interest in the subjective appropriation of divine self-communication, Barth in fact attempts to say something about its essential quality—viz., that the reciprocal relationship between God and human persons remains radically gratuitous and so hidden, unavailable to us either as the basis of a positive theology of religious experience or as the object of religious self-criticism. In reading the Church Dogmatics, then, the interpretative task is not merely to restate the surface features

of Barth's texts (a complacency that Põder—too quickly—finds in the work of George Hunsinger) but to 'decipher' them so as to draw out their implicit portrayal of the implicit structures of religious perception. This 'functional-hermeneutical' reading of Barth's theology of prayer, third, offers a particularly fruitful point of entry into Barth's understanding of the distinctive quality of religious experience and theological language. Prayer, for Barth, is to be construed primarily as petition—the speech-act of one who knows herself to be in a genuinely reciprocal relationship with God, but one in which she is utterly dependent upon God. And in this way it sheds light on the condition of all theological talk of God. Again, in formal terms: '[t]he dialectical reciprocity of asking is … equated with the dialectical reciprocity in fundamental theology' (p. 285).

That prayer is basic to Barth's conception of the theological task is beyond doubt; whether its significance should be understood along the lines suggested by Põder is a further question, one which bears careful consideration. Each component of her threefold developmental-herme-neutical-material thesis invites probing on the basis of further reading in Barth's own texts and in the secondary literature (on the evidence presented here, Põder appears a lively and engaging but highly selec-tive reader of texts). Non-specialist readers of Barth should be especially alerted to the fact that this book intentionally is not a positive descrip-tive account of Barth's theology of prayer—for that, readers may consult the essays from the 2008 Leuenberg conference collected in *Zeitschrift für dialektische Theologie* 24.2.

Donald Wood, University of Aberdeen

Eschatological Presence in Karl Barth's Göttingen Theology. By Christo-pher Asprey. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-19-958470-3. xi + 284 pp. £58.00.

In this revision of his 2009 University of Aberdeen PhD thesis, Asprey examines the five-year transitional period in Karl Barth's theological development as a professor in Göttingen (and Münster). Asprey argues that Barth's work from this period is 'driven by an overriding convic-tion that God's presence is bestowed freely and actively, with the result that divine grace is never a stable reality in the world, but discontinuous with human history, a disruptive—'eschatological'—event whose effect is always to shake up, and hopefully to regenerate, the creatures with which it comes into contact' (p. 1).

After a judicious survey of the secondary literature on Barth's early theological development, Asprey compares the shared concern of Barth and Bultmann for the eschatological quality of revelation and Christian

existence, concluding that Barth escapes the exaggerated dualisms of Bultmann (ch. 1). In chapter 2, Asprey charts Barth's perennial concern that preaching never settle down into a comfortably stable state of possession, but should rather continually exist in the situation of being graciously addressed by God. The content of theology itself is less important than its awareness of being actively suspended in obedience before the call of God. Asprey argues in Chapter 3 that this overly contrastive conception of divine and human agency is partially assuaged by Barth's discovery of the concept of witness in his exegetical lectures on the Gospel of John, and further fleshed out by the substance of the Reformed tradition Barth worked through as a professor at Göttingen. Barth especially appreciated the Reformed concern that the Christian life was integral to its understanding of the gospel, and took the Christological and sacramental debates between the Reformed and Lutherans very seriously in their function as indicators of the necessity to talk about God in order to speak rightly about human existence: Calvin is the figure who combined the unbalanced concerns of Luther and Zwingli into a coherent dialectical position (ch. 4). Chapter 5 contains a detailed comparison between Barth's lectures on Philippians and the technical Christological sections of the *Göttingen Dogmatics*, carefully working through the details of Barth's rearrangement of the theological material he inherited from the Reformed tradition (largely via Heinrich Heppe's dogmatics manual). Chapter 6 is the longest section of the book, including Asprey's description of Barth's pneumatology, critique of religion (especially the liberal neo-Protestant understanding after Schleiermacher), conception of the Christian life and its foundation in sacramental theology. It is also the most critical; Asprey argues that while Barth's early theology avoids most of the criticisms levelled by various commentators, Barth is unable to secure the kind of dialectical stability of the Christian life (as promise) that he intends, despite the strong sacramental understanding articulated in Barth's 1927 *Christliche Dogmatik* (a position Barth abandoned fairly quickly). In his conclusion, Asprey suggests that Barth's insistence on the paradox of grace tends to push aside the reality of grace, and with it, most of the content of theology: grace is the centre, but it '*appears...only as empty space*' (p. 265, Asprey's emphasis). It is in this space that Jesus Christ will subsequently appear in much fuller form throughout Barth's later *Church Dogmatics*.

Asprey's work here is thorough and insightful; he has firmly grasped the heart of Barth's concerns in this transitional period. Much of this book is suited only for Barth specialists, presupposing a high degree of knowledge about Barth's theology and the secondary literature surround-

ing it. But Asprey's careful historical work is promising; it suggests that his future, more constructive theological efforts will be of equal value.

Ben Rhodes, University of Aberdeen

The Early Church: History and Memory. By Josef Lössl. London: T & T Clark, 2009. ISBN 978-0-56716-561-9. 256 pp. £19.99.

This book provides a very unusual and interesting look at the early church. It includes excellent chapters on topics that are rarely covered in a survey book: why we would want to study the early church (ch. 1), and the history of the study of the early church (ch. 2). These introductory chapters, coupled with an outstanding bibliography of modern patristic scholarship, would make the book worthwhile as a supplement to more traditional textbooks even if the bulk of the book had not been written. The key concept of Lössl's work—reflected in the subtitle—is his distinction between history and memory, a distinction he introduces on pages 9-10 and returns to throughout the book. (See especially p. 187, where he argues that the idea of Arianism as an arch-heresy is a product of the church's memory, not of history.) He argues that what has been most influential in shaping subsequent Christianity is not history, but the church's not-always-accurate memory of Jesus' life and of its own past.

While Lössl is exactly right that we need to consider the difference between what really happened and the way the past has been received and appropriated, the sharpness of his distinction between history and memory leads him to be a bit too sceptical about the accuracy of both the New Testament books and the orthodox church's own writings. For example, he regards the Gospels' statements that Jesus was born in Bethlehem but 'from Nazareth' to be contradictory (p. 59), he argues that aside from the seven genuine Pauline letters, no other books of the New Testament definitely date from the first century (p. 94), and he even suggests that the final version of Luke-Acts was written in response to Marcion in the mid-second century (p. 97). Similarly, Lössl casts doubt on the accuracy of Irenaeus's description of Gnosticism even though he admits that on one issue, recent discoveries have 'spectacularly confirmed' Irenaeus's accuracy (p. 107). In contrast, Lössl is a bit too uncritical in his attitude toward writings the church has deemed heretical. Most notably, Lössl regards Gnosticism in general and Marcionism in particular as perfectly legitimate versions of Christianity, widely adhered to in the second century, versions of the faith that simply happened not to win out in the end (see pp. 97-102). In fact, Lössl argues that the determining factor in the church's rejection of these views was the authority of the church hier-

archy, not any kind of consensus about truth arrived at on the basis of Scripture (see p. 158).

In all of these ways, Lössl is quite typical of contemporary scholars. But therein lies the primary problem with his work. He exaggerates the variety within the early church and, in my opinion, significantly under-states the degree of consensus that was present. Moreover, he is far too non-committal about the *significance* of the different views present in the early church. It is certainly true that there were Gnostics, Marcionites, Arians, and others in the early church who did not hold to what we today call 'orthodox' theology, and it is likewise true that historians need to give these people a fair hearing. But at the same time, the church as a whole condemned these views because it believed that they fundamentally com-promised the gospel. To the early church, it *mattered* whether Irenaeus or Valentinus was right, whether Tertullian or Marcion was right, whether Athanasius or Arius was right. Indeed, in the mind of the early church, the very possibility of human salvation hung on the question of where the truth lay.

This sense of the significance of theological variation is largely miss-ing in Lössl's account of the early church, and for evangelicals his book thus turns out to be inadequate. It does serve as an important corrective to an excessively triumphal view of Christian history or to a view that minimizes the amount of variety that was present in the early centuries of the church, but it does not do what evangelicals believe we must do: judge various theological views in light of Scripture, with the help of the church's emerging consensus.

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The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius. By Craig D. Atwood. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-271-03532-1. xix + 457 pp. £71.50.

This unusually helpful book offers the best history available in English of the quasi-Protestant Unity of the Brethren (*Unitas Fratrum*), one of several different churches to descend from Jan Hus and the Czech Ref-ormation. Its author has now become a major spokesman in America for the present-day Moravians, whom he serves as a minister and professor of divinity at the Moravian Seminary in Pennsylvania.

During the past 20 years, the English-speaking world has witnessed a renaissance of interest in the Hussites and their history. Fuelled by major scholarly books written in Britain by the likes of Reginald Ward and Colin Podmore, and in America by Atwood, Jon Sensbach, and the gadfly of the group, Aaron Fogleman, this renaissance has drawn renewed atten-

tion to the ways in which the Hussites have shaped modern evangelical missions, social reform, and ecclesiology. Long recognized as prophets of the Protestant Reformation, the Hussites also printed and sold the first Protestant hymnals, were the first to make the separation of church and state a matter of official church teaching, and modelled for many later dissenters a way of cultivating a gathered church that is also ecumenical.

The present book focuses on the Unity of the Brethren as distinguished from its better-known elder siblings (the Utraquists and Táborites). Though usually confused with the Moravian Church gathered by Nicholas Zinzendorf (in Germany the *Brüdergemeinde*, "Community of the Brethren"), the Unity of the Brethren actually had its own history. After the fall of the Táborites to the military forces of the Holy Roman Empire and the traitorous Utraquists (1434), young Gregory, a nephew of the Utraquist Bishop of Prague, began to yearn again for the purity of the church. Neither as radical as the Táborites nor as worldly as the Utraquists, Gregory and his followers formed a small Christian community in eastern Bohemia (1457-58). Then in 1467, they established their own priesthood and gathered new churches. They would divide amongst themselves over the zeal with which they should separate from the larger church and world. But by the end of the fifteenth century, their Major Party, led by its new leader, Luke of Prague, would win control, develop the doctrine of the Brethren and engage the broader culture.

Over the course of the sixteenth century, the Brethren movement dwindled, suffering persecution at home and living in exile in Poland. Decimated by the ravages of the Thirty Years War, they were excluded from the terms of the Peace of Westphalia. Their famous Bishop John Comenius would labour to keep them alive, promoting reform throughout Europe (especially in childhood education) and spreading the Brethren's doctrine and practice through his *Ratio disciplinae* (1660). But for all intents and purposes, the Unity of the Brethren per se would soon expire.

'The Brethren's theology was profoundly simple', Atwood writes with pride. For them, 'the essence of Christianity is faith, love, and hope. They turned away from elaborate ritual and metaphysical speculation and sought to return to the message of Christianity as given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount' (p. xi). They taught an ethically-driven doctrine best characterized for Atwood by its frequent (though inconstant) call to pacifistic witness and to practice the ethics of Jesus in community. They valued what Atwood labels 'orthopraxy' over 'orthodoxy.' And their biblicism yielded an approach to their confession that was 'flexible' and 'supple' (p. 16).

This is a hagiographic book meant to kindle admiration. It is based to large degree on the work of others (Atwood does not know Czech). But it

is an indispensable guide to an influential movement that will prove to be
a blessing to English readers everywhere.

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Between Truth and Fiction: A Reader in Literature and Christian Theology.
Edited by David Jasper and Allen Smith. London: SCM, 2010. ISBN
978-0-334-04192-4. 179 pp. £30.00.

'Most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy', Matthew
Arnold prophesied in 1880, 'will be replaced by poetry.' 'More and more',
Arnold continued, 'mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry
to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us.' This collection of
readings in literary texts, though its authors would surely disclaim such
an identity, is an Arnoldian exercise. Jasper and Allen work on the post-
modern (i.e., the neo-Victorian) assumption that Christianity, insofar as
it makes claims to finality, definitiveness, and unsurpassability, is hope-
lessly out-dated. Just as Arnold regarded the popular Christianity of his
time as a religion of self-referential biblicism that should be replaced with
a high-culture humanism, so do these latter day Arnoldians treat Chris-
tian Scripture and Tradition as having an oppressive power when they are
not radically qualified by other confections of the literary imagination.

The alleged 'truth' revealed in Israel and Christ and the Church is
itself an interpretive construction, a 'true fiction': 'the Bible is found to
be a book that is not set apart but is, for many of us, a particular ele-
ment in that complex literary and artistic enterprise which has for so long
shaped the lives, hearts and minds of men and women in society' (p. 10).
This means that, even at best, Christianity must be regarded as one fiction
among others. '[W]e are dissolving the difference', the editors confess,
'between the "truths" of Scripture and the lesser claims of other "secular"
literature' (p. 13). Neither can ever become conclusive for the other, since
each puts the other under perennial interrogation. In this endless dialec-
tic between 'truth' and 'fiction' lies the only possible 'finality'. Quotation
marks thus become the trademark of such an *als ob* endeavour, an under-
taking in the theology of 'as if'.

The post-Christian quality of this reader is made evident in its method
no less than its substance. On the one hand, it makes forays into all of
the major genres: fiction, autobiography, poetry, drama, essays, sermons,
post-colonial literature, feminist literature, and the post-modern text. On
the other hand, the critical apparatus is considerably larger than the pri-
mary works from which rather meagre extracts are taken. The ratio of
theoretical commentary to primary texts is, at most, 2 to 1. It is 'as if' the
reader must be primed to approach the text with a large dose of scepticism

so as not to be caught in naive Christian belief. 'Beware of easy answers' becomes the book's virtual refrain.

Even teachers subscribing to Jasper and Allen's post-Christian viewpoint would want, I suspect, for the ratio to be reversed—namely, a meaty chunk of the original text accompanied by a minimum of theory. Such proportionality is the only sure means of avoiding the superficiality that otherwise attends all survey-like anthologies. Nor do most teachers emphasize the speculative use that might be made of a text. We seek, instead, to incise the imaginations of our students with poems such as George Herbert's Love (III), just as we have ourselves been permanently marked by such seminal works. And insofar as Herbert's splendid metaphysical conceit devoted to the Eucharist does yield to theoretical considerations, we are not likely to ask, with Jasper and Allen, whether 'the different "levels" or "worlds" of this poem, the liturgical and the religious, the erotic, the homely [are] complementary or contradictory' (p. 66). Readers are more likely to find that Herbert's wondrously incarnational kneading of matter together with manner prompts their astonished reverence and devotion.

The fundamental premise undergirding *Between Truth and Fiction* is that Christian doctrines constitute fixed and oppressive certainties, until readers learn to challenge and subvert their so-called 'permanently valid truth' (p. 165). Allen and Jasper thus urge their readers to join the postlapsarian Adam and Eve in turning 'their new-found shame in self-awareness to the more creative business of building a world that required imagination, thought and an awareness of the self in the context of the other, whether that be other people, the earth around them, or, finally, God' (p. 162). The Edenic Paradise of our primal parents was presumably a dull and bovine place that required no self-consciously ethical encounter with the Serpent and the Forbidden Tree, indeed no thinking or creativity of any kind at all, certainly no stewardship of the earth, and (least of all) any human or divine communion.

It is altogether appropriate that this post-Christian book should finally call into question Christian theology itself as 'any longer possible or viable as a systematic or even dogmatic exercise ... inasmuch as the conditions for such an enterprise and the authenticity of its claims are clearly perpetually in doubt' (p. 166). It seems that Jasper and Allen are unacquainted with the narrative character of all creeds, the imaginative vitality of all doctrines, nor the radical development of dogma—all undertaken in the face of difficulty and doubt—that have constituted the thinking life of the Church for two millennia. What we thus need is an anthology that would serve as a counterpoint to this one. It would deal not only with the revisions of doctrine that 'clearly perpetually' make Christian faith and life truthful,

but also with the Job-like terror that imbues the work of every eminent Christian writer, from Augustine to Dante, from Donne to Milton, from Dryden to Johnson, from Dostoevsky to Hopkins, from Eliot to Auden, from Greene to Waugh, from Flannery O'Connor to Walker Percy. Only the first of these, alas, merits inclusion in this unsatisfying book. In the meantime, we are left with the desperate Dover-beachism of lonely lovers vowing to remain 'true to one another', while the Sea of Faith continues, 'Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar/ Retreating, to the breath/ Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear/ And naked shingles of the world.'

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William Blake on Self and Soul. By Laura Quinney. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-6740-3524-9. 216 pp. £29.95.

When Professor Laura Quinney engages in close textual analysis she helps me see some of Blake's most puzzling poetry in new ways; her insights about Blake's Four Zoas, for instance, are among the best I've ever encountered. Her ambitious book, *William Blake on Self and Soul*, contains many intellectual gems. Unfortunately, the theological framework in which Professor Quinney places those gems occasionally clouds their brilliance.

Quinney is concerned with the loneliness of the Self in Blake and his reaction against empiricism, and this leads her to read well. But her desire to cast Blake as a Gnostic Neoplatonic atheist undercuts that good reading.

I am not quite sure what Professor Quinney means by the words 'Self' and 'Soul.' 'Self' is not a positive term in Blake, and not until page 19 does Quinney tell us that 'Selfhood' can be problematic. William Blake gleaned the term 'Selfhood' from Jacob Boehme; and though Quinney briefly mentions Blake's 'Behmenism' (30 pages later) she does not expand upon how that relates to Blake's notions of Self and Soul, or how this may be a primary source for those things in Blake that seem 'Neoplatonic' or 'Gnostic'.

It would be helpful if Quinney had described what she means when she uses terms like 'Gnostic' or 'Neoplatonic.' She invokes the authority of Kathleen Raine, who erroneously discounts Blake's Christianity, overemphasising his Neoplatonic dimensions. When Blake does mention Plato he can be quite critical, proclaiming (in a poem called *Milton*) that Plato ought be condemned for he is one of the 'silly Greek & Latin slaves of the sword' who can prevent us from entering 'those Worlds of Eternity in which we shall live for ever in Jesus our Lord'. Blake says he wants to live

in 'Jesus our Lord'. One might argue that this statement occurs in a work of fiction, yet in personal letters to friends Blake says things like:

'as a Soldier of Christ . . . I am under the Direction of Messengers from Heaven, Daily & Nightly' (To Butts, 10 Jan 1802);

'Excuse this Effusion of the Spirit from one . . .whose Happiness is secure in Jesus our Lord . . . I throw myself & all that I have on our Saviour's Divine Providence' (To Hayley, 11 Dec 1805).

These are not the affirmations of an 'atheist'. Quinney is right to say that Blake is not an 'orthodox' Christian, but her work would be strengthened immeasurably if she could see that heterodoxy is not the same as atheism. How Neoplatonic thought may inform that heterodoxy would be an interesting thing to explore.

When Professor Quinney reads unencumbered by what she might call theoretical 'incrustations' her attention to detail reveals important aspects of some of Blake's most complex works. Reading *Jerusalem*, she writes perceptively about the character of Blake's Jesus and sees that it is he who redeems the self from alienation. She understands that Blake is now concerned with Love, 'a turning... toward the other.'

It would be interesting if Laura Quinney had started her book where she ended, verging on a thoughtful description of Blake's theological perspective and the centrality of love—when Selfhood is lost and each unique human form can emanate, or give forth spiritual light. In Blake's theology there are what can be called 'Gnostic' or 'Neoplatonic' elements, and those elements can help us understand aspects of his greater vision. It would be helpful to more carefully explore those elements in terms of what Blake himself professed and sought to promulgate.

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Graham Greene: Fictions, Faith and Authorship. By Michael G. Brennan. London: Continuum, 2010. ISBN 978-1-8470-6339-7. 188 pp. £19.99.

Graham Greene did not like being called 'that detestable term'—a 'Catholic writer.' He was, he insisted, 'a writer who happens to be a Catholic.' Just so. Greene the man of letters was not an apologist for Catholicism, rather he used the faith heuristically, as a lens to examine, a framework to explore, the human condition. He lamented the loss of religious depth in the English novel since Henry James and Joseph Conrad (neither, of course, English), its lack of a grammar of sin and evil, redemption and perdition, its failure to be a site contested by the sacred and the secular.

Catholic dogma—and Catholic liturgy—provided Greene with a stock of ideas and images that, in trim and pellucid prose, he both deployed and disputed with a cinematic vividness and psychological depth, an ethical seriousness and comic incisiveness that fill the reader with sheer delight. (Woe to those who approach literature for utility rather than enjoyment!)

Greene was certainly not a 'good' Catholic, either morally or doctrinally. His 'sins of the flesh'—his fondness for the bottle and his several significant adulteries—are well known, and so empathically and engagingly embodied in his anti-heroes that Hans Urs von Balthasar condemned him for giving sin and seediness a mystique. Perhaps more seriously for contributors to *Communio* were Greene's intellectual sympathies with the ethos of *Consilium*, and with theologians like Teilhard de Chardin, Edward Schillebeeckx, and Hans Küng. Greene once said that 'Conservatism and Catholicism should be ... impossible bedfellows', and he did his cause in Rome no favours, notwithstanding his intellectual infatuation with Vatican darlings like Thérèse of Lisieux and John Henry Newman, by sleeping with the enemy, that is, the liberation theologians. His consuming liaison with atheism, however, could have disturbed no one more than himself. In both Greene's life and work, doubt shadowed faith, despair hope, and betrayal love like his fictional sleuths.

The sources for most, if not all, of this brief sketch of Greene's faith and fiction can be found in this book, in which Michael Brennan takes for his palette not only the novels, short stories, and plays, but also the poetry, journalism, travel books, and correspondence. The author approaches his subject chronologically and developmentally, so I guess you would call his study an intellectual biography. It is educative and sound. However, I put the book down—almost dropped it, so abruptly does it end—with a feeling of disappointment far greater than the expectation with which I took it up. It contains a surplus of information, but a deficit of analysis. With the fiction there is far too much time spent on plot summaries—it becomes (so un-Greenean) rather plodding—and far too little on literary criticism, so students of English will be disappointed. So too will readers looking for theological acumen and weight beyond the accurate iteration of influences and themes. Appreciably sharper and denser is Mark Bosco's outstanding enquiry *Graham Greene's Catholic Imagination* (2005). In fact, Brennan's more astute observations are citations from Bosco's work.

Yet if my praise is faint, damnation is not the fate I would wish for this book, the critical sins of which are venial, not mortal. As Brennan observes, 'Greene was intrigued by the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory ... In a 1968 interview he noted that ... "Purgatory to me makes sense, while Hell doesn't", and that he could not believe in a Heaven which is just "passive bliss"' (p. 84). If the reader (shall we say?) grants an 'indulgence' to the

author's text, and if not inspired then at least informed by it and intrigued enough to revisit Greene's texts with an active imagination, then I am happy to hope that there is a place for *Graham Greene: Fictions, Faith and Authorship* in the literary purposes of God.

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Dostoevsky: Language, Faith, and Fiction. By Rowan Williams. Baylor: Baylor University Press, 2008. ISBN 978-1-6025-8145-6. 290 pp. £12.99.

Pulling together the important content of Rowan Williams's profound, masterful study of Dostoevsky inevitably distorts, since much of the book consists of sensitive readings of Dostoevskian texts. Williams begins with a text, analyzing a confession from an 1854 letter: 'if someone were to prove to me that Christ was outside the truth . . . then I should choose to stay with Christ rather than with the truth.' Does this declaration unveil unacknowledged Miltonic sympathy with the devil? Is he claiming that religion is a leap into darkness, an assertion of will? Is Dostoevsky staking ground on one side of Lessing's ditch? Does it reveal Dostoevsky as an irrationalist, an existentialist?

Each reading has defenders, and Dostoevsky has accordingly been hired on as a spokesman for all manner of trendy programmes. After examining related passages in the novels, Williams concludes that these readings do not work, and that the key is the meaning of 'truth.' If 'truth' is mere fact, then Christ reveals a Truth beyond truth. If 'truth' involves sanding smooth the jagged edges of human experience, Christ is outside truth. Against truth of this world, Dostoevsky confesses Christ as the gratuitous, uncontrollable epiphany of love and joy.

The 'truth' Dostoevsky opposes is diabolical. For Dostoevsky, the devil seeks closure, freezes humanity in a rational order, stops history, and any aesthetics or politics that promises an end to striving is demonic. Dostoevsky exorcises demons not to defend the individualistic freedom of self-assertion (which eventually paralyzes) but the freedom of rightly oriented desire. Behind this analysis of the diabolical stands Dostoevsky's famed 'dialogism'. Demonic 'truth' denies the other the freedom of his otherness, and also imprisons the self because each partner in dialogue finds his own voice and visibility in the vulnerability of speaking and giving others leave to speak. Freedom is freedom in language, hence freedom in communion. Dostoevsky's is an 'iconic' ethics that regards the other as a real presence of transcendent plenitude and as an occasion for 'exchanging crosses', for taking up responsibility of all for all. Eschatology

underwrites and unites Dostoevsky's convictions about desire, diabolism, language, and freedom because eschatology refuses every final word yet affirms that life has meaning to those who love while longing for Christ's future kingdom.

Far from being sceptical or indifferent toward religion, Dostoevsky's novels are rooted in 'a sort of theology' (p. 5), and that theology shapes his fictional craft. Dostoevsky allows his characters liberty to speak and constructs plots that dissolve happily-ever-afters. This is neither a secularising nor an apologeticizing of the novel, but an eschatologically organised Christian fiction.

If the theology that Williams finds in Dostoevsky seems suspiciously close to Williams' own, that is as likely the result of Dostoevsky's influence on Williams as Williams' unconscious monologism. Still, I have the same reservations about Williams as about Bakhtin, on whom he often relies. Dialogism granted, yet in Dostoevsky's own descriptions of his work, he frequently explains that he has a *point* to make. He bitched about censors removing the overtly Christian portions of *Notes from Underground*, and he viewed the Father Zossima section of *Brothers Karamazov* as a 'response' to Ivan—'non-Euclidian,' but still a response. Williams knows this, but he instinctively makes Dostoevsky's work less didactic than the author intended. Dialogism granted; yet it remains the case, as Williams knows, that there is an ultimate monologism, the One Word of the One God, who has not been silent.

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Rowan's Rule: The Biography of the Archbishop. By Rupert Shortt. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2009. ISBN 978-03409-5433-1. 496 pp. £9.99

I write this review the week after Rowan Williams has announced that he is stepping down as Archbishop of Canterbury. I am sure that William's primacy will be remembered as one of the great moments in the history of Anglicanism, yet not without regrets. It has been Rowan's vocation to lead a church that appears to be in centrifuge, a church that strains the meaning of the word 'communion' in its tensions and debates.

With Williams' ascendancy many asked questions like: Can one of the greatest minds in the church also administer and lead through the muck and mire of the church? Can a person with the experience and the mind of Williams maintain the unity and witness of Anglicanism into the future? Is it possible for an episcopal church to be led to adapt to its contemporary global challenges? Throughout the church, even in non-Anglican communions like my own, there are many who view Rowan's well-deserved

exit from the episcopacy with sadness. If so great a churchman and fine a theologian can't save us from ourselves, wherein is our hope?

I find it difficult to imagine a much more adept, judicious, critical-but-fair, and continuously engaging biography of a cleric than the one written by Rupert Shortt. *Rowan's Rule* follows the young theologian through his formative years without overdoing the biographical background. Rowan comes across as a lively, bookish but never dull, activist and meditative, in short, a thoroughly warm and engaging person who is a credit to the church.

Williams' assumption of the post of Archbishop was greeted with widespread acclaim and also a bit of scepticism by some. Would the post be a waste for such a fine mind? Would he be able to make the transition from being an academic and sometime small parish pastor, to being the head of the far-flung, deeply conflicted, and glorious Anglican communion?

When the press asked if he had doubts about his new post, Williams' response was quoted in Rupert Shortt's *Rowan's Rule*: 'You'd be a maniac not to have doubts . . .. It's a job that inevitably carries huge expectations and projections . . . other people's fantasies . . . and to try and keep some degree of honesty, clarity and simplicity in the middle of that is going to be hard work--so that frightened me a lot.' Fear and trembling accompany the summons to the ministry of oversight, fear of God's demands, apprehension of the church's fantasies and expectations, dread of your own limits.

It didn't take long for Williams' doubts to be confirmed in his rocky dealings with the wild Americans, his failed attempts to offer a compromise for to angry Africans, and his ability to attract attacks in the press with dizzying frequency. At points I began to tire of Shortt's cataloguing of controversy. Sometimes Rowan comes across as a well-meaning, sincerely charitable, but often bungling egg-headed professor who shouldn't be in charge of anything so bafflingly out of control as Anglicanism.

Though Rowan is a master Christian communicator, sometimes his academically induced turgidity, combined with his attempts to restate controversial matters in ways that mollified the combatants, led to murky communication and conflicting messages that alienated all sides and pleased few. The unifier (bishops are historically charged with embodying and encouraging the unity and harmony of the church) always risks coming across as a mushy compromiser without principle.

By the end of Shortt's book, we wonder if Rowan William must be miserable. No one who reads Shortt's treatment of Rowan (in which time and again Shortt takes pains to be fair and not overly judgmental) is surprised by Rowan's early exit from the episcopacy. Noteworthy is Shortt's

attempt to set Rowan's rule in the context of his theology. How does Rowan's administration and leadership arise out of his theological commitments? I failed to see a close connection, but perhaps that is a function of the rather ambivalent, now rigid, then lax, bungled opportunities, badly managed meetings in his administration.

Would Williams now, after actually experiencing the empirical Body of Christ from this privileged perspective, revise his idealistic contention, early in his rule that, 'Just as we can trust God because he has no agenda that is not for our own good, so we can trust the Church because it is... a community of active peacemaking... where no one exists in isolation... everyone is working steadily to release the gifts of others.' (I wish that I and Rowan might have gotten to be bishops of *that* church!) But one might expect so great a theologian to praise the church for its divine nature rather than its human effects.

This is a fine book, one that raises the bar for all future attempts, through careful biography, to understand ecclesiastical leaders. Shortt accomplishes, in my opinion, that which we ought to expect of a faithful biographer—truthfulness linked with affection for the subject, candour joined with charity.

I've always thought that one of Rowan Williams's best aphorisms is, 'If we aren't self-created, we are answerable to a truth we don't produce.' Let us give thanks to God for producing one so gifted and intelligent (and faithful!) as Rowan Williams. And let us thank Rowan Williams for helping us to be more attentive to that grand truth (the gospel of Jesus Christ) that we didn't produce.

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BOOK REVIEWS