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EDITORIAL

I occupy a pew far more often than a pulpit. Perhaps that contributes a slightly different perspective for reflecting on the nature of preaching than that of the serial sermonizer. The formulation that has emerged in my thoughts on what constitutes effective preaching runs something like this: a 'good' sermon combines patient explanation with pastoral application, and leads to a spiritual confrontation. And, while doing that, it shows me how to preach to myself.

Among other prompts for this reflection was reading the fine Festschrift for Donald Macleod, *The People's Theologian.*[1] It does what such volumes often do—beyond honouring the honorand, of course: it juxtaposes contributions which take up differing points of view. Shared admiration for the person to whom the volume is dedicated is no guarantee of seamless development from one chapter to the next. Such appears to be the case with a troika of articles that appear under the heading of 'Theology and the Church': two on preaching by Carl Trueman and Alasdair I. Macleod (chapters 11 and 13) provide the bread for which Fergus Macdonald's piece on reading the Psalms with 'postmoderns' (chapter 12) is the sandwich filling. Reading these, my growing sense about 'explanation plus application equals confrontation' as capturing something worthwhile about 'good' preaching initially took a bit of a knock, but came good in the end.

Explanation is needed wherever a guide is needed—or at least appreciated. It's that experience of looking at a painting in the company of an expert, for example, and seeing it through 'new' eyes. I well remember wandering, mystified, through an exhibit of modern art in Leiden in the company of a fellow *Alttestamentler*. We paused before one imposing but, to me, incomprehensible work. I must have admitted my complete bewilderment, for he took pity on me. He began to explain how the work defined space, pointing out various aspects of what the artist had achieved. As it happened, my companion was not only a distinguished scholar and kind colleague, but an exhibited artist in his own right. In one sense, what I saw before his brief commentary was no different from what I saw after. It was still just a massive, empty square hanging on the wall! I can't claim I found it more appealing in the aftermath of his commentary, but my level of comprehension was transformed, as was my appreciation for what I was gazing at.

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1 Iain D. Campbell and Malcolm Maclean (eds), *The People's Theologian: Writings in Honour of Donald Macleod* (Fearn: Mentor, 2011).

This sort of experience—be it with art, architecture, music, technology, sport, literature, or what have you—is fairly common. It enhances our capacity to see what, unaided, we would remain blind to. And so, when explanation brings deepened understanding, it changes the relationship one has with that 'object'. This is also true of Scripture. After one of my own recent forays into the pulpit as a visiting preacher, I was chatting with a member of the congregation over a cup of coffee. We were reflecting on the considerable gifts of their recently retired minister. In that minister's preaching, he said, 'You always felt he was showing you things you had never seen before.' Just so.

Explanation in its own right is a powerful thing. It gets a rough ride from Carl Trueman, however, who is alert to the dangers of 'explanation' usurping the deeper claims of the task of preaching. 'If the preacher thinks he is merely explaining the Bible, he will probably be incapable of distinguishing what he does in the pulpit from what he does in the lecture theatre.'[2] There are the key qualifiers 'If' and 'merely', to be sure, and on the same page he offers one anecdote describing how what was promised as 'explanation' was transcended. Besides the lure of the lecture, there is also the danger that passing on information can be confused with explanation. Too often I've been told that 'the Greek [less often, a Hebrew] word here is…', when that made no difference whatsoever to understanding the passage. Telling the congregation that 'Nicodemus' means 'conqueror of the people' (if it does—but that's another story!) during a sermon on John 3 would simply be a distraction. Explanation brings illumination and aids understanding, but information overload is to be resisted.[3]

Even well understood, though, how does this 'word' exert a 'claim' on the listener? This is where patient explanation gives way to pastoral application. If explanation has to do with understanding, then application has to do with relevance: of what relevance, if any, is this text pertinent to my life, my community, my culture? On this front, Fergus Macdonald's reflection on postmodernity and the Psalms is suggestive.[4] Although there are dangers lurking here, too, the 'performance' of the biblical text in the postmodern framework represents a personal engagement with Scripture from the outset. In this scenario, the individual reader's sense of needs and the values that appeal to their own quest for meaning provide

2 Carl R. Trueman, 'The Preacher as Prophet: Some Notes on the Nature of Preaching', in *The People's Theologian*, pp. 197-215, quote from p. 198, repeated with variations on pp. 200, 206, and 213.

3 Thanks to Peter Grainger for this reminder; see his 'Information Overload' article for a helpful discussion <http://j.mp/PGoverload>.

4 Fergus Macdonald, 'David and Derrida: The Psalms and Postmodernism', in *The People's Theologian*, pp. 217-241.

the points of contact with Scripture. While this might ensure a sense of 'relevance', it might do little to provoke a response and locates authority (whatever that might mean in this context) in the reader rather than the text.

It need not be so, however. I was struck while reading Andrew Hoffecker's fine biography of Charles Hodge how 'The Plan' of Princeton Seminary positively commends time in the Bible in terms that bear a striking resonance to the sort of reading that Fergus Macdonald's article commends. Thus, in Section 1 of Article V., 'Of Devotion, and Improvement in Practical Piety', the following guidance is given:[5]

> It is expected that every student in the Theological Seminary will spend a portion of time every morning and evening … in reading the holy Scriptures, solely with a view to a personal and practical application of the passage read, to his own heart, character, and circumstances...

Those who framed 'The Plan' anticipated the results of the 2004 'Psalm Journey' project that Macdonald describes. Discussions with participants, he notes, 'often focused on specific actions respondents felt the psalm was asking them to take in real life.'[6] This is not simply reading for enjoyment, let alone duty: the outcome is a scripture-shaped life—even a transformed life.

Both of these threads—of explanation and application—come together in Alasdair I. Macleod's article, and the clue as to how they do so is contained in the sub-title: 'The Preacher as Reader of Scripture'.[7] Two aspects of Macleod's contribution strike me in particular. The first is the account he gives of how the preacher-as-reader must be claimed by the text—'changed by what I have read'—before ever it is proclaimed to others. The second is his perception that such 'faithful reading' is, in some sense, exemplary. That is, those who sit, week by week, under such preachers should begin to have their own engagement with the Bible attuned by this mode of patient attention and personal transformation. Such preaching should, I believe, lead from the 'preacher as reader', to a community of those for whom reading becomes 'preaching'. And here,

5 [Ashbel Green], *Plan of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the Unites States of America*. 2nd edn (Elizabethtown, 1816), p. 17. See <http://j.mp/SeminaryPlan>, and W. A. Hoffecker, *Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2011), p. 52.

6 Macdonald, 'David and Derrida', p. 239.

7 Alasdair I. Macleod, 'Layered Reading: The Preacher as Reader of Scripture', in *The People's Theologian*, pp. 243-264; see especially pp. 246 and 249 for what follows.

time is the precious commodity: not simply the week by week exposure to faithful explanation and application, but the growing desire simply to ‘linger’ in the Bible. Sometimes, we fail to see things simply because we haven’t taken time to give the proper quality of attention required.

Of course, there is much more that could be said. In the end, however, this trio of contributors seems to me to be singing from the same hymn sheet—or, at least the same Psalter (considering the context for their articles!). The church must not only be served by those faithfully proclaiming the whole word of God, but filled by those who take care how they listen (Luke 8:18), and who preach that Word to themselves.

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A Biblical Theology of Nationhood: Some Light on the Scottish Independence Question

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INTRODUCTION

Let me be absolutely clear on one thing from the outset: *the Bible does not speak directly to the question of Scottish independence*. There is no conclusive biblical argument in favour of Scotland becoming an independent nation nor is there any theologically-authoritative standard that conclusively justifies remaining a part of the United Kingdom. To that end, this is an issue where Christians will, quite legitimately, continue to take differing views. A temptation for all who hold the Bible as an authoritative standard for life and practice is that we make it speak in ways which it does not. As Vanhoozer comments:

> [T]he text is at the mercy of the reader's whim... Readers always seem to have the last word. They can ignore it, skip over, read into, and at the limit, close texts. Texts may look intelligent, says Socrates, but when you ask them a question they either preserve a solemn silence or else 'always say the same thing'... [W]hat is to stop the reader from projecting his or her own voice into the mute text? Can the text ever have an independent say?[2]

You may well ask, then, what is the point of such an article? If Vanhoozer is correct, and he clearly is, why ask the Bible a question that it patently does not seek to answer ('solemn silence')? Equally, what stops this article

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[1] I include my academic affiliation here as a matter of normal practice. However, I should be clear that—as always—the views expressed in any of my published writings are mine and mine alone.

[2] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1998), 164. The pun in the last line of this quote is, of course, entirely unintended!

from becoming nothing more than a personal rant ('always saying the same thing')?[3]

The essence of this reflective paper is rooted in the belief that, even where the Bible does not speak *directly* to an issue, it can still communicate formative general principles that may be applied to a particular setting. Such is the tone of this paper (formative observations from Scripture) and, therefore, it is important to begin with a statement of methodological clarity. The points raised below reflect those general principles that strike me as being relevant to any consideration of the topic at hand. Therefore, this list is far from exhaustive and is inevitably 'tainted' by all of the personal presuppositions and perspectives that shape who I am.[4] Obviously, another person tasked with the same aim, would most likely arrive at a different set of formative principles that, in turn, could lead the reader to an entirely different set of conclusions. So, in short, this is my honest attempt to weigh up and consider some principles from Scripture that seem to me to be relevant for Christians considering how they will vote in 2014.

In considering this theme at the request of SETS, four principles strike me as being of marked significance for the Christian considering the question of Scotland's potential independence from the UK:

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[3] At this point it is probably worth mentioning that this article is the written form of a presentation made to the annual conference of the Scottish Evangelical Theological Society in 2012. The topic was suggested by the conference organisers and that request is the genesis of these deliberations.

[4] Full disclosure would involve a biography that would surely bore even family members to tears. However, some aspects of the influences that have shaped me (and thus this paper) include the following. (1) I am Scottish, born and bred. (2) I have lived 'overseas' for many years (Poland, USA and England). (3) I am not affiliated in any way to any particular political party, although those who know me will be quick to point out a generic centre-left leaning worldview. (4) I am a scholar of the Bible and, particularly, the Old Testament and hold a high view of the authority of Scripture (whatever that may mean!). I recognise that these factors of my life experience have all shaped the reflections of this paper. I equally recognise that I am a product of a secularised, Western education and that I am shaped by these influences. However, listing formative texts, thinkers, and intellectual influences would be a task that exceeds the bounds of my self-awareness. I should add that I am acutely aware of the thankless nature of my task! I suspect that those on both sides of this debate will conclude that I do not go far enough in one direction or the other. This is not the appropriate setting for a Luther-like 'Here I stand—I can do no other!', however, I can say that this is the extent of my present thinking on the matter.

1. The direction of the biblical narrative is towards inclusion;

2. Our 'choice' of earthly kingdom should always be the one that best reflects the heavenly Kingdom of which we are a part;

3. There is no place for cultural arrogance in the Kingdom of God;

4. All political and social choices should be shaped by missional thinking.

As mentioned above, this list is not exhaustive but it seems that these are principles that should be formative in the shaping of our political perspectives with regard to the independence question. Let me unpack these in some more detail.

1. THE DIRECTION OF THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE IS TOWARDS INCLUSION

There is an implicit narrative in the text of Scripture that moves from the particular to the universal and points to an overarching theme of expansion and inclusion in the Bible. This is seen first in the Edenic command to fill the earth (Gen. 1:28) and continues in the metanarrative of salvation history that begins with the call of Abram (Gen. 12:1–3) and continues through to the Gospels, Acts and Revelation. If, as is often argued, we are to view the Garden of Eden as a type of sanctuary, then the call to 'fill the earth' is actually a call to expand that space of encounter with God throughout the whole earth by way of the spreading presence of God's people.[5] This theme points towards expansion and, by dint of geographic spread, the inclusion of others. Adam and Eve are privy to special relationship with God in that place and their call is to extend that Edenic-type space for the inclusion of more people in this type of relationship with God.[6]

That which is hinted at in Genesis 1 becomes much more explicit in Genesis 12:1–3. Abram and his family are chosen by God and tasked with

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5 See, for example, William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Biblical and Theological Classics Library 12; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), and Lifsa Schachter, 'The Garden of Eden as God's First Sanctuary', *JBQ* 41, no. 2 (2013), 73–77.

6 Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2006), p. 415; Gregory K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (New Studies in Biblical Theology; Nottingham: IVP, 2004).

bringing blessing to 'all the families of the earth'. Again the imagery is of the choice of the particular with the ultimate intent of incorporating a much broader community of people. Abram, the father of Israel, is called into covenant relationship with God, but for the explicit purpose of bringing blessing not just to himself and his people but also to 'all the families of the earth'. The theme is expansive and, from the outset of the redemptive history that begins here, it points to the breaking down of barriers of geography, race, language and social setting.[7]

This passage is relevant to our discussion in two ways. Firstly, diversity of culture is acknowledged here and, clearly, that diversity is valued by God (as reflected in his desire to bring blessing to the smallest of people groups throughout the earth). Secondly, the passage begins a narrative that points to the inclusion of others into an ever-expanding community of God's people. Clearly, the latter in no way denies the former. However, as this theme is developed throughout the Scriptures it is apparent that questions of national and cultural identity, while not subsumed into a singular, monolithic 'Christian' identity, are deemed secondary in importance compared to belonging to the community of God's people.

The inclusive nature of the salvation-history metanarrative becomes a prominent theme in the Old Testament and it is one that challenges many of the insular and separatist tendencies of Israel as a nation. The call of Abraham was intended for the blessing of the nations (Gen. 12:1–3). Equally, the call and formation of Israel also had a more universal purpose designed to impact all of humanity. Israel's foundational encounter with Yahweh at the foot of Mount Sinai makes this clear (Ex. 19:5-6). Israel is both 'treasured possession' (*segullah*) and also 'kingdom of priests' (*mamleket kohanim*). The first descriptive points to Israel's special relationship with God and the second indicates the nation's intermediary function between God and all the other peoples of the earth. The 'sons of Israel' have become a nation but they are reminded from the outset of the inherent value of all peoples in God's eyes and of their function in drawing other peoples into the worshipping community.

As this story develops it becomes apparent that Israel singularly failed in this task. Israel came to view their status as 'treasured possession' with an attitude of national, ethnic and cultural elitism. Their status as the covenant people separated them from every (in their eyes, lesser) nation on earth. Israel's national identity was never meant to be viewed as a cause for pride and many texts of the Prophets and Writings subvert all such

[7] The use of 'families of the earth' points to a blessing that reaches every layer of society.

ideologies.[8] One of the clearest examples of this is found in Psalm 87, where it is declared that:

> [4] Among those who know me I mention Rahab and Babylon;
> behold, Philistia and Tyre, with Cush—
> 'This one was born there,' they say.
> [5] And of Zion it shall be said, 'This one and that one were born in her';
> for the Most High himself will establish her.
> [6] The LORD records as he registers the peoples,
> 'This one was born there.' (ESV)

The poem points to a process of inclusion of peoples within the covenant community and a declaration of their belonging together. The peoples do not stop being from Egypt (Rahab), Babylon, Philistia (etc.) but their primary identity ('This one was born there') is as members of the covenant community through the divine declaration that they too are children of Zion.[9] Christopher J. H. Wright comments:

> The most radical part of the OT vision is yet to come. The nations will come to share the very identity of Israel itself. God's people will burst the boundaries of ethnicity and geography. The very name 'Israel' will be extended and redefined.[10]

This expansive theme finds its fulfilment in the book of Acts and the history of the church, with peoples from all sorts of national and ethnic backgrounds ultimately joining the community of faith and being declared 'children of Zion'.[11]

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8 This critique is played out quite clearly, for example, in Isaiah 1–2.

9 John Goldingay, *Psalms: Volume 2, Psalms 42-89* (Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, 2; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), pp. 640–1.

10 Wright, *The Mission of God*, p. 489.

11 The theme of expansion and inclusion is, of course, continued very clearly throughout the whole of the New Testament. This is seen, for example, in Matthew's Great Commission where 'all nations' are to be discipled; Luke's inclusion theme celebrates the removal of all barriers (social status, ethnicity, gender, nationality, etc.); the great gospel expansions of Acts ('Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth',Acts 1:8) highlight both geographic spread and the inclusion of peoples; and the presence of nations and kings of the nations in the New Jerusalem of John's Revelation (Rev. 21–22) points to the ultimate fulfilment of Yahweh's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12. There can be no doubt that the expansions that were foretold in the Old Testament begin to find their fruition in the New.

This deliberation speaks to the question at hand in two ways. Firstly, God delights in the peoples and nations of the world.[12] Therefore, one might argue that Scottish identity is also valuable in the eyes of God and that this identity may best be marked by political independence. Secondly, however, it must be acknowledged that the unmistakeable trajectory of the central narrative of Scripture seems to point to the *removal of barriers* created by nationality, race or culture.[13] To that end, any movement towards independence must be carefully assessed by Christians in order to ensure that their political intentions are in no way motivated by the type of national, ethnic and cultural arrogance that is so roundly condemned in both the Old and New Testaments. If the clear trajectory of salvation history is towards the removal of such barriers then, surely, the covenant community should only ever set about recreating barriers if they have a very clear justification for doing so.

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12 Some would make much of the (apparently obvious) intertextual connection between the Babel account of Genesis 11 and Pentecost in Acts 2. The correlation is taken to show that God delights in cultural diversity and that the negative effects of the origins of nationhood at Babel are redeemed at Pentecost, thus (somehow) redeeming national identity and justifying separatism/political independence. While agreeing completely with the general premise—God does delight in cultural and national diversity and we see this elsewhere in Scripture (e.g. Ps. 87, Rev. 5)—the conclusion falls for one clear reason. *In Luke's mind, 'the nations' are not really present at Pentecost.*

Despite the geographic spread represented and the multilingual origins of those present in Jerusalem at Pentecost, in Luke's narrative we are dealing with (no more than) the spread of the gospel in Jerusalem. We are not even dealing with Judea yet, let alone the nations. Acts 1:8 functions as a structural marker for the development of Luke's narrative in Acts and the gospel does not reach 'the nations' until Peter visits the house of Cornelius in Acts 10 and Barnabas and Saul are set apart to reach the nations in Acts 13. The Pentecost account speaks to the beginnings of the redemption *of the Jewish people* (Acts 2:5, 11) in all of the places to which they had spread. However, by and large, Luke is here writing about a single ethnic grouping, Israel (although converts to Judaism are included and they would not be ethnically Jewish). There is a universalising element to the Pentecost account but it reflects geographic spread rather than the spread of the gospel to the nations. That being the case, it is difficult to see how the Babel/Pentecost connection provides strong biblical warrant for nationalism (even taking the best sense of that word).

13 Is this not the background to two of the Apostle Paul's most profound and explicit deliberations on the Gospel message, namely, the letters to the Romans and the Galatians?

2. THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM AND HUMAN KINGDOMS

Every time we pray, 'Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven', we are, of course, praying for radical societal transformation. We may not be aware of that as we murmur our way through the Lord's prayer, but we are. For God's will to be done *on earth as it is in heaven* means that the world in which we live would have to be drastically altered. Many aspects of our society fall far short of the divine will as it is perfectly played out in heaven. Injustice and corruption are rife in our world and, societally, we fall far short of God's holy will and purpose on all sorts of levels. So the Lord's prayer is actually a heart cry for radical transformation in our human, earthly realm.

The Christian faces daily a sense of duality in terms of kingdom allegiance. We are, clearly, citizens of a heavenly realm and our ultimate sense of belonging lies elsewhere than here (John 15:18*ff*.; Phil. 3:20; 1 Pet. 1:17, 2:9-10, etc.). Yet, at the same time, the community of faith is charged with the task of *fully engaging* with the world around about us (John 17:6-20; Matt. 5:13-16; Matt. 6:10 etc.). The expectation of just society is, perhaps most clearly explicated in the lengthy central section of the book of Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy 12–26 the ten commandments are unpacked and applied in detail to the societal realm for the time when Israel would become a 'landed' people.[14] Clearly, the central concern of this passage is the just running of Israelite society. Deuteronomy makes it clear that the social order of the nation should always reflect the priorities of God that were given in the 'ten words'. McConville comments:

> In this covenant, religion and politics are one. Israel fulfils its political obligations by virtue of its loyalty to Yahweh, which has an integral social dimension. There is not only a theology of the gift of the land, but a vision, sketched in laws, of how the land should be held. The laws bring the concept of the rule of Yahweh down to particular instances.[15]

While many of the laws of Deuteronomy 12–26 are specific to the civil and ceremonial setting of Israel, Deuteronomy continues to be a formative text for the community of faith. Although many of the details of these laws are not *directly* relevant to contemporary Scotland, the overarching idea of a justly ordered society, that is shaped by the priorities of God,

[14] Georg Braulik, 'The Sequence of the Laws in Deuteronomy 12–26 and in the Decalogue,' in *A Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy*, ed. by D. L. Christensen (SBTS vol. 3; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), pp. 313–35.

[15] J. Gordon McConville, *Deuteronomy* (AOTC; Leicester: Apollos, 2002), p. 34.

should still characterise the Christian community's societal expectations today.[16] To that end—even in this secularised world, where the voice of Scripture is far removed from the public realm—Christians should be concerned about, and campaigning for, a just society that is reflective of biblical ethics and norms.

It appears to me that a proper concern for civil society should be a central driver in the Christian's thinking when it comes to the independence vote next year. The reality is that our political structures markedly influence our social practice. To that end, *one of* the central drivers in any decision for or against Scottish independence should be a concern for Kingdom priorities to be reflected in the earthly realm. The thinking Christian must, of course, weigh political, economic and cultural factors but only alongside this idea of just society. One political forum may better reflect the priorities of God in daily reality than another and this should be carefully considered as part of the decision-making process.[17]

3. NO PLACE FOR CULTURAL ARROGANCE

In many ways this is a subset of the first point made above but it is a question that must be considered explicitly as part of the independence debate. It is a clear and undeniable principle of the Bible—both Old and New Testaments—that there is no place for cultural arrogance in the divine economy.

Deuteronomy 7 and 9 make it absolutely clear that Israel was not chosen because it was bigger, better or more righteous than the other nations (Deut. 7:6–8; 9:4–6). Israel was chosen out of love for their forefathers and for the purpose of outworking Yahweh's glory among the nations. The doctrine of election offers absolutely no scope for any sense of superiority.[18] The same message is later relayed to the people by way of the Prophets. Isaiah 1 and Jeremiah 7, for example, make it clear that Israel has no grounds to boast because of the badges of covenant or the trappings of election. Land, city, temple and king are all gifts of God's

[16] S. Dean McBride, 'Polity of the Covenant People: The Book of Deuteronomy,' in *A Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy*, ed. by D. L. Christensen (SBTS, 3; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), pp. 62–77.

[17] It may of course be a reality, however, that the influence of the secular in the political realm is such that neither Westminster nor Holyrood offer a better take on 'just society', in which case other considerations will properly shape any decision made.

[18] Christopher J. H. Wright, *Deuteronomy* (NIBCOT; Peabody, MA/Carlisle: Hendrickson/Paternoster, 1996), pp. 115–16.

hesed and none of them provides any grounds for an attitude of cultural superiority.[19]

If anything, the gospel's abhorrence of cultural arrogance is heightened in the New Testament. In many of Paul's writings to the embryonic Church attitudes of cultural superiority are the targets that are held firmly in his sights. There is a sense in which unity across ethnic, national and cultural divides comes to be seen as an emblematic proof of the outworking of the power of the gospel message in human reality. Perhaps the clearest example of this type of challenge is seen in Paul's confrontation of Peter in Galatians 2–3. Peter is rebuked for allowing cultural separation to creep back into his social praxis within the church setting. The theme statement of this passage is, of course: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:28). Romans 2 deals with similar issues: Jewish Christians have no grounds to boast because of their possession of the Torah or because they were the original recipients of the covenant and neither do Gentile Christians have cause to boast because they were chosen and engrafted into the covenant community at a time when Israel had largely turned its back on the gospel message. Whatever our human status or situation might be, clearly, there is never any biblical warrant for an attitude of superiority. Equally, unity across any and all human and societal divides is the clear concomitant effect of the gospel. Since unity is central to the effects of the gospel, an attitude that seeks to create or re-create barriers is, in some sense, anti-gospel.

An important *caveat* needs to be applied, of course. The NT passages mentioned above address *the unity of the Christian community and not political union*. Nations are notional entities and, in many parts of the world, there has been a constant sense of flux in terms of nationhood and national identity (e.g. the many changes in Central and Eastern Europe over the last century). Therefore, the process of breaking down all barriers *within the church* can and should continue regardless of Scotland's political status. So we cannot apply these passages in a simplistic manner and simply assume that the Union is, in some sense, more biblical than the dissolution of the Union would be. That is not my point. The United Kingdom is no more inherently commendable than an independent Scotland would be—the Bible is entirely neutral with regard to either entity.

However, the line of application that is relevant to our discussion is the question of cultural arrogance. Clearly, the Bible is focussed on the breaking down of all barriers and the creation of a new, transnational,

19 See, for example, J. Andrew Dearman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), pp. 95–104.

multi-ethnic, intergenerational, community of mixed gender and social status. This is what the church is meant to be and this will be both a light and a challenge to any and all who would observe the inner workings of the church within this world. Therefore, the practice of separation and the recreation of barriers is something that should be somewhat counter-cultural to the Christian community. As mentioned above, there may be justifiable reason to do so in terms of the formation of a just society. However, any Christian approaching this topic (from either side of the debate) must ensure that their motivations are correct and that there is no hint of cultural or national superiority in the desire for independence or maintaining the union.[20]

4. MISSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The fourth, and final, premise that strikes me as being pertinent to this discussion is the consideration of the missional implications of either choice in the independence referendum. Mission is central to the life of the church because it is derived from the very nature of God. As a people we participate in the *missio Dei*, the mission of God.[21] Our participation in outreach reflects the fact that God reaches out to humanity through creation, revelation and, most clearly, through Jesus. Mission should always be a primary concern in every significant decision that the thinking Christian makes. It should be but, unfortunately, all too often this is not the case.

The essential question for the Church in Scotland is this: will an independent Scotland offer better opportunities for outreach than those that exist at present? Or, conversely, will our ability to influence our land with the gospel be curtailed in an independent Scotland? Or, the middle ground, will everything remain more or less the same whether we stay or go? Each individual will answer that question from their own reading of the policies coming out of both Holyrood and Westminster and from the statements of the political leaders in each parliament. It may be impossible to come to a definitive conclusion but it is vital that missional concerns should shape our thinking as a body of God's people in our decision making processes.

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[20] So the nationalist must ask him/herself the question: Is there any sense in which I am in favour of independence simply because I don't like the English? If so, then the motivation is wrong. Equally, the unionist should never be motivated by any sense of superiority based on their Britishness. Cultural arrogance in either direction is patently unbiblical and anti-gospel.

[21] Wright, *The Mission of God*, pp. 75–188.

The centrality of mission to the biblical narrative is clear and the concept of mission seems both to affirm and to minimise the importance of national identity. The discrete voices of both Old and New Testaments create a dual picture of the missional task. The OT seems to describe mission as a largely 'centripetal' entity. Israel is to live such an attractive life in accordance with the Torah that it draws the nations in to the core to find out more about this Yahweh who is so close to his people and who rules his people so justly (Deut. 4:5-8).[22] This idea of mission as attraction is affirmed by the images of the inpouring of the nations to Zion in the Prophets, in texts like Isaiah 2, Micah 4, and Zephaniah 3. As indicated in the call of Abraham, God's heart is for all nations and his intent in calling a specific nation to himself was always that the other nations should be reached through that process. In this sense the identity of every people group is affirmed as important in God's eyes. Scots are important to God—as are the English and Somalis and Syrians and every other people group on this earth. So, on one level, mission affirms nations as significant in God's economy.

However, the flip side of the mission coin is the centrifugal mission that is so significant in the New Testament. Centrifugal mission tends to be the way in which mission is classically understood—going and making disciples. These are two aspects of the same entity and each are vital to the contemporary mission efforts of the Church. The interesting thing about centrifugal mission is that national identity seems to be downplayed amongst the transnational spread of the gospel message. Acts 11 is a good example of this tendency. We read there that 'men of Cyprus and Cyrene' effectively planted the church in Antioch. They shared a common language with the Antiochian people and so we have North Africans and Cypriots planting a church in Syria. National identity does not disappear—they remained 'men of Cyprus and Cyrene'—but certainly national identity is secondary to the task of mission.

This seems to be generally reflective of the way in which the New Testament approaches the idea of nations and nationhood. Clearly, God delights in the diversity of multiple nations and people groups and languages, as is seen so beautifully in the book of Revelation (Rev. 5, for example) and yet national identity is of secondary importance to the

[22] The missional implications of Israel's failure to act as a witness to the surrounding nations by way of obedience to the Torah (centripetal mission) is highlighted especially in Ezekiel's prophecy. It is interesting to note the repeated theme of this prophecy, namely, that Yahweh's name was 'profaned among the nations' because Israel failed to live a Word-based, attractive, community life together (see Ezekiel 20 and 36, in particular). This again emphasises the significance of mission to Israel's identity and purpose.

spread of the gospel of Jesus and the oneness of the people of God. From my experience in Scotland and abroad, there seems to me to be a real sense in which nationality is an increasing irrelevance for missionally-minded communities of faith. Again, in and of itself, this observation neither affirms nor denies the appropriateness or otherwise of Scottish independence. However, such observations should at least shape our thinking as Christians. The advancement of the Kingdom of God must be the most important motivation in every decision that we make, including the way in which we vote in next year's referendum.

CONCLUSION

So we end as we began, with the reminder that the Bible does not address the question of Scottish independence. Nations simply 'are' in the Bible. They are a brute fact—neither specially affirmed nor critiqued. The important thing for our purposes is that Christians should think biblically about the decision to be made next September, rather than allowing our choice in this vital decision to be shaped by other priorities and agendas. The observations of this paper are simply that: observations. These are no more than personal reflections derived from my hearing of the Bible's voice. I fully appreciate that others will read the Scriptures differently and will want to formulate an alternate set of guiding principles in their approach to the question of Scottish independence. I gladly leave them to do so. Nonetheless, it is my hope that these brief comments will in some way, however modestly, help the Christian community in Scotland to reflect biblically on the decision at hand.

FORMED IN THE CRUCIBLE OF MESSIANIC ANGST: THE ESCHATOLOGICAL SHAPE OF THE HEBREW PSALTER'S FINAL FORM

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Christians have been reading the Psalms as a book throughout their history. Sixteen hundred years ago, Augustine (354-430 CE) wrote, 'The arrangement of the Psalms, which seems to me to contain a secret of great mystery, has not yet been revealed to me.'[1] And so in Augustine's view, the arrangement of the individual psalms in the Psalter has significance, even if God had not yet revealed to him the logic behind it. Perhaps this interpretive instinct issued from the way the church through the ages had read the book of Psalms as a single meditation text, already at the time of Jesus, and on through church history well beyond Augustine's lifetime.[2] Closer to our own day, Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890) was unique for his era, as his commentary paid special attention to key word links between adjoining psalms. For example, he pointed out that although Psalms 1 and 2 have very different themes, they are bound into a 'whole' by the repeated beatitude *ʾšry* ('blessed', Pss 1:1; 2:12), and lexically linked together by the verb *hgh* ('to meditate, moan', Pss 1:2; 2:1).[3] Or on a more popular level, in an entry entitled 'Blessedness and Praise', Alexander MacLaren (1826-1910) chose to open his exposition of the book of Psalms with an entry on *both*

1 As cited in, Jamie A. Grant, *The King as Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy's Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* (SBL Academia Biblia, 17; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), p. 1. This quote is also cited in David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme* in the Book of Psalms (JSOTSS, 252; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), p. 14.

2 See Norbert Lohfink and Linda M. Maloney, *In the Shadow of Your Wings: New Readings of Great Texts from the Bible* (Collegeville: Order of Saint Benedict, 2003), p. 79.

3 See Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes: Volume 5, Psalms* (trans. James Martin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 82-3. This commentary was first published in 1859-60, with a second edition appearing in 1867. Francis Bolton translated it from German into English in 1871.

Psalms 1:1 and 150:6, the first and last verses of the book. He wrote: 'It is not by accident that they stand where they do, the first and last verses of the whole collection, enclosing all, as it were, within a golden ring, and bending round to meet each other.'[4] Evidently this 19th century Baptist also read the Psalms as a book, with the twin themes of blessedness and praise purposefully enclosing the entire collection.

With the rise of the rise of historical criticism in the 19th century, and form criticism in the 20th century, two centuries of Psalms scholarship largely moved away from this approach of reading the Psalms as a book. Prior to Gunkel (1862-1932), historical critics set about the task of 'determining' the historical settings of the various psalms, often with a focus on the Maccabean period. As Childs humorously adduced, 'this move was basically unsuccessful. As if one could write the history of England on the basis of the Methodist hymn book!'[5] The form-critical method offered a refreshing twist, as Gunkel—who did not believe it possible to uncover anything about the original composers of the psalms—asserted that the main task of Psalms study should be to categorize the individual psalms according to genre, and to identify the *Sitz im Leben* from the cultic life of Israel that gave rise to each psalm. Although Gunkel's methodology had strengths—such as his development of genre study in the Psalter, and his reminder that much of Hebrew Psalmody did originate in a cult setting—he did not approach the book of Psalms as a well-ordered compilation. In fact, Gunkel bluntly wrote that,

> No internal ordering principle for the individual psalms has been transmitted for the whole. To be sure, sometimes related psalms stand together in the collection of the psalter... More commonly, however, no internal relationship can be discovered between neighboring psalms... What Goethe says ... about the inscription goes for the individual psalm as well: It 'has nothing behind it. It stands alone, and must tell you everything.'[6]

He has made his position clear!

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4 Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture* (Accordance electronic ed. Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 2006), n.p.

5 Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 509.

6 Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (trans. James D. Nogalski; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), p. 2. Although Gunkel was unable to finish this work before he died, he entrusted it Begrich who completed it in 1933; Nogalski translated it into English in 1998.

With the emergence of the canonical approach to biblical interpretation in the latter half of the 20th century, there has been a recovery of reading the Psalter as a single text, and this has tacitly shared Augustine's recognition that the book of Psalms *must* have an intentional arrangement, even if it is difficult to determine. No one in recent times provided a greater catalyst in the quest to uncover the purposeful arrangement of the Psalter than Gerald H. Wilson. The 1985 publication of his dissertation on *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* served to re-awaken scholarly interest in the Psalms as a book, and to spur on this new movement of Psalms study.[7] Wilson focused on the macrostructure of the Psalter as a whole, and many have followed in his wake who have built on his work, as well as applying his canonical method in the study of more microscopic clusters and key themes that bind the book of Psalms together. Zenger characterizes this approach as appreciating the study of the Psalms as individual texts for life-help in the various situations believers encounter, but also viewing the book of Psalms as 'a programmatic composition which is to be read, learned by heart, recited and contemplated as a coherent text.'[8] And so canonical interpreters study *both* the individual compositions in the Psalter, *as well as* the arrangement of the work as a whole.

Although other interpretive methodologies are of great value for the study of the Psalter, in what follows I will employ the canonical method to analyze the arrangement of the book of Psalms as a whole, finally arguing that it has a broadly eschatological shape. If the final shape of the Hebrew Psalter was formed in the crucible of Messianic angst, at a time when Israel had been repeatedly disappointed in its wait for a king like David, and so began to look ahead for *the king* to come and fulfil the eschatological hopes of God's people, this ethos was infused into the arrangement of the book itself. I will build this argument in three parts. The brief but foundational Part I, the obvious is stated: that the Psalter was formed in process and over time. Part II sets out the mains lines of evidence which suggest an intentional shape for the book, where I notice with Wilson and others that the Psalter was not haphazardly put together, but was compiled with care and purpose. This all sets the stage for Part III, in which our general observations will be interpreted, and the conclusion reached that eschatological messianic angst best explains the final shape of the Hebrew Psalter. Finally, I offer some words of application to the Christian life. It is my hope that the reader is led to a greater understanding of the

7 One thinks of the Society of Biblical Literature Psalms Project, with the meetings and publications which have sprung from it.

8 Erich Zenger, 'New Approaches to the Study of the Psalms', *PIBA*, 17 (1994), 54.

Psalms, and a deeper worship of the one who ultimately shaped their final form.

I. TOWARD A FINAL FORM: THE HEBREW PSALTER IN CANONICAL PROCESS

As we begin our study it is important to state what should be obvious, that the book of Psalms was not originally written as a single composition. In fact, the Psalter makes this claim for itself, with the superscription of Psalm 90 suggesting Mosaic authorship, and the content of Psalm 137 clearly pointing to a setting from the Babylonian exile, 850 years after Moses and the exodus. Thus, as the rest of the Hebrew Bible was undergoing its composition, compiling, and editing in stages,[9] so was the book of Psalms. In light of this, Waltke observes that while each psalm does have an original compositional setting, its later use was adapted for a new setting, and its final redaction into the Hebrew Psalter as it now stands also bears editorial fingerprints, before its use in the New Testament offers a fourth interpretive horizon.[10] For Waltke, the intention of the developing text of the Psalter 'became deeper and clearer as the parameters of the canon were expanded. Just as redemption itself has a progressive history, so also older texts in the canon underwent a correlative progressive perception of meaning as they became part of a growing canonical literature.'[11] In short, God was the author of the book of Psalms through each stage of its development.[12] If times changed as the psalms continued to be gathered, the Psalter reflected these changes through its various stages and toward its final form; the individual psalms would have been

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9 Waltke and O'Connor distinguish four distinct stages in the editing of the Hebrew Bible: 'from the time of composition to 400 B.C.E., from 400 B.C.E. to cf. 100 C.E., from 100 C.E. to 1000, and from 1000 to the present' Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), p. 15. According to these authors, the text was standardized during the third period.

10 See Bruce K. Waltke, 'A Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms', in *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg*, ed. by John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), p. 9.

11 Ibid., pp. 6-7.

12 Seybold uses the helpful language of 'growth rings' to describe this process. See Klaus Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms* (trans. R. Graeme Dunphy; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990), p. 14. In fact, his whole discussion of the developing shape of the Psalter is worth reading. See ibid., pp. 14-28.

reappropriated for a new context and the message of the new 'whole' was now greater than the sum of its parts.[13]

II. SHAPING THE FINAL FORM: EVIDENCE OF INTENTIONALITY IN THE EDITING OF THE HEBREW PSALTER

A popular analogy for the book of Psalms is that of a hymn book. Craigie adopts this analogy and then argues that although word linkages are clearly present between psalms in the Psalter, it is also possible that there is no overall structure to the book of Psalms.[14] In other words, just as hymn books are not meant to be read consecutively, neither is the book of Psalms. However, if we can discover evidence of intentionality in the editing of the Hebrew Psalter, the hymn book analogy falls short, and it is legitimate to look for an editorial theme behind the Psalms as a book.[15] As this section unfolds we will begin by looking at evidence from Israel's neighbours, before we move to consider the superscriptions, postscripts, and doxologies in the Hebrew Psalter itself. We will then look for evidence of earlier and later collections within the Hebrew Psalter, before observing key themes which occur at the 'seams' between the books.

1. Evidence from Israel's neighbours

At the outset we can summarize Wilson's findings, that the Sumerian Temple Hymns (2334-2270 BCE) and the twenty-two tablets containing 'catalogues of hymnic incipits', which range in date from Ur III to the neo-Babylonian period (2112-639 BCE), both display evidence of intentionality in shaping their hymnic collections. Further, these hymns maintained their superscriptions, even when they were incorporated into later contexts in which those superscriptions were no longer relevant.[16] Since Israel's neighbours adapted older poems into intentionally shaped new contexts, the possibility is left open that this literary practice could have been adopted by Israel as well.

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[13] See Waltke, 'A Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms', pp. 9-10.

[14] See Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), p. 30.

[15] Wilson notes that apart from seven Qumran Psalms manuscripts (of 39 found at Qumran), the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Aramaic versions of the Psalter follow the Masoretic Text's structure. See Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS, 76; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), pp. 64-5; 'The Shape of the Book of Psalms', *Interpretation* 46.2 (1992), 129. However, a critic could reply that this is simply due to a common *Vorlage*.

[16] For a full discussion of these two bodies of literature, see Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, pp. 13-61.

2. Evidence from superscriptions, postscripts, and doxologies

Moving back to the Hebrew Psalter, the superscriptions are an important item to consider.[17] Wilson helpfully summarizes that these record author, genre, manner of performance, and instrumentation (p. 139). Whereas the Psalter's lone postscript of Psalm 72:20 offers a statement of organizational intent, the superscriptions refer only to the individual psalms they introduce, and by the time of the Psalter's editorial arrangement the superscriptions had become fixed parts of their compositions (pp. 139-45). Wilson notes that in books 1-3 of the Psalter (Pss 1-89), authorship is of primary importance, with David dominating book 1 (Pss 3-41, with Pss 1-2 remaining untitled). In books 2 and 3, David is still cited as an author, and other authors are noted as well (pp. 155-6). This changes entirely after the end of book 3: whereas the first 89 Psalms contain 83 attributions of authorship, the final 61 exhibit only 19! This does not mean authorship is unimportant in the final two books of the psalms, though, as Davidic psalms are often grouped together, and only Moses (Ps. 90) and Solomon (Ps. 72) are claimed as additional authors in this group (pp. 155-6). Finally, one notices that these authorship divisions occur at the 'seams' between the books. In other words, changes in author are seen at the transition point between books (pp. 157-8).

With regard to the genre classifications in the psalm headings, Wilson notes that they never occur together in the same superscription, that genre is not a primary editorial principle for the Psalter, and that outside of the 'Ascent Psalms', a given genre is never clustered completely together (pp. 158-62). Wilson observes further that, this is in stark contrast to the Babylonian catalogues of hymnic incipits, which are organized primarily around genre (p. 143). Further to this, the Psalter also contains four clear doxologies which serve to conclude the first four books, and then five entire psalms of doxology as the climax to book 5 (p. 183).[18] These features are again clear signs that an editorial hand worked to shape at least the general contours of the Psalter.

3. Evidence of Earlier and Later Collections

Wilson continues by observing that earlier and later collections within the Psalter seem to be exposed with careful observation. Specifically, books 1-3 seem to be early and books 4-5 seem to have been compiled and

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[17] This section is drawn largely from ibid., pp. 139-87. Page numbers are given in parentheses.

[18] See Pss 41:14; 72:19; 89:53; 106:48; 146-150. Note that since the superscriptions are identified as verse 1 of the psalms in the Hebrew Psalter, these verse references may differ slightly from those found in English Bibles.

added later.[19] For example, the presence of a Davidic postscript attached to a psalm that claims Solomonic authorship (cf. Ps. 72:1, 20), shows on the one hand that it was meant to end a block of material, namely, books 1 and 2. The fact that other Davidic psalms, even another prayer of David (cf. Pss 72:20; 86:1), occur after this postscript, point on the other hand in the direction of books 1 and 2 as an early collection to which the latter books were added.[20] Wilson notes further that collections such as the psalms of ascents, the psalms of the Sons of Korah, the '*YHWH* reigns' psalms, and the hallelujah psalms, all point to the existence of smaller collections of psalms that were in turn gathered to form the larger collection.[21] Therefore, the final form of the Hebrew Psalter is not a completely new arrangement by a single editor, but at least partly a compiling of earlier collections that were shaped by previous editors.[22] In order to uncover the editorial intentionality of the final editors, then, a look at the so-called 'seams' between the books will be a key interpretive factor, as this is where editorial activity should be most evident.[23] Waltke agrees, but notes that the presence of the so-called 'Elohistic Psalter,' stretching across one of these seams, is also significant.[24] It is well-known that in Psalms 1-41 and Psalms 84-150, *YHWH* occurs 584 times and *Elohim* 94 times, while in Psalms 42-83, *YHWH* occurs 45 times and *Elohim*, 210.[25] No consensus has been reached to explain the pattern of this portion of the Psalms, but we do notice the presence of the phenomenon.[26] With regard to earlier

[19] See Gerald H. Wilson, 'Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms.', in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, ed. by J. Clinton McCann (JSOTSS, 159; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), p. 42.

[20] See Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms, Volume I* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), p. 21. See also Franz Delitzsch, *Psalms*, p. 18. Seybold notes that the 'duplication of material' in the second collection of Davidic psalms (Pss 51-72) is evidence that it grew up separately, e.g. 'Ps 14=53; 40:13-17=70'. Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms*, p. 19.

[21] See Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 5.

[22] See ibid.

[23] See ibid.; Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), pp. 883-4.

[24] See ibid.

[25] See ibid.

[26] Mitchell's hypothesis in this regard is that, 'Israel in the initial period up until the eschatological conflict are estranged from God and under his judgment and wrath. Similarly, the predominance of *Yhwh* after the Elohistic Psalter might suggest that he is favourable to them in the period after the death of the king' Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, pp. 299-300. However, since the

collections of psalms, Waltke explains further that the 'notice in 2 Chronicles 29:30 suggests that two collections, "the words of David" (cf. Pss 3-41 except 33) and "the words of Asaph" (Pss 50, 73-83), existed in Hezekiah's time. Psalms by the sons of Korah (Pss 42-49, 84-88 but not 86) probably constituted another collection.'[27] Again, these are clear signs of editorial arrangement, even before the Psalter took its final shape.

4. Evidence between the Books: Kingship and Wisdom at the Seams

When the so-called 'seams' of the Psalter, the points at which the books meet, are analyzed, patterns emerge which also indicate editorial intentionality. Specifically, Wilson has noted that the theme of kingship occurs at the beginning of the Psalms proper, and the end of books 2 and 3 (Pss 2, 72, and 89), with the absence of a royal psalm in Psalm 41 best explained by book 1's early combination with book 2.[28] Childs agrees and adds that since no ancient groupings of royal psalms have been preserved, but rather, they are scattered throughout the Psalter, this hints that they have been re-appropriated, with a new understanding for a new situation.[29] But it is also significant to note that sapiential psalms occur at the seams of books 4 and 5, and at other key junctures in the Psalter, as Psalms 1, 73, 90, 107, and 144-146 are all wisdom-tinged psalms.[30] Kingship and wisdom, then, are scattered throughout the book of Psalms, and also found at prominent places within it.

III. THE MESSAGE OF THE FINAL FORM: THE ESCHATOLOGICAL SHAPE OF THE HEBREW PSALTER

At this point we are able take our study to the next step: if the Hebrew Psalter *does* bear evidence of editorial intentionality, is there an agenda behind its final shape? Most concede a general shape to the Psalter, with the dual themes of the Torah of *YHWH* and the Anointed One of *YHWH*

Elohistic redaction ceases *prior* to the darkest portions of book 3 of the Psalter, I remain intrigued but not totally convinced by Mitchell's suggestions.

27 Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology*, p. 883.

28 See Gerald H. Wilson, 'The Structure of the Psalter', in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. by David Firth and Philip S. Johnston (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), pp. 233-4; Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology*, p. 884; Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, p. 208.

29 See Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, pp. 515-16.

30 See Wilson, 'The Structure of the Psalter', p. 234.

in Psalms 1-2 forming a 'gateway' into the work as a whole.[31] Further, the doxological climax of Psalms 146-150 is often seen as the Psalter's triumphant conclusion, with the five-book structure in between as a possible reflection of the shape of the Torah.[32] But beyond the generally accepted broad strucutre of the Psalms, should we be saying anything more specific?[33] In what follows I will critically interact with various answers set forth within this field of study, and argue that an eschatological agenda best explains the final shape of the book of Psalms.

[31] An example of 'gateway' language to describe Psalms 1 and 2 can be found, for example, in J. Glen Taylor, 'Psalms 1 and 2: A Gateway into the Psalter and Messianic Images for the Restoration of David's Dynasty', in *Interpreting the Psalms for Teaching and Preaching*, ed. by Herbert W. Bateman and D. Brent Sandy (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2010), pp. 47-62. For other arguments in favour of Psalms 1-2 as an introduction to the work as a whole, see also Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology*, p. 884; P. D. Miller, 'The Beginning of the Psalter', in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, ed. by J. Clinton McCann (JSOTSS, 159; Sheffield Academic, 1993), p. 88. Alternatively, Wilson views Psalm 1 as the lone introduction to the Psalter, with Psalm 2 as the first in Book 2. See Wilson, 'The Shape of the Book of Psalms', p. 133.

[32] In fact, Seybold notes that the length of the Hebrew Psalter even roughly equals that of Genesis. See Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms*, pp. 16-17. This is not to argue for one-to-one correspondence between the Psalm books and their corresponding book in the Torah, but simply to note the existence of a five-book structure.

[33] In addition to the more detailed work I will outline in what follows, Brueggemann argues more broadly that the Psalter is intentionally 'bounded by obedience and praise', with a Psalm that summons Israel to Torah-obedience at its head, and a self-forgetful, Godward note of praise to conclude it. He also sees Psalm 73 as a key 'canonical marker' at the mid-way point between the Psalms, with its emphasis on the believer's struggle and new-found hope in eternal realities, as well as the reiteration of the importance of Torah piety from Psalm 1. See Walter Brueggemann, 'Bounded by Obedience and Praise: The Psalms as Canon', *JSOT* 50 (1991), 63-92; 'Psalm 73 as a Canonical Marker', *JSOT* 72 (1996), 45-56. Another author of note is Balentine, who sees Pss 3-89 as displaying a crisis of the Torah-piety that was set forth in Ps. 1, and book 5 picking up on that theme again, with Psalm 119 as central, with the Davidic monarchy imaging God's reign from shore to shore (Pss 108-110; 138-144), and with praise to God throughout the cosmos sounding forever (Ps 145-150). See S.E. Balentine, 'The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period', in *After the Exile: Essays in Honour of Rex Mason*, ed. by J. Barton and D.J. Reimer (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996), pp. 134-5.

1. In Dialogue with Wilson: Is the Psalter Sapiential or Eschatological?

As the most significant recent catalyst for the study of the Psalms as a book, Wilson deserves the first word in our interaction with the dominant views from the field. For Wilson, Psalm 1 stands alone as a sapiential introduction to the Psalter, and is followed by book 1 proper. This first book begins with an echo of the Davidic covenant (Ps. 2:7-9; cf. 2 Sam. 7:14), and is followed by, 'a very Davidic group of psalms in which the proclamation of *YHWH's* special covenant with his king in Psalm 2 is matched by David's assurance of God's continued preservation in the presence of *YHWH*'.[34] The Solomonic Psalm 72 concludes the predominantly Davidic book 2 with a celebration of the king, and offers petitions for *YHWH* to bless him on the basis of the covenant. However, for Wilson the addition of book 3 adds a new, exilic perspective, as the Davidic covenant is viewed as being in the dim past and the covenant now broken, failed. After the bleak Psalm 88, the hope of the concluding Psalm 89 is that *YHWH* will remember his covenant and uphold the descendants of David. For Wilson book 4 of the Psalter answers the problem of the apparent failure of the Davidic covenant, as it begins with a psalm of Moses, showing that the covenant stretches back before the monarchy, and in fact to the first 'wandering' of God's people, which itself would end with the fulfilment of *YHWH's* promises. Wilson refers to book 4 as the editorial heart of the Psalter, with its '*YHWH* reigns psalms' communicating the message that *YHWH* reigns even if David does not. Finally, book 5 is said to stand as an answer to the pleas of the exiles in Psalm 106, with a message of trusting in *YHWH* alone, and with David as a model of petition and praise. This attitude of trust in *YHWH* will result in obedience to the Torah. The Psalter is then climaxed with a doxological refrain that acts as its conclusion (Pss 146-50). For Wilson, then, books 1-3 are primarily concerned with the Davidic King, and books 4-5 have a much greater emphasis on wisdom and personal approach to *YHWH*, as even the Davidic Psalms in these later books set him forth as an example for the individual to follow. Although Wilson recognizes that royal psalms are found at the seams of the early books of the Psalter, and his later work left more room for an eschatological rereading of them, he viewed the wisdom psalms at the beginning of the Psalter and at the seams of the later books as evidence of a primarily sapiential agenda for those who gave the Psalter its final shape.[35]

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[34] Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, p. 210. Much of what follows summarizes ibid., pp. 209-28.

[35] See Wilson, 'The Structure of the Psalter', pp. 233-4; David M. Howard Jr., 'The Psalms and Current Study', in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and*

Wilson's groundbreaking work on the narrative structure of the Psalter certainly has a lot to commend to it; I largely agree with him and will not restate my own competing narrative reading. Instead, in what follows I will critically interact with some points in Wilson's treatment that warrant reconsideration. Most significantly, while Wilson's broad-strokes explanation of the Psalter has great value, I disagree with his language of a failed Davidic covenant, which prompted a sapiential 'final edit' to the book of Psalms. Whereas Wilson thought of the Davidic covenant as failed in book 3 and therefore fading into the background in books 4 and 5, the structure of the Psalter speaks to a *temporary* cessation of the house of David in the vein of Deuteronomy 30:1-10, along with that same passage's hope of a future restoration. In other words, the shape of the Hebrew Psalter is forward-looking, and not defeatist. The editors experienced an angst for *YHWH* to work, but they were not worried about whether he would be faithful, and faithful through the very chanel he had promised to use, namely, the Davidic king. In other words, the presence of royal psalms throughout the Psalter and the Davidic clusters in the latter books, have not been adequately explained by Wilson. I will speak to this further in what follows, but for now we can note with Howard that since the royal, Davidic Psalm 144 is linked to Psalm 145 which emphasizes *YHWH's* kingship, interpreters must take this as a sign that the earthly expression of *YHWH's* reign was clearly meant to be the Davidic king. Therefore, both earthly *and* heavenly expressions of *YHWH's* kingdom stand together as messages of hope at the end *and* the beginning (Ps. 2) of the book of Psalms.[36] To be fair, Wilson himself argues that since the lament psalms are clustered more densely at the beginning of the Psalter, and those of praise and thanksgiving toward the end, this indicates that we live in a world of suffering and pain, but suffering and pain are not God's final word.[37] But instead of moving to a focus on wisdom for the individual, the Psalter's final editors leaned heavily on the promises of *YHWH*, including the Davidic covenant, and shaped the collection of psalms to anticipate a faithful outcome!

Next, in contrast to Wilson's sapiential interpretation of book 5, the eschatological note must be seen as primary, even if the wisdom-theme is also present and important. Psalm 107 begins this final book with thanksgiving. In answer to the plea at the end of Psalm 106, *YHWH's* mercy does last forever, as this psalm celebrates a dispersed people's return from

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Approaches, ed. by David G. Firth and Philip Johnston (Leicester: Apollos, 2005), pp. 25-7.

36 See ibid., pp. 26-7.

37 See Wilson, 'The Structure of the Psalter', p. 246.

exile.[38] Significant still, this grouping contains two clusters of Davidic Psalms (108-10; 138-45), a likely allusion to an ideal David to come, rather than a primarily sapiential example for the individual to follow.[39] Dempster adds that Psalms 135-7 end with the lament of the exiles who wish for the destruction of their enemies.[40] However, exile is not the final word of the Psalter, because the Davidic Psalms 138-44 provide an answer to this lament, namely, David.[41] Finally, the Psalter ends on a note of praise, as in the words of Bruggemann, Psalm 150 is 'a determined, enthusiastic, uninterrupted, relentless, unrelieved summons which will not be content until all creatures, all of life, are 'ready and willing' to participate in an unending song of praise that is sung without reserve or qualification.'[42] The eschatological narrative reading of the psalter certainly makes sense in light of the data.

2. In Dialogue with Whybray: Is the Psalter Shapeless or Eschatological?

We have already noted that many contemporary scholars do not believe the book of Psalms has a discernible shape, but the only book-length critique of the canonical approach to the Hebrew Psalter has come from Whybray.[43] His ultimate conclusion that 'any editorial activity in the Psalter was sporadic', has certainly provided a helpful challenge to the field. However, his work has failed at several points. Most foundationally, and with Grant, I suggest that Whybray has failed to explain adequately the clear introduction (Pss 1-2), conclusion (Pss 146-50), and five book structure of the Psalms.[44] In addition to Grant's analysis, I add that Whybray has also failed to explain adequately the clearly exilic nature of book 3, along with the presence of royal psalms in prominent places and scattered

38 See Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Leicester; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2003), p. 200.

39 In saying this, I do not deny that there is an element of double duty that these psalms play, with David as *both* an example to follow, *and* a signpost that points to the one who will come in his lineage. But whereas Wilson would have seen the former as primary, I see the latter as most significant in the minds of the second temple reader and editor. See Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew* Psalter, pp. 220-1.

40 See Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, pp. 201-2.

41 See ibid.

42 Brueggemann, 'Bounded by Obedience and Praise', p. 67.

43 See R. N. Whybray, *Reading the Psalms as a Book* (JSOTSS, 222; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

44 See Grant, *The King as Exemplar*, p. 18.

throughout, especially in light of the fact that the book of Psalms received its final redaction when Israel had no king.[45] If there is some truth to Whybray's challenge to canonical interpreters, a more balanced approach has come from a canonical interpreter, as Mays reminds us that it may not be possible to catalogue *every* psalm in terms of an intentional scheme, but rather, we must look for overarching organizing patterns.[46] This point is especially important in light of our observation that the final form of the Hebrew Psalter was at least partly made up of pre-existing collections.

3. In Dialogue with Mitchell: Is the Eschatological Shape of the Psalter Seen in the Minute Details or Mostly in the Broad Strokes?

Many other than myself have seen an eschatological, rather than a sapiential agenda in the editing of the Hebrew Psalter—Howard, Childs, and Brennan to name a few—but no one has developed the idea more thoroughly than Mitchell.[47] As he charts his course, he notes that the Psalter was shaped within an eschatologically conscious milieu when the house of David was in decline, and therefore a time of growing eschatological hope; that the figures to whom the psalms are attributed were regarded as future-predictive prophets in Biblical times; that certain psalms (e.g. 2; 72; 110) seem to be of an intrinsically 'ultimate' character in that they describe people or events in such glowing terms that they far exceed the reality of any historical king or battle; that the second-temple period's inclusion of royal psalms in the Psalter is evidence that the editor *intended* them to refer to a future messiah-king; and that the messianic psalms were placed in prominent positions in the Psalter as a deliberate means of having them 'infect' the interpretation of the whole.[48] He notes further that his hypothesis is in line with the eschatological interpretation of the Psalms found in Qumranic, New Testament, rabbinic, and patristic literature.[49] Although these are extremely insightful contributions to the field, I am not persuaded by the next step of his argument, that a specific eschatological programme from Zechariah 9-14 set the agenda for the Psalms of Asaph, the Psalms of Ascent, the Royal Psalms, and book 4 of

[45] To be fair, Whybray does see *some* eschatological elements in the royal psalms, but not in all of them, and he certainly speaks against any systematic redaction. See Whybray, *Reading the Psalms as a Book*, pp. 98-9.

[46] See James Luther Mays, 'The Question of Context in Psalm Interpretation', in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, ed. by J. Clinton McCann (JSOTSS, 159; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), p. 16.

[47] See Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, p. 88; Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, p. 518.

[48] See Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, pp. 82-8.

[49] See ibid., p. 298.

the Psalter. His mapping out of the specific stages of the eschaton according to the prophetic book, along with their supposed parallels in the shape of the Psalter, seem too forced to be persuasive. However, although he has not heeded the cautions of Whybray and Mays, and although his overall argument has not won widespread support, his groundwork on the eschatological shape of the Psalms is compelling and important. I will appreciatively interact with some of his ideas as I set forth two final clues in favour of an eschatological agenda behind the final shape of the book of Psalms: the milieu of its editors, and the presence of royal psalms.

4. 'Despite Our Distress, YHWH Will Intervene': The Eschatological Milleu of the Psalter's Final Editors

We have already noted with Mitchell that the period in which the Psalter received its final shape was characterized by eschatological hope. He specifies that at the end of the Babylonian exile, when Israel and the house of David were in decline, Biblical literature of this period tends to look for a sudden, dramatic divine intervention in history that will restore Israel's exalted position (cf. Ezek., Zech.; see also the deuterocanonical 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-82).[50] With Mitchell we can point out that it seems extremely logical that the final redactors of the Psalms would have shared this same concern.[51] In fact, this eschatological concern is also (arguably) reflected in the translation of the Psalter into Greek,[52] with the LXX's multiplication of Psalms attributed to David,[53] its consistent translation of *lamnaṣṣēaḥ* ('for the choir director') as *eis to telos* ('for the end'),[54] and its addition of references to various Old Testament prophets.[55] Further still, Wacholder

[50] See ibid., p. 10.

[51] See ibid.

[52] With Seybold I suggest that this translation took place some time in the 2nd or 3rd centuries BCE. See Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms*, p. 14.

[53] For a helpful discussion of this phenomenon, see Albert Pietersma, 'David in the Greek Psalms', *VT* 30.2 (1980), 213-26. He notes that it is sometimes difficult to determine whether the individual psalms 'became Davidic' before or after they were translated into Greek. See ibid., 224.

[54] This phenomenon occurs in all 55 superscriptions in which the word is found, from Pss 4 to 139. For example, see Taylor, 'Psalms 1 and 2', 58. Examples of converse opinions to mine on philological grounds are as follows: P.R. Ackroyd, 'נצח — εἰ̓ς τέλος', ExpT 80 (1969), 126; D. Winton Thomas, 'The Use of נצח As a Superlative in Hebrew', JSS 1.2 (1956), 106-9. In response, I would point out that although eis to telos may have been a valid translation choice for *lamnaṣṣēah*, does it not say something that this nuance was chosen?

[55] See references to Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Ps. 64 LXX [= Ps. 65 MT]) along with Haggai and Zechariah (Pss 145-148 LXX [=Ps. 146-ff MT]), which Wilson

believes that the reference to David in 11QPsalms[a] from Qumran is, 'an allusion to the eschatological descendant of Jesse expected at the End of Days',[56] which makes sense in light of the eschatological thought of the Qumran community. Since the LXX was most likely translated after the Hebrew Psalter received its final shape,[57] and since 11QPsalmsa was likely assembled a century or two later, the eschatological traces in these works do tell us something of the cultural milleu around the time the Psalter received its final shape.

5. Celebrating which King? The Eschatological, Messianic Reappropriation of the Royal and Davidic Psalms

Further still, in light of the absence of the monarchy at the time when the Hebrew Psalter received its final edit, one might question why Psalms that celebrate the king are present at all. One helpful answer has come from Grant, who views the placement of kingship psalms alongside of torah psalms as deliberate by the editors of the Hebrew Bible; since they intentionally reflected the image of a the Torah-observing king of Deuteronomy 17:14-20, the final editor's presentation of kingship was intentionally speaking to the people's eschatological image of a restored Davidic king.[58] Contrary to the very imperfect presentation of the king in the Deuteronomistic history, then, the psalmists paint a picture of an ideal

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believes 'creates a prophetic dimension to the LXX Psalter that encourages even more an eschatological and messianic reading of David and the royal psalms.' Wilson, 'The Structure of the Psalter', p. 244. Admittedly, the question of eschatology in the LXX Psalter is a live one. Although it does not interact with the points I outline here, an argument in favour of an eschatological reading of the Hebrew Psalter but against a further eschatological/messianic agenda embedded into the Old Greek Psalter, see Claude E. Cox, 'Schaper's Eschatology Meets Kraus's Theology of the Psalms', in *The Old Greek Psalter*, ed. by Robert J.V. Hiebert, Peter J. Gentry, and Claude E. Cox (LHB/OTS, 332; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 289-311.

56 Ben Zion Wacholder, 'David's Eschatological Psalter 11QPsalms[a]', *HUCA* 59 (1988), 23. For further discussion of the relationship between Qumran and the MT Psalter, see Wilson, 'The Structure of the Psalter', p. 244.

57 This is in line with Mitchell's view, that the Masoretic Psalter received its final shape prior to the translation of the LXX, which exhibits too much dependence on the Masoretic Psalter to consider the latter anything but its *Vorlage*. See Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, pp. 16-17. For contrary assertions that the Masoretic Psalter received its final shape in the first century CE, see Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms*, p. 6; Gerald H. Wilson, 'A First Century C.E. Date for the Closing of the Book of Psalms?', *JBQ* 28 (2000), 102-110.

58 See Grant, *The King as Exemplar*, pp. 2-3.

Deuteronomic king to come. Waltke agrees, and expands on the way the royal psalms were recast for the new context in which they were edited:

> Israel draped the magnificent royal psalms as robes on each successive king, but generation after generation the shoulders of the reigning monarch proved too narrow and the robe slipped off to be draped on his successor. Finally, in the exile, Israel was left without a king and with a wardrobe of royal robes in their hymnody. On the basis of I AM's unconditional covenants to Abraham and David, the faithful know that Israel's history ends in triumph, not in tragedy. The prophets... envisioned a coming king who would fulfill the promise of these covenants... It was in that context, when Israel had no king, that the Psalter was edited with reference to the king. Accordingly, the editors of the Psalter must have resignified the Psalms from the historical king and draped them on the shoulders of the Messiah... In short, in light of the exile and the loss of kingship, the editors colored the entire Psalter with a messianic hue.[59]

This is further bolstered when we remember that the royal psalms were not only scattered throughout the Psalter, but were also placed in prominent places (e.g. Pss 2; 72). In light of this Dempster notes that books 1 and 2 end on a note of hope, as Psalm 72 speaks of the day when the Davidic 'son' will rule the earth, bring an end to injustice, renew nature, reign from sea to sea, whose enemies will lick the dust, kings will worship him (cf. Isa. 60:1-22), and all nations will be blessed in him (cf. Gen. 12:1-3).[60]

Finally, while I affirm with Grant that the royal psalms reflect the Deuteronomic ideal king, I add that the Davidic psalms reflect the David who is presented in the Deuteronomistic history: as a lamenter on the run from *YHWH's* enemies, as a repenter after the Bathsheba episode, as a flawed but forgiven and faithful king, but most of all, as the recipient of the covenant of 2 Samuel 7 with its promise that his seed will endure on the throne forever. And so Waltke's argument about the royal psalms applies to the 73 Davidic psalms as well, for they also colour the entire Psalter in a Messianic hue, serving as a constant reminder (from Pss 3-145!) of the promise that a king like David would come.

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[59] Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology*, p. 890. See also Richard P. Belcher, *The Messiah and the Psalms: Preaching Christ From All the Psalms* (Rearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Mentor, 2006), p. 123; Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, p. 87; Gerald H. Wilson, 'King, Messiah, and The Reign of God: Revisiting the Royal Psalms and the Shape of the Psalter', in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception*, ed. by Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller (SVT, 99; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), pp 400-1; Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament As Scripture*, pp. 516-7.

[60] See Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, p. 196.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have seen that the Hebrew Psalter was put together in process and over time, and that it bears evidence of intentionality in its shaping. I have argued that an eschatological messianic angst best explains what lies behind that final shape, especially in light of the milieu in which the Psalter received its final edit, and the presence and prominence of royal and Davidic psalms within it. I now close with a few practical reflections in light of our findings.

First, I hope that this study has equipped Christians to use the Psalter in personal and corporate worship, not as a haphazardly arranged hymn book, but as a text for meditation that is a well-structured whole. This may mean paying attention to the narrative context of a given psalm, as the dark Psalm 88 is followed by the more hopeful lament of Psalm 89, which after its superscription proclaims, 'I will sing of the *hesed* of *YHWH* forever,' and as both of these psalms are found in the exilic book 3. That the phrase 'How long, O YHWH' occurs near the end of Psalm 89, also leads the reader into book 4 and the declaration from the lips of Moses that *Elohim Adonai* has been a dwelling place for his people in generation after generation, and that a thousand years (of exile?) is like a day in the eyes of their God.

Next, meditation, praying, and singing of the early laments in the Psalter may be done with the knowledge that praise will be the final word for the Christian, as it is in the book of Psalms. However, the trajectory toward this goal is not a consistently 'onward and upward' one, but rather, reflects the ups and downs of the real life of God's people as they live in a fallen world. As Calvin likened the Psalter to 'an anatomy of all the parts of the soul,'[61] and as the Apostle Paul reminded Christians to remember thanksgiving along with supplication in the midst of worry-inducing events (cf. Phil. 4:6), the book of Psalms is a great aid to guide believers in this full-orbed prayer life, but only as they read it like a book and not a pick-and-choose hymnal![62] If the general movement in the Psalter is from lament to praise, the meandering course that leads to this goal also leads the reader to pray diverse prayers.

Most importantly, I hope this study has helped the reader to better understand the New Testament's use of the book of Psalms with reference

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[61] John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries (Complete)* (trans. John King; Accordance electronic ed. Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1847), n.p.

[62] To be fair, although Whybray argues against a purposeful redaction of the Psalter, he also argues in favour of private consecutive reading of the Psalms for pragmatic purposes, but not because they were necessarily *meant* to be read this way. See Whybray, *Reading the Psalms as a Book*, p. 124.

to Jesus. It is well known that the Psalter is second only to Isaiah as the most quoted Old Testament book by the authors of the New Testament,[63] and sometimes these connections seem baffling to Christians. It is possible that attention to the context of a passage in the Psalter may shed light on its use in the New Testament. A reminder of the eschatological milieu in which the Psalter received its final edit is also a helpful point to remember—leading up to and in the first century, God's people were *looking* for a dramatic turn of events from the hand of their faithful God. Finally, a reading of the Davidic and royal psalms in light of the covenant of 2 Samuel 7, and in light of the failures and subsequent demise of David's successors, further explains the messianic reappropriation of these psalms in the New Testament, as Jesus was being identified as the hoped-for Davidic king. To cite a broad example, Waltke points out that although the royal dimension of the lament psalms had been lost in the intertestamental period, Jesus corrects this and uses them to affirm the Old Testament teaching of a suffering Messiah.[64] We could add that the structure of the Psalter itself would have hinted at this, for as there is movement in the psalms from lament to praise, and as Psalms 146-50 conclude on a note of celebrative worship, so would the life of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He was the ultimate lamenter, the one who deserved so much more, but who *chose* to take on a crucifixion-lament that would end in resurrection-exultation. Indeed, he did this in order to purchase a people out of lament and into praise. From a New Testament perspective, the book of David has become the book of David's greater son, and finally a book for all those who trust in this Messiah for salvation. Praise YHWH!

63 Waltke notes that, 'Of the 283 direct quotes from the Old Testament in the New Testament, 116 (41 percent) are from the Psalter.' Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology*, p. 892.

64 See Waltke, 'A Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms', pp. 15-16.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUS

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Christians affirm that Jesus is fully divine and also fully human[1]. He is fully divine as the eternal Son, who along with the Father and the Spirit, constitute from all eternity the Holy Trinity. Today in the sceptical West and in the Islamic world many hesitate to attribute deity to Jesus. In contrast, during the early Christian centuries, some of his followers found it difficult to convince others and sometimes even themselves that Jesus is truly human.

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In affirming the full divinity and the full humanity of Jesus, orthodox Christians follow the narrative of the incarnation as it is spelt out poetically by Paul in Philippians 2:6-11. 'Christ Jesus,' the apostle tells us is 'in very nature God' (v. 6). Yet in becoming incarnate, he was 'made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!' (vv. 7-8). In becoming human, he does not cease to be 'in very nature God'. But during his life on earth he consistently refused to use his equality with God to his own advantage, enabling him to take 'the very nature of a servant' (v. 7), thus fulfilling the role of the Servant of the Lord prophesied in Isaiah.[2] The mystery of the incarnation is that at one and the same time Jesus is 'in very nature God' while possessing 'the very nature of a servant'.

As a servant, Jesus was totally dependent on his Father. His life was motivated by faith and obedience. His faith and obedience were human expressions. Jesus lived a genuinely human life. As he faced the challenges of living in a fallen world he chose not to exercise his divine prerogatives or call upon the resources his divine attributes as the Son of God. Rather he lived as a believer in God. The writer to the Hebrews affirms that Jesus can 'empathise with our weaknesses' precisely because he 'has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin' (Heb. 4:15).

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1 This article is the revised text of a lecture given on 30 April, 2013, at Taylor University, IN, USA.

2 Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12.

The humanity of Jesus is fully acknowledged in the Gospels. Although miraculously conceived,[3] his birth was natural. His childhood is not covered in detail. What we know is told us by Luke. He reports that when Jesus was a week old ('on the eighth day') he was circumcised, and roughly five weeks later his parents presented him to the Lord in the temple.[4] Luke goes on to summarise Jesus' infancy and childhood as follows: 'And the child grew and became strong; he was full of wisdom and the grace [i.e. blessing] of God was upon him.'[5] Like all healthy children, Jesus grew physically and psychologically. Luke's next reference to him is when he was twelve years of age, again visiting the temple with his parents, this time during Passover.[6] During that visit to the Temple, Jesus fulfils the role of a learner, first hearing and then asking questions of the rabbis. It is clear that even at this early age he exhibited an unusually high degree of spirituality. Luke informs us that the rabbis were 'amazed' and his parents were 'astonished' at the depth and extent of his understanding. Jesus' response to his remonstrating parents'—'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house'—reveals an early consciousness of his unique calling. There is a subtle distinction in the narrative between 'your father' in Mary's query and 'my Father' in Jesus' reply.[7] Luke concludes his account of that event marking Jesus' transition into adolescence in similar terms to those he used of his childhood development: 'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.'[8] Perhaps it is not surprising that Luke, a medical doctor, should pay special attention to the growth and development of Jesus as a child and teenager. Significantly in both references he stresses spiritual as well as physical growth.

Thereafter the four Gospels are silent until the baptism of Jesus at the age of thirty[9] apart from incidentally informing us that he worked as a carpenter.[10] But we can be certain that his spiritual growth and development continued during these eighteen years. The writer to the Hebrews assures us that in his life on earth, 'even though Jesus was God's Son'

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3 Luke 1:35.

4 Luke 2:21-23; cf. Lev 12:3-4.

5 Luke 2:40.

6 Luke may be describing the ceremony in which Jewish boys in their early teens are recognised as responsible members of the religious community—i.e. they become a 'son of the commandment' (*Bar Mitzvah*).

7 Luke 2:41-50.

8 Luke 2:52; cf. 2:40.

9 Luke 3:23

10 Mark 6:3 / Matt. 13:55. Geza Vermes argues that 'carpenter' here is better understood as an honorific accorded to a local sage. (*Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* [London: SCM, 1983], pp. 20-2).

he prayed to God and was heard 'because he was humble and devoted.'[11] The anonymous writer reiterates Paul's stress in Philippians 2:8 on Jesus' obedience to God. While in both Philippians and Hebrews the specific context of his obedience is suffering and death, it is reasonable to believe that obedience to the will of God was a constant feature of Jesus' life both before and throughout his public ministry.

While the New Testament affirms the sinlessness of Jesus,[12] it also testifies to God sending his own Son 'in the likeness of sinful flesh,'[13] i.e. 'in the likeness of sinful humanity' as the TNIV helpfully translates the phrase. Because Jesus 'came with a nature like our sinful nature,'[14] during his ministry he exhibited the physical, psychological and cognitive limitations inflicted on our humanity by the Fall. There is reference in John 4 to Jesus tiring after physical exertion. He met the Samaritan woman when he was sitting by the village well in Sychar resting from the hot midday sun during his journey on foot from Judea to Galilee.[15] Further, in John's Gospel there are instances of Jesus being subject to emotional distress. Facing the destructive power of death and the weeping of Mary of Bethany and her friends at the grave of Lazarus, we are told that Jesus 'was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.'[16] In another context John tells us Jesus 'was troubled in spirit'[17] as he announced to his disciples that one of them would betray him. In Gethsemane Jesus is afflicted with doubt and fear as he anticipates his horrific death as the sin-bearer.[18]

Even the social influence of Jesus and the extent of his conscious knowledge were limited during his 'state of humiliation'. Jesus chose to live within the limited powers of an ordinary human being rather than by divine omnipotence. When visiting Tyre we are told 'He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there'. 'But,' Mark goes on, 'he could not keep his presence a secret.'[19] He was genuinely 'amazed' at the faith of the centurion and he also was at the unbelief of people in his home town of Nazareth.[20] He declared that he did not know the day or the hour when the Son of Man will come in the clouds with great power and glory. 'No one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the

[11] Heb 5:7, GNB.
[12] 1 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; John 8:46.
[13] Rom. 8:3.
[14] Rom. 8:3, GNB.
[15] John 4:6.
[16] John 11:34.
[17] John 13:21.
[18] Matt. 26:26-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46
[19] Mark 7:24.
[20] Luke 7:9; Mark 6:6; cf. Matt. 13:58.

Father.'[21] In the Gospels we are confronted by the mystery of the incarnation: that the One who is omnipotent and omniscient, consciously, and pre-meditatively opted not to exercise his divine attributes and prerogatives, but rather to live within the parameters of human experience without, in so doing, acting in any way morally inconsistent with his divine nature. Thus he chose to be born as a helpless, vulnerable baby, to experience normal human development of body and mind from childhood into adolescence into manhood. So that when the time came to enter his public ministry he already knew he would be able to fulfil that ministry only if he lived in total dependence on the Father and the Spirit.[22]

This relationship with his Father and the Holy Spirit was the nerve centre of Jesus' spirituality. This becomes clear at his baptism in which all three persons of the Trinity were actively involved. The baptism of Jesus was both an act of identification and of dedication. In submitting to John's baptism of repentance 'when all the people were being baptised', Jesus identifies himself with us, numbering himself with the transgressors.[23] At the same time, in seeking the initiatory rite of baptism, Jesus was consecrating himself to the Messianic ministry which he had come into the world to fulfil. This spiritual dynamic of Father, Son and Spirit working together is manifested in the three key events that took place at the baptism of Jesus.

What are these three events? First, Jesus prays. Luke tells us it was 'as he was praying' that Jesus was baptised by John.[24] This is no surprise since the Gospels go on to highlight some seventeen references to Jesus' active prayer life.25 Second, the Spirit descends. 'The Holy Spirit descended

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21 Mark 13:32.

22 'Whatever the Son of God wrought in, by, or upon human nature, he did it by the Holy Ghost, who is His Spirit, as he is the Spirit of the Father.' John Owen, 'Pneumatologia', in *The Works of John Owen* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000 [1862]), vol. 3, p. 162.

23 Luke 3:21; Isa. 53:12.

24 Luke 3:21.

25 J. G. S. S. Thomson (The Praying Christ [London: Tyndale, 1959], p. 35) groups these references under four heads. (1) Jesus' prayers at the great events of his life: (a) his baptism (Luke 3:21); (b) the choice of the Twelve (Luke 6:12-13); (c) the confession of his messiahship at Caesaria Philippi (Luke 9:18); (d) the Transfiguration (Luke 9:29); (e) in Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46); (f) on the cross (Luke 23:46). (2) His prayers in the course of his ministry: (a) before the great conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities (Luke 5:16); (b) before giving the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1); (c) when the Greeks came to him (John 12:27-28); (d) the retiral after feeding the five thousand (Mark 6:46). (3) His prayers at his miracles: (a) healing the multitudes (Mark 1:35); (b)

on him in bodily form like a dove.'[26] Conceived by the Spirit in Mary's womb,[27] Jesus in his baptism received a new anointing in which he was given the fullness of the Spirit and power in order to fulfil his public ministry.[28] Third, the Father speaks: 'And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'[29] It is highly significant that these words of the Father echo two OT scriptures. The first phrase: 'This is my Son' resonates directly with the words 'You are my Son' recorded in Psalm 2 with reference to the ideal King of Israel. The second phrase: 'whom I love and with whom I am well pleased' reflects the description of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 42:1: 'my chosen one in whom I delight'.[30] It is important to note and to reflect on the striking paradox expressed in the voice from heaven. The ideal of kingship would be manifested in servanthood!

The same three features are also evident in the temptation of Jesus which immediately followed his baptism.[31] The tempter came to Jesus after he had fasted for forty days in the wilderness.[32] On several occasions in the NT, fasting is associated with prayer.[33] Although we are not explicitly told that Jesus was praying during his long fast, it is reasonable to assume that he spent much of the time in prayerful communion with his Father, reflecting on the commissioning he had just received in his baptism and anticipating the public ministry on which he was shortly to embark. As in the baptism, so in the temptation, the Holy Spirit is active.

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feeding the five thousand (Mark 6:41); (c) healing a deaf-mute (Mark 7:34); (d) raising Lazarus (John 11:41). (3) His prayers for others: (a) for the Eleven (John 17:6-19)' (b) for the whole church (John 17:20-26); (c) for those who nailed him to the cross (Luke 23:34); (d) for Peter (Luke 22:32).

26 Luke 3:22; cf. Mark 1:10; Matt. 3:16.

27 Luke 1:35.

28 Acts 10:38-39; cf. John 3:34.

29 Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; cf. Matt. 3:17.

30 James Denney reflects in the following way on this remarkable correlation between the heavenly voice and these two OT texts: 'Often He [Jesus] had steeped His thoughts in them [i.e. Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42], but at last, in this high hour of visitation by the living God, they spoke to Him with direct, identifying, appropriating power. It was His own figure, His own calling and destiny, that rose before Him in the ideal King of the Psalmist, and the lowly Servant of the Prophet; it was His inmost conviction and assurance from this hour that both ideals were to be fulfilled in Himself.' James Denney, *Jesus and the Gospel: Christianity Justified in the Mind of Christ*, (2nd edn; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), pp. 203-4.

31 Matt. 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1

32 Matt. 4:2; Luke 4:2.

33 Matt. 6:5-18; 17:21 (KJV); Acts 13:3; 14:23.

Luke tells us that 'Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness'.[34] Then, having concluded his account of the temptation, Luke segues to his narrative covering the beginning of Jesus' public ministry with these words: 'Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.'[35] The most marked difference in the divine assistance given to Jesus in his baptism from that given during his temptation is that in the latter there is no reference in the narrative to a voice coming from heaven. Nevertheless, it surely is significant that Jesus consistently counters the devil by quoting the Word of God. Furthermore, the devil's strategy in the three temptations was to scramble the heavenly baptismal message by tempting Jesus to rely on the first part ('You are my Son, whom I love' — i.e. on being the King in and through whom God's rule would be established and demonstrated on earth) to such an extent that he could avoid fulfilling the second part ('with you I am well pleased')—which, as we have seen, alludes to the Servant of the Lord on whom God puts his Spirit so that in faithfulness and meekness he may establish justice on earth. That is, Satan set out to persuade Jesus that he could be King without becoming a servant. In other words, his objective was to reverse the divine strategy and so negate it. But in all three temptations Jesus repulsed the devil's offensive by strongly affirming his servanthood in submitting to the words of his Father, words on which he may well have been meditating during these forty days.

Both the voice heard at his baptism and the scripture texts he resorted to when under the intense pressure of temptation, highlight Jesus' engagement with Scripture—an engagement which lay at the core of his spirituality while on earth, and an engagement that I wish to make the focus of this article. I do not intend to neglect Jesus' practice of prayer and his infilling with the Holy Spirit for, as we have seen, they also were key factors in his spirituality and, indeed, as we shall see, both greatly facilitated his engagement with the Word of God.

JESUS AND THE SCRIPTURES

Jesus, as we have noted, opted to live his human life on earth within the parameters set by his humanity rather than drawing upon his divine resources as the Son of God. During the covenant renewal ceremony on the Plains of Moab with the Israelites about to enter the promised land, Moses makes a basic distinction between the divine and human. 'The secret things belong to the Lord our God,' he tells the people, 'but the

34 Luke 4:1.

35 Luke 4:14.

things revealed belong to us.'[36] This dissimilarity helps us to understand the spiritual dynamic of the earthly life of Jesus. Because he was genuinely human he shut out the secret knowledge belonging to his divine existence within the Trinity, instead choosing to live by revelation. Furthermore, because he was living as our representative, his task was to 'fully obey the Lord'.[37] Not only was he called to fulfil his mission without recourse to his own divine resources as the Son of God, but as a human being he was committing himself to the highest standard of human motivation and conduct. In other words, in his humanity he was called to be as morally perfect as he was in his deity from all eternity, along with the Father and with the Spirit,

This dependence of Jesus on revelation rather than on omniscience helps us to understand his attachment to the Scriptures both in terms of articulating his message and of understanding his mission. I will now explore in more detail, insofar as the Gospels make this possible, the role of the Scriptures in the experience of Jesus with regard to both the articulation of his message and his understanding of his mission. In other words, we will first look at Jesus as proclaimer, and then go on to explore Jesus as believer.

JESUS AS PROCLAIMER

'What I have heard from him I tell the world'[38] is Jesus' own summary of the origin of the teaching that both astonished and unsettled his contemporaries and has also fascinated and captivated millions of his followers down through two millennia. Yet the Gospels record only three examples of what the Father specifically said in the presence of Jesus. In the first two of these—the heavenly voice at Jesus' baptism and the voice from the cloud at his transfiguration—the message is, in effect, more or less directly taken from the Scriptures.[39] The third occasion, which is recorded in John 12, took place early in Jesus' final week and follows his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Jesus is anticipating his death, now only hours away, and is deeply apprehensive. He momentarily recoils in horror from the prospect: 'Now is my heart troubled—and what shall I say? Shall I say, "Father, do not let this hour come upon me? But that is why I came—so that I may go through this hour of suffering. Father, bring glory to your name!"' The evangelist continues the narrative: 'Then a voice spoke from heaven, "I have brought glory to it, and I will do so again." The crowd standing there

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36 Deut. 29:29.
37 Deut. 28:1.
38 John 8:26.
39 Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22; Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35.

heard the voice, and some of them said it was thunder, while others said, "An angel spoke to him!" But Jesus said to them, "It was not for my sake that this voice spoke, but for yours."'[40] As at the baptism, the divine words are spoken by 'a voice from heaven.' It is surely significant that on this occasion there is again an allusion to a key Old Testament theme which is articulated in texts such as the following:

- 'I will gain glory for myself through Pharoah and all his army ' (Exod. 14:4 (cf vv. 17, 18) recording Yahweh's victory over Egypt).

- 'You have gained glory for yourself' ('You are glorified', NRSV), says the prophet.' (Isa. 26:15, part of a song celebrating God's ultimate victory over the forces of evil).

- 'Thus says the Lord God: I am against you, O Sidon, and I will gain glory in your midst.' (Ezek. 28:21, NRSV; cf. Ezek. 39:13; Hag. 1:8; 1 Sam. 2:30; Ps. 22:23, etc.).

Thus, in all three instances in the Gospels where God literally speaks to Jesus the words spoken are readily identifiable with texts from the OT. This substantial identification between the voice of God and the Scriptures ought not to surprise us. For, as Kevin Vanhoozer claims, writing serves as a medium of communication every bit as much as speaking.[41] This would have been particularly so in the case of Jesus who was given without limit the Spirit who had originally inspired the ancient writers and who animates their texts for later readers and hearers.[42] Telford Work contends that much of what Jesus speaks is Scripture, in the form of direct quotations and allusions.[43] Obviously Jesus does more than recite ancient texts. He also fulfils and radicalises them.[44] He renders the rituals of the Jerusalem temple operationally obsolete along with the extensive Scrip-

40 John 12:27-30, GNB.

41 'Triune Discourse: Theological Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks (Part 2)', in *Trinitarian Theology for the Church: Scripture, Community, Worship*, ed. by D. J. Treier and D. Lauber (Downers Grove, IL / Nottingham, UK: InterVarsity Press, 2009), p. 70.

42 John 3:34; Heb. 3:7.

43 *Living and Active: Scripture in the Economy of Salvation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 85.

44 'Jesus commonly speaks biblical language as his own words. Where he reinterprets these words, he does so to intensify rather than dilute them' (op. cit., p. 85).

ture materials relating to their use.[45] Further, in fulfilling the OT Scriptures Jesus radicalises them. This is very clear in the 'six antitheses' which form part of the Sermon on the Mount.[46] In the case of the first antithesis relating to the commandment 'You shall not murder,' Jesus fulfils it by radically deepening it (v. 22a), widening it (v. 22b) and positivizing it (vv. 23-24).

The substantial identification between the *ipsissima verba* of the Father in the three cases noted and specific OT Scriptures may suggest that behind the various assertions of Jesus that he hears from the Father, recorded in the Fourth Gospel, lies Jesus' intimate and prayerful engagement with Scripture.[47] Of course, some or all of these 'hearings' on the part of Jesus may have been received by direct revelation. But the consistency of three hearings of the Father's *ipsissima verba* echoing OT Scripture indicate the possibility that the hearings recorded in John might also have been mediated through Scripture. I suggest that the reality of the self-emptying of Christ Jesus affirmed in Philippians 2:6-8 transforms this possibility into a probability.

Jesus' meditation on, and interpretation of, the Scriptures is surely a model for us. What he heard from the Father he told the world.[48] We too hear from the Father as we engage with the Scriptures. And often the message we receive from him is given to be shared with others as well as received by ourselves. Like Jesus we are called to engage with Scripture for communication as well as for consumption. To this call many Chris-

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45 Jesus also declared obsolete the OT food laws (Mark 7:19). The church has continued to value the memory of many of these obsolete ceremonies as teaching models of what was to come.

46 Matt. 5:21-48.

47 To the question of the Jewish authorities: 'How did this man get such learning without having been taught?' Jesus responded: 'My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me' (John 7:16). When the Pharisees accuse him of bearing an invalid testimony, Jesus replies that 'he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.' He goes on: 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own, but speak just what the Father has taught me' (John 8:26, 28). As a rejoinder to the scepticism of these religious leaders Jesus declares: 'All I have ever done is to tell you the truth I have heard from God' (John 8:40, GNB). During his final Passover in Jerusalem Jesus warns the crowd listening to him in the temple that rejecting his message will incur judgment on the last day because he had received that message from God. 'I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken…. Whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say' (John 12:49-50).

48 John 8:26.

tians in the global south respond more readily than we do, and leave us an example to follow. It is now time to segue into exploring Scripture engagement in Jesus' life as a believer.

JESUS AS BELIEVER

We have already interpreted the main thrust of Jesus' temptations as a Satanic attempt to persuade him to deny his life calling as the long awaited Messiah. Matthew and Luke make clear that Scripture is Jesus' only defence. While Martin Luther is remembered for throwing his ink-well at the devil, Jesus used what Paul was later to call the sword of the Spirit.[49] Of course, it's important to recognise that Jesus was doing more than throwing these three texts at his tempter. He was doing more than, as if he were, saying on each occasion, 'This is one in the eye for you, Satan!' Jesus was engaging with these scriptures for himself. They acted as a compass to keep him on the course his Father had set for him. Let's look at how he engaged with each of these texts in turn.

Satan's first attempt came at the end of a forty-day fast in the loneliness of the Judean wilderness, traditionally sited above the city of Jericho. Not surprisingly both Matthew and Luke record that Jesus was 'hungry' ('famished', NRSV).[50] So the devil's challenge that Jesus exercise the resources of his divine Sonship by turning stones into bread sought to exploit his undoubted physical weakness at that time. Perhaps as he spoke, the devil was picking up a handful of stones and offering them to Jesus. Jesus' reply, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, reveals his acute awareness of the need for spiritual sustenance from the Word of God if he was to fulfil his mission: 'Man [i.e. humanity] shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'[51] While the Deuteronomic text refers to humanity, Jesus assumes it to be autobiographical. In his baptism he had consecrated himself to be the Servant-King whose task it would be to represent and to redeem a new humanity. Now he quotes the Deuteronomic text to confirm his commitment to the redemption of the world. He *internalises* Deuteronomy 8:3 and makes it his own. He embraces this text as the expression of his own calling, his own story. In doing so he creates a precedent for the followers of the Servant-King. As

49 Eph. 6:17. 'In the Bible God's own word is also a sword in His hand, a sword that lays bare, separating the false and the true (Heb. iv. 12), bringing judgment (Is. xi. 4; Ho.vi. 5), but also bringing salvation.' (F. Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, [London: Tyndale, 1963], p. 177.)

50 Matt. 4:2; Luke 4:2.

51 Matt. 4:4; cf. Luke 4:4.

we engage with a passage of Scripture our task also is to allow the text to become autobiographical. For God's story is also our story!

The next temptation takes place in a very different context.[52] The devil takes Jesus to Jerusalem and has him stand on the highest point of the temple. Again he seeks to sow doubt in Jesus' mind by beginning with the words: 'If you are the Son of God.' 'If you are the Son of God,' he says, 'throw yourself down.' Satan subtly attempts to exploit Jesus' affection for the Scriptures by backing up his challenge with a quotation from one of the most loved of all the Psalms. No doubt the opening stanza of Psalm 91 had often attracted the attention of Jesus as it was later also to appeal to millions of his followers: 'Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.' For obvious reasons Satan does not quote this verse to Jesus. Rather, he cites verses 11 and 12: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'[53] The devil responds to Jesus' submission to Scripture in the first temptation by himself quoting Scripture to him in the second. In order words, he is trying to turn Jesus' key defence into a boomerang.

Jesus' response demonstrates that there is much more to Scripture engagement than the slick mouthing of texts. His approach to Scripture is discriminating. He doesn't assume that because Psalm 91:11-12 says: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone' that the Lord is promising to do this in any and every situation. So he replies, quoting Deut 6:16: 'It is also written: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."'[54] In this instance Jesus is not so much internalising Scripture as *analysing* it. Whereas in the first temptation he opens his heart to the Word of God, here he uses his reason to analyse what the text the Devil is quoting really means. He recognises that the Devil's text is figurative, and declares that it is improper for the tempter to understand it literally. It was obvious to Jesus that Satan was confusing metaphor with plain speech.

Jesus' response indicates that there is a place for analysis and comparison when engaging with any text of Scripture. In other words, *studying*

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[52] I am following Matthew's order here rather than Luke's. The different order of the temptations in these two Gospels may be accounted for if Matthew is following the chronological order while Luke may have changed the sequence in order to climax the temptations in the temple at Jerusalem (E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* [New Century Bible; London / Camden NJ: Nelson, 1966], p. 93).

[53] Matt. 4:6; Luke 4:10. Note that in effect Jesus is equating the Word of God with what 'is written' — i.e. with the Scriptures.

[54] Matt. 4:7; Luke 4:12.

the Scriptures is important. The importance of using the mind in engaging with Scripture is further stressed by Jesus when he upbraided the two disciples he met on the road to Emmaus for being 'foolish' in the sense of being mentally lazy[55] which resulted in their being 'slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken' concerning the Messiah.[56] Those disciples, like so many of their contemporaries, were focusing on only part of the biblical evidence for the Messiah. The stress in Jesus' words on 'all' the Scriptures, like his response to Satan — 'It is *also* written' — underline how important it is to compare scripture with scripture.

The third temptation in Matthew's account finds the devil taking Jesus to the summit of 'a very high mountain' to show him 'all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour.' '"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."'[57] The Bible, going back to Genesis 3, accords significant powers to Satan. Jesus himself would later refer to him as 'the prince of this world,'[58] and it is this role that the devil assumes here. He is offering to delegate or transfer to Jesus his authority over the world. In effect, he was saying to Jesus, 'You can be king of kings without having to become the Servant of the Lord. You can have the crown without the cross!' The Gospel accounts suggest that Jesus' response was emphatic. "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only."'[59]

In this retort Jesus is again internalising the Scripture quoted. He is rejecting the overture of Satan and recommitting himself to serve the Lord alone. But here, Jesus is also directing the Scripture at Satan. He is applying the text when he says: 'Away from me, Satan!' Jesus applies the Scripture to his immediate situation by driving Satan away. E. P. Sanders' comment on the temptation is worth noting: 'It is noteworthy that in answering the tempter, he [Jesus] did not speak in the first person. He did not say, "That's not the way I do things," but rather in effect "That is not according to God's will as revealed in Scripture."'[60] Luke's conclusion of the temptation narrative suggests that Satan retired totally unsuccessful

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55 The Greek *anoētoi* is an 'unwillingness to use one's mental faculties in order to understand', J.P. Louw and E.A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains* (New York: UBS, 1988) vol. 1, 32:50.

56 Luke 24:25.

57 Matt. 4:8-9; cf. Luke 4:5-7.

58 John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11. Paul also recognises that an intelligent system of evil is at work in and through the principalities and powers of this world order (Eph 6:12; Col. 2:15), and James in his epistle (4:7) urges his readers to resist the devil .

59 Matt. 4:10; cf. Luke 4:12; cf. Deut 6:12.

60 E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (New York: Penguin, 1993), p. 117.

from the confrontation. He notes that 'When the Devil finished tempting Jesus in every way, he left him for a while,'[61] G. Campbell Morgan makes the point that he devil had 'exhausted himself'. He had no other line of attack.[62]

Having investigated Jesus' engagement with the Scriptures both as proclaimer and as believer, we might summarise this engagement by affirming Jesus as *par excellence* the proclaimer of the Word and the believer in the Word. We now turn to explore how Jesus' engagement with Scripture was facilitated by prayer.

JESUS AND PRAYER

We have already noted that the Gospels portray Jesus as someone who spent many hours in prayer by identifying him at prayer on seventeen occasions. The writer to the Hebrews makes the remarkable statement that Jesus, although God's Son, was learning obedience right up to the time of his death, and that praying was one of the means through which this ongoing learning experience and spiritual development were taking place.[63]

His prayers must have contributed greatly to Jesus' remarkable consciousness of the Father's presence. When the Pharisees accused him of lacking a corroborative witness to attest his remarkable claim to be the light of the world, he responded: 'I am not alone. I stand with the Father who sent me' (John 8:16). Such close communion with the Father would not have been possible without constant prayer.

Jesus prayed for his disciples.[64] Jesus prayed before performing miracles. This was certainly the case before he raised Lazarus from the dead. John records how the friends of Lazarus' family removed the stone at the mouth of the grave in which his body had been laid four days previously. Then John goes on: 'Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me".'[65] The term 'always' implies that Jesus was in the habit of praying before working a miracle.

Jesus also prayed for himself. The limited examples available to us of Jesus' personal prayers suggest that these were offered in response to the

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61 Luke 4:13, GNB.

62 G. Campbell Morgan, *The Crises of the Christ*, (5th edn; London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d. [1908?]), p. 178.

63 Heb. 5:7-10.

64 Luke 6:12-13; 22:31-32; John 17:6-19.

65 John 11:41-42; cf. Mark 9:29.

promises of Scripture and as expressions of a deep desire to glorify his Father. One such prayer offered by Jesus on his own behalf is found in John 12:27-28: '"Now is my soul troubled," and what shall I say? "Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!"' What prompted this deeply moving prayer? It was the request of some Greek proselytes for an audience. Their plea seems to have awakened in Jesus' mind scriptural prophecies that assigned a place to the Gentiles in the kingdom of God.[66] Perhaps the words of Yahweh to his Servant in the final verse of the second 'Servant Song' of Isaiah became particularly prominent in Jesus' consciousness at that moment : 'I will make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.'[67] But Jesus does not burst into a hymn of praise. Rather, the request of the Greeks 'is like an exploding fuse in the mind of Jesus'.[68] He offers to his Father, not a song of joy, but an anguished lament. For he would have known from the final 'Servant Song' that this great culmination of the kingdom in which salvation will reach the ends of the earth, would be achieved through the Servant of the Lord being 'despised and rejected' and being 'led like a lamb to the slaughter'.[69]

Jesus' most poignant prayer for himself was uttered in the anguish of Gethsemane. Mark tell us that Jesus 'began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them.'[70] Then we are then told that 'Going a little further, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father," he said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."'[71] Matthew records a second Gethsemane prayer of Jesus: '"My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."'[72] The reference to the 'cup' in both prayers is another resonance with the Old Testament.[73] Jesus' primary concern in Gethsemane is expressed in his words spoken to those who came to arrest him: 'The Scriptures must be fulfilled'.[74] Here again, Jesus' obedience to the Father takes the concrete shape of obedi-

66 E.g. Isa. 11:10; 42:6; 65:6; Mal. 1:11.

67 Isa. 49:6.

68 B. Milne, *The Message of John* (The Bible Speaks Today; Leicester: IVP, 1993), p. 184.

69 Isa. 53:3, 7.

70 Mark 14:34; Jesus' words to his disciples echo those of Ps. 42:5-6.

71 Mark 14:35-36; cf. Matt. 26:39; Luke 22:41-42.

72 Matt. 26:42.

73 See Isa. 51:17; Jer. 25:15, 17; Ps. 75:8

74 Mark 10:49.

ence to Scripture.[75] Jesus came, not to do his own will, but to do the will of him who sent him.[76] So we are not surprised to find Jesus engaging with Scripture through prayers uttered as he hung in agony on the cross. In his sense of abandonment he recites the dramatic opening words of Psalm 22: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'[77] Shortly afterwards as death claims Jesus he expresses his final prayer in the words of Psalm 31:5: 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.'[78]

These prayers uttered in the closing hours of Jesus' life demonstrate that for him prayer was a key component of engaging with Scripture. In them, Jesus prays the Scriptures back to God.[79] God speaks to Jesus and Jesus speaks to God. Quite remarkably the Scriptures are the medium which Father and Son utilise in speaking to each other. If prayer was important for Jesus in engaging with Scripture, how much more important it must be for us! When God speaks to us through Scripture he invites us to respond to him in prayer.

In Jesus' case prayer clearly facilitated Scripture engagement. But there was also another factor—the Holy Spirit, and to the role of the Holy Spirit I now turn.

JESUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

We noted earlier that after his baptism Jesus, 'full of the Spirit' and 'led by the Spirit', went into the wilderness, from where, after his period of testing, he returned to Galilee 'in the power of the Spirit' to begin his public ministry.[80] Later in his ministry he affirms to the Pharisees that, far from casting out demons by Beelzebul, he exorcises them by the Spirit of God.[81] The Gospels also suggest that the Spirit empowers the preaching and

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75 Work, *Living and Active*, p. 170.

76 John 6:38.

77 Mark 15:34; Matt. 27:46; cf. Ps. 22:1.

78 Luke 23:46; cf. Ps .31:5

79 This is particularly the case with the Psalms. 'David bore witness to Jesus Christ in his kingly office, his life and his words. The New Testament goes even further. It says that the One who speaks in the Psalms is already the promised Christ himself (Heb 2:12; 10:5) or, indeed, the Holy Spirit (Heb 3:7). So the very words uttered by David were at the same time being uttered in him by the Messiah who was to come. The prayers of David were also the prayers of Christ, or rather, Christ himself offered them in the person of his ancestor David.' Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Psalms: Prayer Book of the Bible*, Tr. Sister Isabel Mary (Oxford: SLG Press, 1994), p. 5.

80 Luke 4:14; Matt. 4:1; Luke 4:14.

81 Matt. 12:28; Luke 11:20; cf. Acts 10:37-38.

teaching of Jesus. Several times they tell us that the people were amazed at the authority with which Jesus spoke.[82] The Fourth Gospel's commentary on the work of the Son of God reveals the source of such great authority: 'The one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.'[83] If, in fact, Jesus' teaching was revealed by the Father as he engaged with the Scriptures, as we are claiming, then surely the Spirit would have played a role in that process of engagement and revelation. In this regard Telford Work stresses that 'Jesus' own words preserved in these New Testament texts … are truly God's speech, truly the word of God in human words…. This is not simply because Jesus is divine in an abstract sense, but because he is the Spirit-anointed Son: "For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit" (John 3:34).'[84] The activity of the Spirit in and through Jesus may also help to explain those texts which inform us that Jesus knew the thoughts of others.[85] This supernatural knowledge may have come directly from the omniscience of the Son, but in light of the evidence already considered that the Son chose not to exercise his divine attributes during his state of humiliation, this is unlikely. More probably this knowledge of what others were thinking was communicated to Jesus by the Spirit as a gift such as a 'word of knowledge' and like similar gifts later granted by the Spirit to members of the church in Corinth.[86]

If the Spirit played a key role in Jesus' engagement with the Scriptures. how much greater is our need of the Spirit's ministry as we read and meditate on the Word of God! The writer to the Hebrews highlights this ministry of the Spirit when he quotes from Psalm 95 as a text through which the Spirit speaks. That Psalm was, of course, composed and written centuries earlier, which is acknowledged by Hebrews when the writer introduces its eleventh verse with a phrase using the past tense: 'just as God has said'. But the writer also introduces the same psalm with words utilising the present tense: 'as the Holy Spirit says'. In fact he quotes Psalm 95:7-8 twice, with varying introductory tenses, so that these verses are the Word of God spoken and the Word of God speaking.[87] It is important for us to realise when we are engaging with a text of Scripture that the relationship of the Holy Spirit and Scripture did not end when the Spirit

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82 Matt. 7:28-29; Mark 1:22, 27; Luke 4:36-37; 7:8.

83 John 3:34; cf. Luke 4:16-21.

84 Work, *Living and Active*, p. 88.

85 Matt. 9:4 / Mark 2:8 / Luke 5:22; Matt. 12:25 / Luke 6:8; Luke 9:47; John 2:25; 4:39.

86 1 Cor. 12:8.

87 Heb. 3:7-8 cf. 4:7.

'carried along' the original authors.[88] The same Spirit who inspired the text of Scripture then[89], can animate it now so that we hear God speaking to us today through the sacred page.[90]

POSTSCRIPT

In summary we have discovered that the spirituality of Jesus was Word-mediated; it was prayer-orientated; and it was Spirit-led. Since I have focused more on this third feature, it might be appropriate in concluding to return to the temptation narratives paying attention to how Jesus engaged with these texts from Deuteronomy. I suggest that a certain progression in his manner of engaging with Scripture can be discerned in the Matthean order of the temptations. In the first encounter with the Devil Jesus *internalises* Scripture. In the second, he *analyses* Scripture. And in the third, he *actualises* Scripture. Of course, it can be argued that all three responses are present in each of the encounters. While this is true, I think the verbs: 'internalise', 'analyse', and 'actualise' respectively capture the primary mode of Jesus' engagement with Scripture in each of the three confrontations.

Popular psychology distinguishes between the right and left hemispheres of the human brain. The right hemisphere coordinates our emotions, intuition, imagination and volition. The left hemisphere manages the analytical, logical, and rational side of our thinking. Adapting this psychological insight, we might say that Jesus responds to the first temptation primarily with his right brain—his emotions and his will. He internalises the text. We might then go on to say that Jesus deals with the second temptation primarily with his left brain—his reason, for he questions Satan's snatching Psalm 91 and tearing it out of the wider context of Scripture. Finally, in the third temptation, as in the first, Jesus reacts primarily with his right brain as he volitionally rejects Satan's exchange and emotionally re-consecrates himself to his divine destiny. So as Jesus internalised Scripture, as he analysed Scripture and as he actualised Scripture his whole being was involved. In this surely he provides us with a helpful template for our engagement with Scripture. By way of example he calls us to internalise, analyse and actualise a passage of Scripture utilising both hemispheres of our brain: the imaginative and intuitive as well as the analytical and rational.

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88 2 Pet. 1:21.

89 2 Tim. 3:16.

90 As we read and meditate on Scripture were are also dependent on the Spirit to enlighten our minds and to quicken our hearts.

Jesus by way of example is surely warning us against engaging with the Bible in a mode that is left-brained from start to finish. True, Scripture texts need to be analysed. We need to get behind the text and understand its original meaning. But we must also sit in front of the text and listen to the message it has for us in the moment of engagement and at the specific juncture we have come to in our lives.

Most of the world's armies march by the left. The Lord's army marches by the right!

Unravelling Scottish Evangelicalism (Part Two)

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INTRODUCTION

Is Scottish Evangelicalism unravelling? A belief that it might be was one reason for choosing 'Evangelical Ecumenicity' as the theme for the 2011 Scottish Evangelical Theological Society conference. Underlying the conference agenda was a perception that perhaps irreparable fissures threaten the Scottish Evangelical future. The conference conveners invited the current author to open proceedings by unravelling the roots of what the conference organizers identified as contemporary Scottish Evangelical 'polarization'.

In the first part of my paper, a revised version of which was published in a previous number of this journal, I argued that modern Evangelicalism has not declined from a pristine unity into rival camps.[1] Rather, the potential for Evangelical fissure has always been latent within the very forces that have propelled the Evangelical coalition to success since the eighteenth century. I concluded that Evangelicalism 'has only lived and breathed because it has existed in a social-cultural setting of the kind that has valued personal liberty and religious competitiveness. Its members are freely-associating, self-determining groups. Such an environment has meant longevity and vitality for the movement as well as division and rancour. Evangelical diversity is both the movement's tragedy and triumph.'[2]

While Evangelicalism has always functioned as a movement calling the church back to old certainties (be they those of New Testament authenticity, or Reformation confessionalism) , its birth and development within a social-cultural milieu that has valued innovation and individuation has meant that demand for the restoration of authentic Gospel religion has in fact created multiple new forms of Christianity. Such innovation is often justified by the Pietistic emphases within the movement. These Pietist

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1 M. Spence, 'Unravelling Scottish Evangelicalism (Part One)', *SBET* 30 (2012), 30–50. Part Three, the final instalment, is scheduled to appear in *SBET* 32 (2014).

2 Ibid., p. 49.

traits, by stressing a personal connection between the human and the divine, help to endorse ecclesial modernizations when they are claimed to spring from a closer insight into the nature and purposes of God—even if others within the Evangelical coalition protest that these innovations do not quite comport with the way that they understand spiritual truth! In this second instalment of the paper, I offer a cursory historical survey of some of the ways in which the Evangelical movement in Scotland has demonstrated the internal logic of the movement's congenital fissiparousness in ways that have both furthered and frustrated the existence of the coalition.

DISRUPTIVE EVANGELICALISM

Evangelicalism was a disruptive force in the nineteenth-century Scottish church. Its inherent tendency was to promote religious pluralism. This was because the movement embodied the liberalizing, democratizing and voluntaryist spirit of the age. Indeed, in one sense 'Evangelicalism' is the name we give to the adaptation of central Reformation Protestant doctrines to the emerging cultures of the modernity. Although Evangelicalism in the Hanoverian era has commonly been seen as a conservative force, marshalling religious obedience against revolution and aiming to defend the social order, this was not the view of many observers at the time. As one critic put it, alluding to the rise of Evangelical missionary initiatives such as the Glasgow and Edinburgh Missionary Societies, 'the whole of this missionary business grows from a democratical root [and is] calculated to produce discontent, to foster an aversion to the present order of things'.[3]

A tendency to view Presbyterianism as the authentic locus of Scottish ecclesiastical history means that talk of the disruptive tendencies of nineteenth-century Evangelicalism leads our minds quickly to the 'Great Disruption' of 1843. The secession in this year of over 450 Evangelical ministers from the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church of Scotland was indeed a major event, but the impression left by much historiography is that this was the central, game-changing factor in Victorian Evangelical history. However, the evidence from the previous fifty years suggests that, despite the powerful vision of a national Christianity propounded by Thomas Chalmers and the Kirk Evangelicals, they were fighting a losing

[3] C. G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland Since 1707* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), p. 32. See my comments in the first instalment of this article on the applicability of Nathan Hatch's observations about the democratization of American Evangelicalism to Scotland. Spence, 'Unravelling (Part One)', p. 34.

battle. In one sense, their vision was undermined by the very religious impulses which they endeavoured to inculcate.

By the last decades of the eighteenth century the church south of the Scottish border had already experienced the disruptiveness of Evangelical revival. The Anglican Evangelical renewal movement associated with John Wesley had broken the bounds of the Established church and transmuted into a separate denomination called Methodism. Wesley's doctrines of universal atonement, individual free will, and moral perfectionism had also sparked the first major polarization of the Evangelical coalition between those 'Arminian' Methodists who followed his teaching and other Calvinistic Methodists who, while agreeing with the need for new forms of preaching in order to promote conversion and renewal, continued to set their Evangelicalism within a framework drawn from the Calvinist Reformed tradition of the Protestant Reformation.

It is sometimes asserted that Wesleyan Methodism had no impact in Scotland because Arianism did not sit well with the resolutely Calvinist Scots. However, although when learning of Wesley's plans to visit Scotland, George Whitefield told him bluntly, 'You have no business there', Wesley did not listen.[4] As Margaret Batty has demonstrated, numerous Methodist congregations formed in the late 1750s due to 'the heroic endurance' of a small number of Methodist preachers.[5] Thus by the time of Wesley's death in 1791, there were 1,179 Scottish Methodists.[6]

Other streams of the eighteenth-century Scottish Evangelical movement flowed through more conventionally Calvinist channels, yet nonetheless also began to erode the kind of confessional national Christianity for which Chalmers would argue in the 1830s. Drawing inspiration from the English and Welsh Calvinistic Methodists and from Anglican Evangelicals, a small group of Scottish Independents emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. One early sponsor of this movement was Willielma Campbell, Lady Glenorchy (1741–1786), a wealthy Evangelical patron who founded chapels in Edinburgh and Strathfillan in the last three decades of the eighteenth century. Influenced by the English Calvinistic Methodist preacher Rowland Hill (1744–1833) and by the English Evangelical patron of Calvinistic Evangelical preaching, Selina, Countess of Huntingdon (1707–1791), Glenorchy intended her chapels to be ecumenical preaching centres. She resisted the absorption of the chapels into any one denomination. Glenorchy's movement was small and abortive—

4 M. Batty, *Scotland's Methodists, 1750–2000* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), p. 4

5 Ibid., p. 19.

6 Ibid., p. 35.

against Presbyterian intransigence she found it easier to found churches in England. However, her initiatives showed a latent force within Evangelicalism that could push against established ecclesiastical structures in the name of ecumenical mission and Biblical preaching.

A more sustained impulse toward Evangelical independency came from Robert (1764–1842) and James (1768–1851) Haldane. In the teeth of opposition to both overseas and home mission from the Church of Scotland, and with the support of English Anglican Evangelical minister, Charles Simeon (1759–1836), the Haldanes helped form the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home as a mission agency to the Highlands in 1798. The Society sponsored hundreds of lay evangelists who were dubbed the 'Haldane Preachers'. Numerous 'preaching Tabernacles' were formed in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Wick.[7] These preaching tabernacles inevitably took on the hue of fully-fledged churches, offering the Gospel in new ways in new places. There were eighty-five such independent congregations in Scotland by 1807.[8] Today, might these be styled 'emergent' churches?

Like Lady Glenorchy, the Haldanes were originally members of the Church of Scotland who faced entrenched opposition to their supra-parochial mission work. They formally left the Church of Scotland in 1799. Their subsequent desire to break the monopoly of ecclesiastical interests led them to offer a two-year course of seminary instruction for the evangelists in Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh. These lay seminaries were in many ways the precursors of non-university theological training institutes that would be founded in subsequent years of Scottish Evangelical history—from the late Victorian Bible Training Institute of Glasgow, founded by the Glasgow United Evangelistic Association in the late Victorian era, to the early twenty-first century Destiny College, a training school of Destiny Church International, founded and led by self-styled 'social entrepreneurs' Andrew and Sue Owen.[9] Indeed, the Haldanes exemplify a certain brand of Evangelical pioneer whose commitment to mission, antipathy to hierarchy and desire to re-make the church to meet the needs of the age has always sought to strip back ecclesiastical struc-

7 D.E. Meek, 'The Early Nineteenth Century', in *The Baptists in Scotland: A History*, ed. by D.W. Bebbington (Glasgow: Baptist Union of Scotland, 1988), pp. 26–47 (p. 31).

8 Drummond and Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland*, p. 53

9 D.W. Lovegrove, 'Haldane Preachers', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, ed. by Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark, 1993), p. 385. On Destiny Church, see K. Roxborough, 'Growth Amidst Decline', in *Church Growth in Britain 1980 to the Present*, ed. by D. Goodhew (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012) pp. 209–20 (pp. 217–9).

tures in preference for their own vision of New Testament Christianity. Like many later Evangelical visions, whether those of the Brethren movement of the mid-nineteenth century or those contained within the Charismatic New Churches of the late twentieth century, the restless desire for contemporaneous authenticity and New Testament essentialism that has marked this kind of Evangelical *renovatio ecclesia* has, in the words used by Deryk Lovegrove to describe Robert Haldane, 'displayed a mixture of unitive and divisive tendencies.'[10]

In 1808 the Haldane brothers began speaking in favour of credo-baptism. The controversy which ensued split the Independency movement between pædo- and credo-baptists. The pædo-baptists evolved into the nucleus of the Congregational Union, founded in 1812. Glaswegian minister Ralph Wardlaw (1799–1853) became perhaps the most well-known representative of the Evangelical Congregationalist community in Scotland. Thus another distinct Evangelical sub-institution was born from the refractory energies of the Evangelical movement.

The Haldanes helped merged their stream of credo-baptist Independency into the channel carved by the Scottish Baptist movement, the source of which was also in the eighteenth-century Evangelical movement. In 1768, Archibald MacLean, influenced by George Whitfield, had founded the Scotch Baptist Connection. The Scotch Baptists were distinguished from their English counterparts by an emphasis on mutuality of elders (rather than 'one man' pastorship) but nevertheless co-operated with the missionary-minded English Baptists to sponsor itinerant evangelists across Scotland.[11] MacLean sounded early the note of Evangelical restorationism which pulsed through the movement more fully in the nineteenth century when he spoke of Baptist principles representing the 'primitive purity and simplicity of the Christian faith'.[12] In fact this note was itself drawn from the Sandemanian or Glasite movement, with which MacLean had been involved, and from which the Scotch Baptists recruited heavily, although the inward-looking separatism of that movement was now blended with the more outward-looking missionary-minded disposition of the Evangelical revival.[13]

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10 D.W. Lovegrove, 'Haldane, Robert (1764–1842)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Online edn., ed. by Lawrence Goldman. (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11896>, accessed 11 July, 2013.

11 Meek, 'The Early Nineteenth Century', p. 28

12 Ibid., p. 22.

13 L. Billington, 'The Churches of Christ in Britain: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Sectarianism', *Journal of Religious History* 8 (1974), 21–48 (pp. 22–3).

The Haldane accession in 1808 helped give identity and solidarity to Baptist principles across Scotland and infused the somewhat separatist and confessionaly Calvinist tendency of Scotch Baptist culture with a new pragmatic Evangelical zeal.[14] The Baptistic impulse pre-dated the Evangelical revival, of course, but the drama of credo-Baptism as a visual symbol of conversion, the Baptist commitment to congregationalism and an underlying anti-creedalism appealed to the democratising spirit of nineteenth-century Scotland. The Evangelical movement, itself a product of a growing religious democracy, thus refreshed and re-oriented Scottish Baptists into another compelling Evangelical institution in an increasingly crowded marketplace. A Scottish Baptist Association was formed in 1835, drawing together churches with strong links to the Home Missionary Society for Scotland (BHMS) that had been formed in 1827 with a particular mission to the Highlands and Islands. The Association was re-launched in 1843, the year of the great Disruption, as the Baptist Union of Scotland. Seventeen churches joined, most of them with a strongly Arminian temperament.[15] A larger number of churches joined in a re-launched Union in 1869, a broad coalition shaped by the spirit of Evangelical ecumenicity of the age.[16]

The Baptists, like all denominations in this era, often co-operated with other Evangelicals and yet they also implicitly claimed for their distinctive practices and ecclesiology the imprimatur of New Testament authenticity. In 1880, for example, Baptist pastor William Grant listed these Baptist distinctives: congregational independence, believers' baptism, membership of churches limited to Christians. He then added as a fourth that 'Baptists do not recognize creeds or confessions of faith'. This claim to have boiled down Gospel Christianity to a set of distinctive ideas, followed by a claim that these ideas are not in and of themselves a particular confession but simply represent pure Christianity, is a disingenuous way of disarming critics! It has been a common attitude within many Evangelical movements that have sought primitive simplicity.[17]

Evangelical sentiment helped unify as well as fracture during the early nineteenth century, although the net result was the same: the creation of vibrant sub-communities in a religious free market. The constructive dimensions of the Evangelical impulse was evident in the transforma-

14 Meek, 'The Early Nineteenth Century', p. 32.

15 Ibid, p.41

16 D.B. Murray, 'Baptist Union of Scotland', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, pp. 59–60.

17 J.M. Gordon, 'The Later Nineteenth Century', in *The Baptists in Scotland: A History*, ed. by D.W. Bebbington (Glasgow: Baptist Union of Scotland, 1988), pp. 48–66 (p. 61).

tion of the Secession and Relief churches (originally formed during the eighteenth century in protest at an earlier controversy concerning state involvement in ecclesiastical matters) into a new Evangelically-oriented institution. In 1820 two of the eighteenth-century Session Presbyteries (the New Licht Burghers and the New Licht Antiburghers) merged to form the United Secession Church. The two groups had been brought together in part by shared participation in Evangelical missionary societies which had helped dissolve a narrow Calvinist defensiveness.[18] In 1847 the United Secession Church combined with another eighteenth-century Presbyterian splinter group, the Relief Church. This church had been founded in 1761, again in part over the rights of congregations to elect their own minister but also pervaded also with a piety drawn from the Evangelical revival and a missionary spirit which had led some to dub them the 'Scots Methodists' (a name which is, of course, unfair to the real Scots Methodists). [19] The new institution was called the United Presbyterian Church. The five hundred or so United Presbyterian congregations were infused with an Evangelical missionary emphasis over the next fifty years.[20] It exemplified a tendency of later Evangelicals to found new churches in middle-class areas already well-served by Christian congregations.

DEMOCRATIC DISRUPTIVENESS

During the 1830s and 1840s, the disruptive tendencies of Evangelicalism intensified. Several other new Evangelical communities were founded, largely within the industrializing lowlands but also with a growing presence in north-eastern fishing villages. The rationale for each of these groups was premised on the belief that the hierarchical structure of the existing denominations did not do proper justice to the New Testament blueprint for the church. Each spoke with a tone (which many late twentieth century New Churches would also adopt) which implied that they were the first to challenge tradition and the sole providers of a truly 'evangelical' expression of Christianity. Ironically, the very pride with which these groups claim to have reduced Christianity down to all but its barest essentials has generally ended up generating an attitude of exclusivity which militated against the primitive ecumenicity that the group has sought to construct.

The most significant of these mid-century groups was the Brethren movement which had its origins in a number of separatist groups in Ire-

[18] I. Hamilton, 'United Secession Church', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p. 841.

[19] Brown, *Religion and Society*, p. 37.

[20] Drummond and Bulloch, *Church in Victorian Scotland*, p. 44.

land and England that gathered around Irish clergyman John Nelson Darby (1800–1882), English missionary Anthony Norris Groves (1795–1853), and Scottish preacher Henry Craik (1805–1866). Arising in the late 1830s, the Brethren at first provided an umbrella movement for numerous groups of independently-minded Evangelical Christians dissatisfied with the practice and structure of existing churches. Committed to a non-hierarchical, non-clerical community, they aimed for primitive simplicity rooted in the breaking of bread. The egalitarian feel of Brethrenism meant it appealed particularly to the heartland of working classes in the industrialising middle belt of central Scotland, as well as to rural fishing communities.[21] Brethrenism clearly represented the central Evangelical tension. It manifested an Evangelical essentialism; its very name implied that this was pure, apostolic Christianity shorn of its traditions and hierarchies and open to all who simply desired to be known as 'brothers' in Christ. However, the Brethren did not actually sweep up all who claimed the name 'Evangelical' into their radical vision for 'mere Christianity'. Rather, they constructed another ecclesiastical subculture—one without ministers, or connexions, or theological colleges, to be sure, but nevertheless pervaded by a deep sense of its own identity, culture, and values. The Brethren movement itself fractured between Open and Exclusive wings in 1848.[22]

The quest for primitive apostolic simplicity exhibited by the Brethren was matched by the emergence of another strand of primitivism, the Churches of Christ, adopted in 1842 as the denominational affinity of several Baptist congregations who had, over the past decade, been influenced by the County Antrim-born preacher Alexander Campbell (1788–1866). Campbell, who emigrated with his father to Pennsylvania in 1809, was also animated by a desire for primitive Christianity, an attitude forged by the heady freedom generated amid the revivalism of the American frontier. As was the case with the Brethren, the name of this group implied a desire for New Testament essentialism. Members wanted to be known simply as followers of Christ or 'Christians': nothing more, nothing less. The movement, which in the United States was called 'The Disciples of Christ', gained more churches in Scotland than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. There were forty-nine congregations Scot-

21 N.T.R Dickson, *Brethren in Scotland 1838–2000* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002), *passim*, esp. pp. 25–7.

22 Roger Shuff speaks of the 'invisible structures' that helped provide Brethren with *de facto* ecclesiastical unity. R. N. Shuff, *Searching for the True Church: Brethren and Evangelicals in Mid–Twentieth Century England* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005), p. 32.

tish congregations by 1917. Like the Brethren, this movement flourished in urban and industrializing areas, places where the dissolution of traditional social structures provided the nearest equivalent to the heady religious liberty sprouting in the soil of the American west.[23]

A further example of a quest for a 'simple' evangelical community occurred in 1843—actually on the exact same day that Chalmers led the walkout from the Church of Scotland—when James Morrison (1816–1893) founded the Evangelical Union. Morrison, a probationer in the United Secession Church, had since 1839 preached what he called the 'three universals': the universal love of God, the universality of the atonement and the universal of the work of the Holy Spirit. In other words, he rejected not only the structure of Presbyterianism but also its Calvinist theology. He believed that mission was best served by preaching unlimited atonement and human free will. The Evangelical Union appealed to the growing democratic spirit of the age. 'A universal atonement is popular with the masses', wrote Morrison's biographer.

> Untaxed bread for all; liberty for all; a suffrage for all—these have been popular political cries. Not less a Saviour for all—if men were only set free from theological leading-strings. And for this very reason we have always felt that the doctrines of the Evangelical Union were a protest against religious conservatism, and in harmony with the liberal and liberalising spirit of the age.[24]

Like the Brethren and Disciples of Christ, the name of the Evangelical Union again implied that all true evangelicals should join the community in a spirit of simple fellowship and mission. Indeed, some Evangelical Union congregations eventually moved into Brethrenism, although the denomination itself merged with the Congregationalist Union in 1883. The Evangelical Union is particularly good example of the symbiosis between Evangelical fragmentation and the democratic liberty and voluntarism of the Victorian age. Kier Hardie joined the Evangelical Union later in the century.[25] The first incarnation of the Baptist Union of Scotland (founded in 1843) was self-consciously Morrisonian in emphasis.[26]

The Scottish Methodists movement also fractured into multiple groups in the nineteenth-century with a scattering of churches locked

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[23] D.M. Thompson, 'Churches of Christ', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p. 187.

[24] 'The Origin and Formation of the Evangelical Union: No.6', in *The Evangelical Repository* (4th Series), No. 1 (1870), pp. 1–23 (pp. 11–12).

[25] A.L. Donaldson and J. Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland* (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1978), p. 199.

[26] Meek, 'The Early Nineteenth Century', pp. 39-40.

into the lay-leaning Kilhamite New Connexion, the populist Independent Methodist movement, the missionary-led Bible Christians, the anti-hierarchical United Methodist Free Churches, or the American-influenced, revivalist–minded Primitive Methodists.[27] The numbers involved in these movements were relatively small (as was the case with some of the other movements surveyed in this section), although the Primitive Methodists, who enjoyed a supple organizational structure, enjoyed notable success in the same decade (the 1840s) and same location (the industrialized towns of the western central belt) as the other new movements of the era that we are surveying.[28] Indeed, by the mid-nineteenth century it was perhaps the availability of other forms of 'free grace', primitive, missionary-minded Evangelical Christianity that stymied Methodist growth, rather than the often-alleged Scottish dogged traditionalism or recalcitrant Calvinism.[29]

Finally, it is worth noting one more disruption, again occurring in 1842–3 when Episcopal priest David T.K. Drummond (1806–77) led his congregation of St Thomas, Rutland Street, Edinburgh, out of the Episcopal Church of Scotland and formed an alliance with English Anglicanism in order to continue Evangelical worship and preaching. A significant Evangelical presence within the Episcopalian church grew in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Even in this relatively marginal church within the Scottish landscape, Evangelicalism disrupted and multiplied the forms and structures of Christianity.[30]

THE 'GREAT' DISRUPTION

It is only once we have understood the emergence of this increasingly democratic, somewhat chaotic, Evangelical marketplace that we are ready to fully grasp the story of the 'Great' Disruption, which we can now interpret as but one more of many fragmentations and re-alignments triggered by Evangelical Christianity in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The 1843 Church of Scotland Disruption was the result of the growth of Evangelicalism in the Church of Scotland since the late eighteenth century. Inspired by the legacy of the Cambuslang Revival and by the growth of Evangelicalism in the Church of England, the Evangelical 'Popular Party', among whom numbered Robert Walker (1716–83), John Erskine (1721–1803), and Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847), stressed the need for 'real' or 'saving' faith, in contrast to merely nominal assent or deistic

27 Batty, *Scotland's Methodists*, pp. 48–79, 141–157.

28 Ibid., p. 147.

29 Brown, *Religion and Society*, p. 53.

30 D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 307.

natural religion. The popular party maintained a characteristic Evangelical emphasis on the centrality of Christ's atoning sacrifice in satisfying divine justice and recommended that such an emphasis on Christ's saving mercy should be broadcast widely through preaching. The paucity of such Gospel preaching, noted Robert Walker, meant that 'the power of godliness hath declined and languished, till a cold formality hath at length given way to the open profession of infidelity itself'.[31]

Like its English counterpart, Scottish Evangelicalism in its national church guise had a profound concern for the social implications of right belief and practice. John Erskine, for example, echoed Wilberforce when he wrote in his *Fatal Consequences and General Sources of Anarchy* that only real, vital Christianity could preserve a nation from ruin. Similarly, Walker stressed the link between right belief and ethics: 'Morality grows out of faith in Christ, as the branches grow from the stock.'[32] The conviction that Evangelical Christianity was good for the soul of the nation meant that the Kirk Evangelicals were strong believers in a territorial, state church. Thomas Chalmers lectured extensively on the virtues of national confessional Christianity in the 1830s and became the darling of establishmentarians across Britain.[33] It is in part this articulation of a vision of an Evangelical national church that may deceive us into believing that the Kirk Evangelicals had a real chance to create such an institution if only they had not been thwarted by the obduracy of the Moderates. In fact, the Kirk Evangelicals were trying to lock the Presbyterian stable door after the Evangelical horse had bolted. In fact, they were among those who had helped prise the door open in the first place.

During the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Church of Scotland Evangelicals focused on strengthening parish ministry and extending pastoral and evangelistic outreach into the growing urban centres of industrializing Scotland. This was exemplified by Chalmers' experiment of making the parish a unit of social, religious and moral cohesion in Glasgow. Having gained a majority within the General Assembly, in 1834 Evangelicals helped pass legislation that enabled creation of new chapels in areas underserved by the existing parochial system (the Chapels Act) and gave congregations the right to call a minister against the wishes of the lay patron of the church (the Veto Act), thereby

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31 J R. McIntosh, *Church and Theology in Enlightenment Scotland: Evangelical Party, 1740–1800* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998), p. 204.

32 Ibid., p. 205.

33 'All the world is wild about Dr Chalmers', observed William Wilberforce. Quoted in B. Hilton, *Age of Atonement* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 57. The substance of his lecture tour was published as *Lectures on the Establishment and Extension of National Churches* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1838).

encouraging Evangelical congregations to retain Evangelical ministers. All this was intended to strengthen, not undermine, the national church; and yet setting these actions in the context of the broader predilections of the Evangelical movement, the Kirk Evangelicals were clearly influenced by the prevailing tendency to seek 'fresh expressions' (as we might call them today) of church life. The establishment of extra-territorial chapels and assertion of congregational prerogative was but one expression of the tendency to create new venues for Evangelical Christianity that had been occurring from Glenorchy to Morrison. The disruption of existing ecclesiastical structures was, as it well known, indeed the natural culmination of the Kirk Evangelicals' bold project.

The presenting cause of their break with the Church of Scotland was the perennially vexed question of the relationship between Scottish state and church. In 1838 the right of congregations to appoint their own minister was overturned by the Court of Session in favour of the right of lay patronage, thus stymying the plan to ensure Evangelical ministers for Evangelical congregations. In 1843, the Chapels Act was also declared illegal by the Court of Session. These decisions generated a move by the Evangelicals for a separation of church and state, a proposal that split the Church of Scotland. Chalmers led around four hundred ministers out of the Kirk. They constituted themselves as the Free Church of Scotland. Having for so long stood for the vision of an Evangelical national church, and although trying to claim that they still *were* the national church, Chalmers and his co-religionists (perhaps up to 38% of the clergy and 40% of lay adherents) now found themselves committed in practice to running a voluntary church in order to preserve their Presbyterian liberties, which had themselves become tethered to their Evangelical priorities.[34] Chalmers even took some pride in his stance: 'I do hope that henceforth our friends the Voluntaries will think seriously of us than they have done heretofore', he wrote '…when they find us giving up all the endowments of a National Church so soon as it is determined that we shall not be permitted to hold them but at the expense of our Christian liberties.'[35]

Locating the Great Disruption in the broader milieu of early-nineteenth century Evangelicalism shows that Evangelical growth of the kind that had led to a strong Kirk Evangelical party under Chalmers also created the conditions for luxuriant evangelical crops that sprouted in the first half of the nineteenth century, crops diverse enough to mean that

34 Brown, *Religion and Society*, p. 32

35 Although Chalmers also clarified: 'the Voluntaries mistake us, if they conceive us to be Voluntaries'. A.L. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland 1843–1874* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1975), p. 14.

any unity around a national church—or, indeed, any church—withered. Mid-century Scottish Evangelicalism was 'lay in spirit, urban in concern, disaffected from the ministry … expressing its distrust of traditional religious institution by the formation of new ones, which were kept out of the control of the clergy as much as possible.'[36] Evangelicalism was clearly a modern movement that flourished in pluralistic contexts. Indeed, Evangelicalism was itself helped create those pluralistic environments. By 1850, Scottish Evangelicals, particularly in the industrial central lowlands, had—willingly or otherwise—embraced a free trade in Christianity. Surveying the scene at mid-century, one might have felt that Evangelicalism was unravelling; alternatively, if you were a member of one of the emerging groups, you may have felt that it was only just beginning.

EVANGELICAL ECUMENICITY

Clearly each of the groups surveyed above maintained its own identity; sometimes, as was the case with the Brethren, this was a very separatist identity. Any hope of constructing just one Evangelical union was bound to failure. However, a commitment to paring down ecclesiastical traditions to apostolic simplicity was not insincere. It spoke of a growing attitude that warmed to the idea of deconstructing false ecclesiastical boundaries and was attracted to ecclesiastical minimalism. It was thus no coincidence that at the same time the Evangelical Christian world was fragmenting, thereby ostensibly militating against any kind of official Scottish Evangelical unity of the kind once hoped for by Chalmers and the Kirk Evangelicals, so also Scottish Evangelicals were becoming increasingly excited about the prospects for Evangelical ecumenism. This would be a unity based not on structural homogeneity but rather upon pragmatic co-operation and affective bonds of friendship: a unity that was freely chosen, not ecclesiastically conferred. This was a vision not dissimilar to the vision that political radicals of the era such as John Bright (1811–1899) and Richard Cobden (1804–1865) propounded in regard to the potential for economic free trade to create international peace.

This desire for unity and the forging of a common Evangelical culture had, of course, already glimmered in the eighteenth-century revival as well as in early nineteenth-century mission organizations such as the Glasgow City Mission (founded in 1826). The proliferation of cross-denominational religious tract publishing also helped perpetuate this

[36] J. Kent, *Holding the Fort: studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London: Epworth Press, 1978), p. 101.

missionary ecumenism.[37] The desire for unity was exemplified by the formation of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846. Fifty-five Scottish ministers, including Glasgow businessman and philanthropist John Henderson (1782–1867), Free Church Moderator Robert Candlish (1806–1873), and Congregationalist Ralph Wardlaw, supported the cause.[38] The institution, which aimed for visible co-operation, stressed and even celebrated a tension between unity and diversity.[39] Its founding document stated:

> That this conference, composed of professing Christians of many different denominations, all exercising the right of private judgment, and, through common infirmity, differing among themselves in the views they severally entertain on some points, both of Christian doctrine and ecclesiastical polity, and gathered together from many and remote parts of the world, for the purpose of promoting Christian unions rejoice in making their unanimous avowal of the glorious truth that the church of the living God, while it admits of growth, is one church, never having lost, and being incapable of losing, its essential unity. Not, therefore, to create that unity, but to confess it, is the, design of their assembling together. [40]

The growth of diverse Evangelical institutions and subgroups in this era was therefore matched by a feeling that denominational strife might be ending and that fragmentation might actually be healthy for allowing private judgment to find an outlet that did not disrupt essential co-operation on mission and proclamation.[41]

During the latter half of the nineteenth century the spirit of 'evangelical alliance' multiplied across Scottish Evangelicalism even while yet more distinct sub-Evangelical networks were born. J. Edwin Orr called

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37 S. Piggin, 'London City Mission', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, pp. 494–5.

38 Drummond and Bulloch, *Church in Victorian Scotland*, p. 313.

39 Wolffe suggests that several Evangelicals saw the Disruption of 1843 as untethering Evangelicals from denominations in order to form a new voluntary union that would usher in the millennium. J. Wolffe, 'Unity in Diversity? North Atlantic Evangelical Thought in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', in *Unity and Diversity in the Church: Studies in Church History*, vol. 32, ed. by R.N. Swanson (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1996), pp. 363–75 (p. 366).

40 'Historical Sketch of The Evangelical Alliance', in *The Religious Condition of Christendom* 1, ed. by E. Steane (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1852), pp. 52–73 (p. 55).

41 J. Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006), pp. 240–1.

this era the 'second great awakening'.[42] It was indeed a time of renewed mission and conversion, but the 'awakening' was also a reassertion of the Evangelical 'imagined community' that had been created in the eighteenth century and pivoted on shared narratives, hymns, preaching and periodic revivals. A new semi-professionalized 'revivalism' emerged which aimed to disperse this religious energy broadly across church and society. The revivalist culture was powerful and intoxicating. It was also, in some ways, a mirage that deflected Evangelicals from grappling with some central questions of theological identity and ecclesiastical practice that would return to haunt them in the twentieth century.

THE PROMISES AND PITFALLS OF THE REVIVALIST AGE

When James Morrison, the founder of the Evangelical Union, began preaching universal atonement, he did so not from a speculative interest in predestination but out of a perceived missiological imperative. If salvation was a free gift, he reasoned, those to whom the Gospel was addressed must have the freedom to respond to its offer. That meant that Christ must have died for all, or otherwise the individual would be constrained in their free choice by the prior decision of God about who would be saved. The evangelistic strategy of the church must create the conditions in which individuals can exercise such freedom to make a choice for Christ.

Morrison was somewhat unusual for consciously propounding a theology that was self-consciously aligned with the trends within the Wesleyan-Arminian branch of the Evangelical coalition. In practice, however, his ideas became widely shared because of the growing purchase of the phenomenon known as 'revivalism' among Scottish Christians of all stripes. Indeed, Morrison had come to his views after reading the principal architect of nineteenth-century revivalism, the American Presbyterian, Charles Finney (1792–1875). In his seminal *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (originally given in 1834), Finney, who claimed to remain a Calvinist, argued that God had given human beings *methods* to win people to Christ. A revival, he claimed, is 'not a miracle' but 'a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means'.[43] It is still God who converts people, argued Finney, but God has entrusted to humans the tools by which he works. Finney therefore recommended the conscious and strategic deployment of evangelistic strategies to stimulate individ-

[42] J. E. Orr, *The Second Evangelical in Britain* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1949).

[43] C.G. Finney, *Lecture on Revivals of Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 12–13.

ual conversion and communal revival, including the often emotionally-laden Gospel song, the 'anxious seat' (a bench at the front of a meeting to which penitents were invited to move toward as a sign of their desire to respond to Christ), and the use of affective female testimony. These tools, embedded in large-scale meetings often led by a well-known professional 'revivalist' (often a lay evangelist) became the essence of late nineteenth-century 'revivalism'. Like Finney, many Scottish Calvinists believed they could reconcile this new emphasis on human methods and free will with their inherited confessions, although such reconciliation was normally at the expense of the latter.[44] Revivalism became a major force across the Scottish religious landscape for several generations and helped generate a powerful identity for the Evangelical coalition well into the twentieth century.[45]

Large-scale bursts of revival in this mode began in in Dundee and Kilsyth under itinerant mission of William Chalmers Burns (1815–1868) in 1839, and exploded during the international revival movement of 1859–61. The events associated with this movement triggered considerable growth within some of the existing denominations, such as the Brethren and the United Presbyterians.[46] Scottish revivalism was perfected in the visit of the Chicago shoe salesman-turned-preacher, D.L. Moody (1837–1899) during the 1870s.[47] Moody left a trail of philanthropic and missionary organisations in his wake across Scottish cities, helping the Free Church in particular experience demographic expansion.[48] This spirit of revivalism was supported by businessmen and enterprising ministers. It clearly

44 D.W. Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000), p. 46.

45 There is a growing literature on revivalism in Victorian Britain. See R. Carwardine, *Trans-atlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America 1790-1865* (London: Greenwood Press, 1978); Kent, *Holding the Fort*; Susan Sizer, *Gospel Hymns and Social Religion*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978); J. Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland 1859–1905* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000); K.S. Jeffrey, *When the Lord Walked the Land: The 1858–62 Revival in the North–East of Scotland* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002); D.W. Bebbington, *Victorian Religious Revivals: Culture and Piety in Local and Global Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

46 Drummond and Bulloch, *Church in Victorian Scotland*, p. 185.

47 D.W. Bebbington, 'Moody as Transatlantic Revivalist', in *Mr. Moody and the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. by T. George (London: T & T Clark, 2004), pp. 75–92 (pp. 78–9; 87). See also Holmes, *Religious Revivals*, pp. 69–76; Drummond and Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland*, p. 9

48 Drummond and Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland*, p. 14

exhibited Finney's belief that the 'right means' could stimulate wholesale spiritual awakening. 'We may not be able to command wealth or friends', said William Ross (1836–1904), the revivalist-minded pastor of Cowcaddens Free Church, 'But, so long as God is true, we can command a blessing.'[49]

Revivalism aimed not only for the conversion of individuals but also for an entire spiritual renovation of individuals and communities.[50] The tendrils of revivalism stretched out into beach missions, street preaching, orphanages, tract distribution societies, regular prayer meetings, meals for the poor, and the temperance movement.[51] Children's work in particular grew in the late nineteenth-century, pioneered by Payson Hammond (1830–1910), an American-born Free Church ministerial student whose work among children in the 1860s was the inspiration for the foundation of the Children's Special Service Mission in England in 1867, although the organization did not take root in Scotland until 1902.[52]

Revivalism also spawned another batch of new churches and denominations. This was the next burst of the Evangelical desire to recover an authentic New Testament Christianity, now self-consciously using revivalist techniques in an attempt to embed the Gospel within urban and socio-economically poor communities. These new late Victorian institutions included the Salvation Army which first established a Scottish presence in the Anderston district of Glasgow in 1879 and married robust revivalist fanfare with strong revivalist philanthropy;[53] the Faith Mission, founded in 1886, which aimed to bring revival to rural areas of Scotland and Ireland rooted in apostolic confidence that God would provide for all material needs of Christian missionaries; and the Church of the Nazarene, an American network of congregations which was in 1915 adopted as the denominational affinity of a number of Scottish churches who had, from 1906 onward, embraced the holiness teaching that a second blessing

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49 T. Lennie, *Glory in the Glen: A History of Evangelical Revivals in Scotland* (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 200), p. 91.

50 Drummond and Bulloch, *Church in Victorian Scotland*, p. 50. On the broader tendency for evangelistic enterprise to transmute into a campaigns for social and ethical reform (with an implicit critique of this tendency for its softening of religious distinctiveness) see: D, Edozain, 'The Secularization of Sin in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 62 (2011), 59–88.

51 Brown, *Religion and Society*, pp. 143–8.

52 J.M.F. Butler, 'Scripture Union', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p. 763. See also N. Scotland, *Apostles of the Spirit and Fire* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2009), pp. 165–186.

53 M. Harper, 'Salvation Army', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, pp. 743–4.

could lead to the elimination of sin.[54] Revival also spawned non-denominational mission halls such as the Carrubers Close Mission in Edinburgh, the Dundee Tent Mission, and the Tent Hall in Glasgow. Although these institutions were founded as mission centres they evolved (just like the Haldane 'preaching tabernacles' a century earlier) into *de facto* churches. Jock Troup (1896–1954), a product of this revivalist culture who became the redoubtable superintendent of the Tent Hall, did not try to hide the fact that mission halls offered an alternative expression of church that he believed broke with the established norms of Scottish Christianity: 'the highbrow stuff in some churches is a waste of time', he observed. 'Surely Jesus does not want all that formality.'[55]

Revivalism swept up the new and existing churches into a good deal of pragmatic unity. At a revival meeting in Perth in 1860 the sponsors boasted that they had 'buried sectarianism in the South Inch of Perth that day and saw no Christian weep over its grave.'[56] A 'revival' (the term was often used in this era in the typical American sense of meaning a large evangelistic rally at which a large number of conversions and rededications were expected to occur) in Motherwell in 1905–6 was jointly co-ordinated by several United Free churches, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, the 'Hallelujah Mission', the 'Mission Church', the Salvation Army and the Brethren. Even the national Kirk was caught up in revivalist fervour, a reminder that in many ways the Church of Scotland, although still officially marked with a vision for national Christianity, was nevertheless forced to compete for business using the tools of mass evangelism.[57] At Eyemouth, the Church of Scotland minister W.D. Kennedy thus noted that he was 'ever ready to unite with his brother-ministers in any movement which has for its object the common good of all'.[58] Of course, none of this 'delightful spirit of harmony'[59] meant that denominational differences ended, nor that there wasn't a certain degree of rivalry for

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54 T.A. Noble, 'Church of the Nazarene', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p. 186. These churches had from 1909 styled themselves as the 'Pentecostal Church of Scotland', although unlike the churches that came to use the descriptor 'Pentecostal', they did not teach that the second blessing would lead to glossolalia or other spiritual gifts. The change of name was necessitated by a need to distinguish their holiness teaching from the emerging Pentecostal movement.

55 G. J. Mitchell, *Revival Man: The Jock Troup Story* (Fearn Christian Focus, 2002), p. 182.

56 Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 55.

57 Lennie, *Glory in the Glen*, p. 106.

58 Ibid., p. 117.

59 Ibid., p. 127.

converts, but shared participation in revivalism was an occasion for unity and Evangelical solidarity.

The key to this unity was a decline in dogma. In late Victorian revivalism words were at a discount and emotional warmth was at a premium. 'There was often little preaching' it was noted of a 'revival' at Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh in 1905, under the guidance of Joseph Kemp (1871–1933).[60] The soft-peddling of theological complexity was widespread across Scottish Evangelicalism. In 1866 seventy-one leading figures of Scottish Evangelicalism called for a conference 'with the view of removing, as far as practicable, from among evangelical protestant Christians, conflicting interpretations of the doctrines and precepts taught in the word of God'. Appealing to the doctrine of Biblical perspicuity they hoped that unity on the plain meaning of Scripture would put an end to needless doctrinal debates and thus to denominational strife. Only such unity, they argued, would allow the church's 'evangelistic work to be blessed with full success'.[61] This appeal revealed the key to the unity that Scottish Evangelicals enjoyed in the late Victorian era: an evangelistic revivalism based on minimal dogmatics and a belief that the gold of Biblical Christianity could be easily and incontrovertibly distinguished from the dross of worthless theological debate.

This decline of dogma meant that revivalist ecumenicity hid, and may even have irritated, future Evangelical divergences. This was because the decline of a focus on the Biblical text, and the art of constructing coherent doctrinal statements based upon it, was not limited to revivalist-minded Evangelicals but was shared with the inter-related set of ideas and theologies that we know today as theological liberalism. Theological liberalism was at core a belief in the need to update Christian doctrine and to act with freedom, or liberality, toward inherited dogmas, in order to account for modern knowledge. This included new ideas about the historical accuracy of Scripture, theories of geological and biological evolution, and a growing commitment to the explanatory power of science and technology. Nineteenth-century theological liberalism claimed that Christianity must develop and change according to the times if it was to speak to contemporary society: this was, after all, an age of progress. Across Scottish Christianity in the late nineteenth-century 'a new spirit of tolerance and tentativeness, along with a growing preference for the apologetic as

[60] Ibid., p. 206; D.B. Murray, 'Kemp, Joseph William', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p. 454.

[61] *The Evangelical Repository*, 4th ser., 1 (1867), p. 67. The proposal under review was contained in the book *Unity of Creed, the Union of the Christian Church* (Edinburgh: Elliot, 1866).

opposed to the dogmatic spirit, rendered the hard-line orthodoxy of the traditionalists increasingly uncongenial.' [62]

On the one hand, of course, revivalist Christianity was a world away from these progressive themes that were being articulated through the theology faculties of Scotland and elsewhere in Europe and America. Revivalism is associated with an 'old-time Gospel' message that actually developed in conscious opposition to *avant-garde* scholarly theories. D.L. Moody is reported to have told a group of ministers: 'I don't see why you men are talking about "two Isaiah's" when half the people in the country do not know that there is one Isaiah yet.'[63] However, by subduing the pursuit of dogmatic or confessional truth, late Victorian Scottish revivalism actually helped precipitate the erosion of classical theological discipline among Evangelicals. Because of the deposit of Scottish church history this often meant an erosion of Calvinism, but it was not as if there were any great Arminian theologians emerging to take their place! Rather, doctrinal discussion of all stripes was relegated to a subsidiary role within Evangelicalism. It was a nice indication of this phenomenon that the Free Church accepted hymns in in 1879 largely as a result of the popularity of Sankey's *Sacred Hymns and Solos*.[64] Sankey's hymns were entirely non-Calvinistic and non-dogmatic: they were personal, emotive, yearning, and testimonial. Moody, meanwhile, focused his preaching on stories of happy reunions in heaven rather than preaching about sin and hell.[65] Just over a decade later, the Free Church passed a Declaratory Act that made official that which Sankey had unofficially announced and helped to perpetuate: that subscription to the Westminster Confession was no longer necessary to be a Free Church Minister (the United Presbyterians had already passed such an act in 1879). P. Carnegie Simpson (1865–1947) thus noted ironically that 'Moody's preaching of a "free Gospel" to all sinners did more to relieve Scotland generally ... of the old-hyper Calvinist doctrine of election and of what theologians call "a limited atonement" than did even the teaching of McLeod Campbell.'[66] Moody and Sankey may have preached the 'old time religion', but it was not as old as 1646.

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62 A.C. Cheyne, *Studies in Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), p. 131; A.C. Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1983), pp. 60–85.

63 J. W. Chapman, *The Life and Work of Dwight Lyman Moody* (London: James Nisbett & Co., 1900), republished at <http://www.biblebelievers.com/moody/20.html>, accessed 11 July, 2013.

64 Drummond and Bulloch, *Church in Victorian Scotland*, p. 187.

65 Ibid., p. 33.

66 I. Hamilton, 'Moody, D.L.', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, pp. 605–6 (p. 606); cf. Drummond and Bulloch, *Church in Late Victo-*

The revivalist project was not even necessarily about conversion, but often emphasized rededication of back-slid Christians and offered spiritual uplift for beleaguered disciples. Merging with Wesleyan Arminian focus on a 'second blessing', late Victorian revivalism stressed not only conversion, but 'crisis' and 'consecration'— a second, and perhaps regularly-recurring, crisis period of the Christian in which they broke through to a new level of spiritual immediacy and entire dedication to God. Accounts of revival meetings regularly emphasized that this 'blessing', rather than conversion of the penitent, was the main point of the meeting. As one minister wrote:

> In the revival meetings in the Institute there were happy choruses, hallelujahs, bursts of praise and wonderful prayers, but behind it all, and through it all, and sometimes in a somewhat overwhelming measure, there was that consciousness of the presence of a Higher Power that constitutes the difference between a real revival meeting and what is merely an imitation.[67]

This new emphasis on common encounters with the Spirit provided a unity based on charismatic experience with often startling similarities to the 'charismatic renewal movement' of a century later.

This emphasis on an empowering post-conversion experience that moved one to a higher plane of spiritual life was also the defining theme of the Keswick movement. Founded in 1875, the Keswick Convention, a yearly meeting of British Evangelicals held in the Lake District, absorbed the teaching of the American 'Higher Life' movement, which the predominantly Anglican Keswick audience interpreted as meaning a post-conversion experience that would lead to suppression of all known sin, a state that could be described as the 'victorious' Christian life. Many Scottish Evangelicals attended Keswick, and regional meetings were established.[68] From 1892 a Scottish National Convention was held regularly at Bridge of Allan, a venue chosen for its romantic vistas.[69]

Revivalism, and the broader 'higher life' movement from which it was nourished, each with their focus on religious passion and warmth, allowed those who wanted to embrace historical critical Biblical methodology or evolutionary social theory to do so unhindered while still enjoying and

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rian Scotland, p. 11.

67 Lennie, *Glory in the Glen*, p. 106.

68 Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth–Century England*, p. 73.

69 Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 307; I. Randall, *Evangelical Experiences: A Study in the Spirituality of English Evangelicalism* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), p. 273.

proclaiming a personal piety and love of Jesus.[70] One can observe this duality clearly in the life and thought of Alexander Whyte (1836–1921), minister of Free St George's, Edinburgh. Weighing in to support the right of Free College professor William Robertson Smith (1846–1894) to embrace higher critical ideas about the Old Testament, Whyte declaimed:

> The theological mind will stand still at its peril… No man who knows, or cares to know, anything of my personal sympathies and intellectual and religious leanings will accuse me of disloyalty to the Calvinistic, Puritan, and Presbyterian polity … but I find no disparity, no difficulty in carrying much of the best of our past with me in going out to meet and hail the new theological methods.[71]

Whyte was in this way a paradigm of theological liberalism. However, he also remained committed to the revivalist cause. Converted by D.L. Moody, he supported the cause of what today looks to be a very old-fashioned, pre-critical kind of missionary project, helping, for example, to organise the visit of American revivalist J. Wilbur Chapman (1859–1918) to Scotland in 1914.[72] Indeed, when Chapman could not attend a meeting, Whyte stepped in and, according to his biographer, 'spoke on the hymn "Just As I Am"—his favourite subject during those months—with an eloquence, a pathos, and a home-coming power which made this address stand out in the memory of some who knew him well as among the very greatest of his utterances'.[73] Note, of course, that he preached on a Gospel hymn, not on a Biblical text.

Such 'liberal revivalism' was also evident in the case of Henry Drummond (1851–1917), another convert of Moody and a notable student evangelist at the University of Edinburgh. Drummond's theological speculations borrowed from Spencerian evolutionism. He increasingly came under attack for downplaying original sin and the cross.[74] However, his concern to convert young people was thoroughly imbued with Evangelical revivalist fervour. 'Last Sunday', he wrote, 'after an hour's meeting, I sent all the small boys home, and kept two or three hundred of the big ones for

70 Cheyne, *Transforming of the Kirk*, pp. 81–3.

71 G.F. Barber, *The Life of Alexander Whyte* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1925), p. 219.

72 Ibid., p. 521,

73 Ibid., p. 556

74 D. W. Bebbington, 'Drummond, Henry (1851–1897)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn, May 2007, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8068>, accessed 11 July 2013.

a private talk about decision. We did not think it wise to cross-examine them individually, or put any undue pressure upon them, but I am sure many of them are thinking more seriously.'[75] Like Whyte, Drummond saw no conflict between conversionist, pietistic preaching and adoption of new theological ideas. The lack of dogmatic statements within revivalism allowed his conscience to rest easy on this point.[76]

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

As I noted in the first part of this article, anti-dogmatism united Evangelical revivalism with theological liberalism because both evangelical experimentalism and theological liberalism were relatives of the German theologian Friederich Schleiermacher (1768–1834). Both exhibited the same genetic trait that religion as something that inheres in the feelings, rather than in intellect.[77] This is not, of course, to suggest that all involved in revivalism or the holiness movement consciously embraced liberal theology or historical-critical methodology. However, taken as a whole, late Victorian revivalism allowed the questions posed by new scholarship and science to be submerged beneath an experiential unity rooted in common evangelistic endeavour and romantic conceptions of faith. In the end, this deferred some pressing questions about tradition, authority, conversion and the appropriate relationship between Christianity and modern thought to several generations later than that in which they should have been grappled with by the movement.

This *Zeitgeist* was not, of course, necessarily a declension from some older Evangelical purity. As I contended in the first part of this article, Evangelicalism was always a hybrid of pragmatism and pietism on the one hand, and Reformation Protestant confessionalism on the other. Indeed, Schleiermacher himself was *formed* by pietism in the first place (his father was a Lutheran Pietist pastor), the very same force that help shift Protestantism into its Evangelical gear during the eighteenth century. The late Victorian era, infused by cultural romanticism and popular sentimentality, was particularly conducive environment for the flourishing of the pietistic elements of the movement. However, as Victorian emotion and sentiment declined throughout British society in the first few decades of the twentieth century, these two elements of the movement started to diverge again, forcing upon Evangelicalism with a fresh urgency a question about its dual parentage: was it a movement of new light, or old dogma? A move-

75 Lennie, *Glory in the Glen*, p. 405

76 Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 90.

77 Spence, 'Unravelling (Part One)', p. 46.

ment of fresh expressions, or orthodox certainties? As Christian Britain decayed, the Evangelical identity crisis became more acute.[78]

[78] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 202–1.

Some Patient God Come Down to Woo: Barth, O'Connor, and the Analogy of Creation

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The great conceit of modernity is that it presumed to have resolved all myth and mystery. Modernist historiographies have told us that the myth of the flat earth was soundly defeated six-hundred years ago, thereby leading to the growth of presumption regarding humankind's ability to fathom all mystery.[1] Humanity's eyes had been opened as it perceived a newly spherical world. It became well known that the world is not flat, and therefore the old lie of perfectly horizontal horizons allowed for a new vision of the heights of human potential free from religious blindness. We had conquered the one myth, and now all myths must be uncovered like witches in an inquisition. Eventually this led to a growing gulf between 'the natural and the supernatural realms' in which it became more and more attractive to conceive of a watchmaker God, interested enough to create a world, but disinterested enough to remove himself from it.[2] In turn this gradually eroded our sense of perspective as the eye of reason became favored over the eye of faith. When liberal Protestant theology winked at Kantian subjectivism, one eye remained closed and half-blinded half of Christendom. Thus, since all things are flat when you look at them with only one eye, the victory of the spherical world was short-lived, and the Western world continued to stumble into—as T.S. Eliot put it—'an age which advances progressively backwards'.[3]

The dichotomy between the spiritual and the physical stands at odds with the biblical, and more specifically Pauline view. Indeed, Paul seems

1 Among the most prominent popularizers of this reading of history was Andrew Dickson White in his famous *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology and Christendom*, 2 vols (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1922). Recent scholarship has shown that this historiographical narrative is heavily an innovation of the nineteenth century. See Jeffery Burton Russell, *Inventing the Flat Earth: Columbus and Modern Historians* (New York: Praeger, 1991); Edward Grant, *God and Reason in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), esp. pp. 342-44.

2 Hans Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 4.

3 T.S. Eliot, 'Choruses From "The Rock"', in *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1971), p. 108.

particularly concerned to guard against it when he writes his epistle to the Romans. In the beginning of the letter, he opens his great argument by situating it in the context of all of creation. Paul describes how

> [t]he wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people … since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.… (Rom. 1.18-19)[4]

Paul's confidence in the clarity of the revelation as it is evident in creation is startling. In our age, we are not used to making the connection between mundane momentary encounters and the grand, specific claims of revelation. Where then, is such a view represented in this present era? Where are the theologians and poets who, with Paul, espouse a view of creation in which God is not distant or absent, but integrally and unavoidably involved?

It was in response to this problem that two figures from radically different corners of the Western world did their work. Karl Barth (1886-1968) and Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964) could not have been situated more differently. Barth was a Swiss protestant theologian possessing refined German academic parlance, while O'Connor was a American author from rural Georgia who spoke with a considerable drawl.[5] It is not at all likely that Barth knew anything of O'Connor, and O'Connor's exposure to Barth was favourable but limited.[6] However, in spite of this,

4 All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011) unless otherwise noted.

5 Apparently, when O'Connor was attempting to switch from a major in journalism to the prestigious Iowa Writer's Workshop, her Georgia accent was so thick that the representative from the department could not understand what she was asking. 'Embarrassed, I asked her to write down what she had just said on a pad. She wrote, "My name is Flannery O'Connor. I am not a journalist. Can I come to the Writer's Workshop?"…Like Keats who spoke Cockney but wrote the purest sounds in English, Flannery spoke a dialect beyond instant comprehension but on page her prose was imaginative, tough, alive…'. Paul Engle, quoted in Flannery O'Connor, *The Complete Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 1971), p. vii.

6 See Ralph C. Wood, *Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), p. 10, n.7. Wood continues, 'The list of her library books contains only Evangelical Theology, the lectures Barth gave on his single visit to America in 1962.' I have chosen to use O'Connor as an illustration of Barth's thought for two major reasons. First, there is an evi-

there is a remarkable coherence between the theologies of both figures. In a letter, O'Connor wrote that she liked 'Old Barth … he throws the furniture around', and in her diocesan newspaper, she commended Barth to Catholic readers: 'There is little or nothing in this book that the Catholic cannot recognize as his own.'[7]

This article will argue that, in response to a significant portion of modernity which had unduly denied the active involvement of God within his creation, Barth and O'Connor presented a view of creation in which the common things of this world are infused with God's specific, active presence. To argue this, I will first briefly sketch the progression whereby modernity came to this radical division between the empirical and the theological. Second, I will look at how Barth and O'Connor conceived of God's involvement in creation. Third, since enlightenment thinkers—along with Barth and O'Connor—remain aware of a central conflict in the world, we will look at where Barth and O'Connor identify the locus of this conflict. I will conclude by suggesting that Barth and O'Connor's response to modernity may offer a way forward for those living with postmodernity.

PUTTING A WEDGE IN REALITY

A significant part of the problem can be traced to the dissolution of the link between the empirical and the ontological. During the Enlightenment, philosophers such as Immanuel Kant began to argue for a hard and fast division between the things of this world and the involvement of God.[8] To philosophers like Kant, God might have created the world, but his continual involvement was at least irrelevant, and at most impos-

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dent link between O'Connor and the work of Barth, suggesting that she was either directly influenced by him or came independently to similar conclusions, and second, because it seems that Barth's own view of creation resists abstraction, and thus finds credibility in being articulated literarily.

7 Flannery O'Connor, *The Correspondence of Flannery O'Connor and Brainard Cheneys* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986), p. 181; Quoted in Wood, p. 10 n.7.

8 Kant's metaphysic, described by some as 'transcendental idealism', fed naturally into Schleiermacher's de-emphasis on revelation as a means of authority, since it is something that originates necessarily outside of 'spatiotemporal appearances', and elevates subjective experience as the most credible basis for religion. Karl Ameriks, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed., ed. by Robert Audi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), s.v. 'Kant, Immanuel'. See also Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by J.M.D. Meiklejohn (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1934), p. 453.

sible. This posed a serious challenge to theologians of the day, frightening them with the prospect of a now obsolete religion. If miracles, revelation, and the incarnation could not be considered authoritative, what need was there for a Christian faith? The effort of Friedrich Schleiermacher was therefore commendable, but unfortunate for subsequent generations of Protestant thought. In response to the looming threat of an obsolete Christianity, he led a pious retreat into subjective faith, qualified only by a 'feeling of absolute dependence' on an ambiguously defined 'Deity'.[9]

By the twentieth century, this disbelief in the miraculous led theologians such as Rudolf Bultmann to contend with the very person of Christ, asking who Jesus could have been if miracles were now out of the question. Since 'modern science does not believe that the course of nature can be interrupted or, so to speak, perforated, by supernatural powers', it must be asked who Christ actually was if not a miracle-working son-of-God.[10] Like Schleiermacher, Bultmann's intention to develop an *apologia* for the relevance of Christian faith was commendable, but at too high of a cost. To dichotomize the natural and the supernatural was to silence the whole canon of revelation, that is, the books of creation and scripture. What is more, by silencing the canon, such a view left man and creation standing at odds with a distant and mysterious god, rendering him incapable of interpreting the acts of creation which seem ambivalent to him. For Kant, Schleiermacher, and Bultmann, if a fissure is identified, it is between God and his creation, not between man and God. In the end, the modern world was left with an irrelevant, impotent Christ who was incapable of pacifying an increasingly violent world.

It was providential, then, that in the first half of the twentieth century, the tide began to change. Many theologians were becoming aware of what Jean Daniélou referred to as the, 'rupture between theology and life'.[11] For Barth, this 'rupture' was intolerable, and he came to argue for a view of creation which sought a more direct link between the physical world and theology. This ultimately led him to describe the relationship between creation and its Creator as 'analogy.'[12] For Barth, creation was 'the external

9 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), p. 17.

10 Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 15.

11 Quoted in Boersma, p. 2.

12 Quoted in Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*, trans. by Edward T. Oakes (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), p. 165. In using this term, Barth seems to be adapting Aquinas's idea of the 'analogy' in which 'the matter of the heavenly bodies and of the elements is not the same, except by analogy, in so far as they agree in the character

ground of the covenant'— the necessary condition for the entire redemptive narrative of Scripture.[13] In the same way that creation was created as the 'external ground of the covenant', it also granted creation its eschatology, the final end-goal of all of creation—which is grace, as it is embodied in Jesus Christ. Balthasar described Barth's view of grace in creation as being like a 'magnet' toward which all created things are oriented. Thus, the spiritual and the physical are not two separate spheres, but integrally joined by way of analogy, climaxing toward a divinely orchestrated gracious end.

READING A SMALL HISTORY IN A UNIVERSAL LIGHT

There are at least two implications to Barth's view of creation. First is that God possesses an inevitable and unavoidable immanence. '[I]n virtue of its nature [as the creation of God], it is radically incapable of serving any other purpose, but placed from the very first at the disposal of His grace.'[14] Creation possesses 'no independent teleology.'[15] Since creation is the product of a God with particular qualities and goals, it resembles his purposes in a ubiquitous manner. It is not accidental or arbitrary, but highly intentional and instrumental for bringing about God's purposes. In the words of Paul, '*All things* work together [*panta synergei*] for good, for those who are called according to his purpose' (Rom. 8:28, italics mine). The empirical world is not alienated from God in the same way that humans are. Indeed, it was 'subjected to futility' as a result of human sin (Rom. 8:20; see also Gen. 3:17), but for Barth, God still utilizes it as a vital means of revelation, in concert with the revelation of his Son. This represents a significant expansion of Calvin's description of the way in which God uses creation:

> [S]ince we are creatures who always creep on the ground, cleave to the flesh, and, do not think about or even conceive of anything spiritual, he condescends to lead us to himself even by these earthly elements, and to set before us in the flesh a mirror of spiritual blessings.[16]

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of potency'. Presumably, this means that there is a semblance between 'the heavenly bodies' and 'the elements' while each possesses its own ontology (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, Q.66 Art. 2).

[13] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, Study edn (London: T & T Clark, 2009), III.1, p. 96.

[14] Ibid., p. 98.

[15] Ibid., p. 93.

[16] John Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian religion*, ed. by John T. McNeill, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press,

For Barth, God does not merely condescend. Instead, he places himself, as it were, directly in the downcast sightline of his purblind creatures.

Within the work of O'Connor, this idea of God's immanence is pervasive, and seen in her use of natural elements situated within a highly regionalized setting. As an American writer from the Deep South, this was 'not a matter of so-called local color', but the use of a specific region was vital because it relates to, 'those qualities that endure regardless of what passes, because they are related to the truth. It lies very deep. In its entirety, it is known only to God…'.[17] In other words, the minutiae of a particular place matter because they are related to the things of eternity. A careful balance is struck here between God's pervasive presence in his world and our ability to discern how he is present. It remains essentially a *mystery*.[18] The task then, for the artist and theologian alike, is to read 'a small history in a universal light.'[19] Thus, in her story, 'The River', the common sight of a slow-moving, muddy river is imbued with sacramental meaning. An itinerant Protestant preacher performing baptisms declares it to be, 'the rich red river of Jesus' Blood'. He continues,

> All rivers flow from that one River and go back to it like it was the ocean sea and if you believe, you can lay your pain in that River and get rid of it because that's the River that was made to carry sin. It's a river full of pain itself, pain itself, moving toward the Kingdom of Christ, to be washed away, slow, you people, slow as this here old red water river round my feet.[20]

In the mouth of a common preacher, O'Connor voices a view of nature that is profoundly tied to the theological. Life and theology are inextricably linked. Here, a counterpart to Barth's 'analogy' is seen in the relation between the common things of creation—a river—and the eternal reality of the atonement.[21]

2001), IV.xiv.3.

17 Flannery O'Connor, *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1969), pp. 57-8.

18 O'Connor advocates what she calls 'anagogical vision' which she defines as 'the kind of vision that is able to see different levels of reality in one image or situation'. She goes on to liken this interpretive method to the three-level medieval model of scriptural interpretation. Ibid., p. 72.

19 Ibid., p. 58.

20 Ibid., 'The River' in *Collected Works* (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1988), p. 162.

21 Barth, quoted in Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, p. 165.

THE CHRISTOLOGICAL BULL

This brings us to the second implication of Barth's view of creation. For him, the two realities of creation and God are related supremely in the person of Christ. Balthasar describes Barth's understanding of this relationship as an hourglass, 'whose two contiguous vessels (God and the creature) met at the narrow passage at the centre (Jesus Christ)'.[22] By emphasizing the person of Christ as the *telos* of all of creation, Barth avoids the danger of pantheistic spirituality. Revelation remains primary, but as Hans Boersma puts it 'at the same time, the gift of supernatural revelation through Christ made it legitimate to turn the hourglass upside down, so that nature, too, made its genuine contribution, in and through Christ'.[23] Jesus Christ is both the beginning and the goal of creation, and is therefore fulfilled in him.[24] Thus, where many have stopped at a vague notion of the existence of God, conceding the existence of a 'deity' but hesitating to ascribe anything specific to it, Barth describes a creation which cannot be fully understood apart from the particular person of Jesus Christ, the nexus between the creature and God.[25]

O'Connor utilized a similar principle in her short story 'Greenleaf'. Here, a rather mundane natural element—a common bull—is used christologically. He is constantly present, steadily chewing the grass, and watching the unregenerately selfish Mrs. May, 'like some patient god come down to woo her'.[26] The climactic redemptive scene has the Bull charging her, tenderly goring her 'like a wild tormented lover', while 'One of his horns sank until it pierced her heart and the other curved around her side and held her in an unbreakable grip.... [S]he had the look of a person whose sight has been suddenly restored but who finds the light unbearable.'[27] In step with Barth, O'Connor has not hesitated to fill a nat-

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22 Quoted in Boersma, p. 5; See also Balthasar, p. 197.

23 Boersma, p. 5.

24 See Barth, p. 231.

25 It should be noted here that while Barth identifies the person of Christ as essential to an understanding of creation, it remains unclear how this is the case. This stands in some tension with the work of scholars such as N.T. Wright who have made it their aim to understand the significance of Christ as a Jew living in first century Palestine (although Wright does make considerable effort to explicate the contemporary relevance of a close reading of the cultural context of Jesus); e.g. N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 467-76. See also Lucien Legrand, *The Bible on Culture: Belonging or Dissenting* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), pp. 71-112.

26 O'Connor, 'Greenleaf' in *Collected Works*, p. 501.

27 Ibid., p. 523.

ural event, as unusual as it may be, with specific christological content. She does this in a way that is more than mere hyperbole or metaphor. If the christological meaning were removed or downplayed in the story, the resolution would have disappeared, and it would become a mere morality tale. However, as it is, the story is saved by inserting this moment of grace, saturated with the particulars of a christological reality. It is the God of Hosea as a jealous lover reclaiming what is His in Mrs. May. Because God took on flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, thereby situating himself in the hardened particulars of time, body, and place, the bull is able to act christologically (although perhaps unbeknownst to itself) by interrupting Mrs. May's existence with the corresponding hardened particulars of divinity. The incarnation of Christ gives new meaning to an otherwise irrelevant, violent event, and it becomes Mrs. May's redemption. The bull is now able to make 'its genuine contribution, in and through Christ'.[28] By doing this, O'Connor takes Barth's christologically focused creation and plants it within a provincial setting, thereby showing Christ's presence—with all of his redemptive attributes—in a setting far-removed from the dust of Palestine.

HEALING THE FISSURE

A problem remains, however. It is fine to argue that God remains actively involved in every part of creation in specific ways, but this does not get at the heart of the issue. Whereas modernity had tended to locate a gap between God and his creation, Barth and O'Connor both locate this in the fissure between God and man. As we have already seen, because Barth portrays creation as not possessing any 'independent teleology' and because God is himself the single sovereign over all creation, 'He does not have to do with the subject of another nor a lord in his own right, but with His own property, with the work of His will and achievement… the creature is destined, prepared and equipped to be a partner of this covenant.'[29] Humans then, are unique as the only creature (with the possible exception of angels) who have rebelled against this exclusive authority, and are now embroiled in a conflict between, 'its Creator on God's side,' and 'its own God-given nature on its own'.[30] Elsewhere, Barth writes, 'Only in error and falsehood, and to its own hurt, can [the creature] become untrue to its origin in the Word of God.'[31] Thus, even though the creature operates under the delusion that there is another authority which can be appealed

28 Boersma, p. 5.
29 Barth, *CD*, III.1, p. 93, 95-6;
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., *CD*, III.1, p. 110.

to, there is only one end which all things must serve. There is, as it were, only one source of gravity, to which all things eventually must either settle or come crashing down. Because of this, the healing must begin at the level of the conflict between God and man, not God and all of creation. And so Barth locates the incarnation as a second act of creation.[32]

Creation then, not only 'promises, proclaims, and prophesies the covenant,' but, 'prefigures, and … anticipates it, without being identical to it'.[33] Thus, in Genesis 1-2, we are not merely looking for 'Jesus Christ as the goal, but Jesus Christ as the beginning', as the solution to the rupture between God and man, and so the rupture between 'theology and life'.[34] This ultimately leads Barth to advocate a view of all of creation in which, by way of analogy (as opposed to directly), all of creation is intrinsically related to the person of Christ, who divinely heals the rift between God and man.[35]

In O'Connor, the conflict between God and man is likewise seen as the primary issue, bearing consequence in man's alienation from creation. Self-righteous characters who presume they are right with God by virtue of their sensibility appear frequently. A prominent example is that of Ruby Turpin in 'Revelation'. Throughout the story, which takes place in a doctor's office waiting room (itself evocative of a kind of eschatological purgatory), Turpin is portrayed as an essentially decent person, free of the vices that afflict the less scrupulous. In fact, Turpin herself is fond of expounding on her decency in relation to other people.

> Sometimes Mrs. Turpin occupied herself at night naming the classes of people. On the bottom of the heap were most colored people, not the kind she would have been if she had been one, but most of them; then next to them—not above, just away from—were the white trash; then above them were the homeowners, and above them the home-and-land owners, to which she

32 This also seems to be the point which John makes by deliberately alluding to the Genesis account in the opening lines of his gospel; see John 1:1-18.

33 Barth, *CD*, III.1, p. 232. It is at this point that Barth appears to espouse something like the natural theology he famously rejected. However, he may actually avoid such an ironic error by insisting so tenaciously on the preeminence of Christ. Whereas natural theologies might allow for a 'bottom-up' view of revelation, in which it becomes possible to know God through creation without reference to Christ, Barth sees this an impossibility. Creation bears an essential testimony of God, but it only fully occurs in Jesus Christ. In addition to being the end and goal of creation, Jesus also serves as a kind of interpreter of it, without whom the creation would finally remain incomprehensible and arbitrary.

34 Ibid.; Jean Daniélou quoted in Boersma, p. 2.

35 See Barth, *CD*, III.1, p. 232.

> and Claud belonged. Above she and Claud were people with a lot of money and much bigger houses and much more land. But here the complexity of it would begin to bear in on her, for some of the people with a lot of money were common and ought to be below she and Claud.… Usually by the time she had fallen asleep all the classes of people were moiling and roiling around in her head, and she would dream they were all crammed together in a box car, being ridden off to be put in a gas oven.[36]

Like Barth, O'Connor understood that the essence of sin lay not in one's lack of moral decency, but in the tyrannical hunger to be 'his own source and standard, the first and the last, the object of a *diligere propters eipsum* [loving on account of its very self]'.[37] To do this is to deny one's own creatureliness. In spite of her decency, Turpin's reconstruction of reality cannot help caving in on itself, ending with everyone, herself included, 'crammed together in a box car, being ridden off to be put in a gas oven'. The most telling scene comes in the end as Turpin finds herself alienated from creation surrounding her as she finally notices the 'invisible cricket choruses', singing in unison with, 'the voices of the souls climbing upward into the starry field and shouting hallelujah'.[38] As the redemptive work of God continues all around her, she finally comes to realize that both creation and the Creator are working for one thing, the redemption of depraved humanity.

CONCLUSION

In our own day, the solution to our partial blindness might be in further developing such a view as Barth and O'Connor's. Whether modernity continues to blind one eye, or postmodernity desperately and reactively clenches both eyes shut—irascibly insisting that specific knowledge of God is arrogance—both writers point to a compelling solution. Where the strength of their view was in insisting that the spiritual still mattered to the age of Bultmann (not to mention Russell, Dewey, *et al*), their value in our own day might be in the insistence that true spirituality is not the vague 'feeling of absolute dependence,' but is found in the calloused feet of a God who joined sinew to bone to flesh in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.[39] It may be that by speaking of a creation that is set up with one

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36 O'Connor, 'Revelation', in *Collected Stories*, p. 636.

37 Barth, *CD*, IV.1, p. 421.

38 O'Connor, 'Revelation' in *Collected Stories*, p. 654.

39 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, trans. by John Oman (Louisville Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), p. 106.

purpose in mind—the redemptive covenant work of God—and that such a creation is fulfilled supremely in the person of Christ, the infirm eyes may begin to see, and we might begin to develop vision that is deeper and more honest than we had thought possible.

It may take the Word spitting into the earthy mud and caking it into our eyes that we will begin to see that the world is not merely a flat, empirical reality, nor is it a treacherous, superstitious place, haunted at every turn by fickle and ethereal spiritualities, but it is the very external basis of the covenant. With both eyes open, we will begin to perceive how every molecule is bent on the purpose of the Father, and our blinding sin purged of its ignorance and pride. This is to do more justice to the person and work of Jesus Christ, 'for from him and through him and for him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen' (Romans 11:36).

Contingent Authority: Karl Barth as a Resource for an Accessible Concept of Biblical Authority

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Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. (Hebrews 1:1-3)[1]

INTRODUCTION

Articulating a compelling account of biblical authority is difficult in its own right; that difficulty, however, is exacerbated in a time when there is no certainty as to whether a thing called 'authority' exists. By offering a suggestion for biblical authority, this paper will carve a path between two conversations. The first is the broad contrast between Scripture and tradition: while Protestants have been keen to emphasize the centrality of Scripture, its counterparts in the Catholic and Orthodox traditions have wished to point out that Scripture is a part of a history and context which cannot be divorced from an idealistic set of texts. The second regards Barth scholarship in particular: on one end of an extreme continuum Barth is seen as something of a compromised modern who fails to abide by classic evangelical dogma; on the other end, he is regarded as a naïve patron of untenable orthodoxy. That being so, this paper will argue for a concept of biblical authority, developing resources drawn from Barth, that is contingent and public in nature, maintaining the historically conditioned aspect of the text and its unique and trustworthy character. By highlighting the realism underpinning his doctrine of revelation, Barth's theology of the Word will provide the foundation upon which the notion of contingency will remain. The degree to which Scripture is authoritative is exactly commensurate with the degree to which it participates in the truth of God's own Word. Therefore, investigation of Scripture's claims—

1 All Scripture references are cited from the NRSV. This paper was presented at the 15th Edinburgh Dogmatics Conference hosted by Rutherford House, 2-5 September 2013.

be it historical or otherwise—is legitimized by the actuality of God's revelation, making possible a view of witness that is essentially one of humble stewardship owed fully to the grace of God.

REVELATION, WORD OF GOD, OR SCRIPTURE?

Those with little acquaintance with Karl Barth have perhaps heard—whether quoted favourably or otherwise—that in his thought, the Bible becomes the Word of God. In programmatic form, Barth provides the following thesis in *Church Dogmatics* I/2: 'Scripture is holy and the Word of God, because by the Holy Spirit it became and will become to the Church a witness to divine revelation.'[2] This characteristic distinction between the pages of Scripture and the Word of God finds its origin in Barth's infamous turn from liberal sensitivities to the object with which theology

[2] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. by G. W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, 4 vols in 13 parts (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956-1975), I/2, p. 457 [hereafter referred to as *CD*, followed by volume/part and page number]. This paper will work primarily from *CD* as it is the most mature statement of Barth's theology and has been so influential, although *CD* does not represent a singular static perspective. Hans Urs von Balthasar's important work on Barth's theology established a long lasting reading that suggested he had two critical transition points: from the theology of his youth towards 'Dialectical Theology;' and then again towards a theology of analogy; see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie* (Köln: J. Hegner, 1951). Bruce McCormack has challenged the legitimacy of so distinguishing this shift from dialectic to analogy: *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectic Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). For postmodern readings of Barth, see William Stacey Johnson, *The Mystery of God: Karl Barth and the Postmodern Foundations of Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997); Walter Lowe, *Theology and Difference: The Wound of Reason* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993); Graham Ward, *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For postliberal readings of Barth, see George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984); Hans W. Frei, *Types of Christian Theology*, ed. George Hunsinger, W. C. Placher (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1992). Joseph Mangina makes a sound suggestion when he says, 'Seeking to bring him into conversation with Kant, Hegel, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, or Derrida is a worthwhile endeavour, and the reader who poses such questions will not go away disappointed. Yet it must be admitted that Barth himself would likely have been frustrated by the whole debate. One can imagine him borrowing a line from St Paul, arguing that neither modernity nor postmodernity matters, but the new creation (Galatians 6:15).' Joseph L. Mangina, *Karl Barth: Theologian of Christian Witness* (Louisville: John Knox, 2004), p. x.

is rightly concerned. By reading Paul anew in 1916, which would manifest itself in his commentary on Romans (first edition 1919, and a reworked second in 1921), he found that the Bible introduces 'not how we find the way to him [God], but how he has sought and found the way to us.'[3] For Barth, the object of liberal theology was nothing but speech about human speech about God. In contradistinction, ecclesial discourse owes its existence not to epistemic difficulties surmounted but to the acting presence of a free God, namely 'revelation'.

A Controversial Distinction

This distinction between Scripture and the Word of God by means of a theology of revelation has been subjected to scrutiny, to be sure. The most notable criticism comes from his contemporary Dietrich Bohnoeffer who suggested Barth's flight to an impervious realm failed to give a faithful account of earthly human knowing, calling his doctrine 'positivism of revelation.'[4] Describing the insistence with which Barth appealed to the centrality of revelation, Tillich suggests his approach is 'a demonic absolutism which throws the truth like stones at the heads of people, not caring whether they can accept it or not'.[5] Wolfhart Pannenberg accuses Barth of falling into the vices of that liberal tradition he so vehemently rejected by placing the justification of faith on a distanced idea of revelation, never actually escaping the subjective.[6] From an evangelical perspective, Donald Bloesch voices concern with the thinkers once known as 'Neo-Orthodox': he suggests their distinction between the Word and its forms 'in which the divine word and the human word are only loosely

3 Karl Barth, from his *Wort Gottes*, as cited by Eberhard Busch, *The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth's Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), p. 20. Barth was among others who joined a unified critique of 'neo-Protestantism', Thurneysen, Bultmann, Gogarten, Brunner, and Merz, and from this group came the journal *Zwischen den Zeiten*, ibid., p. 23. See also Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, trans. by John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), p. 173.

4 This is a translation of the German *Offenbarungspositivismus*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, ed. by Eberhard Bethge (New York: McMillan Company, 1962), pp. 163-4. See also Simon Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism? Barth's Earliest Theology and the Marburg School* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); William Kuhns, *In Pursuit of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Dayton: Pflaum, 1967), p. 200.

5 John Webster, *Barth* (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 14.

6 Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991-1998), 1, p. 44.

associated and never function in an indissoluble unity' and remains unsubstantiated.[7]

While it would be fruitful to pursue these various issues in their own right, my present concern is to substantiate the perspective that Karl Barth's distinction between Scripture and the Word of God is not a flight into the subjective, nor a manoeuvre to evade historical criticism, nor yet, most importantly, a mere epistemic concern. Rather, Barth's distinction is an attempt to respond faithfully to reality itself, more specifically reality as it has been revealed by God.

As Response to Reality

The decision to distinguish revelation as that which ultimately cannot be contained in Scripture is anything but a self-preserving ploy in the face of biblical fallibility. Rather, if one means by the word 'God' the living, self-contained, and triune God of Jesus of Nazareth, and sustains that meeting him is conditioned upon the act of this God in the present, then one is required to reflect forever that reality in one's speech. As Bruce McCormack elaborates on Barth's articulation of the doctrine of revelation,

> Like the Chalcedonian formula, it points out errors on the right hand and on the left without giving positive expression to the truth in the middle. And the reason is quite simply that the truth in the middle can only be expressed by God.[8]

This is not to limit the significance of Scripture by any means; rather it is to establish the ontological precondition of Scripture, a conviction borne from an encounter with God. Barth explains:

> If we want to think of the Bible as a real witness of divine revelation, then clearly we have to keep two things constantly before us and give them their due weight: the limitation and the positive element, its distinctiveness from revelation, in so far as it is only a human word about it, and its unity with it, in so far as revelation is the basis, object, and content of this word.[9]

Already, the participatory link between Scripture and its referent is recognized while being anchored in the actuality of God in his act of self-reve-

7 Donald G. Bloesch, *Holy Scripture: Revelation, Inspiration, and Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), p. 31. Bloesch does admit that this criticism is less true of Barth.

8 McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectic Theology*, p. 464.

9 *CD*, I/2, p. 463.

lation.[10] This implicit tension, the possibility and impossibility of human testimony, comprises the stimulus for a theology that is 'dialectical'. Joseph Mangina says: 'To pursue "dialectical theology" is thus to acknowledge the inadequacy of our language, but at the same time to affirm the utter necessity of bearing witness.'[11] In this way, Scripture alone, as a deposit, cannot be regarded as revelation as such, for it is required that God act upon the hearer of Scripture to make comprehension—or more specifically, faith—possible: hence an objective and subjective component in the historic appearance of Jesus and the reception of this word respectively.[12] Barth develops the conviction that faith requires an act of God into a trinitarian formula. God the Father reveals himself in his Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is that which awakens the life of faith in the believer: in lyrical form, Barth summarizes his account as follows: 'God reveals himself. He reveals himself through himself. He reveals himself.'[13] With an additional example, one can appreciate the central concern of Barth's foundational distinction between Scripture and the Word of God as an attempt to reflect the necessity of God's free activity in the hearing of the gospel. Regarding the notion of inspiration, Barth confirms that as witness, Scripture is indeed shaped, in form and content, by the Holy Spirit. He says the Spirit 'is described as the real author of what is stated or written in Scripture', and speaking of the prophets and apostles he says 'they speak in the place and under the commission of Him who sent them'.[14] Therefore, in order to sustain his original conviction that God's action is the presupposition of faith with this more traditional concept of inspiration, Barth uses the term *theopneustia*, a term derived from the verb used

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10 In affirming that Frei did appreciate the dialectic component of Barth, McCormack quotes him on the occasion of Barth's death: 'The ground of the actuality of the incarnation, of its ontological possibility, and of our being able to think about it, are one and the same. That God related himself to us means that it was possible, that he must be himself eternally in a way that is congruent with his relating himself to us contingently… The possibility follows from the actuality.' In *Theology and Narrative*, quoted in Bruce L. McCormack, *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), p. 160

11 Mangina, *Karl Barth*, p. 16.

12 McCormack, *Orthodox and Modern*, p. 110. McCormack puts it this way, 'Thus conceived, revelation is seen to have two moments: an objective moment (God veils himself in a creaturely medium) and a subjective moment (God gives us faith to know and understand what is hidden in the veil). The objective moment is christological; the subjective moment, pneumatological.'

13 *CD*, I/1, p. 296

14 *CD*, I/2, p. 505.

in 2 Timothy 3:16, to account for both emphases.[15] These examples are intended to demonstrate that Barth's doctrine of revelation is first and foremost a response to reality, not a conceptual or existential safeguard.

The Christological Contour of that Reality

Having argued for a thoroughgoing realism, Barth's presentation of this material in *CD* I/2 has been recognizably abstract in character.[16] In fact, Reformed theologian Klaas Runia critiques Barth's approach as a

> dogmatical construction. First a principle is established, namely, the actualistic conception of revelation, and then all the other data and facts are adapted to this principle. It is noteworthy that Barth gives hardly any attention to the *Bible's own testimony* about itself.[17]

In a recently published article entitled 'The Doctrine of Inspiration and the Reliability of Scripture', Katherine Sonderegger addresses this concern in her fine treatment of Barth's later Christology which would support the contours of Barth's earlier cerebral prose. In *CD* IV, Barth attends the significance of the resurrection under the heading 'The Verdict of the Father'. For Barth, the resurrection effectively validated the life and death of Jesus Christ in a juridical act, and therefore this is the Father's declaration that he is the Saviour of the world. The one with whom the radiance of the Father has been shown has at all times condescended to a fallen creation. Sonderegger says this is,

> to act when all creaturely actions are impossible. Like the virgin birth, the resurrection of Jesus is a historical event where the initiative and control of creaturely, historical agents are ruled out, and the divine agency manifest.[18]

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15 Ibid. Writers of Scripture wrote as *auctores secundarii*.

16 McCormack, *Orthodox and Modern*, p. 202. McCormack argues that Barth's work here is platonic in character and critically different from the Christology following his decisive work on election.

17 Klaas Runia, *Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 109.

18 Katherine Sonderegger, 'The Doctrine of Inspiration and the Reliability of Scripture', in *Thy Word is Truth: Barth on Scripture*, ed. by George Hunsinger (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), p. 26. In the words of Barth himself: regarding the resurrection, 'it was the very model of a gracious act of God, the Son of God as such being active only as the recipient, God the Father alone mediates His action and revelation. This made the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the very first the sure and unequivocally transcendent place, the true other side here on this side, from which we can look back with enlightened and indisputable assurance on the first act of God.' *CD*, IV/1, p. 356.

The form and content of Barth's earlier concerns are derivative of the coming of the Son of God, who has made eternal life and fellowship with God possible. She notes that 'the earlier categories of revelation are now made ontological and concrete'.[19]

Dependence on the 'Power' of God

To recap, this distinction between Scripture and the Word of God, anchored in a recognition of revelation, is a concern to reflect upon reality as it is. The necessity of God's activity in the right hearing of the Word is a theme found in the New Testament itself. In Romans, Paul expresses concern to carry out his obligation to both Greek and barbarian, wise and foolish, yet under the singular condition of proclaiming the gospel. His central orientation for both circumstances is proclamation, a medium congenial to the nature of his subject which is news (Rom. 1:14-15). As he continues, he says 'I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith' (v. 16).

Moreover, Paul expounds his concerns to the Corinthian community. In response to disputes over reputable leaders, Paul despairs that he should in any way contribute to the church's obsession with persons. He continues that had he spoken in such a way as to make the poignancy of the gospel contingent upon his abilities, namely through 'eloquent wisdom', he would in fact rob his hearers of the power of God and nullify the 'cross of Christ' (1 Cor. 1:17-18). For it is not by the word of Paul that humanity can be saved, nor it is it by the word of Paul that the cosmos may be sustained (cf. v. 13); it is the Word of God which makes possible that which with humanity is impossible. As Paul emphasizes, the cross, not to reiterate the resurrection, is a monument to God's thoroughgoing salvific prerogative. Jesus speaking from his resurrected body commissions the apostles to a ministry of witness to the world and says, 'you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth' (Acts 1:8). The mere potentiality of their witnessing ability is legitimated alone by the power of the Holy Spirit, both to bring forth a true word (cf. Eph. 6:19; John 16:13) and make present the Christ of the message (cf. John 3:1-15; 9:1-41).

THUS SAYS WHO?

How then is one to regard the words of Scripture, the human text, as the Word of God and, as pertains to the present concern, therefore authorita-

[19] Sonderegger, 'The Doctrine of Inspiration', p. 26.

tive? Again, many trajectories could be followed in response to this question, but this paper will restrict itself to a singular focus: namely, that the authority and trustworthiness of Scripture is exactly commensurate with the degree to which it participates in the truth.

Barth on Historical Criticism

Barth's concern with historical criticism was in continuity with his understanding of revelation in the preceding argument. Naturally, this would by no means minimize the historical character of the text, and therefore exegesis includes appropriate methods of inquiry commensurate with that discipline.[20] The basis of Scripture as witness lies in its historical continuity with the supreme revelation in Jesus. Barth suggests that with regard to Scripture one should maintain,

> the true humanity of the person of Jesus Christ as the object of its testimony. What else is the Bible but the proof of the existence of the historical environment of this reality and, to that extent, of the historicity of the reality itself?[21]

Scripture is prioritized due to its unique relationship to the truth to which it refers, both in its historical proximity to a historical reality and its empowered proclamation of a Word that is kerygmatic and called the 'power of God'.[22] Barth refers to the apostles as having 'the unique and contingent function of the first witnesses'.[23] In his 1937 Gifford Lectures, Barth addresses the relationship between the historical nature of the text and its reliance upon God for recognition. He says of historical criticism:

> One is entitled to expect from it that it will clarify the whole human form of the witness to Christ in the Old and New Testaments, throwing light on its linguistic, literary, historical and religious-historical aspects. But we should not expect it to set before us the object of this testimony, which is God's revelation and therefore Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel and the Lord of His Church. How could revelation ever be recognised as the divine content of that testimony except through revelation?[24]

[20] Barth suggests that revelation is the 'content of the biblical word' and that hermeneutics is 'prescribed by this content.' *CD*, I/ 2, p. 472.

[21] *CD*, I/ 2, p. 485.

[22] 'If we have really listened to the biblical words in all their humanity, if we have accepted them as witness, we have obviously not only heard of the lordship of the triune God, but by this means it has become for us an actual presence and event.' *CD*, I/ 2, p. 463.

[23] *CD*, I/1, p. 539.

[24] Karl Barth, *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God According to the Teaching of the Reformation: Recalling the Scottish Confession of 1560*

Therefore revelation, and all that is entailed therein, owes at every point its existence to God; however, this is not an abstract hypothesis, but the conclusion derived from the concrete happenings of God throughout redemptive history. As John Webster explains in his monograph on Scripture, inspiration is no inaccessible justification for authority; rather inspiration is an *a posteriori* conclusion necessitated by God's revelation.[25]

Hans Frei, addressing the Karl Barth Society of North America in 1974, gave a lecture entitled 'Scripture as Realistic Narrative: Karl Barth as Critic of Historical Criticism'. In this presentation, Frei argues that Barth upholds both theological exegesis and historical criticism by means of a realist perspective.[26] He takes the following passage from Barth's *Church Dogmatics* in order to expound a 'historical-literary'[27] account:

> The term 'history' is to be understood in its older and naïve significance in which—quite irrespective of the distinctions between that which can be historically proved, that which has the character of saga, and that which has been consciously fashioned, or invented, in a later and synthetic review—it denotes a story which is received and maintained and handed down in a definite kerygmatic sense.[28]

Frei points out three distinct aspects in this passage: 'that which can be historically proven', 'that which has the character of saga', and 'that which has been consciously fashioned or invented'.[29] Though these components represent something of a stratified text, they are nevertheless holistically

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(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), p. 67. As Otto Weber suggests, identifying the object of revelation 'is not because a man has laid hold of the Bible, but because the Bible has laid hold of him'. Otto Weber, *Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics: An Introductory Report on Volumes I:I to III:4* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1952), p. 26.

25 John Webster, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 32.

26 Hans Frei 'Scripture as Realistic Narrative: Karl Barth as Critic of Historical Criticism' in *Thy Word is Truth*, p. 49. Lecture given by notes and recorded in Toronto for the Karl Barth Society of North America, Spring 1974 (ed. Mark Alan Bowald).

27 Ibid., p. 54. This term was used in Rudolf Smend's important work on Barth's relationship to historical criticism. Rudolf Smend, 'Nachkritische Schriftauslegung', in *Parrhesia: Karl Barth zum 80. Geburstag am 10. Mai 1966*, ed. Eberhard Busch, Jurgen Fangmeier, and Max Geiger (Zurich: EVZ, 1966), pp. 215-37.

28 The term Barth uses is '"*historisch*" … that for which evidence is relevant.' Ibid., 56. Quoted from *CD*, IV/2, pp. 478-9

29 Ibid.

integrated into a singular vision of Scripture as witness. Frei maintains that 'for Barth, it depicts the one real world in which we all live so that to understand the meaning of it is the same as understanding the truth of it.'[30]

Authority: The Continuity of Christ and His Witnesses

As first witnesses, the apostles are uniquely qualified to speak on behalf of God for numerous reason ranging from historical and personal proximity to Jesus to Holy Spirit empowerment in their proclamation. As 2 Peter 1:16-18 says,

> For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.' We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

The apostles' qualifications are those means by which they are privileged with special access to God's revelation. Their speech and wisdom are accepted only and in so far as they remain in continuity with reality, and it is the Christian conviction that by the grace of God they so remain. However, if this is accepted there are implications for the posture with which the idea of authority is appropriated.

In consistently Barthian fashion, the authority of Scripture cannot be attributed to the isolated achievement or privilege of individual persons; instead, the precondition of authority is the decisive act of God. Barth writes,

> We now know to what extent it [the Bible] points to a superior authority confronting the proclamation of the Church: obviously to the extent that it is a witness of divine revelation.[31]

There is a presupposed participatory link, a link established through numerous means, that recognizes the genuine relationship between the words of Scripture and the Word of God.[32] John Webster also connects the legitimacy of authority with its representation of reality:

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30 Ibid., p. 59.

31 *CD*, I/ 2, p. 457.

32 'Barth thus acknowledges that the church exercises a genuine, mediate authority of its own, embodied in such norms as canon, creeds, and confessions of faith. In this way the church participates indirectly in the authority

> True political authority is neither capricious nor arbitrary but lawful and *fitting to reality*. Authority is potent because it bears the truth to and therefore orders our acts, whether intellectual or practical, in accordance with reality. And so authority cannot be conferred; authorisation is not a proposal, but an act of truthful judgment through which authority is acknowledged as that which rightly kindles activity of a specific quality in a specific direction.[33]

The Public Nature of Authority

Because authority is in this way not a possession of the few, but rather a conviction of the many, Barth insists that the whole of the ecclesial community is beckoned to share in exegesis; for the nature of Scripture's authority is essentially public. For even the limitations on the inquiry into Scripture are integral to the truths under consideration, and hence are a property of reality itself. To elaborate, there are no secondary mediums which may claim authority on their own terms.[34] Moreover, 'public' does not mean that anyone and everyone can read scripture rightly and know God. It does not mean that apostolic witness and teaching are not uniquely prioritized, and it does not mean that anyone can objectify and manipulate that which is supremely dependent upon God. Barth writes:

> This means that like all other authoritative powers in the Church it can only represent the divine authority. And if this is the case it is not merely possible but necessary to appeal from Scripture (always recognizing its unique value) to a true and original Word of God which we have to conceive of quite differently.[35]

On the one hand there is a legitimate and distinguished authority established for Scripture, and on the other there is the conviction that God is the ultimate and in fact only true authority; because the church can sur-

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of the Word itself.' Mangina, *Karl Barth*, pp. 46-7. He also articulates the relationship in the following way: 'To say that Scripture and proclamation are forms of the Word is to say that they participate in the event of revelation, without being directly identical with revelation itself.' Ibid., p. 35.

33 John Webster, *Holy Scripture*, p. 53.

34 In Barth's *Credo* he defines tradition as 'the sum total of the voices of the Fathers' and not a second source of revelation. Robert McAfee Brown 'Scripture and Tradition in the Theology of Karl Barth' in *Thy Word is Truth*, p. 8. In the *CD*, Barth says that Scripture has a 'higher, judicial, decisive authority superior to all the proclamation which takes place in the Church and can claim authority of the Church.' *CD*, I/2, p. 458.

35 *CD*, I/2, p. 541.

render neither of these claims, it is perhaps most aptly called a 'dialectic.' For both are required for a robust consideration of biblical authority.

Barth offers no abstraction of textuality. The temptation is inevitably to garner expectations of Scripture as text according to those texts with which one is most accustomed. Yet Scripture is not formulated by its virtue as text, rather it is fashioned into text by means of its broad and unique contribution to the recipients of God's own activity. In other words, the 'how' and 'what' of its content are not decided in advance. Barth may be of greatest importance in his operative presupposition of God,[36] for the difficulty with which theologians are faced in naming the qualitative variable that makes the Bible authoritative is intensified by the desire to account for it by means of theory.[37] For there is no concept which holds in unity the whole of Scripture; rather it is the self-sufficient God who has acted throughout it. In speaking of the unifying power of Jesus for Scripture, Hunsinger writes

> It was this Name and this Name alone that provided Holy Scripture with its unity. No doctrine or set of doctrines, no system or comprehensive scheme, no ideology or ontology, could perform this important unifying role for Christian hearers of the Word. The unity of the totality of Holy Scripture, and through it ultimately of all things, resided exclusively in the mystery of this Name.[38]

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Barth's distinction between Scripture and the Word of God is a response to the actuality of God's revelation. The realism that underpins all considerations of the historic and literary character of the text makes possible a claim for authority that is not possessive but contingent. Scripture, the product of those who were both eyewitnesses and empowered by the Spirit, can be regarded as integrally truthful and unique; however, the authority of Scripture is established in the conviction that its

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[36] Berkouwer suggests that in dealing with Barth the difficulties 'arise not so much out of his form of expression as out of his *mode of thinking*'. G.C. Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), p. 12 (emphasis original).

[37] Speaking to the identification of Scripture as Scripture, Barth says, 'If there is such a witness and the acceptance of such a witness, it can only mean that it has already been constituted and chosen, and that its acceptance is only the discovery and acknowledgement of this fact.' *CD*, I/2, p. 473.

[38] George Hunsinger, *Thy Word is Truth*, p. xix.

testimony is accurate and that which is infinitely beyond the achievement or stature of persons.

Debating Justification Productively: A Review Essay

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Justification: Five Views. Edited by James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy. London: SPCK, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8308-3944-5. 319 pp. £15.99.

In theology, one generation's conflict means the next generation's clarity. At least we hope so. To ask what the legacy of recent justification debates will be for future debates over the Gospel and the Church's proclamation of it, is implicitly to ask what we have clearly and decisively learned in these debates. This book, consisting of carefully executed essays and responses written by highly accomplished theologians, serves as something of a barometer for real progress in understanding.

Thankfully this is a fairly substantial volume of approximately 300 pages rather than the unforgivably thin hat-tip some 'views' books devote to important topics. And what is more, the contributors largely measure up to the challenging task they are given: Michael S. Horton writes what is termed a 'traditional' Reformed essay; Michael F. Bird contributes a 'progressive' Reformed view (again pardoning the seldom helpful adjective); James D. G. Dunn is an excellent and respected voice for a 'New Perspective' position; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen offers a 'deification' view; and Gerald O'Collins and Oliver Rafferty present a Roman Catholic view.

The lineup of authors is impressive, if occasionally a little curious. Kärkkäinen is eminently qualified to write on a vast range of theological questions, but as an ordained Pentecostal his deification essay—a topic traditionally associated with the Orthodox tradition—reminds us that these 'views' volumes typically (inevitably?) suffer somewhat on the horns of a dilemma: will they be oriented to ecclesiastical and confessional *traditions* (Reformed, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Orthodox) or to theological *models* (union with Christ, deification and theosis, new perspective(s) on Paul, justification-centralism)? The difficulty is real, not least because there are no clean lines of demarcation here. As I have noted elsewhere, the confessions of the Reformed and Lutheran traditions overlap extensively on justification, at least when the topic is defined narrowly enough, and within the Reformed tradition one can easily find varieties of both 'old' and 'new' perspectives on Paul alongside, and integrated with, a focus on union with Christ, as well as some highly nuanced forms of theosis. And

then, the actual substance of Kärkkäinen's deification essay further complicates the picture. His contribution expounds deification largely with a view to developments in one pocket of contemporary *Lutheranism*, and this in a book lacking a traditional Lutheran essay.

And that surprising tidbit requires a comment. Ironically it is Kärkkäinen's essay that comes closest to being overtly Lutheran, and yet there are plenty of good reasons to object to his reading of that tradition. (At least many Lutherans would think so.) Why, then, is there no Lutheran essay when that is historically the tradition most readily identifiable with the topic? The editors explain that they did not think it necessary to include a Lutheran essay because Horton's piece made it redundant to do so: his contribution is, they say, 'functionally identical in all the significant theological respects to the traditional Lutheran view' (p. 10). I agree with the editors' evaluation of Horton's essay, and at least they recognized that the apparent omission of a Lutheran contribution would require an explanation. However, it seems rather unfair to Horton who presumably didn't realize his essay was expected to do double service. It is also unfair to confessional Lutherans who have a well-defined and articulated theological system of their own on this topic—one that is arguably more clearly the default mode of (especially popular) evangelical thinking than any of the other views represented in this volume.

But having already criticized the volume as 'collection', let me rush quickly to charity, too: editors of such volumes simply cannot accomplish everything. While one might have hoped for an essay by an Orthodox priest or theologian to represent that tradition (could one ever have enough David Bentley Hart?), and a Lutheran one as well (Robert Kolb? Timothy Wengert?), or perhaps some other scholar's analysis of the historic Orthodox tradition on justification (Gerald Bray? Robert Letham?), certainly one would not have wanted to miss out on Kärkkäinen's essay either. And apart from author selections, it must be noted that the editors' two introductions to the volume—one on justification in historical perspective and one on current debates—are alone more than worth the price of the book. Introductions to collections of this sort are sometimes lamentably, perhaps even infuriatingly, weak. But not in this case. Here are clear, well-articulated maps for getting to grips with the real issues and making the most of the fine essays that follow. More than that, here are helpful tools for cultivating that rare but indispensable feature of a truly Christian debate: a reading that is both informed and charitable.

THE ESSAYS

For those familiar with the debates and the authors the essays themselves are, with a few exceptions, predictable in their arguments. Readers of *SBET* will likely be most interested in the essays by Horton and Bird (and therefore we shall review their contributions in most detail), and possibly Dunn, but it would be a shame to overlook the essays by Kärkkäinen and O'Collins/Rafferty. Both of these latter essays exhibit such clarity and candour that their essays should be high on the list of first reads on the topic, even if their distinctive proposals are ultimately unpersuasive.

For his part, Kärkkäinen winsomely commends a new interpretation of justification prompted by the Finnish Lutheran and Orthodox dialogues which have been dissected extensively in the journals and, at least as a reading of Luther, found wanting. The thrust of this ecumenical endeavour is to bring about a *rapprochement* between Lutheran soteriology and Roman Catholicism by way of the East, and in particular the idea of deification.

I have long wondered if, after all the qualifications and nuances customarily attached to more modest versions of theosis and deification (in order to guard against a range of ontological red flags), we do not end up with something quite close to the most robust and realistic forms of the Reformed doctrine of glorification. The responses to Kärkkäinen's essay by the other contributors, especially Horton's, suggest this may in fact be the case, though it is less obvious that this is due to Western parallels to the distinction of 'essence' from 'energies', a parallel disputed strongly by some in the last few decades in the context of Trinitarian theology. As with Kärkkäinen's essay, ongoing discussions of theosis may serve at least as reminders that glorification remains a severely and inexcusably underexplored feature of Reformed theology. This is ironic since it forms something of a capstone and *telos* to so much of what is distinctive about Reformed theology, and with the resources at hand one can hope the situation will soon begin to improve.

For their part, O'Collins and Rafferty present a Roman Catholic view by means of a historical survey focused on two related notions: (1) humanity as deeply but not irretrievably affected by the Fall; and (2) human freedom to cooperate with divine grace. They explain the ongoing importance of Trent—still the stubbornly defining moment in the official Roman Catholic theology of justification—in the context of variations within the Catholic tradition on the question. This is followed by a rather extensive autobiographical account by O'Collins of the development of his own thinking, including his hearing the great German New Testament scholar Ernst Käsemann lecture on Romans and, thirty years later,

his participation in the well-known 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification'. However, as Kärkkäinen points out (pp. 305-6), it would have been helpful if O'Collins and Rafferty had discussed the meaning today of that 1999 Declaration.

HORTON'S ESSAY

Horton's essay, the first in the series, is in many respects a commendable, clearly presented overview of the traditional Reformed doctrine of justification. His goal is not merely 'to repeat the relevant paragraphs in our confessions and catechisms, but to argue that their view of justification is even more firmly established by recent investigations' (p. 83). This includes a fair overview of the historical and biblical materials on imputation and the vocabulary of justification and the righteousness of God.

Though one will quibble (and sometimes argue) with his expressions now and then, Horton's summary is helpful and in most respects accurate. However, as one reads closely there are several lingering questions worth asking, in addition to those pointed out by his interlocutors. (And I raise these questions at some length because, in the big picture, Horton's theological identity—on this question and more generally—is closest to my own.) For instance, it may be overreaching to argue that the heart of the Reformation debate turned on the lexical meaning of the term *dikaioō* (p. 92), and it is at least debatable that in Romans 8:30 Paul intends an *ordo salutis* in the modern sense of the word (p. 101 et al.). Furthermore, Horton takes N. T. Wright to task for saying 'present justification declares, on the basis of faith, what future justification will affirm publicly (according to [Romans] 2:14-16 and 8:9-11) *on the basis of the entire life*' (p. 97, quoting Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said* [Lion Books, 2003], p. 129; emphasis is Horton's). However, Horton does not mention here that Wright later clarified his meaning by saying future justification 'will be seen to be *in accordance with* the life that the believer has then lived', rather than on the basis of it. Whatever one might conclude about Wright's restatement, this is a significant clarification and one of which the reader should be aware. Thankfully it is included in one of the introductions to the volume (p. 71). More on this topic below.

Furthermore, Horton is rightly concerned to make clear that justification is based not on the righteousness of God's divinity (what or who God *is* as divine) but on the gift of righteousness from God (in the incarnate Jesus obedient unto death). Horton stresses the point over several pages. But he muddies the waters somewhat by suggesting the opposite at times, such as when he argues that the gift of God in Jesus Christ for sinners includes not only the righteousness that the law requires but also

the righteousness that God *is* (p. 96), an affirmation Horton makes more than once.

Also, Horton is perhaps most confusing on the relationship of union with Christ, justification, and sanctification. This appears when he argues (as he has elsewhere) that, on the one hand, 'to "put on Christ" is to derive all of one's righteousness from him, *both for justification and sanctification*' (emphasis mine) and then, on the other hand (and on the same page, p. 108), putting on or 'being clothed with' Christ is only justification language and the basis for the sanctification of daily conduct. Similarly, Horton says justification is the 'basis for the transformative effects of union with Christ'. He later offers a formulation to explain the relationship, saying 'if union with Christ in the covenant of grace is the matrix for Paul's *ordo*, justification remains its source, even for adoption' (p. 110). (I think Horton wants us to read 'union with Christ' rather than the 'covenant of grace' as the antecedent for 'its' in this statement, although I may be mistaken here.) Later, however, in fact on the same page, Horton states that 'Justification is distinct from regeneration, yet both are the effect of union with Christ, which the Spirit effects by his Word. This is why Paul compares justification and its effects to God's creation of the world *ex nihilo* by his Word (Romans 4:17, with Psalm 33:6)' (p. 110).

Setting aside what I see as a misunderstanding of Romans 4, these last two sentences are simply bewildering: both justification and regeneration are the effects (or 'the effect') of union with Christ, a union effected by the Spirit through the Word. Yet it is justification, not the union, that Horton goes on to say in the next sentence has creation-like effects. Further, justification is the *source* of the *ordo salutis* (while union with Christ is its 'matrix'). In his response, Dunn asks in a footnote, 'Does Horton really mean it when he says, "Justification is distinct from regeneration, yet both are the effect of union with Christ, which the Spirit effects by his Word"?' (p. 120, n. 2). If I understand Horton correctly, and I beg the reader's patience if I do not, Horton does indeed seem to want to say exactly that. It would appear he understands union with Christ as in some attenuated sense the 'matrix' for every gracious blessing, including regeneration (which the Reformed confessional tradition has typically understood as a spiritual prerequisite to faith-union with Christ, which may explain Dunn's perplexity), and yet that it is justification that functions as a creative word bringing about, as source, the blessings of the *ordo salutis*, including especially the good works of sanctification, the glories of the new creation, and, as we now note, the disarming of our enemies.

Related to this, then, is Horton's argument that the justification of the ungodly is itself 'the source of the abundant and varied fruit of Christ's conquest', pointing to Colossians 2:13-15 and 1 Corinthians 15:53-56. Yet

it is not clear how either text supports such a focused theological connection. In Colossians 2, Paul argues that the cross of Christ secured the forgiveness of sins for believers (the debt incurred by the Law's demands can no longer stand against us) and was indeed also the event of the disarming of 'the rulers and authorities' over which he triumphed. But Paul does not thereby draw a line from one benefit of the cross (forgiveness) to the other (disarmed rulers) in causal fashion as Horton suggests, making justification or the forgiveness of sins *itself* what disarms the rulers. Paul does not suggest, as Horton states, that 'Christ's conquest of the powers *is based on* his having borne our debt for violation of the law' (p. 98, emphasis mine). For Paul in Colossians 2, it is not justification which accomplished this but the cross, the one cross of Christ which both brought justification and disarmed our enemies. Neither is it clear that it is *exclusively* the *legal* facet of death and the law that is in view in 1 Corinthians 15. The distinction is a nuanced one, yet an important one as well.

Finally Horton, like many before him, appeals to 2 Corinthians 5:21 ('For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God') as evidence of imputation. Here again I will comment more fully below but, in my view, 5:19 (among other passages), with its language of 'not counting trespasses', provides significant biblical warrant for the doctrine of imputation in Paul, properly understood. But it is possible that 5:21 may have a reality inclusive of but also more comprehensive than imputation, not least because Paul has quickly, and otherwise curiously, changed his verb from 'count' or 'impute' (*logizomai*) in 5:19 to 'become' (*ginomai*) in 5:21. A more expansive, ultimate vista for our '*becoming* the righteousness of God' in Christ would also seem to make the most sense against the Isaiah backdrop commentators usually recognize that Paul appears to have in view.

In my view, while Kärkkäinen, Dunn, and O'Collins say much of instructive value, the most interesting response to Horton comes from Bird. In reply to Horton, Bird agrees with the lion's share of Horton's presentation though he would take exception to certain assumptions and conclusions along the way. Indeed, it appears that Bird assumes he and Horton agree that justification and transformation (which Bird prefers to 'sanctification', with good cause as he explains on p. 112) are 'linked logically and Christologically, but the latter cannot be subsumed under the former conceptually' (p. 113), but in light of Horton's stress on justification as the source of sanctification or transformation, I suspect Bird may have (charitably) missed how Horton does in fact subsume one under the other conceptually. However, Bird does take issue with the confidence of Horton's lexical survey, noting helpfully how some NT uses of 'righteousness' do not seem to fit Horton's expectations as neatly as one might wish.

Also, although Bird holds to imputation himself, regarding it as a 'theological implicate of the biblical teaching', he does not endorse the kind of merit theology that is often used to support the idea, preferring instead to point to the reckoning that occurs within the context of union with Christ (p. 116). His 'biggest gripe with Horton's treatment,' however, 'is what he does not say' (p. 116), and this concerns the relationship between justification and Paul's social context or, put differently, the Jew-Gentile question which was in fact the primary concern the Apostle had, rather than the Council of Trent. Given the shape of justification debates in the last few decades, this is indeed a curious silence on Horton's part, not least because of the ways I am confident he would want to speak clearly and compellingly to the issue.

BIRD'S ESSAY

Bird's own 'progressive Reformed' essay is both interesting and compelling, and Horton's should not be read without the benefit of Bird's (and, I suggest, vice versa). With meticulous attention to the texts, and with the benefit of having already published an important study of Paul and justification, he develops the Apostle's language of the righteousness of faith in Galatians and Romans, including along the way an important observation on the (temporary, I note) disagreement between Paul and Peter (often overlooked in Reformed discussions of Paul's theology) and, not to be missed, a helpful discussion of what the 'righteousness of God' is *not*. Bird affirms that 'there is indeed a gift of a righteous status from God… but the righteousness of God introduces the entire package of salvation in all of Romans…' rather than justification by faith, a carefully explained observation that rings true. In a clarification worth pondering and repeating, he explains that the 'righteousness of God' is not the gospel, but 'is something that is revealed in the gospel' (p. 141).

Bird follows his survey of Romans with a robust defence of the imputation of Jesus' law obedience as the grounds of the believer's righteousness, and locates this imputation in the context of Jesus' own justification by the Father and our union with him by faith, appropriately noting some blind spots in N. T. Wright's statements on the question (pp. 145-52). Among the last sections in Bird's essay is a valuable discussion of justification by works in Paul and James, including Bird's admission that he is 'acutely uncomfortable' with how Wright has sometimes expressed himself on this matter. Nevertheless, Bird wishes to make clear that justification 'according to' works is entirely biblical, and to explain what that does and does not mean. In this I judge him to have largely succeeded, and in a way that navigates a controversial question with exemplary care.

Incidentally, Bird explains the adjective 'progressive' along the lines of seeing the need to remedy, among other things, a perceived poverty of interest both in *historia salutis* (history of salvation) because of a myopic preoccupation with *ordo salutis* (order of salvation), and in the social context of Paul's writings and all its implications (pp. 131-2). I can hardly agree more strongly and yet, in light of Reformed exegesis and theology in the last generation or two, I'm not sure it is ultimately very progressive to insist on them. In any case, Bird properly urges the importance of reading the Apostle on his own terms rather than the ones dictated by polemics.

In his response, Horton objects to Bird's criticisms of the notion of merits with an appeal to the antiquity of this language. He does this, first, by referring to the 'merit of the fathers' among rabbinical teachers, though, with others who have written on the topic, I'm not confident this rabbinical language is necessarily reflective of biblical usage. Horton also appeals to covenantal substitution in Isaiah 53 which, I think, is more compelling, though it also clarifies how merit language is a theological construct designed to capture a feature of the biblical witness in a way the text itself (i.e., explicitly) does not. There is nothing illegitimate about employing such a construct, of course; it is the task of theology to articulate these features of the text in order that the coherence of biblical teaching might be grasped by faith. For this reason, I appreciate Horton's subsequent remark that merit asks, in essence, 'to what purpose' was Christ's obedience as the uniquely faithful Adam and Israel? I might subtly modify the question to 'of what quality' is that obedience in order to include Horton's focus but also accent what seems to me to be the continuing value of properly nuanced merit language.

Horton also disagrees with Bird on Paul's language of 'becoming' sin and righteousness, explaining 'In my estimation, Romans 5:19 (like 2 Corinthians 5:21) does not refer to a transformative "becoming" as Bird suggests, any more than Christ's "becoming" sin for us refers to a degenerative process rather than imputation.' Horton is with the majority of interpreters here, yet I have my doubts, particularly with what Horton sees as an obviously incorrect consequence: Christ's 'becoming' sin in a way that goes beyond imputation to something more personally substantial. I find just such a feature of the atonement when I read of the suffering Servant as one who becomes, in the heights (or is it depths?) of his becoming sin for us, one 'from whom men hid their faces' (Isaiah 53:3), so disfigured or, to use Horton's term, degenerated was his appearance. Here is something distinct from the legal condemnation, something of a piece with the monstrosity that the land had become—substantially—as cursed under Israel's disobedience (pace Deuteronomy). Here is an extensive description of consummate judgment which suggests that here, at

the cross being anticipated, sin comes finally and climactically to fully embodied expression in a way that is not captured by the language only of a guilty status, and also goes beyond all the dark yet hitherto restrained expressions of the curse's horror in Israel's history.

Further, Horton demurs from the idea of a final justification by works yet he—astutely, charitably, and correctly, in my view—acknowledges that a distinction between judgment *according to* rather than *through* or *on account of* works is 'well attested in classic Reformed treatments', and that he himself is indeed 'open to Bird's interpretation'. Not simply because I happen to agree with Bird's construction on this point, I regard this is as among the finest of many encouraging moments in Horton's contributions to this volume. It exhibits a spirit of honest and patient inquiry which makes all the difference not only in these 'views' volumes but in the wider discussions of which it is an example.

SOME OBSERVATIONS

Each of the essays in this volume deserves a close reading and detailed interaction and I regret that I cannot devote that kind of space to them here, especially in the case of Dunn's essay which should be read carefully before more is published at the popular level regarding the 'new perspective' model. I would like, however, to note a few features of the essays that may serve to advance discussion still further. As my point of departure, I note Horton's observation, correct in my view, that the differences between his view and Bird's, while in some cases deep-running and significant, are in other cases more inflated in appearance than they are in reality. Certainly, as I think is clear so far, I find I agree with most of what Horton says, yet in those places where I differ from Horton it is Bird that I look to in this volume to press those matters, which he does admirably and persuasively. But before noting an example of how their models might be brought closer together, I offer a few brief observations on the essays as a whole.

Firstly, many of the contributors refer to the importance of the 'faith of/in Jesus Christ' debate in Pauline studies, a debate over whether the underlying Greek construction should be understood as referring to Christ's own faith/faithfulness (the 'subjective' genitive) or to the believer's faith in Jesus Christ (the 'objective' genitive). In fact it appears to me that this question is even more pertinent to the justification debate than the attention given to it in these essays suggests. The reader should note that Bird co-edited a valuable collection of essays on this question that should be thoroughly digested. His own somewhat mediating stance also seems to me the most judicious in handling the evidence.

Secondly, an unsettling feature in several of the essays and responses is the talk of justification as but one of many available and biblical ways of speaking of the reality of salvation, a term we may use alongside other concepts such as 'union with Christ' and 'reconciliation'. Granted that the truth of this theological complementarity is important to affirm, and granted that the language of this kind of terminological interplay goes a long way toward avoiding myopia, it is also important to affirm the distinctions between, and the nature of the relationships among, these terms and concepts. In fact, to a significant extent the differences among the essayists reduce down to the question of just that relationship. Despite how some writers write and some readers read, it is quite important to note that neither in Scripture nor in tradition is 'faith' characteristically a synonym for 'justification', nor is 'justification' a synonym for 'reconciliation' or 'salvation'. Certainly 'justification' is not a synonym for 'the Gospel' or 'union with Christ'. The ideas all belong together, undoubtedly, but they are distinct as well. For Reformed theologians in the Westminster confessional tradition, at least, union with Christ and justification are not simply two ways of speaking of one reality. The latter is an aspect of the former—manifesting it, we should note, in an irreversible relationship (cf. Westminster Larger Catechism, Q. & A. 69).

Thirdly, I have complained about this elsewhere and will spare the reader a repeat performance, but we would benefit, I think, from more careful attention to the ways the relationship between justification and sanctification/transformation is articulated using language of 'cause' or 'source'. There is a world of difference between saying on the one hand that the *fact* of justification—or, put differently, the *knowledge* of our justification—provides great motivation for the life of sanctification, and on the other hand that justification *itself* is the cause of sanctification. The former, I have to think, is uncontroversial and carries with it the weight of many forefathers in the Faith besides the testimony of Scripture in many places.[1] The latter notion, however, is quite controversial and, as I have argued before, problematic theologically.

Usually this connection is put forward as a way to explain why the life of good works is necessary, particularly in view of the old Roman Catholic charge that justification by faith alone opens the door to licentiousness. But, theologically (rather than experientially) speaking, it is not justification itself that provides the rationale for this necessity but, as Calvin and others have tirelessly insisted, union with Christ that does so. Indeed,

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1 It is also, incidentally, how Calvin's 'justification as the main hinge of *religion*' language ought to be understood, in keeping with then-traditional uses of *religio* for the Christian life.

the reason justification cannot exist independently of transformation is not due to what justification is *in terms of itself* but because of the reality of which justification speaks in its own distinct way: that we are 'in Christ.' As Horton himself notes, the Heidelberg Catechism rejects moral licentiousness by arguing that 'it is impossible for those *who are engrafted into Christ by true faith* not to bring forth the fruit of gratitude' (p. 89, emphasis mine), which is quite different from arguing that it is impossible because one has been *justified*, unless one means that if one is justified it is because one is in Christ, and anyone in Christ is also sanctified.

To put it in other terms, the peace of conscience that the fact of justification affords is invaluable as a motivation for a life of holiness. In fact, we cannot have the pursuit of real holiness if we believe our justification is in question and that we thus need to earn it in some way. Justification necessarily comes with and alongside a host of realities and blessings, and it entails a range of ethical conclusions as well, particularly in the area of communion or fellowship. But to note the *experiential benefits* of knowing our justification is secure is not the same as noting the *theological* relationship between justification and sanctification, and the writers in this volume occasionally blend the two together. We must take great care in our language of justification as a cause of sanctification not to suggest that it is justification itself but our knowledge of it that, in a limited sense, may be understood as a 'cause' of a life of good works. Speaking immoderately on this point suggests something false about justification, viz., that it is not in fact a purely forensic declaration but something inherently generative, along the lines of what God's Word is in the very different context of his act of creation. At issue, then, are assumptions about the nature of God's speech and whether or not it is *always* the same *kind* of act, but we cannot explore them here.

IMPUTATION OF THE ACTIVE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST AND FUTURE JUSTIFICATION

Finally, and more extensively, as noted above, Horton affirms the imputation of the active obedience of Christ (IAOC) whereas Bird does not, and Bird affirms a form of not-yet (final) justification *according to* (but not *on the grounds of*) works which Horton denies, at least for now. Here are two ideas not usually considered together, yet I suggest they ought to be and that it might be a fruitful and interesting relationship to explore. I can only be suggestive here, of course, yet I would offer the following thoughts.

With regard to the eschatology of justification, the nature of the final judgment has regretfully faded from view in current debates in favour of

interest in other questions, but it has long been a key area of discussion within and outside the Reformed tradition. And while there have been some who have denied a final justification altogether, believing it to be a danger to the reality of an 'already' (present) justification in Christ by faith alone, such a danger is not necessary. Readers of these essays will discover, I think, that for all the real risks of abuse it involves (as does justification 'by faith alone', for that matter), talk of eschatological justification in some non-meritorious relation to works does not itself make one a Catholic, as Bird rightly reminds us. This much should be known already by those familiar with the pertinent texts rather than only popular presentations of the question, but the reminder is always timely.

In these debates it is often assumed, I think, that it is the idea of justification in Christ at the *end*, rather than justification in Christ *now*, that is in need of defence. Yet the situation is actually quite the reverse, biblically. The weight and pull of the biblical witness, especially in the Prophets, is on the *final* Day of the LORD and all that that Day will bring. So the problem, so to speak, of NT theology is the explanation of the ways in which the realities of that long-awaited Day have now been brought forward in history in the person and work of Christ—yet not in whole but provisionally, and in full expectation still of that Day of consummation to come. The fact of a justification secured and real *now* need not require that it have *no* future dimension any more than our sanctification or adoption now requires that we do not look forward to our final sanctification or adoption. Instead, as aspects of what it means to be united to Christ, our union is itself, in *all* its varied ways, including justification, an already and not-yet blessed reality. So, as Geerhardus Vos noted many years ago with characteristic acuity, 'In Gal. v. 5 Christians "through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness" (that is for the *realization* of the hoped for things pertaining to the state of righteousness conferred in *justification*).'[2] The question, of course, is how to articulate this eschatological *realization* of justification in a way that does justice to the full scope of the biblical witness to it as something already truly (and wonderfully!) secure now, and yet also anticipated as the *telos* or end of a life of perseverance, obedience, and suffering. Each of the writers in this volume addresses the question in some way and their differences on this point are instructive.

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[2] Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (1930; repr. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1994), p. 30 (emphases added); original publication, 'The Structure of the Pauline Eschatology', *Princeton Theological Review* 27/3 (1929), 403-44 (quote on p. 432).

What, then, about the relationship I am suggesting between final justification 'according to' works and the idea of the IAOC? To speak simply, it is a matter of coordinating one idea with the other in light of union with Christ. For those who, like Horton (and myself), affirm the IAOC, Christ was justified by the Spirit in resurrection from the dead (1 Timothy 3:16) because of and only after the life of Torah obedience that culminated in his suffering and death on the cross. He is the uniquely faithful second and last Adam (and Israel). Those united to Christ by faith and the Spirit are justified as they are included in him, and thus in the verdict passed over him by the Father in resurrection from the dead. On the other hand, for those who, like Bird (and myself), affirm a carefully nuanced view of final justification 'according to' but not on the meritorious grounds of obedience or perseverance, we note how believers are frequently encouraged to perseverance in view of this final legal prospect, very much in keeping with the testimony of the OT prophets. In Paul's prayers for the Thessalonians, persevering obedience in love is prospective and not only retrospective (as in a gratitude-*only* construct), belonging productively and indispensably to the Christ-path of the Christian life which will culminate in *final blamelessness* on the coming Day of the Lord (1 Thess. 3:12-14; 5:23).[3]

Yet we should note that, as Paul unpacks the dynamics of our union with Christ, it is rather clear that this union entails a Christ-storied form for the Church's life in Christ—that the obedience 'material', if you will, of Christ's submission to the Father's will (his 'active' obedience) is the 'material' of the believer's obedience to the Father's will in union with Christ (as recognized, e.g., in Reformed expositions of the so-called 'third use' of the law). For instance, against the highly relevant backdrop of law, obedience, Spirit, and life in Romans 8:3-13, we note the Christological shape of the closely articulated if-then relationship in Romans 8:17, '…and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, *provided* we suffer with him *in order that* we may also be glorified with him'. The theology of Paul's matter-of-fact connection here, far from unique to Romans 8, extends well beyond the suffering-obedience of Christians as *merely* a thankful reflex of justification. To put the matter more concisely, in the NT, there is a relationship between Christ's positive Torah obedi-

3 Such a construction is well represented historically and long familiar in biblical studies, yet it could use development; the recent monograph by Matthew D. Aernie, *Forensic Language and the Day of the Lord Motif in Second Thessalonians 1 and the Effects on the Meaning of the Text* (West Theological Monograph Series; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), should, I hope, put the biblical question quietly to rest.

ence (his active obedience) under the long shadow of the cross *which was prospective of his own justification by resurrection*, and the believer's own positive obedience in cross-bearing *which is prospective of his own finally-realized justification by resurrection*. It would appear that those who argue for either IAOC or for final justification in accordance with (not on the basis of) non-meritorious works are in the best position to do full justice to the other side of this same picture.

The Church's Gospel-defining insistence, of course, is that Christ's obedience is uniquely meritorious and the Christian's is a non-meritorious participation in him by the Spirit. Our obedience and Jesus' obedience are not on any kind of a meritorious continuum (the 'material' commonality of Christ's obedience and ours referred to above is, crucially, not of this kind) and the Church cannot insist on this too strongly.

The language of merit reminds us of this. Bird, I think, is correct to shudder at much of the use of 'merits' in theology (note the plural in my use of the term here). I agree that the notion of a pool or bucket of merits is foreign to the testimony of Scripture and a step or two away from how 'Christ our righteousness' should be understood. Yet I hasten to add that the Gospel very much depends on affirming that there is a *qualitative* (what it is), and not only *quantitative* (how much there is), difference between Christ's obedience and my own, and I believe this can be well captured by the traditional language of 'merit' (note now the singular). Use of merit in the history of theological reflection from Tertullian forward has been, in its finest moments at least, a valiant and sometimes imperfect attempt to do justice to that crucial distinction between Jesus and me, particularly in view of that Christological shape of Christian obedience I just referred to above. Speaking of the uniquely meritorious quality of Christ's obedience, as the obedience and righteousness of the one who is alone the second and last Adam, safeguards the Church from some of the wrong-headed ambiguities of the old 'imitation of Christ' traditions of piety, while preserving its authentically biblical instinct. Surely the talk of 'merits' is subject to abuse and misunderstanding, but we likely have a baby and bathwater situation here rather than something obviously and necessarily requiring excision from our vocabulary. And to speak more pointedly, the less capable we are of accounting for the positive, biblical role of obedience and perseverance in salvation within a Reformed theological model, the more attractive the alternative positions of the New Perspective, Rome, and Constantinople will appear.

In sum, perhaps there is something here worth exploring, particularly among Reformed theologians. Horton and Bird, I think, have readers in different places on the right track, though as you can see I would like to press a matter here and there.

Final Remarks

What, then, to return to my opening observation, about the legacy of the justification debates? What does this volume suggest that we have truly learned? Even a cursory read should put to rest a range of fictions common in the popular arenas of the debate, such as the idea of a (singular) 'new perspective' on Paul that can be responsibly addressed as such, or that Roman Catholic theologians merely repeat Trent and do so as a monolithic group. The essays by Dunn and O'Collins/Rafferty should alone put to rest such oversimplifications, and one should hope they will.

Furthermore, we have been reminded of the importance of the social implications of justification in the New Testament, and despite some over-ambitious and misguided uses of this reminder, it remains important not to lose sight of it. The social and theological Jew-Gentile challenge of the first century may not have been the sum-total of the justification question as Paul addressed it, but it was the principal historical context for his working that question out. Neither is this observation the invention of New Perspective writers; the history of Pauline exegesis bears out that we may have indeed lost sight of something only recently reemphasized.

Lastly, despite the easily defensible dominance of Paul's writings in this volume, I expect the contributors would agree that we must take care not to give the impression that justification is something the Apostle invented rather than part of the Gospel the apostles proclaimed on the basis of the witness of Israel's Scriptures (which are ours). I trust it is not too adventurous to suggest that we will understand the NT teaching on justification to the extent that we understand exactly how the NT writers argue the case for the Gospel, including justification, from the OT Scriptures in the light of the coming of the Christ.

Some may be weary of the justification discussions, but we should rather be quite excited about what is going on, especially in biblical studies. Advancing in our theology of salvation will require not only a skilled and responsible retrieval of the invaluable work done by fathers of the Faith but also the critical engagement with solid, pioneering work being done today. In my view, this volume encourages confidence that it is within the Reformed tradition that the best justice can be done to the biblical breadth and scope of this eminently important theological topic, and listening in on the critical engagement among these contributors shows how that work might continue to be done. Indeed it bears repeating that Reformed theologians will do their best work *as Reformed theologians* when interacting carefully with the contrary voices of history and reality, inside and outside of one's own tradition, rather than of myth and caricature. In the end, Horton's essay clearly and admirably reaffirms the most

important features of the doctrine of justification while including, in my view at least, a few less persuasive features, while Bird's essay—and Bird's work more generally—provides a needed, astute, and largely persuasive complement to Horton's essay which deserves serious consideration by theologians of all traditions who, with Paul, commend Christ alone as the Church's hope in this age and in the age to come.

Reviews

The Word in Small Boats: Sermons from Oxford. By Oliver O'Donovan. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6453-6. 172pp. £11.99.

It will come as no surprise to those familiar with the prudent work of the former Canon of Christ Church that his *Sermons from Oxford*, gathered imaginatively around the maritime metaphor of a *Word in Small Boats*, proclaim the origin, power, and goal of history that has always defined his ministry: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Entertaining a few second thoughts about his chosen title for this collection reminds us of the two-fold meaning of 'the Word' and 'small boats.' Biblically the Word (capital 'W') refers both to the eternal Christ who made and redeems the created order, as well as to the revelation of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures: the 'Word' is Christ Jesus himself and the Word he has spoken to humankind. Jesus preaching from a small boat at the shore of the sea reminds us of Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom, issued not infrequently from the shores of the sea. Christians, too, are 'small boats'; impotent vessels made powerful only by their contents. A small boat will hasten its voyage when manned by a capable Captain, where it will always be directed with purpose to an intended destination. The title therefore discloses a great deal about the selected sermons. If there is an irreducible nucleus, or central message to Prof. O'Donovan's sermons from Oxford, it is that the Word of God *must*, in fact, be preached.

The reader is given thirty sermons in this fine collection, bookended by an introductory and concluding sermon. Each sermon falls under one of four headings: The Mission of God's Word; The Community of God's Word; Tradition, Truth, and the Public; and Launched upon Life by God's Word. Dr. Andy Draycott proves a capable and judicious editor to this collection, carefully selecting and arranging each stand-alone sermon into a larger Sermon that defines the text itself. This is by no means an easy project. These sermons are abnormally dense. Only the most attentive listeners of Christ Church would have been capable of detecting all the subtleties of Prof. O'Donovan's sermons. Reading them in text is vastly easier, and the reader is encouraged to read slowly with Bible in hand. Bringing sermons by another preacher into cogent synthesis, doing justice both to the preacher and to his sermons, testifies to Dr. Draycott's achievement in this volume. His introduction to the sermons provides a concise overview and preliminary theological assessment of what is to come. Having spent several years studying Prof. O'Donovan's moral and

political theology prior to publication of this collection, it is apparent that Dr. Draycott *understands* the shape and contours of the sermons he treats.

The length, form, and (of course) text of each sermon varies. Some sermons take as their text the lectionary recommendation for the day, while some do not; some make an explicit address of a relevant moral or political question, and some are generally practical in purpose; some sermons are ambitious in what they seek to convey, while others remain more modest. Regardless of the text or subject of chosen message, however, every sermon is superbly crafted and richly imaginative. One can only wonder how the relevant sermon might have been delivered! These sermons are given to us for our edification, and if received with open heart and mind as the Word of God is meant to be received, that is precisely what they shall accomplish. *The Word in Small Boats* is recommended for academic, pastor, and layperson alike.

Matthew Arbo, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, USA

Christian Ethics in a Technological Age. By Brian Brock. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6517-5. x + 408pp. £22.99.

With the publication of Brian Brock's second monograph, *Christian Ethics in a Technological Age*, readers are given a conceptually wide-ranging, thoroughly researched, and theologically attentive engagement with fundamental ethical questions of technology and of technological advance. It assumes (rightly) that humanity finds itself in the throes of complete technological domination; an 'age' of technology that defines the contextual fabric of culture, commerce, politics, and, increasingly, *all* of creaturely life. The manifold problems technology introduces and reintroduces are shaped in conversation with three incisive modern philosophers: Martin Heidegger, George Grant, and Michel Foucault. This exposition Brock describes as an 'Attempt to claim Christ's Dominion,' which also serves as the header for part I of his inquiry. Part II, the more expressly theological treatment of the technological question, is described as 'Seeking Christ's Concrete Claim.' The Christian Ethic of technology is thus framed upon a foundation of Christology.

If Part I is meant to identify, contextualize, and nuance the ethical questions surrounding technology, then Part II is meant to better define the idolatrous conditions of our technological age by exposing its ideological foundations to the light of theological truth originating in Christ's reign. Here the scope of Brock's inquiry widens considerably. Chapter four sets the tone for what is to become a positive Christian ethic of technology. It will not do simply to obey Christ's command by not-per-

forming certain acts—one must *seek* Christ's claim actively. This chapter pivots the text's central argument and becomes a bend in the road where, once taken, the path leads upward beyond the conceptual treeline and into clearer, unobstructed terrain. Seeing through or over the shadowy conceptual forests of technological ambiguity requires understanding of creaturely flourishing. Our guide on this pathway to conceptual clarity is Christ himself, his command being addressed to the sojourner as an invitation to proceed in service to him. Technology offers an alternative invitation in the form of a temptation: 'to actively seek us out and offer us greater and supposedly more powerful access to new gods.'

The ethic for the Christian community is Christ himself and thus to act as unto him is not only to obey his command but to offer him our *worship*. Chapters seven and eight, in particular, explore the doctrine of creation for ethical insights into our accounts of work and Sabbath, as well as to the basic materiality of creaturliness. The latter chapter forms the second climax of the text (chapter four being the first) and surveys a variety of moral tensions generated by worship of the false god technology. Brock's treatments of environmentalism, food, and fertility are especially illuminating in this regard. Human beings are creatures among creatures united in the Divine declaration of 'good' and created to worship the Maker.

Brock's contribution to theological and ethical understandings of technology is commendable in both its depth and breadth, offering to Christian moralists a convincing argument richly supported by biblical insight and theological sensitivity. The shortcomings of the text (principally methodological) would be that its aims are too ambitious and aspire to too much; the amount of space devoted to sustained exposition and commentary on modern texts being but one manifestation of that ambition. And yet, despite its ambition, this volume is remarkably cautious: readers are shown simply and clearly *how* the question of technology is to be theologically and ethically conceived. If one is looking for rationale to 'rage against the machine,' look elsewhere! It might be that the machine rages against you!

Matthew Arbo, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, USA

C.S. Lewis vs the New Atheists. By Peter S. Williams. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013. ISBN 978-1-84227-770-6. 275pp. £9.99.

Among the many books published on the fortieth anniversary of the death of C.S. Lewis, this one is a real gem. Although Lewis died some fifty years before the rise of the 'new atheists', Peter S. Williams shows how the various apologetic arguments advanced by him stand up even today against

what is essentially a revival of 'Old-Time Atheism' (the title of the first chapter). Whilst the book is full of historical and biographical interest, its real strength lies as a contemporary resource for probing forensically the various new atheist arguments. The author states his aim as follows: 'In literary company with Lewis, this book will place the central arguments that led him from atheism to Christ into a contemporary dialogue with the new atheists' (p. 21). It is an aim which the author, himself an experienced philosopher and apologist, has achieved with distinction.

Lewis' own journey of faith was, we are reminded, one of multiple stages: moving from what he termed 'popular realism' (materialism) to Christianity via the intermediate steps of philosophical idealism, pantheism, and theism. It is a road that others have since trod, and Williams brings out the influence Lewis has had on former atheists such as Francis Collins. The introductory chapter traces how even non-Christian philosophers have defended Lewis as a philosopher of some competence. The waspish dismissal of Lewis by American physicist and neo-atheist Victor J. Stenger as a mere 'author of children's literature' (p. 16ff) is one which neo-atheists would no doubt cheer, but it is by no means widely shared in academic philosophy.

Chapters two to six cover Lewis' thinking on scientism; the argument from desire; the argument from reason; the problem of goodness; and the historicity of the New Testament's account of Jesus. Each chapter is characterized by a freshness and engagement with contemporary discussions that is truly impressive. In the chapter on scientism, Richard Dawkins may be well-known as acknowledging in his various writings a world of 'awe' and 'beauty' but, as Williams points out, in Dawkins' universe such terms refer to 'nothing but subjective personal reactions taking place within, and relative to, by-products of an evolutionary process lacking any intrinsic meaning or given purpose' (p. 28). Williams also helpfully points out that the well-known definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 as being 'certain of what we do not see' is not a proof-text for 'blind faith' but rather, understood in the context of the immediately preceding passage, a call to persevere in times of trial 'in the *rationally warranted* expectation that God will bring his promises to completion' (p. 53, emphasis original). In the ensuing chapters Williams sometimes has to engage directly with the new atheists for the good reason that they have often ignored the arguments of Lewis himself despite referencing him and claiming to have engaged with him; for example Dawkins fails to take the 'argument from desire' seriously, confining his remarks to 'brief and confused comments…' (p. 75). He also draws from contemporary Christian philosophers. Alvin Plantinga complains that '[Daniel] Dennett… doesn't know

anything about contemporary analytic philosophy of religion, but that doesn't stop him from making public declaration on the subject' (p. 75).

The concluding chapter is an impressive and impassioned summary of the flaws in the reasoning of the new atheists. It is made repeatedly clear that they have, on issue after issue, failed to engage properly with philosophy in general and Lewis in particular. Even fellow-atheist Geoff Crocker complains that Dawkins 'has become a campaigner rather than a thinker' (p. 218). The persistent equating of religious faith by Dawkins, Hitchens and others with 'blind faith' in the face of well-known counter-arguments is shown to be itself 'an example of precisely the sort of blind faith that neo-atheists like to accuse believers of embracing' (p. 216)! And '(r)ather than believe in God they believe that our transcendent longings should be satisfied by the very objects that occasion them…' (p. 220).

Williams' style is accessible to the non-specialist, and he usually manages to interpret some of the more abstruse quotations in an understandable way. The book is extensively referenced, and these are helpfully grouped at the end of each chapter into selected works by Lewis, websites, video and audio links, online papers and books, making this a very practical resource for further study.

Alistair Donald, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models. By A. Scott Moreau. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8254-3389-4. 428 pp. £19.99.

Written by a lecturer in the Missions and Intercultural Studies at Wheaton Graduate School who has previously been a missionary in Swaziland and Kenya, this publication has received much acclaim. Its concern is to present the missiological implications of Paul's affirmation that he became a Jew to win the Jews. This type of contextualization is relevant to anyone working amongst those of another world religion or even for the pastor called to serve in a housing estate or a stockbroker belt. Many of the author's examples are drawn from one of the most difficult areas of evangelism, that of bringing the gospel to Muslims.

Moreau's book is divided into two main sections. The first, 'Foundations for Evangelical Contextualization' deals with the academic concepts of models and maps in contextualization. In particular he considers the evangelical presuppositions concerning revelation and interpretation, and the marks of a good contextual approach when evangelising. The main concepts amongst evangelicals are those which involve mainly either indigeneity, transformation, syncretism, incarnation, holism or praxis. Moreau considers the different tools to develop contextualization such

as storytelling and the use of redemptive analogies and how these may engage people. He presents the various shades of the insider movement which connects with the question, for example, as to how far a Muslim convert has to leave the culture and religious practices of Islam.

The second main section, 'Mapping Evangelical Models of Contextualization'. explains the main approaches evangelicals have used to engage in missions contextually. Moreau bases his findings on an analysis of 249 documented case studies. He concludes that the missionary as an initiator of the evangelistic process is one who has the role of either facilitator, guide, herald, pathfinder, prophet or restorer. For each role is given the methodology, biblical and contemporary examples, along with its strengths and weaknesses. The most commonly used ones are those of guide and pathfinder.

Moreau finally reflects on possible future trends within an evangelical approach to contextualization. At the close of the publication there are 6 appendices mostly summarising the work of other writers, and also a reference list of nearly 800 publications.

Some might find this book unsatisfactory because it basically takes published work by missiologists and missionaries and compares their findings. No one particular approach is advocated and an evaluation of the Biblical data is confined to a few pages. The specialized terminology used in this process can cause confusion.

It is a strong publication however as an academic resource. Moreau has consulted 5,000 missiological reference items, there are 101 keywords or phrases defined, 50 tables and each chapter finishes with questions for reflection as well as a select bibliography. Accompanying PowerPoint slides can be purchased from the publisher. It is the lecturer's dream class text.

Pastors and missionaries should find the discussion of different contextual approaches and the various roles stimulating for their ministry. To what extent are they guides or pathfinders? How much insider movement do they encourage? Certain parts they may find intriguing, such as the 'Camel method of evangelism', and the 'Flaw of the excluded middle'.

For those interested in obtaining a review copy of the book, the Kregel Academic & Ministry Blog offer copies for those who can publish reviews on their own blogs.

David E. C. Ford, Free Church College, Edinburgh

The Practice of Prophetic Imagination: Preaching an Emancipating Word. By Walter Brueggemann. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8006-9897-3. 158pp. £11.99.

The issue of 'prophetic' preaching is in great need of theological reflection today. Walter Brueggemann has consistently brought to the table the urgency of the prophetic task in our contemporary context by mining the practices and situations of the Old Testament prophets. This book builds upon his earlier work, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978). His fundamental burden then, as now, sees preaching as evoking a compelling, alternative 'narrative' of reality over against that of the dominant cultural consciousness. For Brueggemann, preachers are the poets of the contemporary landscape, uttering fresh words which 'may take our breath away' (p. 41).

As expected, the Old Testament prophets are quoted *en masse* as a kind of unified symphony of rhetorical thought, along with a highlighting of their particularities and peculiarities. Various preaching themes emerge, such as responding to tragedy and loss alongside hope and expectation. Brueggemann highlights the sheer variety of expression amongst the prophets, which helpfully wards us away from seeing preaching in overly narrow or monotonous modes. Truly, our sermons should be teeming with as much vibrant, adaptable and 'edgy' expression as those of the prophets themselves.

However, such incessant emphasis upon the 'poetic' responsibilities of the preacher, at times, *over*-ascribes the role of 'imagination' to the preacher rather than God. Brueggemann lauds the prophets for their 'subversive' metaphors and 'shocking' interpretations of events (e.g. the destruction of the Temple). But surely, the prophets—as God's mouthpieces (cf. Jeremiah 1:9)—were not given *formless* content for their oracles. They were not creative writers reading meaning into cultural events; they were proclaiming God's word(s) *to* the culture itself. The relationship between divine and human agency in prophetic utterance is complex, of course; Brueggemann's account suffers for a lack of sustained theological attention to it.

There is also a tendency to import latently postmodern rhetoric into the Old Testament narrative. Thus, Israel offers the world 'emancipation instead of rat-race production'; 'covenantal dialogue instead of tyrannical monopoly' (p. 12), and undercuts the 'stifling reductionism of the royal consciousness' (p. 23). Of course, it is important to transport Israel's narrative *into* the present day, but not the other way around. Evidently, Brueggemann brings a little too much anti-establishment, anti-US, anti-consumerist angst *into* his exegesis. It is difficult to imagine Jeremiah or

Amos being quite so friendly with such distinctly postmodern thought-categories. Indeed, surely prophetic preaching might critique *these* prevalent 'narratives' too.

As to the book's structure, various sets of bullet points and numeral sections are offered with little rationale. One is often lost in a swathe of emphases and intermittent quotations which are never lingered upon long enough to provide sufficient reflective depth or clarity. Along the way, however, Brueggemann offers many insightful pseudo-proverbial reflections upon the significance and theological scope of the preaching task: 'Prophetic preaching is an effort to imagine the world as though YHWH... is a real character and a defining agent in the world' (p. 23); 'The preacher's words, like the embodied Word, refuse the confinements of modern rationality and dare to utter yet another word' (p. 128); 'It is the bite of the prophetic tradition that it can out-imagine the dominant imagination, because it is in sync with the truth of YHWH' (p. 28). Such homiletical gems are extremely valuable.

Brueggemann really does have a lot of perceptive things to say about the theology and practice of preaching. But he does not give a wholly convincing clarion call for the *whys* and *hows* which this book appears to offer. Thus, he succeeds in bringing the uniquely *prophetic* nature of preaching to the forefront of our minds, but fails to bring it home in the way he intends.

Aaron Edwards, University of Aberdeen

Princeton Seminary in American Religion and Culture. By James H. Moorhead. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8028-6752-0. 570pp. £40.99.

Readers of SBET will find this volume to be of compelling interest for more than one reason. On the one hand, a reader from the UK will find here a continuation of the story of how the seminary at Princeton (and still-earlier theological instruction through the pre-existing College of New Jersey) functioned in the same theological universe as the Scottish university divinity faculties and the English Nonconformist theological academies (eventually absorbed within England's emerging 'red brick' universities). Scots John Witherspoon (1723-94) and James McCosh (1811-94) are important components of this story. The Scots missionary-theologian, John R. Mackay (1889-1983) stood at the helm of this seminary for almost a quarter-century. Commonalities continued during the 2004-12 presidency of the Scot, Iain R. Torrance. At Princeton, the trans-Atlantic link has been ongoing and definite.

On the other hand, North American readers of this journal will find a fair-minded and comprehensive account of the seminary's two-century existence—an existence which, they have repeatedly been informed, suffered a fatal blow on the occasion of the withdrawal of New Testament scholar, J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937). Rebuffed when nominated to the seminary's chair in apologetics and apprehensive over the denomination's determination to broaden the perspective of Princeton, Machen and a circle of supportive faculty members withdrew in 1929 to found Westminster Seminary. Eighty-plus years later, conservative evangelicals on this side of the Atlantic still write and speak as if Princeton Seminary is only of significance *until* the year of rupture. Moorhead's massively-researched volume will compel those so-minded to think again, and to acknowledge the complexities at stake in that post-Great War era. The volume is characterized by three great strengths.

Moorhead's treatment of the two-century existence of the school is what may be called consolidative, for it incorporates the research of many into his own skilful narrative. Indeed, the evangelical constituency (just alluded to) will, to a degree, be disarmed on discovering that their journal articles, doctoral dissertations, and published monographs on Princeton in the pre-1929 era have—with others—been duly noted and digested. Had the same constituency researched the post-1929 era, their researches would also be reflected in this consolidative account.

It ought to have been so. The component of the Princeton faculty remaining in 1929 and dominant until circa 1940 was no less emphatically evangelical in its commitments than the element which departed for Philadelphia in 1929. The last of the Hodges to teach at Princeton, C. W. Hodge Jr. (1870-1937), successor to B. B. Warfield, continued in his post until his death. New Testament scholar, William Park Armstrong and the biblical theologian, Geerhardus Vos finished their careers at the seminary. The popular-level Bible commentaries of Charles R. Erdman (1866-1960), the Bible dictionary compiled by John D. Davis (1854-1926), the missionary writings of Samuel Zwemer (1867-1952), the pastoral writings of Andrew Blackwood (1882-1966)—all these continued to assist the broadly evangelical world for decades to come. When Princeton Seminary inaugurated its academic doctoral programs in 1944, evangelical and Reformed students were among those seeking admission.

Moorhead's account is, in addition to being consolidative, strongly contextual. He shows that in different epochs, Princeton Seminary mirrored the sentiments and championed the concerns of large swathes of the nation. In the period up to 1812, theological instruction in the College of New Jersey had—as part of the Witherspoon legacy continued under his son-in-law Samuel Stanhope Smith—taught evangelical theology

from the moderate Enlightenment stance embracing Scottish 'Common Sense' philosophy. This continued well beyond 1812. The early stance of the seminary from its 1812 foundation also mirrored the social outlook of American Whigs; the ante-bellum outlook of the seminary on American slavery mirrored the concern of middle America that slavery be ended (though not abruptly abolished). Until 1900, Princeton's theological outlook was clearly dominant in its denomination and provided the theological 'pulse' of northern Presbyterianism. The difficulty faced by the seminary in the post-1900 period was that it had become self-consciously defensive in the face of a changing theological and social landscape, and stood against a tide of adjustment at work not only in American society but across its sponsoring denomination and her other seminaries.

Moorhead's account further serves as a corrective to an imbalance rooted in the fact that Princeton has been appraised too frequently through the 'lens' provided by the careers and biographies of 'pillar' faculty members such as Archibald Alexander, the Hodges (Charles and son Archibald), and Benjamin Warfield. What colour is added by Moorhead's provision of an extended treatment of Samuel Miller (contemporary to Archibald Alexander), of W.H. Green (1825-1900) 'the Hebrew teacher of his generation', and William Brenton Greene (1854-1928) who from 1892 instructed in what we would today term social ethics and apologetics! There is a texture and a variety to the massively-learned conservative Princeton tradition which may have gone underappreciated.

Yet, with all this said, there are certain things one might have liked to see handled, or handled differently. We have begun by noting Princeton's trans-Atlantic significance. But we do not read here of the trans-Atlantic role played by Princeton which in effect adjudicated much British Reformed theology by the steady awarding of honorary D.D. degrees to pastors and theological tutors across the water. Especially in English Nonconformity, then-barred from the English (but not Scottish) universities and in Scottish Presbyterian dissent (whose Divinity Halls were not linked to that nation's universities), Princeton's trans-Atlantic role was extensive.

Second, while it is evident that Moorhead deeply admired President John R. Mackay, (president from 1936-59), devoting 50 pages to the impact and direction of his presidency, one comes away with the opinion that the sums have not been reckoned quite adequately. If we grant (and we ought to) that the 'old Princeton' endured beyond 1929, it was clearly on Mackay's watch that this era was laid to rest. Moorhead has not adequately explained how Mackay—who took his former professor, B. B. Warfield as his theological hero—could preside over the school's steady embrace of neo-orthodoxy, with Emil Brunner as visiting pro-

fessor by 1937. In the Mackay era, departing faculty members who were unambiguously evangelical were systematically replaced with those who identified with the evangelical position only in some qualified sense. It was this 'evaporation' at Princeton which opened the way for seminaries such as Fuller and Gordon-Conwell to become the institutions of choice for PCUSA evangelicals.

Third, while any volume surveying two centuries of institutional history in 570 pages will have had to leave many stories untold, some omissions seem rather glaring. Surely, there is an important story to be told relative to the demise of the *Princeton Theological Review* in 1929 (the year of the seminary's re-organization) and the not-unrelated commencement in that year of the *Evangelical Quarterly* at Edinburgh? The emergence of *Theology Today* at Princeton in 1944 was a development consistent with the now more inclusive theological stance of the seminary. Surely the omission of any treatment of its editor, theologian Hugh Thomson Kerr Jr., (a faculty member between 1940 and 1974) represents a missed opportunity to explore this change of theological emphasis. The church historian, Norman Hope, who taught at Princeton 1946-78, is completely passed over as is the practical theologian, Donald Macleod, who taught at Princeton from 1948-88. Finally, we are left to wonder as to what was the line of demarcation determining which current faculty members would be mentioned in this work and which would not. One hopes that the faculty members of today accepted the principle of selection used.

Kenneth J. Stewart, Covenant College, USA

Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton. By W. Andrew Hoffecker. (American Reformed Biographies). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011. ISBN 978-0-87552-658-4. 460 pp. US$19.99.

For any who regard Old Princeton with gratitude and respect, Charles Hodge (1797–1878) will be a figure of profound importance. Beyond this constituency, however, it might be wondered why this unoriginal and parochial theologian now deserves a large-scale biography. (In fact, not only one but two biographies of Hodge appeared in 2011, the other written by Paul Gutjahr and published by OUP.) Andrew Hoffecker's authoritative and readable account of Hodge's life and work should satisfy those from either camp. In fact, the scale of his influence and involvement in nineteenth century American life may surprise those for whom he remains primarily the author of a trustworthy work of systematic theology.

Lives can be messy things, and biographers face the challenge of providing structure for a narrative which inevitably has many diverse, diffuse, yet intertwined strands running through it. Here, it must be thought,

Hodge presents less of a challenge than some, perhaps most. Basically, he went to Princeton, then he went to Europe, then he went back to Princeton and then, some years later, he died. Simple enough—but it barely hints at the scope of Hodge's importance or achievement. Hoffecker divides the biography into six major sections comprising thirty-five chapters; the first two parts correspond to 'he went to Princeton' ('Roots'), which covers his early life and student days up to his appointment to the faculty of Princeton Seminary, and 'he went to Europe' ('Broadened Abroad') a brief, two-year sojourn to which Hoffecker devotes careful attention and attaches fundamental significance. The remaining four parts trace Hodge's theological engagements with different facets of the Presbyterian church in the United States, although the brief fifth part, 'Interaction with Europe', picks up his connections to the wider church formed during his youthful European tour.

Hoffecker portrays Hodge as an individual of clear and deliberate thought and integrated convictions, capable of inspiring deep affection but able and willing to engage in combat—verbal or written—where he saw the need. Inevitably, Hodge harboured tensions too: Hoffecker presents a persuasive and appealing account of how head and heart each made their contribution to Hodge's activity as a public theologian. Even so, one or two fissures in Hodge's commitments invite comment and explanation, but pass unnoticed. How is it, for example, that he could be so suspicious of 'voluntary societies' and opposed to inter-denominational cooperation in the 1840s, yet at the same time produce a popular theological textbook intended for use across denominational lines? And by the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in 1873, he was able to offer a stirring prayer for evangelical cooperation and deliver an address on 'Christian Union'—both of which still repay reading and reflection.

In the main, and in the manner of the best theological history, Hoffecker's narrative constructs a nuanced framework for exploring and explaining Hodge's theology. That this is done in so sustained a fashion may explain one apparent oddity in the structure of the biography as a whole. Of course, Hodge's three-volume *Systematic Theology* (1872-73) was the capstone of his writing career and the harvest of a lifetime in theological education and controversy. We catch little glimpse, however, of Hodge at work on this massive achievement, nor do we enjoy much if any exposition of what factors inspired its emergence in just this form. By contrast, Hodge's theological handbook for use in the churches, *The Way of Life* (1841), produced mid-career, gets a welcome and lively chapter giving just this sort of setting for what is a very appealing part of Hodge's output—but hardly on the scale or having the significance of the later work.

If this quibble is a sign that at least one reader wanted more, then that is no bad thing. On the other hand, a little less at some points could have helped, too. There is some repetition between text and notes (endnotes, sadly), and in a few cases between text and text (as on, e.g., p. 292) that might have been eliminated (and 'Bovarie Posey' for E.B. Pusey is a bit of a howler on the next page). A firmer editorial hand at these points would have helped. But quibbles these remain, and churlish at that for such a substantial contribution which so insightfully informs in so satisfying a manner.

David J. Reimer, University of Edinburgh

Barth and Dostoevsky: A Study of the Influence of the Russian Writer Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky on the Development of the Swiss Theologian Karl Barth, 1915-1922. By P. H. Brazier. (Paternoster Theological Monographs). Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007. ISBN: 978-1-84227-563-4. xix + 245pp. £24.99.

During the summer of 1915, a young Swiss minister in Leutwil introduced the pastor in the neighbouring valley, serving the small village of Safenwil, to the writings of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky. Through this simple gesture, Eduard Thurneysen propelled Karl Barth's theological development by sharing with him the wellspring without which, as Barth would later claim, he 'would not have been able to write either the first or the second edition of the commentary on Romans,' (pp. 7-8, 75, 139). In this masterful study, P. H. Brazier traces the contribution of the Russian author to Barth's thought, specifically in regard to sin and grace and the *diastasis* between the world and God, during Barth's crucial *Wendung und Retraktation* period. Using Bruce McCormack's groundbreaking work 'as a given and as a base line' (p. 3), Brazier carefully examines not only Dostoevsky's influence upon Barth, but also Barth's early theological development, his catalytic dialogues with Thurneysen, and Thurneysen's own significant scholarly contributions to the fields of pastoral care and Dostoevsky studies.

Brazier divides the seventeen chapters of his book into four parts. The first part traces Barth's early theological formation, including his wartime disillusionment with the theology of his teachers, and introduces his friendship with Thurneysen. Part Two argues that Dostoevsky's understanding of sin and grace influenced Barth's thought during the crucial year of 1915, sowing seeds that would ripen in Barth's later, focused study of the Reformers. Brazier claims that Dostoevsky's 'Idea,' namely that humanity, when adrift from God, acts without constraint, shaped Barth and Thurneysen's emerging view of human sinfulness. The Russian

novelist provided an anthropology that rang true to a generation struggling with the cataclysmic suffering and loss of World War I. Dostoevsky grasped their crisis and pointed toward its resolution, found only in God's grace extended to unworthy sinners. Further, Dostoevsky's novels laid the groundwork for Barth and Thurneysen's detailed study of Biblical texts in 1916, from which Barth's commentaries on Romans would eventually arise, and prepared Barth for his own discovery of 'The Solution' to the futility of human-centred projects through an encounter with the 'wholly other' God of Scripture. Part Three provides an overview of Thurneysen's books on pastoral care and Dostoevsky, considers the influence of various scholars upon Thurneysen and Barth as they interpreted Dostoevsky's novels, and closes with a discussion of the theological existentialism found in both Dostoevsky's and Thurneysen's writings. Part Four examines Barth's correspondence with Thurneysen during the writing of *Römerbriefs 1* and *2*, his references to Dostoevsky and others (the Reformers, Overbeck, Kierkegaard) within these volumes, and the convergence of theological themes between Barth's Romans commentaries and Dostoevsky's novels.

The strength of this volume lies in its broad scope, thorough research, and crisp writing. Brazier displays a lucid understanding of the contextual factors influencing Barth's early theological development, skilfully analyzes Dostoevsky's writings in their own right as he also traces their influence upon Barth, and patiently unpacks the contributions of the lesser known Thurneysen. Brazier's challenge lies in the interweaving of these strands, which at times threaten to pull apart as separate narratives straining in different directions. Nevertheless, his broad discussion supplies a new 'base line' that may inspire further, more focused, thematic studies of the theological dimensions of Barth's interaction with Dostoevsky and Thurneysen. Indirectly, Brazier's research illumines the crucial role of artistic media, specifically of novels, in the formation and dissemination of theological ideas. Overall, Brazier's commendable and highly readable book sharpens our view of the vibrant world of literature, theology, friendship, and pastoral ministry that shaped the young Barth and that prepared him for his tremendous theological contributions.

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Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith. By Michael McClenahan. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012. ISBN: 978-1409441786. 228pp. £55.00.

This book is the published form of McClenahan's 2006 doctoral dissertation undertaken at Oxford University. It focuses on the theme of justification by faith, a doctrine that was highly significant to Edwards in

the context of the events leading up to the Great Awakening. The central thesis advanced is as follows: 'Edwards' discourse on justification follows in broad continuity with previous Reformed explanations of the doctrine' (p. 192). This argument for continuity is one that embraces novel elements in Edwards' thought, elements which are interpreted as evidence of the attempt to restate the Reformed tradition in fresh ways rather than as departures from it.

In order to establish his argument, McClenahan offers a close reading of Edwards' discourse, *Justification by Faith Alone*, in the light of its polemical and intellectual context. The contents of the discourse were first delivered in two public lectures in 1734, and subsequently published in 1738 in expanded form. Polemically, the key issue addressed is the Arminianism that Edwards opposed. In chapters one and two, McClenahan demonstrates that it is primarily the Arminian theology that is represented in Archbishop John Tillotson's published sermons that Edwards opposed in his discourse. Key aspects of Tillotson's theology of justification include a version of the covenant of grace in which faith and obedience are conditions, a re-definition of justifying faith that entails obedience, and a view that God accepts a man's sincere albeit imperfect obedience on account of Christ's meritorious obedience and suffering. It is argued that Edwards contended against this 'new fashioned divinity' in defence of the 'old Protestant doctrine' of justification (p. 22).

Having established Tillotson's significance, McClenahan offers a critical exposition of Edwards' discourse in chapters three to five in which he shows that the key tenets of Tillotson's Arminian theology are explicitly addressed by Edwards with the resources of Reformed Orthodoxy. One example will suffice to illustrate McClenahan's approach in these chapters—Edwards' view of imputation. Edwards defined justification in terms of sin's remission and the title to eternal life (pp. 96-100). From the standpoint of sin's resolution, justification entails freedom from the guilt of sin and the legal right to eternal life. This definition lays the ground for Edwards' doctrine of imputation in the light of his covenant theology (pp. 139-147). It parallels Edwards' conception that sin's satisfaction and the perfect obedience of God's law are necessary for justification. The former is achieved in Christ's atoning death while the latter is fulfilled in Christ's perfect obedience to the law, both of which are imputed to believers in their justification. Throughout the exposition, McClenahan shows that Edwards' view of imputation is akin to those of Reformed Orthodox theologians such as John Owen and Francis Turretin. He further shows that Edwards' articulation of imputation is directed against Tillotson's conception that a person's sincere but imperfect obedience counts towards justification.

McClenahan makes a number of important contributions in his reading of Edwards' discourse. His study challenges the conclusions of scholars who undervalue the forensic nature of justification in Edwards for a more Catholic conception of it. In particular, it calls into question Miller's influential thesis that New England covenant theology, with its stress on preparationism and covenantal conditions, departed from Calvin's theology and opened the door to Arminianism. McClenahan has ably demonstrated that it was the Anglican Arminianism of Tillotson that Edwards opposed, and he opposed it as one who drank from the wells of Reformed Orthodoxy. Meticulously researched, rigorously argued, and sprinkled with helpful summary paragraphs throughout, this is a work that will benefit both pastors and scholars on a central concern of the Gospel.

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The Holy Trinity: Understanding God's Life. By Stephen R. Holmes. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012. ISBN 978-1-84227-741-6. xix + 231pp. £19.99.

In this significant contribution to Trinitarian debate, Holmes argues that the trumpeted revival of Trinitarian theology over the last decades, far from being a positive development, represents a departure from the classic doctrine.

Holmes correctly agrees with Ayres that Augustine expresses agreement with the Cappadocians and the Constantinopolitan settlement. From this he maintains there is no substantive division of east and west on Trinitarian doctrine. Holmes attributes the east-west model to the arguments of Theodore de Régnon. Photius, the ninth century Patriarch of Constantinople, in fulminating against Augustine and the double procession, generated more heat than light. Indeed, there was no need for a revival of Trinitarianism, for the classic doctrine has always been accepted across the church. The social doctrine of the trinity, with its talk of a divine community, is an abandonment of the entire theological tradition.

There are many positive elements to Holmes' case. Much, if not most, recent writing has effectively removed the immanent trinity or led towards intra-Trinitarian relations that verge on tritheism. Holmes' strong commitment to classic Trinitarian theology is to be welcomed. The book is thought provoking and has generated and will generate considerable discussion and response.

Naturally, there are some points for debate. My concern, as a pastor for twenty five years, has been with the grass roots, with pulpit and pew. In my experience of over half a century of hearing sermons and prayers, I

recall very few Trinitarian sermons, other than those I or colleagues have preached, nor heard prayers invoking the trinity from outside the Book of Common Prayer. From this angle a Trinitarian revival was needed and is needed still.

Moreover, differences between east and west did not arise out of thin air; there was an underlying disagreement. The controversy over the *filioque* was hardly a chimera. The liturgies of the Eastern church are markedly different—and for the East, the creeds, the liturgy and the ecumenical councils are paramount rather than the musings of individual theologians. Simply because Augustine was not in conflict with the Cappadocian settlement, or since recent discussions have reached certain agreements, does not warrant sweeping a millennium or more of conflict under the carpet as though it did not exist.

It is surprising in view of this that Holmes hardly refers to Eastern and Orthodox representatives. Lossky, Meyendorff, Staniloae, Cabasilas, Florovsky, and Bobrinskoy are not mentioned. He overlooks the point that converts from Rome and Protestantism have historically been called on to renounce, *inter alia*, the *filioque* before their chrismation. Seminar papers, journal articles, and theological treatises may seem to set the agenda but for Orthodoxy the unchanging liturgy and the life of the church in creed, councils, and living worship is where the action is. Here Theodoe de Régnon is at most a recent, remote and largely irrelevant footnote.

Along rather similar lines one is struck by the absence of reference to T.F. Torrance, to my mind the pre-eminent figure in recent Trinitarian theology. Where does he fit in Holmes' analysis, one wonders?

Finally, I have some concerns with Holmes' understanding of the classic trinitarianism as he expresses it in his final chapter. Perhaps due to his justifiable opposition to the social trinity he seems to go just a touch in the opposite direction in saying that the only distinctions between the hypostases are the eternal relations of origin. Do not the missions—the incarnation of the Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit—disclose something?

Despite such caveats, Holmes is to be congratulated on writing an accessible book worth reading and pondering deeply.

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