Guest Editorial
Thinking Biblically — The Asylum Seeker Crisis

We are in the midst of a humanitarian crisis. Plastered across news channels and front pages are alarming headlines and disturbing images portraying the mass migration of thousands fleeing Syria, Iraq, and North Africa. Behind the rhetoric is a crisis that cuts to the heart and leaves most of us feeling helpless and confused about how we should think, feel, and respond to this global tragedy.

It is interesting looking through the grand narrative of the Bible just how much migration lies at the very heart of the unfolding story of God. Adam and Eve at the very start are forced to relocate from Eden because of their sin. Noah boards a ship to escape a supernatural disaster. Migration is forced upon the people defying God at Babel. Abraham migrates from Ur of the Chaldeans in obedience to God's command. Jacob and his family are migrants for 400 years in Egypt having escaped a famine in Canaan—all by God's foreknowledge. The Exodus sees God's people become nomadic wanderers for forty years through a rugged, dangerous, and hostile environment. Once they finally receive the law and enter the land there are explicit laws given in the Torah speaking about Israel's responsibility to love the foreigner and not exploit those sojourning amongst them. David is driven to live amongst the Philistines as King Saul's vendetta against him reaches its peak. The eighth-century BC conquest of Assyria and the exile to Babylon in the sixth century sees millions of people displaced by military might. Jesus is forced to leave Nazareth and seek refuge in Egypt during his early life due to the infanticide carried out by King Herod. Priscilla and Aquila find themselves in Corinth on account of the anti-Semitic *diktat* of emperor Claudius. And Peter even describes the normal Christian as an 'exiled alien' in the opening of his first letter.

Let's also remember that at the very heart of the gospel is the story of a reverse migrant worker, Jesus Christ, who left the boundless glory of heaven to become a man in a broken and messed up world. In this world fraught with danger he laboured and toiled ceaselessly without gratitude and amidst great and growing opposition. He gave up his rights and went willingly to a cruel cross where he gave his life as a ransom for many, completing all the work that he had been sent to accomplish by His father. He did not flee or run, he came and died so that we would have a safe place to call our home forever with him, all because he left his place of comfort and prosperity to enter our war torn world.

So how should we respond? Here are my suggestions:

Pray in four directions. *Firstly*, pray for governments and authorities. Pray that they would be given wisdom from above in dealing with this crisis and finding a way forward that allows for safety and flourishing. *Secondly*, pray for the countless agencies in the midst of the crisis whether it be border controls or relief efforts, pray they would be given strength and energy, pray they would treat those in their midst with patience, grace, respect and as individuals. *Thirdly*, pray for opportunities. What an opportunity for mission is arriving on our doorstep, to be able to tell people looking for refuge and help that there is One who promises to be their refuge and help forever. People are coming from very closed and largely unengaged countries into a region of relative gospel freedom. *Fourthly*, pray for safety and justice. Safety for the thousands of people embarking on treacherous voyages: as one sees the images of people crammed onto boats that aren't sea-worthy you can't help but pray the William Whiting hymn words, 'Oh hear us when we cry to thee / for those in peril on the sea'. Pray also that those profiting from the misery of others would be halted and brought to justice.

Think in three directions: *How can I show Jesus in my attitude to this crisis?* Jesus' earthly life was characterized by his love and service towards outsiders and outcasts. How can I conform my attitude to his image? *How can I engage meaningfully with Scotland's migrants?* What if we decided that we were all going to have at least one asylum seeker/migrant friend, and that we would invest in that relationship meaningfully and deliberately—what opportunities might God open for new life and hope as the gospel is shared along with our lives? *How can I use this subject to share the gospel?* This crisis is the topic of conversation across living rooms and office blocks alike: how can I use it to shake the tree and share the gospel?

Give in two directions: Give to agencies and organizations trying to help those affected by this crisis, organizations like UNICEF and Save the Children who are on the ground and seeking to assist and care for these people's immediate needs. Also give to the agencies that are seeking to not only care for these people but also seeking to share Jesus with them organisation like Tearfund and OM.

Love in one direction: The life changing news of Jesus Christ means that we are saved from serving ourselves and freed to serve others. Therefore, as the freest people on the earth we are able, equipped, and empowered to love others unconditionally with a humble extravagant compassion.

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The Bible as Sceptre: Authority and Worldview

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INTRODUCTION[1]

For the bulk of Christian history the authority of the Bible to rule over every area of thought, speech and practice was accepted without question. As David Jasper comments in his *Short Introduction to Hermeneutics*, '[the] hermeneutics of faith can take many forms, but it was, on the whole, the predominant way of reading the Bible for at least the first fifteen hundred years of Christian history.'[2] Until the rise of the critical era, that is. With the Enlightenment desire to question all things, eventually the Bible too became subject to human intellectual critique.[3] Although not *the necessary* consequence of critical readings of Scripture, almost inevitably, the secularizing tendencies of the Enlightenment have ultimately led to the broad rejection of the authoritative role of revelation in our life and society.[4]

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1 This paper is the written form of a presentation made at the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society annual meeting in March 2014. SETS seeks 'to promote Scottish theology which serves the churches, is faithful to Scripture, grounded in scholarship, and catholic in scope' (<http://www.s-e-t-s.org.uk/society>, accessed 16.10.2015). The topic was assigned by the organisers and the audience at the event was mainly made up of pastors, church leaders and academics. So, inevitably, the content of this paper is shaped in part by the brief given to me.

2 David Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), p. 9.

3 See Jamie A. Grant, 'Scripture and Biblical Criticism', in Michael Bird and Michael Pahl, eds., *The Sacred Text: Excavating the Texts, Exploring the Interpretations, and Engaging the Theologies of the Christian Scriptures* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010), pp. 101–18, for a brief overview of the gradual application of Enlightenment, critical approaches to the study of the Bible, and Alvin Plantinga, 'Two (or More) Types of Scripture Scholarship', *Modern Theology* 14 (1998), 243–77, for an excellent discussion of critical and traditional approaches to biblical interpretation.

4 See Richard Tarnas' fascinating discussion of this process in *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World*

However, throughout that turbulent period of change in human history and ever since, many communities of faith, while often accepting the merits of critical approaches, have continued to hold to the idea that the Scriptures, as divine revelation, speak authoritatively into *every area* of human thought and praxis. Within the modern setting, for example, the UCCF Doctrinal Basis was often regarded as a bedrock of British Evangelicalism in the twentieth century. Its statement regarding the Bible contends:

> The Bible, as originally given, is the inspired and infallible Word of God. It is the supreme authority in all matters of belief and behaviour.[5]

In the more postmodern twenty-first century, it would probably be fair to say that the UCCF Doctrinal Basis does not command the same influential position that it once did within church circles. Equally, we would arguably have to acknowledge that approaches to Scripture among communities that self-describe as 'evangelical' are broader than they have ever been in the past.[6] However, even with this changing picture, it seems fair to suggest that 'biblicism' remains one of the key identifying features of evangelical theology and worldview.[7] The above statement on Scripture remains helpful because it outlines clearly the idea of the Bible as sceptre: it is from God, it speaks to all things and governs (or, at least, *should* govern) every area of our attitude and practice.

In this paradigm-challenging environment, evangelicals have come to argue over particular nuances in their defence of the concept of biblical authority (whether defined as inerrancy or infallibility or by the use of some other term) while quietly letting the Bible itself fall into relative disuse in our own congregations. Also, given secular scepticism with regard to the Bible, it becomes easy to view the text in a privatised

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View (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991). Tarnas comments that: 'The modern mind required of itself, and exulted in, a systematically critical independence of judgement—an existential posture not easily compatible with the pious surrender required for belief in divine revelation...' (p. 320).

5 <https://www.uccf.org.uk/about/doctrinal-basis.htm> accessed 01.04.2015 (no joke implied!). UCCF is the Universities and College Christian Fellowship.

6 Brian Harris, 'Beyond Bebbington: The Quest for Evangelical Identity in a Postmodern Era', *Churchman* 122/3 (2008), 201–20.

7 The term, of course, is David Bebbington's and he describes this high view of Scripture as one of the four marks of evangelical religion along with conversionism, activism and crucicentrism; *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), pp. 2-3.

manner—the Bible speaks about *my* salvation and how *I* should live. However, it remains vitally important for those who adhere to a high view of Scripture to remember that the Bible speaks broadly and with life-affirming authority to every aspect of life and society.

With these challenges to the role of Scripture in mind, it seems appropriate to turn our minds to four specific aspects of this notion of the Bible as sceptre:

1. The range of Scripture;
2. The voices of Scripture;
3. The use of Scripture;
4. The doctrine of Scripture.

1. THE RANGE OF SCRIPTURE

The evangelical community's unhelpful focus on the *precise description* of the Bible's authoritative nature has contributed towards a great disservice in terms of our awareness of its role as *kanōn* in shaping the believer's holistic world and life view.[8] Discussion of descriptors often seems to outweigh reflection on content. So we bat about the specifics of 'inerrancy' over 'infallibility' as appropriate badges of membership while there is a general failure to understand the full ramifications of the Kingdom of God as it unfolds in the pages of the Bible. If Scripture is the ultimate authority for those of us who self-describe as evangelical then we must allow its voice to speak into every area of life and being, rather than wasting time defending the particular semantics of our high view of Scripture.

Even a cursory analysis of the biblical text shows its comprehensive nature.[9] We readily come across verses or passages of Scripture that speak to areas of life as wildly diverse as the following:

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[8] The concept of canon implies that the Scriptures become a 'rod' or 'rule'—a governing document by which the community of faith lives. See Lee Martin McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006) for a full and helpful discussion or R. T. Beckwith's helpful article on the topic, 'The Canon of Scripture', in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. by T. D. Alexander and B. S. Rosner (Leicester: IVP, 2000), pp. 27–34.

[9] Of course, I run the risk of being accused of proof-texting here and this would be fair comment. My point here, however, is not to model a particular approach to hermeneutics and interpretation of the text. It is, simply, to

- human nature and the basic questions of anthropology (Psalm 8)
- politics and societal justice (Psalm 72)
- law and justice (Prov. 21:3; 28:15-16)
- art and artizanship (Prov. 22:29; 31; Eccl. 2:1-11; 9:10)
- ethics (Job 31)
- family (Prov. 10:1; 15:20)
- trade (Prov. 11:1)
- sex and sexuality (Song of Songs)
- paradox in our life experience (Ecclesiastes)
- mourning, loss, doubt and theodicy (Psalm 88; Job)
- meaning in life (Eccl. 1:1-11)
- the cosmos and the environment (Ps. 97:6)
- and much, much more besides.

The obvious point is that the Bible speaks to much more than just questions of spirituality, salvation and relationship with God. The canon does, of course, speak to these key matters but it addresses so much more besides. In fact the Bible presents the reader with thought-provoking discussion that speaks to the whole spectrum of life and experience.[10] In short, it is legitimate for us to conclude that the Scriptures confront the reader with the presentation of a holistic and comprehensive world and life view. To view the canon as less than this is a gross misrepresentation of the concept of the Bible as sceptre. If the enscripturated word of God

provide a superficial scan of the diversity of subject matters addressed in the Bible.

[10] In so saying, I am not implying that there are simplistic hermeneutical lines to be drawn between the world of the Bible and every detail of our modern life. I mean, rather, that the variegated voice of the Scriptures speaks into all of the foundational issues and experiences that are common to human beings.

speaks to humanity today, then we must accept that it speaks into *every* aspect of human life and not just to questions of salvation, spirituality and privatised religion. The Bible as spectre gives us a theology of Kingdom.[11]

Every time that the believer prays, 'Your *Kingdom* come, your *will* be done, *on earth*, as it is in heaven,' there is, in fact, a request for radical societal transformation and the complete change and renewal of known realities. We are asking for the total metamorphosis of life as we know it.

A kingdom has its own political system of rule. A kingdom will tend to share a common language. A kingdom implies shared cultural norms and expectations. A kingdom will often have its own take on everything from art to trade, from food and drink to sense of humour. A kingdom implies citizenship and belonging—rights *and* responsibilities, laws and privileges. The concept of kingdom is far-reaching and necessarily impacts upon almost every area of life, both individual and corporate. However, most of all, the concept of kingdom implies a king![12]

Our contemporary and democratic concepts of kingdom are somewhat pale in comparison to the understandings that would have been shared by Jesus' original hearers of the Lord's prayer. They would view kingdom as all-encompassing, the king as all-powerful and his stated word as an unquestionable absolute. I fear that our contemporary understanding of and response to Scripture is both monochrome and anaemic by comparison. If, then, the Bible speaks authoritatively to every area of life, our preaching of it and response to it should be equally holistic. James Orr is helpful here:

> Everything depends here on what the Revelation of the Bible is supposed to be. If it is a few general elementary truths of religion we are in search of, it may freely be conceded that these might be given in very simple form. But if we are to have a Revelation such as the Bible professes to convey, a Revelation as high as the nature of God, deep as the nature of man, universal as the wants of the race, which is to accompany man through all the ascending stages of his development and still be felt to be a power and an inspiration to him for further progress—it is absurd to expect that such a Revelation will not have many profound and difficult things in it, and that it will not afford

[11] The discussion of the Bible and worldview in N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992) is helpful in this regard.

[12] G. E. Ladd phrases this in admirably succinct terms: 'The Kingdom is God's kingly rule', in his classic text *A Theology of the New Testament*, revised edn; ed. by Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 58.

> food for thought in its grandest and highest reaches. 'Thy judgements are a great deep.'[13]

Orr would have us consider the Bible as a complex text. Not just in the sense that aspects of it can be difficult for the reader to understand but in the deeper sense that it is multi-layered, technicolour and polyphonic, speaking in glorious, Dolby-stereo, surround-sound into every aspect of our life and being.[14] This is beautifully illustrated for us in Psalm 19's description of the torah—God's teaching and instruction to humanity—as being *təmîmāh* (19:7). Our English translations tend to opt for the translation 'perfect' which, in many ways, is fair and reasonable. However, it is also important to remember that the use of this word in the Old Testament normally tends to revolve around the idea of 'holistic completeness'.[15] The psalmist points to the vivifying power of the Scriptures' all-encompassing voice.[16]

So, if the voice of the Bible speaks to the totality of human life and experience, so too should our teaching and preaching of it. It seems all too often that our evangelical community, with its high regard for Scripture, fails to allow the text to speak into every area of life and being. Our reflections frequently tend to be spiritualised, individualistic and limited in scope to matters spiritual. The good news is of a *Kingdom* and that Kingdom impacts everything—our reflections on Scripture should match that range.

2. THE VOICES OF SCRIPTURE

A second aspect of the authoritative nature of the Bible that seems relevant to the current cultural setting and the challenges that we face is the polyphonic nature of God's Word. The Scriptures contain a wide variety of textures and types—poetry and philosophy, law and apocalyptic, narrative and letter—yet, somehow, our preaching and teaching often fails to reflect that diversity. A sermon on a psalm often looks and feels much like a sermon on a short pericope from Ephesians. A message from Judges

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13 James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1989), p. 21.

14 See the helpful discussion of how the Bible shapes worldview in Al Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*, 2nd edn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

15 See *HALOT*, תָּמִים, *s.v.* This is reflected in the numerous footnotes to the EVV suggesting the alternative translation of 'blameless'.

16 A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), p. 104.

tends not to differ much from a homily based on Ezekiel's apocalyptic visions. Why is that?

The careful reader will note that all of the verses given above to illustrate the comprehensive range of Scripture's voice are drawn from the Old Testament's poetic literature. This is a fascinating insight in itself. Would we, today, desiring to shape the worldview of our generation, communicate essential truths through the medium of poetry? I suspect not. Yet the Bible speaks *authoritatively* through the poetic, with all of its metaphoric vagueness and lack of precision! The fact is that a massive section of revelation is written in poetic form, especially when we note the close similarities between the prophetic and poetic literature of the OT. Bartholomew and O'Dowd sum up the conundrum:

> Poetry, like wisdom, has a rich, renewing, healing and unifying power, which largely goes unnoticed or unappreciated today. Aside from a few select psalms, few of us give much attention to biblical poetry.[17]

My suggestion is that, in relation to the authoritative voice of the Bible in today's world, the evangelical community is overly focussed on the propositional and often either fails to reflect or simply flattens the diverse voices found in the text. It strikes me that this is a problem that we need to address if the church is to fulfil its missional calling.

This quote from a recent book on the ontological nature of the Bible helps to illustrate the problem and its implications:

> The Bible is an oracular book, through which the living God speaks. The language of the Bible is, generally speaking, ordinary language. The words of Scripture *include* propositional statements that are meant to be believed and affirmed with full propositional force.[18]

On one level, this is statement that many evangelicals would affirm as their own. However, the key term in it is the word 'includes'. The Bible does indeed *include* propositional statements but it is not *limited* to these alone. Therefore, necessarily, the Bible cannot be reduced to a set of propositional statements. Unfortunately, our treatment of the Scriptures would

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17 Craig G. Bartholomew and Ryan O'Dowd, *Old Testament Wisdom Literature: A Theological Introduction* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2011), p. 47.

18 Al Mohler, Jr., 'When the Bible Speaks, God Speaks: The Classic Doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy', in *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*, ed. by J. Merrick and Stephen M. Garret (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), p. 45 (emphasis mine).

often lead one to believe that the Scriptures are little more than that—a set of propositions that can be readily agglomerated into a neat system.[19]

Poetry is, by definition, ambiguous. Metaphors are necessarily vague. Paradox is, of course, complex. Apocalyptic is other-worldly. Wisdom is reflective. Proverbs are pithy and deliberately partial statements on an issue. Biblical history (indeed, all history for that matter) is biased. Songs are emotive. Laments are painful. Prophecy strikes at the conscience. These voices cannot and should not be presented in the same way. We should not treat proverbs as if they were law or songs as if they were letters. A poem cannot be reduced to a few propositional statements. The pain of a lament cannot be rendered as a short intellectual thesis.

The challenge for the church is this: are we preserving the teaching practices of modernity in a post-modern world? If so then, in our communication, we fail to allow the authority of Scripture to speak in the natural forms that it takes. When we reduce the Bible to propositional statements (except in so far as these are the direct statements from the text) then, inevitably, we rob the Word of an element of its communicative power because form and content always go hand in hand in any communication. C. S. Lewis's oft-quoted thoughts regarding the psalms are worth hearing again:

> What must be said, however, is that the Psalms are poems, and poems intended to be sung: not doctrinal treatises, nor even sermons. Those who talk of reading the Bible 'as literature' sometimes mean, I think, reading it without attending to the main thing it is about; like reading Burke with no interest in politics, or reading the Aeneid with no interest in Rome. That seems to me to be nonsense. But there is a saner sense in which the Bible, since it is after all literature, cannot properly be read except as literature; and the different parts of it as the different sorts of literature they are. Most emphatically the Psalms must be read as poems; as lyrics, with all the licences and all the formalities, the hyperboles, the emotional rather than logical connections, which are proper to lyric poetry. They must be read as poems if they are to be understood; no less than French must be read as French or English as English. Otherwise we shall miss what is in them and think we see what is not.[20]

If we do not reflect properly on the message of the Bible *in its given forms* then we will actually miss the communicative intent of the text. Our belief

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[19] In so saying I am *not* having a pop at systematic theology. My primary concern here is our handling of the Bible as God authoritative word in the 'pulpit' setting.

[20] C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: G. Bles, 1958), pp. 2–3.

that the Bible is authoritative must shape our forms of communication as well as the content of our worldview. Where the Scriptures communicate in bitter lament, we must never minimise or pacify the text. Where the Word of God reflects doubt and conflict we should never explain that away with more acceptable platitudes. While it is not an argument that I can develop in detail here, I would contend that the books of Job and Ecclesiastes are among the most significant evangelistic texts for a post-modern generation. Our task, metaphorically-speaking, is to allow the sceptre to strike in all of its power and that must include attention to and appropriate expression of form.

3. THE USE OF SCRIPTURE

It seems to me, thirdly, that we diminish the authority of the biblical text when we make it something that it is not: boring! The Bible is a fascinating and variegated book of books and we marginalise its communicative effect and authoritative power when we make our use of the text in the ecclesial setting singular. We must do more with the Bible than just preach it. Not to be misunderstood, preach it we must and expository preaching has a biblically-privileged position, but this should never be our sole public use of Scripture in the church setting. If anything is going to diminish the authority of the Bible in the life of the church, it is making the Scriptures seem boring and irrelevant.[21]

So, preaching is central to the life of the church but there is much else that we can and should do with the Bible in our communities of faith. Here are a few ideas but this list is far from exhaustive:

i. Reading the Word: Most churches do this every week. Some church tradition will always have a set reading from the Old Testament, the New Testament and a Gospel. However, more often than not, we do the public reading of Scripture poorly. It is seen as the necessary prelude and background to the sermon rather than the vivifying Word (Ps. 19:7). It is almost as if the reading is secondary to our analysis of it. Surely, there is something backwards about that? We need to be both creative and contemplative in our public reading of Scripture. Our reading should reflect the inherent drama of the text and time should be given for the congregation to reflect on the text. Instead of a prayer meeting, why not co-opt the youth group to read the text of Romans as it would have been originally

[21] Again, just to be clear, I am not suggesting that preaching *per se* makes the Bible boring and irrelevant. My argument is simply that we run that risk if preaching is the *only* public encounter with the Word that we offer our church communities.

read—as a letter to a community of God's people. Reading Romans out loud, with all of the dramatic emphasis it deserves, will take around fifty minutes and the impact of reading a letter as a letter can be huge. It is a different form of engagement with Scripture.[22]

ii. Teaching the Word: There is an important distinction between preaching and teaching and teaching also has its place within the church family. The adult Sunday schools of the North American church provide a great opportunity to go deep in the Word of God as a community of God's people. I have yet to see these successfully replicated in the Scottish church scene but there are other creative ways to incorporate teaching into the life of the congregation (e.g. a hour on a Saturday morning with the promise of bacon rolls or, occasionally, giving over a Sunday evening service to a more informal teaching-type encounter with the Word).[23]

iii. Meditating on the Word: Psalm 1 describes the blessed (happy) person as being one who both 'delights in' and 'meditates' on the torah of Yahweh. The practice that is encouraged is to *hāgāh* on God's teaching and the Hebrew verb implies something more than just reflective contemplation. The verb is somewhat akin to 'muttering over' the text.[24] Reading silently is often said to be the peculiar product of modernity. There is some evidence that both reading and praying in the ancient world tended to be done out loud.[25] The significance seems to be based in the vocal repetition of the text as a stimulus to the ear. The seeing and hearing of the text combined inculcates a greater engagement with and appropriation of its message. *Lectio Divina* is a popular and useful tool to encourage this type of engagement with the Scriptures that can be used in a congregational, as well as small group, setting.[26]

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22 The same is true of the Gospels. Mark could easily be read in one sitting or John in two and this gives an encounter with Jesus that is quite unique.

23 In a cultural setting where biblical literacy is on the decline the importance of teaching is elevated.

24 *HALOT*, הגה, *s.v.* Koehler and Baumgartner offer the translation options 'to read in an undertone' or 'to mutter while meditating'.

25 See, for example, the discussion of reading groups in William A. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

26 See, for example, the discussion of Lectio Divina on the Bible Society website <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/lectio-divina>.

iv. Contextualising the Word: The general lack of biblical literacy is a huge problem in terms of the Bible's authoritative communication in this generation. By and large people in the church struggle hugely with the Old Testament because of the interpretative difficulties caused by gaps of history, culture, language and worldview. In any teaching setting, if the Scriptures are going to speak clearly, it is important to bridge these gaps in clear and manageable ways. Just three minutes on the impending Assyrian crisis—or a half-page handout—gives great insight for understanding Isaiah. The same is true of the challenges of Gnosticism when preaching through 1 John or explaining the OT wisdom background to the parables, and so on. Contextualising the Scriptures helps people to see the meaning of the text for themselves and respond to it.[27]

v. Unpacking the Interpretative Toolbox: How often does a preacher hear the words, 'I don't know how you got all of that out of *that* text!' To the 'person in the pew,' it seems like a magic trick. Here's the text and suddenly, *abracadabra*, here's the application! It strikes me that this is a somewhat inadequate way to go about unpacking the text of Scripture if we truly believe that it is the authoritative Word of God that shapes our worldview. As with the above discussion of contextualisation, it is not difficult to incorporate brief insights into the hermeneutical process as part of our teaching. Along the way we teach people how to fish rather than simply fishing for them.

vi. Pray and Sing the Word: If the Bible is to shape every aspect of our thought world, it is important to give people a spiritual vocabulary that addresses every life setting. Therefore, the biblical text must shape our prayers and our songs as well as our teaching. As human beings we are more than just intellects and the Scriptures should form our emotive responses of joy and sorrow and every hue in between. Indeed, is this not the very reason why the Psalms have communicated with such power to generations of believers throughout many ages and cultural settings? They transcend the particular environment of both author and reader by giving expression to thoughts, emotions and experiences to which we can

[27] In the same vein, we have a wealth of great study bibles available in the UK setting. These are helpful tools in bridging the hermeneutical gap, with bite-sized pieces of Bible background information made available at those points in the text where these details are most relevant for accurate interpretation. I would argue that the days of giving people just the simple text of the Bible have long since passed. Such study aids are essential if people are to be encouraged to grapple with the whole of Scripture in a meaningful way.

all relate.[28] The Psalms give a spiritual vocabulary that aids our expression of biblical truth in every setting. Having the right vocabulary available to us is an important aspect of worldview formation.[29]

This is far from being an exhaustive list. There are many more approaches to the Scriptures that will prove helpful in encouraging engagement with the text. We face a constant battle with boredom in our congregations and diversity of approach is one way to counter that challenge. If we truly believe that it is the Word of God that speaks to change lives and attitudes then we must maximise encounter with that Word.

4. THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

One final comment on the role of the Scriptures in shaping the worldview of our communities of faith. It seems singularly unproductive to waste time quibbling over the semantics of our high view of Scripture rather than unpacking the text for a generation of people that desperately needs to experience its power to change lives. The strong focus of discussion on questions of 'inerrancy' compared to 'infallibility' in recent years has unnecessarily subverted our attention from questions of praxis to issues of ontology. Our shared ontological understanding of the role of the Bible in the life of faith is actually clear within the evangelical community, regardless of the incessant debates of over the particular semantics of our high view of Scripture. I find myself in substantial agreement with my former colleague and good friend, Michael Bird, when he notes:

> [D]iscussions over how to express the truthfulness of Scripture might be better served by defining Scripture's veracity as opposed to the means of its incapacity for error... Thus, in seeking to define the way in which the Bible is true, or not untrue, there is the danger that one opts for a definition that is detailed and robust but thereby becomes so specific that it fails to reflect the breadth of Christian tradition, historical and global. For that reason I prefer stating the truthfulness of the Christian Bible in positive terms.[30]

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28 Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), pp. 18–28.

29 David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 185–6.

30 Michael F. Bird, 'Introduction: From Manuscript to MP3', in *The Sacred Text: Excavating the Texts, Exploring the Interpretations, and Engaging the Theologies of the Christian Scriptures*, ed. by Michael Bird and Michael Pahl (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010), pp. 14, 17.

The evangelical community of all brands shares a high view of Scripture, a positive belief that the Bible shapes and changes lives in their every aspect. Our focus, therefore, should not be derailed by debates on the minutiae of how we define the veracity of the biblical text. We should, rather, be focussed on our shared desire to bring the worldview-challenging truth of the Bible to the 95% of the population in Scotland who seldom, if ever, encounter the Scriptures in any sort of meaningful way.

CONCLUSION

Some modest suggestions, therefore, in conclusion. Firstly, the evangelical position regarding the supremacy of Scripture needs no more debate. Secondly, our shared focus should be fully fixed on questions of praxis in terms of proclamation both within and outwith the church. Thirdly, this praxis should have a broad vision of the full range of the Bible's voice which encompasses a holistic, Kingdom-based world and life view. Fourthly, our encounters with Scripture should be as varied as the text is itself. And, fifthly, the Bible cannot be reduced to a set of propositions but must be encountered as it is written, as song, poem, proverb, parable, philosophy, history—and so many more.

Two Contrasting Portraits of the Exodus Generation in Hebrews: How Redemptive History Explains the Text

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I. INTRODUCTION

There are two very different pictures of the Exodus generation (or wilderness generation) in the Letter to the Hebrews. The first picture of the Exodus generation extends from Hebrews 3 to 4. This picture is entirely negative and characterized by apostasy.[1] This is the generation who left Egypt, hardened their hearts, put Yahweh to the test, went astray, did not know God's ways, were evil, disobedient, and fell away (Heb. 3:7-12). This exemplary act of sin is connected to Psalm 95 as it addresses a later generation and exhorts them 'not to harden their hearts today, as the rebellious generation in the wilderness hardened theirs'.[2] In a word—that Exodus generation is the epitome of *rebellion* and an enduring image of what should be avoided for all generations of God's people. The second picture of the Exodus generation occurs in Hebrews 11:29 ('By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned'). It is the only reference to a group of people exercising faith (*pistis*) in the famous 'Hall of Faith'.[3] This picture is both short and entirely positive.[4] The generation who crossed the Red Sea did so 'by faith'. This generation is part of the magisterial

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1 This negative portrait is also found in *4 Ezra* 7:106-11 and CD 2:16ff. See Pamela M. Eisenbaum, *The Jewish Heroes of Christian History: Hebrews 11 in Literary Context* (SBLMS; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), p.172 n.148. I explore the negative portrait in Psalm 106 below.

2 Thomas R. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews* (Nashville: B&H, 2015), p. 121.

3 Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 618.

4 Ben Witherington III notes: 'The author moves smoothly from the personal displays of trust shown by Moses to the trust in God displayed by the people of Israel in the Exodus and the Conquest.' *Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2000), p. 413.

'cloud of witnesses' (Heb. 12:1) who were 'commended' by God (Heb. 11:2, 39). In a word—they were also full of *faith*.[5]

This contrast raises important questions about the theology of the writer to the Hebrews. Are these even the same group of people? How is it possible to have this juxtaposition within the same epistle? Apologetic questions aside (e.g., Bible contradiction studies), this contrast provides for an interesting and relatively unexplored window into the theology and salvation-historical nuances of the epistle. Surprisingly, it is difficult to locate extended discussion of this specific matter in commentaries and exegetical studies on Hebrews.[6] Some briefly allude to this contrast in Hebrews, but without significant comment.[7] In addition, there are no textual variants that could provide an alternative reading that would alleviate the tension.[8]

Commentators often note how the author of Hebrews does not draw on any figures in Israel's history during the wilderness wanderings. The next passage in Hebrews 11:30 jumps to the battle for Jericho. This literary evidence points to the conclusion that the author was aware of a contrast between Hebrews 3-4 and 11. The fact that the 'Hall of Faith' moves directly to the conquest of Jericho (in Heb. 11:30) and passes over the failures in the wilderness may attest to the writer's intention to draw

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5 In his pastoral commentary, Richard D. Phillips succinctly states, 'Despite their many failures and rebellions, that generation did perform one great act of faith: the exodus itself and the passage through the Red Sea.' *Hebrews* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2006), p. 506.

6 The following commentaries do not address Israel's apostasy as a contrast in relationship to Hebrews 11:29: Barnabas Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* (New York/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), *passim*; David deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), p. 414; James W. Thompson, *Hebrews* (Paideia Commentaries; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), p. 243; Victor C. Pfitzer, *Hebrews* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), p. 166. Harold W. Attridge's interaction consists of the following brief footnote on Heb. 11:29: 'Contrast the faithlessness of the exodus generation in chaps. 3-4' (*Hebrews* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989], p. 343 n. 90). Clearly, there is a lacuna in the scholarship on this point.

7 William Lane states: 'The writer had earlier referred to the faithlessness of the wilderness generation in 3:16-19.' *Hebrews 9-13* (WBC 47B; Dallas: Word, 1998), p. 378.

8 F.F. Bruce, 'Textual Problems in the Epistle to the Hebrews', in *Scribes and Scripture: New Testament Essays in Honour of J Harold Greenlee*, ed. by David Alan Black (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), pp. 27-39.

two very different pictures of this generation.[9] This is an argument from silence but the absence of figures such as Joshua is 'glaring'.[10]

As an aside, one scholar has concluded that those who left Egypt through the Red Sea cannot be the same people who rebelled in the wilderness: these 'faithful old saints in Hebrews 11 cannot be identified with the Sinai community in Hebrews 3:7-4:11'.[11] If this were true, it would put the whole matter to rest. But this view is idiosyncratic and there is no evidence put forth as to legitimize it.

This study will describe and evaluate a total of three positions of this contrast between Hebrews 3-4 and Hebrews 11. First, I will evaluate the attempt to reconcile this text based on Moses' representative headship. Second, I will evaluate the attempt to use remnant theology as a hermeneutical adjudicator. Finally, I will advance a third view by arguing that *the pictures of the Exodus generation in Hebrews 3-4 and 11 are theologically coherent and cogent when evaluated in light of the author's use of redemptive history.*

II. THE EXODUS GENERATION AND MOSES' HEADSHIP

Can Moses' position as covenantal head or representative of Israel help to explain the two different portraits of the Exodus generation? This possible solution would mean that the Exodus generation exercised faith only in the sense that their federal representative Moses exercised faith. To use the language of Pauline theology: 'here [in the Red Sea] they were baptized into Moses'.[12] The actions of the head can be put to the account of the whole, allowing one to speak of the nation acting in faith.

Simon Kistemaker's brief comments in his expository commentary seem to move in this direction. Kistemaker argues that the writer of Hebrews 'chooses this act [of faith] in view of Moses' trust in God'.[13] Other writers are simply not clear on this matter. N.T. Wright first observes that putting blood of the Passover lamb on the door-post was an act of faith—a legitimate observation that is nonetheless absent in Hebrews 11. When Wright's pastoral commentary gets to Israel's passage through the Red

9 Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 344.

10 Eisenbaum, *Jewish Heroes*, p. 172.

11 Kiwoong Son, *Zion Symbolism in Hebrews: Hebrews 12:18-24 as Hermeneutical Key to Epistle* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005), p. 143.

12 Fritz Laubach draws heavily from Pauline theology (1 Corinthians 10) in his commentary on Hebrews 11:29 in *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1967), p. 241.

13 Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of Hebrews* (NTC, 15; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), p. 343.

Sea, he refers to Moses' trust in God.[14] Michael Cosby even suggests that in Hebrews 11:29, 'the Israelite people are joined to Moses' in order to form a new subject.[15]

A good reason for considering Moses' headship is the canonical parallel in 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 where Paul also uses the Exodus generation as an exemplar for warning. In fact, Paul argues that the whole nation was 'baptized into Moses' (1 Cor. 10:2). Such a clear canonical parallel cannot be easily dismissed, even if the Pauline authorship of Hebrews has very few supporters (Eta Linneman being a notable exception). Nor should we accept the conclusion that Paul's use of the Exodus generation was 'upholding a wholly different moral'.[16] The same text in the OT could be used by NT writers in different ways, but it is not clear that is case here. Both Paul and the author of Hebrews envision a robust faith that produces action. Both use exemplars, both negative and positive, for their task (Heb. 6:12 // 1 Cor. 6:11).

Perhaps the best reason for using Moses as the key to understanding the 'faith' of the Israelites in Hebrews 11:29 is the literary structure of the textual unit. Gareth Lee Cockerill provides a compelling argument by observing that there are parallels between the life of Moses (Heb. 11:23-29) and the life of Abraham (Heb. 11:8-12, 17-19)—with seven elements in each.[17] In each section of seven elements, the fourth is 'the centerpiece'.[18] For Moses, the centerpiece is his action of keeping the Passover by faith (Heb. 11:28). This parallelism gives Cockerill reason to believe that v. 29 is part of the life of Moses. It is true that Moses inspired the people to have faith through his proclamation or preaching.[19] His own faith expressed itself in his identification with the people of God. And Moses serves as important shadow of Jesus' sonship through his faithful service 'in all God's house' (Heb. 3:2). On the one hand, Cockerill states that Hebrews 11:29 is 'from the life of Moses' but then he goes on to clarify on the next page that Hebrews 11:29-31 are examples 'from the lives of those who

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14 N.T. Wright, *Hebrews for Everyone* (London: SPCK, 2004), p. 141.

15 Michael R. Cosby, *The Rhetorical Composition and Function of Hebrews 11* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1988), p. 47.

16 Marie E. Isaacs comments on the discontinuity between Hebrews and 1 Corinthians in *Reading Hebrews and James: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), p. 57.

17 Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), p. 564.

18 Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 564.

19 Thomas Lea states: 'Moses' faith must have inspired their faith.' *Hebrews, James* (HNTC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), p. 204.

follow Moses'.[20] A close reading of Cockerill's argument seems to be that there is indeed some literary parallelism between Moses and Abraham in Hebrews 11. But it is not clear that this parallel extends to Hebrews 11:29 which should parallel 11:17. Cockerill himself notes that the Moses section Hebrews 11:23-29 'is no mere repeat of the previous section'.[21] Thus, it seems best to conclude that the Moses section has some elements of development from Abraham that would create some discontinuity between Hebrews 11:29 and the rest of the Moses section.

In spite of all of these reasons to consider Moses' headship as a hermeneutical key to resolving interpretive difficulties, it will not stand up to one simple exegetical observation: the subject of the faith exercised in Hebrews 11:29 is plural. Moses is indeed the mediator of the covenant and the leader of Israel.[22] But Moses' two-fold status does not negate the individual and corporate responsibility of the people within the nation to exercise faith. P.T. O'Brien observes in a footnote that 'the author had prepared for the change of subject in v. 28, "*their* firstborn", the grammatical antecedent of which is "the people of God" in v. 25'.[23] Thus, Hebrews 11 portrays the Exodus generation as both related to and distinct from Moses.

III. THE EXODUS GENERATION AND REMNANT THEOLOGY

Can remnant theology help to explain the two different portraits of the Exodus generation in Hebrews? Remnant theology is the concept that Yahweh always ensured that there would be a 'faithful few' amongst the mass of apostates in Israel. Even if the whole nation was corrupt, there would be some true believers left who would not bend the knee to idols. If this remnant was present within the apostate generation of the Exodus, it would be plausible to refer to the whole as faithful (or full of faith) based on the actions of the few.

This seems to be the tack taken by John Calvin. He explains: 'It is certain, that many in that multitude were unbelieving; but the Lord granted to the faith of a few, that the whole multitude should pass through the

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20 Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 564-5.

21 Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews,* p. 564.

22 O. Palmer Robertson notes, 'In these various roles he [Moses] serves by divine appointment as a prophetic figure anticipating a greater than Moses yet to come who will at the same time be "like" Moses (Deut 18:15, 18)' in *God's People in the Wilderness: The Church in Hebrews* (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications), p. 11.

23 P.T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), p. 435. Emphasis original.

Red Sea dry-shod.'[24] Calvin seems to see that a conflict must be resolved between faithful and faithless caricatures of Israel. The commentator Marie E. Isaacs states: 'Omitting any mention of the faithless *among* the wilderness generation who did not see the promises of God realized, our author moves on swiftly.'[25] Without elaboration, it is difficult to determine if Isaacs thinks that there was a faithful remnant and an apostate group *among* that generation.

The difficulty with this explanation is that the text of Hebrews 11:29 does not support a contrast, even if implicit, between an apostate Israel and a faithful remnant. The contrast in the Greek works at the discourse level rather than the syntax level. The logical contrastive 'but' in the ESV, NET, NRSV, and NIV is an interpretive move that does not reflect any Greek word.

There is no separate noun that identifies the subject of the action of crossing the Red Sea. The subject of the action verb (*diabainō*) for crossing the Red Sea is implicit as a third-person plural.[26] The literary characters in Hebrews 11:29 are in some sense 'anonymous'.[27] The literary characters who trusted God's promises are simply 'they'.[28] As noted above, there is strong exegetical evidence that ties the 'people of God' in v. 25 with the plural subject in v. 29. With the third-person plural verbs, the explicit reference to the 'Egyptians' (*Aigyptios*) sets up a contrast of nation *versus* nation. A comparison with the citation of Jeremiah 31 in Hebrews 8 will support the conclusion that the 'people of God' is the 'house of Israel' (Heb. 8:10). Kistemaker explains, 'the contrast is between the nation Israel that expressed faith in God and thus was victorious and the unbelieving king and army of Egypt who perished in the waters of the

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24 John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, trans. by John Owen (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1853), p. 299. Elsewhere in the commentary, Calvin refers to the 'remnant' of Jews saved from exile as a pattern that extends through post-exilic history until the coming of Jesus (pp. 68-9).

25 Isaacs, *Reading Hebrews and James*, p. 136. Emphasis mine.

26 'Plural verbs give the impression that many people performed each act of faith.' Gareth L. Cockerill, 'The Better Resurrection (Heb. 11:35): A Key to the Structure and Rhetorical Purpose of Hebrews 11', *TynB* 51 (2000), 219.

27 Eisenbaum, *Jewish Heroes*, p. 172.

28 Donald A. Hagner states, 'The people (lit., "they") exhibited the same kind of faith as Moses did. They were confident that God would deliver them and thus prove himself faithful to his promises' in *Hebrews* (UBCS; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), p. 201.

Red Sea'.[29] Ultimately, the reader must infer who is crossing the Red Sea from the context.

IV. THE EXODUS GENERATION AND REDEMPTIVE HISTORY

The reader of Hebrews must come to two conclusions. First, the nation of Israel acted in faith collectively as they passed through the Red Sea. Second, they later acted in faithlessness and disobedience.[30] *The key to understanding how both of these actions are usable by the author of Hebrews for imitation and avoidance is the fact that they were historically separate events that occurred in a faith-then-apostasy sequence.* For the author of Hebrews, the historical order in which events took place has a corresponding relationship to salvation-history or redemptive history. Because the nation of Israel acted in faith when they walked through the Red Sea *before* they rebelled in the wilderness, these two acts may be seen separately. The historical incidents are independent yet they relate to each other as part of the comprehensive arc of redemptive history.[31] Of course, as Cockerill notes, the 'simple chronological order' of the events of Moses' life in Hebrews 11 does not negate arrangement for rhetorical impact.[32]

4.1 Redemptive History and the Past. The clearest parallel of an interest in the relationship between history and salvation-history is found in the explanation of the 'law of Moses' and the 'word of the oath'. Notice how chronology plays a key role in the following passage:

> For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, *which came later* than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever. (Heb. 7:28; ESV)

This text draws a comparison between the word of the oath and the Law of Moses. Because the 'word of the oath' that appoints a Son came (historically) after the Law of Moses, it holds more weight (salvation-historically). A significant portion of the author's Christology hangs on historical matters and the order in which certain acts of revelation were given. Thus, Jesus' Melchizedekian priesthood is superior to the priesthood of Aaron

[29] Kistemaker, *Exposition of Hebrews*, p. 343.

[30] Lea, *Hebrews, James*, p. 204.

[31] Eisenbaum focuses on the unity of the heroes in Hebrews 11: 'The biographic descriptions of each hero are not independent *historia*, as they are on the Greco-Roman lists, but part of one comprehensive *historia*' in *Jewish Heroes*, p. 81.

[32] Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 565.

because it is based on a newer and definitive word.[33] This is perhaps the clearest example of a which-came-later theology. Other instances of this which-came-later theology include the following implicit or explicit chronological relationships: (1) God had to have rested *after* he created the world (Heb. 4:4), (2), God had to have spoken of a day of rest *after* Joshua entered Canaan (Heb. 4:8), (3) Levi had to be born *after* Abraham (Heb. 7:10).

Returning to our two contrasting portraits of the Exodus generation, we might say that both portraits are possible because of this which-came-later theology. Specifically the apostasy of Israel in the wilderness, as highlighted in Hebrews 3-4 comes later than the faith exercised during the Exodus and highlighted in Hebrews 11. The nation does not begin in unbelief. One event happens in the Red Sea and one event happens in the wilderness. In addition to the differences in geography, it is Israel's past that opens up the future for her. Both Moses and people of God trusted God's promises (Exod. 14:1-31) and moved forward against all human rationale.[34] Whereas the Passover required faith *without* evidence, the Exodus required faith *against* evidence, being hedged in by Egyptians behind and the sea in front.[35]

The presence of two contrasting pictures of the Exodus or Wilderness generation in also found in the Psalms. Like the letter to the Hebrews, there is a negative portrayal of Israel (Psalm 106) and positive portrayal (Psalm 124). This faith-then-apostasy pattern is highlighted by Ps 106:12-13 (ESV):

> Then they believed his words;
> they sang his praise.
> But they soon forgot his works;
> they did not wait for his counsel.

What is significant about Psalm 106 is that it provides clues about how to reconcile these two portraits of Israel through an understanding of redemptive history. Israel truly 'believed his [Yahweh's] words'

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[33] 'This oath signals God's definitive, last, superior word'. Isaacs, *Reading Hebrews and James*, p. 96.

[34] Exodus 14:15-16 (ESV) provides a good example of Yahweh's directive that required faith: 'The Lord said to Moses 'Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground."

[35] Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York/London: Doubleday, 2001), p. 510.

(Ps 106:12). They even sang his praise! The very next verse explains the turn of events with reference to time: 'they *soon* forgot his works; they did not *wait* for his counsel' (Ps 106:13). Psalm 106 makes clear that apostasy came (quickly!) after faith. The historical order of events in the past sets up the paraenesis for the present: 'both we and our fathers have sinned…' (Ps 106:6).[36] It is the chronological order of these events that provides the context for a redemptive-historical lens for the present and the opportunity for repentance.

For the author of Hebrews, historical chronology is vitally important because certain events have corresponding relationships to the outworking of God's plan of redemption. History is everything because salvation-history is everything. For example, if it could be established that the historical order in which certain events occurred are incorrect, a large part of the theology of Jesus' priesthood would collapse. With respect to the juxtaposition of Hebrews 3-4 and 11, it is the faith-then-apostasy sequence that provides cogency. If Israel started out in apostasy and began with hardness of heart toward Yahweh, the historical details and salvation-historical details would collapse.

Historical accuracy and theology are bound together for the writer of Hebrews. Whereas some have argued that there is 'considerably *more* than an awareness of simple chronological pastness, presentness, and futurity' in Hebrews, we must not conclude that simple chronology is insignificant.[37]

4.2 Redemptive History and the Present. While the author of Hebrews allows the entire priesthood of Jesus to roost on the ledge of the historical chronology of divine revelation, he simultaneously seeks to make the reader consumed with the present moment. The present is the time in which faith is still possible. N.T. Wright uses simple language to capture how this works with the Exodus generation: 'Hebrews wants its readers to think of themselves as in some ways like that generation, walking through the wilderness on the way to God's promised future; and they mustn't make the mistakes that the Israelites did.'[38]

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[36] 'In each case the psalmist makes plain that the faithfulness of the succeeding generations lies in remembering the great things the Lord has done for them.' W. Ross Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known: The Missionary Heart of the Book of Exodus* (NSBT; Downers Grove: IVP, 2012), p. 52.

[37] Graham Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics: The Epistle to the Hebrews as a New Testament Example of Biblical Interpretation* (SNTSMS 36; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 38.

[38] Wright, *Hebrews for Everyone*, p. 28.

According to Wright, each person, as long as the Lord tarries, has the opportunity to identify with the Exodus generation and exercise faith. The writer of Hebrews captures this eschatological relationship to the present through the hook-word 'today' as found in the citations from Psalm 95:7-11 in Hebrews 3-4.[39] Although the Exodus generation started well, they did not finish well. They did not persevere in faith and are condemned for their 'unbelief' during their rebellion in the wilderness (Heb. 3:19). Graham Hughes explains: 'The decisions made in it (the present) determine in a quite radical way the future for the individual'.[40]

Our conclusion does not negate Pamela Eisenbaum's conclusion that Hebrews 11 has a 'collective historical trajectory'.[41] But this statement must be qualified. The collective trajectory was completed for the Exodus generation in their rebellion. But the trajectory can be paused to highlight the future that is opened by faith when people respond 'today'. The faith exercised by the Exodus generation as they proceeded through the walls of water of the Red Sea was genuine faith. It was a faith made in the ancient past but it is also a faith that points to the *present* need to persevere.

4.3 Redemptive History and the Future. The faith exercised by the Exodus generation as they walked through the Red Sea is also *a contrast that points to an eschatological judgment*. The writer seeks to argue in Hebrews 11:29 that those who crossed the Red Sea possessed faith whereas the Egyptians attempted the same and died.[42] There are proverbial sheep and goats in this scene and no middle ground is to be found. Lane concludes: 'The fundamental distinction recognized by the writer is the division between those who believe and those who do not.'[43] Likewise, F.F. Bruce notes, 'our author implies that they [the Egyptians] came to

[39] For a study on hook-words or the Midrash technique of *gezerah shawah* see David H. Wenkel, '*Gezerah Shawah* as Analogy in the Epistle to the Hebrews', *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 37 (2007), 62-8.

[40] Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, p. 39. Emphasis mine.

[41] Eisenbaum argues that the list of heroes is an attempt to retell 'the story of Israel's history' (*Jewish Heroes*, p. 81).

[42] Erich Gräßer states, 'Die Ägypter wollen es den Israeliten gleichtun, um deren Flucht zu verhindern.' ['The Egyptians want to imitate the Israelites, to prevent their escape.'] *An die Hebräer: Hebr 10:19-13:25* (EKK XVII, 3 Vols; Zürich: Benziger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990), 3, p. 180. The concept of imitation may be another way to consider this contrast between Israel and Egypt.

[43] Lane, *Hebrews* 9-13, p. 379.

grief because they had no faith'.[44] Those who are of faith succeed and live whereas those who do not have faith perish.

The contrast is between the people of God who have faith and the enemies of God who have no faith. If Lane and Bruce are correct, the Egyptians are not enemies of God because they are Egyptians. They perish because they lack faith. Thus, it likely functions as a small portal into the eschatological judgment at the end of the age. This contrast is similar to the contrast between Israel and Egypt/Canaan in *Wisdom of Solomon* 10:15-12:11.[45] The apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon* states: 'She [wisdom] brought them over the Red Sea, and led them through deep waters; but she drowned their enemies, and cast them up from the depths of the sea' (WisSol 10:18-19; NRSV).

Pamela Eisenbaum points out that the author of Hebrews expects the reader to understand that those who have received the final 'word' of Jesus have a privileged position when compared to all the heroes of the Hall of Faith.[46] We know the end of the story and the fulfilment of God's promises. This is where the Hall of Faith leads: 'God had provided something better for us' (Heb. 11:40). It is faith and the reception of that which is 'better' that defines whether one will be saved or perish in the end. We must be careful not to gaze at the Exodus generation to the exclusion of looking at Jesus. A study such as this is not meant to cause redemptive history myopia. All human examples of faith fall short in light of the faithfulness of Jesus—the pioneer and perfecter of the faith (Heb. 12:2).[47]

V. CONCLUSION

The presence of the Exodus generation in the Hall of Faith of Hebrews 11 is as problematic as the scandalous figures of Barak, Samson, and Jephthah.[48] These additional difficulties must be set aside for another day.

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44 F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), p. 316.

45 Eisenbaum, *Jewish Heroes*, p. 172 n. 148.

46 Eisenbaum, *Jewish Heroes*, p. 83.

47 Todd D. Still, '*Christos* as *Pistos*: The Faith(fulness) of Jesus in the Epistle to the Hebrews', CBQ 69 (2007), p. 752 = *idem*, in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts*, ed. by R. Bauckham, D. Driver, and N. MacDonald (LNTS, 387; London: T & T Clark, 2008), p. 46.

48 D. Stephen Long notes that these figures have perplexed commentators since Chrysostom in *Hebrews: A Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Louisville: WJKP, 2011), p. 195. Eisenbaum echoes this conclusion in her monograph on Hebrews 11, noting 'some of the author's selections are surprising' in *Jewish Heroes*, p. 82.

What we have addressed is the fact that the Exodus generation is both an exemplar of faith *and* apostasy in the letter to the Hebrews. Thus, the Exodus generation is a source of comparison for the people of God of *all ages*—both positively and negatively. Broadly stated, our thesis is that the author's nuances of redemptive history can provide an explanation for this bold contrast.

The redemptive historical thesis explains the whole as well as the parts of Hebrews. Faith is both separable *and* inseparable from endurance.[49] This is because the marathon race of endurance must have a beginning—a moment when the runner begins to move. For the Exodus generation, the rebellion in the wilderness *came later than* the initial act of faith in crossing the Red Sea. As historical events and redemptive historical events, the exodus and rebellion are both separable and inseparable. We saw earlier how Psalms 106 and 124 also provide contrasting portraits of the Exodus generation—a possible source of antecedent theology for writer of Hebrews.[50] As separable events, the writer of Hebrews takes the initial act of faith and hits the 'pause' button, so to speak, viewing it as an isolated event. As inseparable events, this same Exodus generation failed to demonstrate that this initial act of faith produced the enduring fruit of obedience and thus proved their apostate condition.[51]

[49] Thompson notes, 'As the author indicates in 10:36-39 and 12:1-11, faith is inseparable from endurance' (*Hebrews*, p. 249).

[50] The letter to the Hebrews also approximately parallels Jesus' teaching about faith in the Parable of the Sower in the Synoptics. Some seed from the sower falls on the rock and produces genuine growth. But this growth eventually withers away because it had no moisture (Luke 8:6-7). Jesus explains that this means some 'believe for a while' (Luke 8:13) and then fall away—following the faith-then-apostasy pattern.

[51] 'Faith and obedience are distinguishable but inseparable. Faith is the root and obedience is the fruit.' Schreiner, *Hebrews*, p. 496.

Opera Trinitatis ad Extra Tanquam Providentia Dei: A Dogmatic Adumbration of God's Teleological Triune Activity

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Twentieth-century theologians Karl Barth and Otto Weber have suggested that the intermingling of nascent Christianity with philosophical systems such as Platonism or Aristotelianism has isolated the Christian doctrine of providence from any sustained consideration of the tri-personal God revealed in Christ. However, a specifically Christian account of divine providence must examine what it means for the God who is provident to be identified as the Trinitarian God. Inasmuch as God's providence is willed eternally and enacted everlastingly the doctrine of providence encompasses all divine activity in the Creator-creature relationship. Moreover, all *opera trinitatis ad extra* are teleological in nature, having as their *telos* eschatological communion.[1] In this broad sense, God's providence can be explicated only by means of the Christian specification of how it is the triune God brings his creatures from their creaturely origin to immortal existence in contemplation of and communion with Him.[2]

The following account will consist of three parts. First, two basic constitutive judgments of historic trinitarian theology will be briefly expounded. Second, this twofold conception of triune activity will be used to aid reflection on three particular instances of divine activity—creation, redemption, and sanctification—each of which figures in God's

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1 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* Bk. V, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, [hereafter *ANF*] ed. by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (New York: Scribner's, 1913) vol. 1, pp. 526-67.

2 John Webster, 'On the Theology of Providence', in *The Providence of God: Deus Habet Consilium*, ed. by Francesca Aran Murphy and Philip G. Ziegler (London: T & T Clark, 2009), pp. 158-75 (see pp. 160-1). So Webster: 'conceptual-topical treatment must be undertaken in such a way that the primary historical order of the canon in which all doctrines are being treated all the time is not set aside' (p. 160).

directing of his creation towards its *telos*.[3] Finally, I will briefly outline a couple prospective axioms funded by this account.

I. TRIUNE ACTIVITY: UNITY AND DISTINCTION IN *OPERA TRINITATIS AD EXTRA*

A brief look at Pro-Nicene trinitarian theology yields two reciprocating judgments concerning the economic operation of the triune God: (1) unity of activity and (2) the appropriation of certain divine activities to individual persons. Many Pro-Nicene theologians hold to the unity and inseparability of the *opera trinitatis ad extra*.[4] Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were, by virtue of their consubstantiality, determined to be one in *ousia* and also therefore in *energeia* (Latin *operatio*).[5] In other words, many base the inseparability of operations on (1) ontological or volitional unity among the divine persons, which was understood in terms of a triadic divine simplicity, and (2) Scripture's testimony concerning God's working in the economy of salvation (e.g., John 5:19; Acts 2:33; Titus 3:5-6; *inter alia*).

In *Ad Eustathius*, Gregory of Nyssa exhibits an instructive circularity in his demonstration of the unity of operations present in the testimony of Scripture. He argues that this perceptible unity of activity functioned as corroborative evidence for human understanding of the unity of nature among Father, Son, and Spirit. Yet, the unity of activity perceived is, ontologically speaking, the consequence of tri-personal consubstantiality.[6] Gregory's extended affirmation of inseparable trinitarian operations advances out of his understanding of the unified will of God: 'There is no delay that exists or can be conceived in the motion of the divine will

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[3] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), pp. 97-128.

[4] Cf., Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit*, 1.28; in Athanasius, *The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit*, trans. C.R.B. Shapland (London: The Epworth Press, 1951), pp. 133-6.

[5] T.F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), p. 74.

[6] Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Eustathium de Sancta Trinitate = Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, [hereafter *NPNF*] ed. by P. Schaff and H. Wace, (New York: Scribner's, 1917), second series, vol. 5, pp. 328-30. For a helpful explanation of this theme in Gregory of Nyssa, cf. Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), p. 231.

from the Father through the Son to the Spirit.'[7] As Michel Barnes advises, the unity among the wills of the three distinct persons functions as a *sine qua non* for Gregory's argument that 'the unity of operations proves unity of nature'.[8]

The accentuation of certain persons in particular divine activities is pervasive in the reflections of the early church fathers.[9] These hypostatic identifications of divine activity in the creation form what is now considered the doctrine of appropriation, a teaching, which for the pro-Nicenes, was 'an important habit of Christian speech because it is central to Scripture's own speech about the divine persons'.[10] Additionally, the Apostles' and Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creeds are both structured in a manner befitting this doctrine, for rather than speaking of the activities performed by God *triunely*, they both attribute particular activities to Father, Son, and Spirit, respectively. Following the latter creed especially, many associate the Father with creation, the Son with redemption (through incarnation), and the Spirit with sanctification.[11]

Augustine supports the doctrine of appropriation, but with a strong qualification by way of inseparable operations: 'some things are even said about the persons singly by name; however, they must not be understood in the sense of excluding the other persons, because this same three is also one, and there is one substance and godhead of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit'.[12] Augustine here posits how to maintain both unity and distinction of the Trinity by virtue of the way they characterize the economic activity of the triune God. In short, the doctrine of divine appropriations

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7 Gregory of Nyssa, *On 'Not Three Gods,' Ad Ablabium* = *NPNF*, 2, vol. 5, p. 335. This translation is taken from Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, 231.

8 Michel René Barnes, 'Divine Unity and the Divided Self: Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology and Its Psychological Context,' *Modern Theology* 18 (2002), 489.

9 For a summary of the 'pro-Nicene' Fathers on this topic, cf. Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 297-300. This work of Ayres on the pro-Nicene Fathers is a magnum opus that offers detailed analyses of the prevailing trinitarian theology of the Church Fathers, which emerged 'from the 360s onwards' (p. 240).

10 Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, p. 299.

11 Wolfhart Pannenberg posits a helpful connection between the order of the divine persons of the Trinity (i.e., the relations of origin) *ad intra* and the operation of God *ad extra*, which results in the following appropriation: creation to the Father, reconciliation to the Son, and eschatological consummation to the Spirit; *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols, trans. by G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991) vol. 2, p. 6.

12 St. Augustine, *De Trinitate* I.19 = *NPNF*, 1, vol. 3, p. 28.

functions as the means by which the Personal property of each divine person is perceived in the economy of salvation as Father, Son, and Spirit are attributed distinctive operations, yet this in accordance with God's unity of will, power, and wisdom, which obtains despite the threeness revealed in the advent of Christ. Together the *opera indivisa trinitatis ad extra* and the doctrine of appropriation form a framework for interpreting the work of God in the enactment of his eternal plan for creation.

II. TELEOLOGICAL TRIUNE ACTIVITY: GOD'S ACTING TOWARD THE TELOS OF HIS *OPERATIO EXTERNA*

A. God's Triune Creative Love. God in his eternal triune perfection freely elected to create with the intention that his creatures would enter into perfect, everlasting fellowship with Him. Creation itself is an act of God, which assumes providential activity.[13] Thus, the enactment of God's plan begins where the *opera trinitatis ad extra* begin—*creatio ex nihilo*. The intra-trinitarian life obtains necessarily and eternally, but God's relationship to his creation does so by virtue of divine freedom and omniscient, loving election.[14] The former relationship extends to the latter in God's act of creation. The creative love of the triune God, represented by his free determination to create, functions as 'an expression of the perfection of the divine life'.[15] The perfect triune life provides the grammar for the creative act of God. As Gregory of Nyssa put it, creation is to be thought of as 'a transmission of power beginning from the Father, advancing through the Son, and completed in the Spirit'.[16]

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[13] As Barth contends, God's knowing, willing, and acting in creation and providence presuppose one another; Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, 4 volumes in 13 parts (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956-1975), III/3, pp. 4-5. [Hereafter indicated by *CD* followed by volume/part number, and page number.] Pannenberg upholds the inverse relation: 'All that is said about God's ruling and preserving presupposes creation' (*Systematic Theology*, 2:37).

[14] For a similar statement of this relationship, cf., Christoph Schwöbel, 'God, Creation, and the Christian Community', in *The Doctrine of Creation: Essays in Dogmatics, History, and Philosophy*, ed. by Colin Gunton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2004), pp. 149-76; see p. 156; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p. 1. Athanasius states this conceptual priority in his response to Arius' heretical claims against the primacy of God's Fatherhood over against his role as Creator: *Orationes Contra Arianos*, I.20 = *NPNF*, 2, vol. 4, p. 318.

[15] Schwöbel, 'God, Creation, and the Christian Community', p. 159.

[16] Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Eustathius* 3.1.100 = *NPNF* 2, vol. 5, pp. 326-30. This translation is taken from Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, p. 207.

The first article of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed designated God the Father as 'maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible'. The Christian tradition specifies the Father as the accentuated person of the Godhead with respect to God's creative activity. This accords with the relations of origin in the Godhead, according to which the Father is the source of the eternal processions of Son and Spirit, the fount of divinity. The Father is not only the fount of being, however, but also functions as the loving Father over creation just as he is a loving Father to the Son.[17] So Weber pronounces, 'the creation is the work of the Father, not "without" the Son and the Spirit, but it is not the peculiar work of the Son or of the Spirit'.[18]

Not only the Father, but the Son and Spirit also participate in the creative act. Holy Scripture testifies that God's creative act is a triune act of God involving in particular ways both the Son (John 1:1-3, 10; Eph. 2:10; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:3) and the Spirit (Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps. 104:30). In Genesis 1:1, the reference to the plural *'ĕlōhîm* as the subject of the creative act is a reference to God the Father as he is distinct from the Holy Spirit described in the next verse as 'the Spirit of God hovering over the waters'. Gregory of Nyssa summarizes the trinitarian shape of God's creative act: 'The fountain of power is the Father and the power of the Father is the Son and the spirit of that power is the Holy Spirit and creation is entirely… the achievement of the divine power.'[19]

The doctrine of creation's assertion that God created *ex nihilo* suggests that all created things have complete ontological dependence on God, even rational creatures (1 Cor. 11:12b). God created human persons in his Image (Gen. 1:26-27; Ps. 8). This is the act, which Jürgen Moltmann has identified as the 'culmination' of creation.[20] Human persons, by virtue of the *imago Dei*, are given ontological, functional, and ethical dignity. The nature of these creatures as rational agents bearing the *imago Dei* was such that they were created free to act in accordance with their own intellect and volition. This freedom is not stifled, but rather 'secured' by God's governance over his creation, which allows human persons to live faithfully unto the end for which they were created.[21] This very freedom, along with the inchoate state of humanity's existence, combined to allow

17 Barth, *CD* III/3, p. 28.

18 O. Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics*, 2 vols, trans. by Darrell L. Guder (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), vol. 1, p. 393.

19 Gregory of Nyssa, *De Spiritu Sancto:* 3.1.100 = *NPNF* 2, vol. 5, p. 320. This translation is taken from Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, p. 207.

20 Moltmann, *The Trinity*, p. 116.

21 Webster, 'On the Theology of Providence', p. 170.

for the corruption of creaturely existence as such in the fall of humankind recorded in Genesis 3.

Before the despair aroused by the great loss entailed by the fall overwhelms, however, this event must be recast in light of the triune God's overcoming love for his creation. God, in his omniscience, knew this would happen when he nevertheless determined to create despite the self-inflicted curse of humanity (cf. Eph. 1:11; 1 Pet. 1:20). In choosing to grant the gift of existence to creatures despite their inevitable failure, God did not passively abandon them, nor did he only provide the possibility for human persons to mature beyond their former penultimate fellowship in the garden. God eternally decreed to bring reconciliation between himself and humanity so that certain creatures may proceed into the ultimate, everlasting, and perfect communion of mutual love and glory with their God.

B. Triune Redemption & Reconciliation through Incarnation, Atonement, and Resurrection. In advance of the broken covenantal relationship between the triune God and his beloved creatures, God elected to love them in a special fashion, providing a path toward perfect communion with himself. In the incarnation of the Son of God as Jesus Christ, God initiated the execution of this reconciliatory plan.[22] By virtue of his active obedience, the sinless human life Jesus lived (Rom. 4:23-25; 5:16; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 2:8-10), and his atoning work as the blood sacrifice for humanity (Matt. 26:28; 1 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 9:12; 1 John 2:2), he made it possible for God's creatures to live unto and eventually in perfect communion with the triune God. As a summit point in God's providential activity, Jesus Christ fulfilled perfect humanity by faithfully living as the quintessential image and likeness of God. By believing in the good news of the gospel, individual human persons are united to him in the *mortificatio* of the flesh and the subsequent *vivificatio* of the Spirit (2 Cor. 5:14-15). This is the accentuated role of the Son in the triune activity of God for the accomplishment of man's redemption and reconciliation with God (Col. 1:19-20).

The Father not only eternally begets the Son, but he (together with the Son and Spirit) also eternally decrees the incarnation of the Son for the redemption of human persons. The Father thus sends the Son, but he does not send the Son to be alone in the economic order, for he bestows the Spirit on him (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35). From the very conception of Christ the Holy Spirit is actively present in the incarnate existence of the

[22] Cf., Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* I.4 = *NPNF* 2, vol. 4, p. 38; Thomson, *Athanasius*, pp. 142-3.

Word of God. The incarnation of Jesus, who was sent by the Father, and anointed by the Holy Spirit, contains Christ's atoning sacrifice, which satisfies the justice of the Father (Rom. 3:25), and his resurrection, which accomplishes victory over death (1 Cor. 15:50-57). It is by virtue of Jesus' resurrection that the atonement is demonstrated to be efficacious, for it is not enough for human persons to die with Christ (*mortificatio*), but they need also to rise with him (*vivificatio*).

The entire process of redemption enacted by the Father through Christ in the Spirit can also be understood as recreation, which terminates in new creation. Christ, by entering with his human nature into the eternal glorification of the Word by the Spirit, made it possible for human persons also to enter into that perfect communion of mutual glorification.[23] Humanity, however, is incapable of laying hold of the reality exhibited in Christ's life and death. Another witness is thus required. This witness is the Holy Spirit, who bestows the gift of faith upon human persons so that in them the work of the Father in Christ is not only believed (*de dicto*), but is internalized (*de re*) in order to facilitate their union with Christ and subsequent sanctification.[24]

C. The Triune God's Sanctification of All Things. The witness of the *missio Christi* is the Holy Spirit (John 15:26-27), the accentuated divine person of sanctification who brings to fulfilment the penultimate stage of God's plan for created existence by dispensing redemption (*fides qua receptio*) and sanctification. This work of the Holy Spirit involves both the Father and the Son as the *missio Spiritus Sancti ad creatio* emanates from the Father as the working out of the mission of Christ to restore human persons to right relationship with God. As Gregory of Nyssa intimates, 'the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit alike give sanctification, and life, and light, and comfort, and all similar graces'.[25]

The progressive work of the Holy Spirit to make all things new, which one may call sanctification, is active from the beginning of creation until history's consummation, but this work takes centre stage when

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[23] Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on the Song of Solomon* 15 in *Gregory of Nyssa: Homilies on Song of Songs*, ed. by Brian E. Daley and John T. Fitzgerald, trans. Richard A. Norris, Jr. (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), pp. 496-7). Cf., Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, pp. 308-9; Moltmann, *The Trinity*, p. 176.

[24] Weber explains, 'Thus, the work of the Spirit consists, by appropriation, of opening man to the work of the Father in the Son, making man into a man for God because God is for man. This work is still best formulated with the old concept of "sanctification"' (Weber, *Foundations*, vol. 1, p. 395 n.142).

[25] Gregory of Nyssa, *On 'Not Three Gods,' Ad Ablabium* = *NPNF* 2, vol. 5, p. 328.

Jesus Christ, the Logos incarnate, sends the Spirit to that already nascent *ekklēsia* made up of Jesus' followers (Acts 2). This momentous occasion at Pentecost marks the beginning of the new age of the Spirit promised long before to the prophets (Joel 2:28-32).[26] The ushering in of this age of the Holy Spirit marks the beginning of the end, the 'last days' (Acts 2:17: *en tais eschatais hēmerais*).[27]

Sanctification is the final act in the enactment of God's plan to bring creation into perfect fellowship with himself. The Spirit's eschatological work of sanctification can be divided into two correlative acts: purification and perfection. The former applies specifically to the community of faith and the latter to the creation as a whole. Purification presupposes the giving of the Spirit to creation as a Gift. As the divine Gift, the Holy Spirit bestows his gift of faith unto certain human persons so that they might believe in the person and work of Christ and in the authority of his verbally inspired Word (John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16). The Holy Spirit then liberates these believers to be gradually conformed to the likeness of Christ, for, as Tertullian declared, 'the will of God is our sanctification, for he wishes his "image"—us—to become also his "likeness;" that we may be "holy" just as he himself is "holy"'.[28] Purification, as the first act of eschatological sanctification appropriated to the Holy Spirit, is aimed at the achievement of perfect holiness in the pattern of Christ, yet such sanctity cannot be attained in this temporal life, but only in the eternal life to which believers direct their hope (Titus 1:1-2; 3:6-7).

Perfection, on the other hand, is the end to be accomplished by virtue of the 'experience of the Spirit,' which comes with these last days: '[beginning] the completion and perfecting of the creation of human beings and all things'.[29] The Holy Spirit makes holy the nature of humankind, opening her 'to the work of the Father in the Son, making man into a man for

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[26] The Holy Spirit should not be abstracted as merely consonant with the *Zeitgeist* of the modern day, however, but is specified by his identification as the 'Spirit of Christ'. The Word functions as the rule by which the Christian knows what is of the Spirit. Ephraim Radner attempts to combat this kind of pneumatological abstraction in 'The Holy Spirit and Unity: Getting Out of the Way of Christ', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 16 (2014), 207-20.

[27] Thus, Moltmann: 'In the Spirit people already experience now what is still to come. In the Spirit is anticipated what will be in the future. With the Spirit the End-time begins' (*The Trinity*, p. 124).

[28] Tertullian, *On Purity* I = *ANF* vol. 4, p. 50.

[29] Moltmann, *The Trinity*, p. 125. As Weber notes, 'the two notions of creation and of vocation to divine communion are always associated' (*Foundations*, vol. 1, p. 395 n.142).

God because God is for man'.[30] In other words, the perfecting aspect of this transfigural sanctification is the gradual transformation of all created things, in accordance with their nature, to their elected *telos*. Yet, this activity is never completed, but always in process until the return of Christ at which time creation will finally be rendered new so that the people God has prepared for Himself will share in communion with his perfect triune life.

The Holy Spirit's eschatological work also contains the glorification of the Son and the Father (Phil. 2:10-11): 'the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus the Son and the through him God the Father.'[31] The creature comprehends this *operatio externa trinitatis* in reverse order, however, experiencing the work of the Holy Spirit by which the person and work of Jesus are glorified, which is also to glorify the Father who sent Him. It is the final state of eschatological unity bound up in mutual love and glorification that stands as the fulfilment of the Spirit's work of sanctification. The end of creation is the entrance of God's beloved into the circle of mutual glorification known as Father, Son, and Spirit.[32] By virtue of our triune Provider's activity in creation, redemption, and sanctification, this perfect end will indeed be accomplished.

III. CONCLUSION: PROVISIONAL AXIOMS

The perfect communion of mutual love and glory between the triune God and his sanctified creation quite literally is the *raison d'être* of all *operationes externae trinitatis*. Divine providence is in its broadest form this all-encompassing enactment of God's plan to bring about his end for creation. This broad construal of the enactment of God's providential care for creation in his teleological triune activity *ad extra* substantiates the declaration of Moltmann that 'the teleological principle of thought penetrates the very heart of the Christian message'.[33] Despite the recent proliferation of theological reflection on the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of providence has remained nearly unaffected. In many cases the questions of contemporary theology have set the terms of theological inquiry rather than the normative formulations of ancient Christianity. However, the expository task of theology must be undertaken before apologetic concerns are satisfied. For these reasons, the present project has taken its contribution to be one of expository rehabilitation rather

30 Weber, *Foundations*, vol. 1, p. 395 n.142.
31 Moltmann, *The Trinity*, p. 126.
32 Cf. Anatolios on Gregory of Nyssa, *Retrieving Nicaea*, pp. 209-10.
33 Moltmann, *The Trinity*, p. 90.

than that of making apologetic claims about the still important topics of causality, science, human freedom, or evil.

I conclude this reorientation to providence doctrine by setting forth two explicit axioms of the approach:

> **(1) The triunity of the Christian God necessarily shapes Christian doctrine:** Specifically, this model provides resources to enhance the generically monotheistic accounts most often put forth concerning divine providence; in contrast to these standard considerations, divine activity in the world, on the part of the Christian, needs to be considered in terms of God's tripersonal identity.

> **(2) The providential activity of the eternal and omniscient God encompasses his election and creation:** Providence is not merely the action God takes once he elects and creates, but instead comprises all divine activity ad extra, for the eternality of God does not fit with a temporal sequencing of divine activity that suggests that he is merely figuring things out as he goes along.

The preceding account has necessarily taken the form of an adumbration, but hopefully one that will function as the impetus for an extended exposition of God's providence under the guise of these trinitarian and teleological insights. It is within this framework that the Christian theologian is empowered to deliberate upon contemporary apologetic questions.

THE PROBLEM AND PROMISE OF MEDIATION: GUNTON ON BARTH AND THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

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INTRODUCTION[1]

In his posthumously published *Barth Lectures*, Colin Gunton asserts concerning Barth's doctrine of Scripture: 'As a matter of fact I think he is wrong, I would want to have a stronger doctrine of scripture as the Word of God, myself.'[2] What lies at the heart of Gunton's critique was an issue of increasing focus in his later theology, namely, mediation. All doctrines purporting to give an account of the triune God's action in the world must reckon with the concept of mediation—the doctrine of Scripture included. According to Gunton, the chief failure in Barth's doctrine of Scripture is his inability or unwillingness to see the variegated and mediated ways God reveals himself.

By piecing together his fragmentary remarks on Scripture, this article outlines Gunton's criticisms of Barth's account, especially those related to his theology of mediation and Barth's supposed lack thereof, it provides an exposition of Gunton's own contribution, and ultimately asks how successful he is in moving beyond Barth while also retaining some desired distance from a traditional Scripture principle. It is hoped that this inquiry into Gunton's bibliology will highlight the challenges and possibilities of trying to navigate the waters between conservative doctrines of Scripture and supposedly mediating positions like Barth's.

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1 Some parts of this article are included in modified and expanded form in my *Trinity and Humanity: An Introduction to the Theology of Colin Gunton* (Paternoster, forthcoming 2016).

2 Colin Gunton, *The Barth Lectures*, ed. by P. H. Brazier (London: T&T Clark, 2007), p. 74.

THE PROBLEM OF MEDIATION: GUNTON'S CRITIQUE OF BARTH

Gunton's reading of Barth's doctrine of Scripture flows naturally from his account of Barth's theology of revelation. One of the chief problems in modern views of revelation is the assumption that God relates to us without mediation, either to the mind or experience. Barth, Gunton charges, falls prey to a similar problem; for while not arguing for non-mediation in the human mind or experience, Barth holds to what Gunton calls a 'revelational immediacy', namely, 'a direct apprehension of the content of the faith that will in some way or other serve to identify it beyond question'.[3] Knowledge of God is accomplished by an alien and *immediate* encounter with the objective reality of God. The sovereign God acts freely to give direct apprehension of himself.[4] This belief in non-mediated revelation is expressed in Barth's insistence that revelation is *self*-revelation, and that God is freely revealed through God. To Gunton, mediation basically denotes 'the way we understand one form of action—God's action—to take shape in and in relation to that which is not God; the way, that is, by which the actions of one who is creator take form in a world that is of an entirely different order from God because he made it so.'[5] As this is applied to the triune God, mediation is summed up thus: '[A]ll of God's acts take their beginning in the Father, are put into effect through the Son, and reach their completion in the Spirit.'[6] Therefore, anything we might say about God's self-revelation must be construed along these lines. To be sure, God reveals God, but the precise nature of how that revelation

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3 Colin E. Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation: The 1993 Warfield Lectures* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), pp. 3–4. For a very helpful and moderately critical overview of Gunton's relationship to Barth, see John Webster, 'Gunton and Barth', in *The Theology of Colin Gunton*, ed. Lincoln Harvey (London: T&T Clark, 2010), pp. 17–31. I benefited greatly from some of Webster's analysis.

4 Gunton hints at agreement with the charge that Barth's theory of revelation evinces an over-realized eschatology: revelation is here and now, direct and full. He contrasts Barth's with Pannenberg's view that full revelation is solely eschatological and presently indirect. See Colin E. Gunton, *Revelation and Reason: Prolegomena to Systematic Theology*, ed. P. H. Brazier (London: T&T Clark, 2008), pp. 68–9.

5 Colin E. Gunton, *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 5.

6 Colin E. Gunton, *Act and Being: Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 77. This theology of mediation was often developed through the use of Irenaeus' image of the Son and Spirit as the Father's 'two hands.' See, e.g., C. E. Gunton, *Christ and Creation: The Didsbury Lectures*, 1990 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), p. 75.

is mediated by God and in God must be spelled out. Barth does not parse this out, resulting in a tendency to minimize aspects of the roles of Christ and the Spirit in mediating revelation.

Certainly Barth was aware of the centrality of Christology to any construal of revelation. However, if one holds too tenaciously to the principle that only God reveals God, Gunton asks, then what space is left for the *humanity* of Jesus, for example, to be revelatory? Is it possible for God to be revealed by that which is other than himself?[7] In Barth, revelation in Christ comes through his divine nature, not his humanity. Yet, according to Gunton, the Son is 'the focus of God the Father's immanent action, his involvement *within* the structures of the world, as paradigmatically in Jesus'.[8] Thus, self-revelation is somehow mediated through Jesus' human life and ministry in the world. He argues that one of the chief weaknesses of Barth's theology is that he buys into an 'Aristotelian principle' that only like can reveal like.[9] However, Gunton contends:

> The Fourth Gospel suggests a more subtle interweaving of revelation not only through the like—he who has seen me has seen the Father—but its counterbalancing by a theology of revelation through otherness. The Father is indeed made known by Jesus, but as one who is greater than he (14:28), and so beyond all we can say and think: one revealed by humiliation and cross, but revealed none the less as other.[10]

The Son, in his humanity, mediates revelation. Creation mediates the Creator. Barth fails to give an adequate account of this fact, often even setting up an either/or proposition: either God (construed generally) reveals himself (directly) or there is no revelation.[11]

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7 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, 5. This argument Gunton borrows from Alan Spence, 'Christ's Humanity and Ours', in *Persons, Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology*, ed. Christoph Schwöbel and Colin E. Gunton (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), esp. pp. 88–93.

8 Gunton, *Act and Being*, pp. 77–78.

9 Gunton might characterize this as an example of Barth's capitulation to the Augustinian heritage of placing a radical disjunction between God and the created order. For an example of Gunton's critique of Augustine's doctrine of creation, see Colin E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (New Studies in Constructive Theology; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 76–7.

10 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 123.

11 This failure may be a symptom of a larger problem Gunton finds in Barth's theology, namely, the 'swallowing up' of the humanity of the Son by the divinity. He writes: 'Because the humanity of Christ is for Barth the humanity of God, everything that happens is for Barth the act of God. That is right, but

As a result of his lack of specificity, the mediation of the Spirit is also given short shrift in Barth's theology of revelation. Barth follows Reformation theologies by more or less limiting the Paraclete's work to the application of the benefits of salvation or to the internal confirmation of Scripture's message. On this account, the Spirit's role in revealing or mediating revelation is negligible. Moreover, in Barth there is a tendency to blur the distinctive revelatory roles of the three Persons of the Godhead. With respect to the Spirit, he fails to highlight that the Son's ministry of revealing the Father is carried out in the Spirit, thus making the Spirit a mediator of revelation in that distinct manner. Without an adequate theology of mediation, particular revelatory works of the Spirit wind up underappreciated. What this points to is the need in Barth (and many other theologies) to better specify the different patterns of mediation (in this case, of revelation) within the Trinity.[12] In the end, Gunton maintains that there is little room for mediation in Barth's theology of revelation—whether by Christ, the Spirit, or creatures—and this contributes to the troubled relationship between Scripture and revelation in Barth's thought.

According to Gunton, Barth's actualist vision of revelation, when specifically applied to the Bible, disposes him to place too much of an emphasis on how Scripture becomes the Word of God today and too little stress on how it was *originally* inspired and received as the Word of God.[13] If present revelation is located in subjective response, or revelational immediacy, then it is more difficult to see how it may be located in a text. In

raises the question: in what sense is everything that happens also the action and passion of a man?' (Gunton, *Christ and Creation*, p. 48). Elsewhere he charges that Barth 'orders' the priesthood of Christ to his divinity, therefore diminishing the human character of his priestly work; see Colin Gunton, 'Salvation', in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. by John Webster; (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 157.

12 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 122. This failure to specify patterns of mediation might be a result of what Gunton recurrently charges as Western theology's resistance to further distinguish the particular *ad intra* and *ad extra* operations of the Trinitarian Persons, as well as its inability to ascribe real personhood and meaningful agency to the Holy Spirit. See, e.g., Colin Gunton, 'The Spirit in the Trinity', in *The Forgotten Trinity: A Selection of Papers Presented to the BCC Study Commission on Trinitarian Doctrine Today 3* (London: BCC/CCBI, 1991), pp. 123–35; Colin E. Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (2nd edn; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), pp. 30–55, and Colin E. Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity, The 1992 Bampton Lectures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 188–92.

13 Gunton, *Barth Lectures*, pp. 73–4; cf. Gunton, *Revelation and Reason*, p. 188.

what sense, then, is the Bible inspired so that it becomes a unique vehicle of revelation? In Barth, the Bible's inspiration is not so much found in the authors' words, but in the act of God's self-disclosure to the person engaging the Scriptures.[14] The Bible is a 'witness' to the real thing, not the thing itself, since a creaturely thing cannot reveal God. Gunton takes issue with Barth's use of the witness metaphor, writing, 'Witnesses speak of what they see, autonomously and in their own strength, or at any rate that they are in external relation to that which they record.' He concludes that the metaphor of witnesses implies that the Spirit works from the outside to transform the human words of the writers into the words of God. This account neglects the Spirit's role in (1) forming a community around Jesus Christ, (2) enabling particular members of that original community to recognize what was redemptively significant in their encounter with Jesus Christ, and (3) empowering the apostolic authors of Scripture to write those words, making those words the medium of revelation.[15] In Barth, the Spirit merely mediates the subjective response of the contemporary hearer or reader. Barth's problem is a 'deficient pneumatology'.[16] Therefore, without jettisoning the notion of the Spirit's work of quickening a proper response to Scripture, Gunton aims to develop a more robust account of Scripture's relationship to revelation.

THE PROMISE OF MEDIATION: GUNTON'S PROPOSAL

Gunton follows Barth in seeking to centre revelation on God's saving action. He defines revelation proper as a unique event, bound up historically in the original encounters of prophets, priests, kings, and apostles with God's redemptive action, and culminating in Jesus Christ as God's saving work incarnate. Whatever else might be defined as revelation must be done so only in a derivative and inferior sense. If revelation proper is *sui generis*, then the issue for us becomes one of mediation: what is the precise nature of this revelation of redemption in Christ and how is this unique revelation made accessible to us?[17] Let us address both of these matters.

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[14] It is probably fair to say that Gunton's main point is that Barth *over-emphasizes* present 'inspiration' to past inspiration. In a response to a question during a lecture, he briefly acknowledges that Barth holds to some view of original inspiration (Gunton, *Revelation and Reason*, p. 81). Yet the brunt of his critique is directed toward the perceived lack of a doctrine of inspiration in Barth.

[15] Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, pp. 76–8.

[16] Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 68.

[17] Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, pp. 109, 113, and 125.

Revelation is defined by Gunton as 'a form of personal relation of God to the world' and brings about the knowledge of the heart—the knowledge of faith—and not merely intellectual knowledge.[18] Although there is an intellectual component to revelation (and the knowledge that follows), it is not at the top of the hierarchy.[19] If revelation is in some sense redemptive, then 'heart knowledge' is superior to 'head knowledge'. Arguing from the Fourth Gospel he writes that the knowledge of the Father mediated by the Son (e.g. John 14:9), and the 'truth' mediated by the Spirit (John 16:13) are not propositional, but personal. As a source of personal, relational knowledge, revelation is a gift, not a possession. Gunton argues that in John's Gospel, gnosis is found most often in its verbal form, so that 'knowing is something that is done as the result of a relation to God in Christ'. If this kind of knowledge is a gift, then it silences boasting and pre-empts presumption, for no one can take hold of this personal relation at a whim; it must be given.[20] Revelation, which engenders the knowledge of faith, is then what Gunton calls a 'success word' in that it 'presupposes that something has actually been conveyed from revealer to recipient'.[21] How does this take place? This takes us to the centre of Gunton's doctrine of revelation—the mediatorial work of the Holy Spirit.

If revelation is the past Christ event, but also somehow a present personal relation, then that which connects God to humanity, the past to the present, and Person to person, is the Spirit. Now, the Spirit's distinctive function in the economy and eternity, according to Gunton, is to establish and actualize particularity—especially of persons divine and human. Thus the particular humanity and mission of Jesus, which function as the very vehicles of revelation, are brought about by the Spirit from start to finish.[22] By emphasizing the mediation of the Spirit, Gunton seeks to draw attention to the revelatory necessity of Christ's human nature—his creatureliness—and vice versa. Unmediated revelation of the Father is not our reality; revelation comes to us through the incarnate Son, by the Spirit.

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18 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 106.

19 Colin E. Gunton, *Intellect and Action: Elucidations on Christian Theology and the Life of Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), p. 52.

20 Gunton, *Intellect and Action*, pp. 53–4.

21 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 113.

22 On the particularizing role of the Spirit within the Godhead and the created order, see Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, pp. 182–90. Regarding the Spirit's particularizing of Jesus' humanity, Gunton borrows from Edward Irving. See, e.g., Gunton, *Christian Faith*, p. 102; Colin E. Gunton, 'Christology: Two Dogmas Revisited—Edward Irving's Christology', in *Theology through the Theologians: Selected Essays*, 1972–1995 (London: T&T Clark, 2003), pp. 151–68.

A theology of mediation rightly recognizes that the triune God enables the created order—which includes Christ—to bear a ministerial function. 'This means,' Gunton asserts, 'that parts of the world are empowered to serve as mediators of God's creation of other parts'.[23] As this pertains to our main concern, the Spirit's *present* and *ongoing* mediation of revelation takes place primarily through communities, traditions, and texts. Creaturely realities mediate the Creator through the creative Spirit of God.[24] It is at this stage that we might be able to make sense of Gunton's doctrine of Scripture.

According to Gunton, Barth's account of Scripture focused almost exclusively on Scripture becoming the Word of God in the event of revelation, or present inspiration, and under-emphasized original inspiration and original reception. He charges that traditional treatments conflate inspiration and revelation, so that 'the text either replaces or renders redundant the mediating work of the Spirit'.[25] Much of Gunton's work on Scripture is spent attempting to specify the relationship between inspiration and revelation. Following Coleridge, he argues that it is one thing to say something is revelatory, and another to say that it is inspired by the Spirit. Coleridge writes:

> There may be dictation without inspiration, and inspiration without dictation; they have been and continue to be grievously confounded. Balaam and his ass were the passive organs of dictation; but no one, I suppose, will venture to call either of those worthies inspired. It is my profound conviction that St. John and St. Paul were divinely inspired; but I totally disbelieve the dictation of any one word, sentence, or argument throughout their writings. Observe, there was revelation. All religion is revealed...[26]

Gunton holds that this kind of distinction makes space for the human character of Scripture, and allows us to 'dispense with the need to wring equal meaning out of every text'. Put differently, inspiration does not negate the fallibility and limitations of the biblical authors; thus it cannot

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[23] Gunton, *Christian Faith*, p. 7.

[24] He sums up his view of the mediation of revelation thus: 'Revelation is mediated in a number of ways: each way is a different way of revealing something of God and the truth . . . There are a variety of means through which we can gain Revelation' (Gunton, *Revelation and Reason*, pp. 76–7).

[25] Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 66.

[26] Cited in Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 66. See also Gunton, *Revelation and Reason*, p. 72.

be straightforwardly equated with revelation.[27] Scripture is not revelation itself, a claim Gunton says is in line with the mainstream Christian tradition, but rather it mediates revelation. The important question has to do with the nature of that mediation.[28]

Revelation might be defined as making things known which otherwise would remain hidden. Inspiration is the unique form of the mediation of revelation that makes known, by the Spirit through the biblical writings, truths about God and his ways that could not be obtained elsewhere.[29] What makes the Bible unique as revelation (in some sense) is that it is the 'bearer of saving knowledge'; it mediates to us the salvation mediated by Jesus Christ.[30] Yet, how does the Bible come to be the bearer of this knowledge? This brings us back to Gunton's original concern regarding the relation between inspiration and revelation, and underscores the need to identify and specify the peculiar character of inspiration.

The Spirit's involvement in inspiration must take account of at least two facets of the Spirit's work more broadly speaking. First, it must be highlighted that the Spirit is the one who forms communion, or community, with God and others. The church is constituted every time the word of the gospel is proclaimed and the Holy Spirit, through that word, calls the community into being—lifting them to the Father through the Son. Gunton frequently emphasizes the Spirit's role in liberating and opening people to exist for their Lord and one another.[31] Therefore, part of the

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27 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 66. On the non-problem of fallibility, he notes: 'In so far as God deals with us humanly then there has to be space between the words and God. In one sense you will want to hold to the infallibility of scripture in a broad sense, but there has to be space between the words and the *Word* as Barth would see it, between the words and *God*' (Gunton, *Revelation and Reason*, pp. 83–4).

28 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 67. Put differently, Scripture is *revelatory* or *revealing*, not revelation, properly speaking. On this distinction, see also Gunton, *Barth Lectures*, p. 74.

29 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, pp. 68, 71–2.

30 Gunton writes: 'The distinct mark of the revelatory character of the Bible is its relation to salvation in Christ the mediator of salvation. The revelatory uniqueness of the Bible derives from its mediation of the life of this man, and particularly his cross and resurrection' (Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 73). He also writes: 'The particular quality of the Bible's mediation of revelation is derived from its mediation of salvation. Its [sic] uniqueness derives from the uniqueness of the Christ who is mediated and of that which is mediated by Christ' (Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 74).

31 See, e.g., Colin E. Gunton, 'The Church: John Owen and John Zizioulas on the Church', in *Theology through the Theologians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), p. 202.

Spirit's work as it relates to inspiration is to form a particular community, from and for whom the writings arise and are compiled. Gunton writes: 'If the Paraclete is the one who guides the community into all truth, as the Fourth Gospel promises that he is (John 16:13), the Bible's inspiration may be perceived to derive from precisely this fact, that it is the book of a community.'[32] The Scriptures are the work of the Spirit inasmuch as they are the result of the Spirit's formation (and guidance) of the church. Second, we must consider that one of the Spirit's primary vocations is to bring us to Christ, who himself reveals the Father. He is the Spirit of Christ, the one who directs attention away from himself to the Son of the Father.[33] Any conception of inspiration must take account of at least these two factors. Hence, the inspiration of Scripture is to be found partially in the idea that the Holy Spirit enabled members of the original community to recognize and articulate what was redemptively significant about the events surrounding Jesus Christ.

This is precisely where Barth's witness metaphor falters. Witnesses can be autonomous observers, whereas the biblical authors are part of a community the Spirit has oriented around and to Christ, out of whom writings emerge that function as the unique medium of revelation—even the words of God in a sense—because of the Spirit's work. Gunton cites P. T. Forsyth approvingly: 'The Apostles were not panes of bad glass, but crystal cups the master filled.'[34] The words that arose from and were used to convey their experience of revelation are in some way intrinsically related to the revelation itself. Moreover, something must also be said for the unique function the apostles had due to their proximity to Jesus. The apostle's role was to mediate revelation, and in doing so mediate salvation. Inspiration consists of the Spirit enabling these apostolic authors to write what they have written and to enable these words to be the unique mediators of revelation.[35]

All this being said, there still must be a distinction made between the words of the apostles and revelation itself. The Bible is revelation, or better revelatory, only insofar as it brings us into contact with the salvation that is found in the Jesus Christ, who alone grants us access—epistemically, relationally, and salvifically—to the Father.[36] Let us now turn to assess Gunton's proposal and some of its related critiques.

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32 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 75.

33 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, pp. 75–6.

34 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 77.

35 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 78.

36 He writes: 'The form of revelation is not identical to the form of that which it reveals, any more than the form of a scientific theory is identical with the form of the world it makes known, though in both cases there is an intrin-

BEYOND BARTH? A MODEST ASSESSMENT

Gunton on Barth. Gunton had two related criticisms of Barth's theology of revelation generally, which set the stage for his move beyond Barth with respect to the doctrine of Scripture: (1) Barth over-emphasized immediacy in revelation and thus did not develop an adequate account of the Son and Spirit's mediation of revelation, and (2) he resisted the notion of creaturely mediation.

Without wading into every detail of whether Gunton reads Barth accurately, it is worth reflecting more carefully on what he sees at work in Barth. To begin, it is not entirely clear how the first charge may reasonably be levelled against Barth, at least not without further specification. While it is true that Barth argues for a form of immediacy with respect to God's giving of himself in the act of revelation, it does not appear true that he leaves the notion of immediacy unbounded and undefined. In Barth, God's knowledge of himself is the only true form of immediate knowledge. Human knowledge of God is derivative; we are given a share in God's own knowledge of himself, but only in mediated form. He writes: 'The fact that God knows Himself immediately is not neutralised by the fact that man knows Him on the basis of His revelation and hence mediately, and only mediately, and therefore as an object.'[37] The 'therefore' is critical here. God makes himself an object of knowledge only as he presents himself in a mediated way—particularly as the Word and Spirit. Indeed, Barth goes on to say:

> The reality of our knowledge of God stands or falls with the fact that in His revelation God is present to man in a *medium*. He is therefore objectively present in a double sense. In his Word He comes as an object before man the subject. And by the Holy Spirit He makes the human subject accessible to Himself, capable of considering and conceiving Himself as object.[38]

Not only do we see an acknowledgement of mediation, but it is Trinitarian mediation: God is made known to us in the Word and by the work of the Spirit.

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sic relation between the two.' Similarly, he concludes: 'Dogma and theology are revisable, scripture is in certain respects open to question, but revelation, mediated through scripture, is not' (Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 81).

37 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, 4 volumes in 13 parts (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956-1975), II/1 p. 10. Henceforth, *CD*.

38 Karl Barth, *CD* II/1, p. 10 (italics added).

Granted that Barth has some broad theology of revelation's triune mediation, it may be that Gunton's discomfort with what he perceives to be Barth's resistance to creaturely mediation, even in the Person of the Word incarnate, has some merit. Indeed, we find passages in Barth that confirm Gunton's charge that the humanity—the creatureliness—of Christ is not revelatory, such as:

> The statement about Christ's deity is to be understood in the sense that Christ reveals His Father. But this Father of His is God. He who reveals Him, then, reveals God. But who can reveal God except God Himself? Neither a man that has been raised up nor an idea that has come down can do it. These are both creatures. Now the Christ who reveals the Father is also a creature and His work is a creaturely work. But if He were only a creature He could not reveal God, for the creature certainly cannot take God's place and work in His place. If He reveals God, then irrespective of His creaturehood He himself has to be God.[39]

Barth certainly does not ignore the Son's place in the mediation of revelation, as we saw above. The question for Gunton, it seems, is in what sense the Son in his entirety—both divinity *and* humanity—is the mediator of revelation. In Barth, the human nature of Jesus is a veil, a form of hiddenness. The humanity of Christ is the form, not content or subject of revelation.[40] He is clear that the *incarnate* Word mediates revelation.[41] However, in defending the axiom that only God reveals God, he may open himself to the question Gunton asks, namely, what is the substantial revelatory significance of Jesus' humanity?[42] Gunton's prescription of a more thoroughgoing connection between Christology and pneumatology might be helpful in this regard. If the human life and ministry of Jesus is formed and carried out by the Spirit, then there might be more room for a notion of his humanity being revelatory while priority is still given to divine action; divine and human doing need not be opposed.

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39 Barth, *CD* I/1, p. 406.

40 See, e.g., Karl Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion, Volume 1*, ed. by Hannelotte Reiffen; trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), pp. 89–91. Henceforth, *GD*.

41 E.g. Barth, *GD*, pp. 88–89.

42 Some writers see this tendency to strictly separate divine and human agency as a result of Barth's supposedly 'Nestorian' Christology. It is not only evidenced (maybe) here in the doctrine of revelation, but also in his view of baptism; cf. John Yocum, *Ecclesial Mediation in Karl Barth* (Barth Studies; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 168–70.

Gunton on Scripture. Amidst the various charges and claims, there are at least two related contributions Gunton purports to the make to traditional and contemporary doctrines of Scripture. First, he provides a more adequate account of the relation of inspiration and revelation. Second, he offers a more robust description of original inspiration—one that attends to the importance and interrelation of the original community, the biblical authors, and the actual words of Scripture.

Gunton alleges that much of the tradition (Barth included) tends to conflate inspiration and revelation, and in doing so replace or render redundant the Spirit's work of mediation. It is not entirely clear to whom and to what he refers. Certainly examples could be given of medieval, Reformation, and post-Reformation writers who drew clear distinctions between inspiration and revelation, and even spoke well of the Trinitarian patterns of mediation involved in the production of Scripture. Bonaventure, for example, writes: 'Scripture does not take its starting-point in human inquiry; rather it flows from divine revelation, *coming down from the Father of lights, from whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth receives its name*.' [43] It is for revelation that Scripture comes to be, coming principally from the Father. Lest we conclude that he does not think in terms of mediation, he adds later: 'The manifold meaning of Scripture is also appropriate to its source. For it came from God, *through* Christ and the Holy Spirit, who spoke through the prophets and the other holy people who committed this teaching to writing.' [44] To employ one of Gunton's favourite images: scriptural revelation comes to us through the mediation of the Father's 'two hands', especially through the various modes of the Spirit's inspiration. Revelation, inspiration, and Trinitarian mediation are all here present.

In addition, Richard Muller, in his magisterial *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, provides several accounts of medieval, Reformation, and post-Reformation writers who drew clear distinctions between inspiration and revelation, and even spoke well of the Trinitarian patterns of mediation involved in the production of Scripture.[45] Aquinas, for example, made the distinction between revelation and inspiration, and brought greater specificity to the modes of the Spirit's mediation. Inspiration, for Aquinas, refers to the work of the Spirit elevating the mind of the prophet and giving it a capacity for divine knowledge, while revelation

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[43] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prol. 0.2.

[44] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prol. 4.4.

[45] See Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 4 vols (2nd edn; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 2, pp. 38–47, 243–44.

denotes the actual presentation to the mind of inaccessible knowledge. Whether one agrees with Thomas or not, he is aware of the distinction between the two related acts. Even in the twentieth century, the conservative B. B. Warfield, aware of the need to distinguish revelation and inspiration, retorts that this distinction is necessary in the case when revelation is narrowly conceived as 'an external manifestation of God' or 'an immediate communication from God in words'. In such cases, revelation is clearly not identical with inspiration.[46] However, he contends,

> 'Inspiration' does not differ from 'revelation' in these narrowed senses as genus from genus, but as a species of one genus differs from another. That operation of God which we call 'inspiration', that is to say, that operation of the Spirit of God by which He 'bears' men in the process of composing Scripture, so that they write, not of themselves, but 'from God', is one of the modes in which God makes known to men His being, His will, His operations, His purposes. It is as distinctly a mode of revelation as any mode of revelation can be, and therefore it performs the same office which all revelation performs, that is to say . . . it makes men, and makes them wise unto salvation.[47]

Inspiration is a species of revelation, brought about by the Spirit of God, with the ultimate purpose of salvation in Christ. It not only records revelation, but is revelation; it not only records the redemptive acts of God in Christ, but is a redemptive act.[48] Thus, it difficult to see how Warfield and many others miss the important features Gunton identifies as lacunae in traditional treatments. Here in Warfield—the ultra-traditionalist, some might say—we find triune mediation in various modes and a careful delineation of the differences and similarities between inspiration and revelation.

With respect to Barth, Gunton's concern is that an over-emphasis on contemporary 'inspiration' leads to a conflation of it with revelation and to an accompanying lack of attention to the Spirit's inspiration of the original authors and community. In response, it might be observed that Barth sought not to separate original and contemporary 'inspiration', nor

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[46] It appears that Gunton's logic (as he borrows from Coleridge) is similar: (1) revelation equals dictation; (2) inspiration is clearly not dictation; (3) therefore revelation does not equal inspiration. Thus, the traditional assumption that because something is inspired it is revelation apparently falters. However, the problem does not lie in the traditional assumption, but in the first premise of the syllogism.

[47] B. B. Warfield, 'The Biblical Idea of Inspiration', in *The Works of B. B. Warfield*, 10 vols (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 1, pp. 106–7.

[48] Warfield, 'Inspiration', p. 107.

to elevate the latter over the former. Rather, his aim was to demonstrate the inseparability of the two. It might even be argued that he held to the priority of the *there* and *then* of inspiration, over the *here* and *now*, since one can only hear God's voice through the voices of the original authors.[49] The issue is not, perhaps, whether or not Barth treated original inspiration with some detail, but rather what the relative weighting of it was in his overall account. The emphasis on inspiration (or illumination, or revelation) being a free gift and not a possession may detract from issues regarding original inspiration and reception. Thus Gunton looks to provide something that supplements or moves beyond Barth.

The uniqueness and promise of Gunton's proposal arises from his distinct pneumatological emphases. Perhaps a way to get at one of his key contributions is to place his account alongside one feature of Warfield's. In a famous dictum, the Princeton theologian asserts concerning the providential work of God in forming the people who would write Scripture: 'If God wished to give His people a series of letters like Paul's, He prepared a Paul to write them, and the Paul He brought to the task was a Paul who spontaneously would write just such letters.'[50] God shapes the key events and forms the writer—personality, training, experiences, gifts—so that what is written freely is the result of divine preparation and direction and is precisely what God desired to be written. God not only inspires the original authors, but directs their course entirely.[51] Gunton's doctrine of the Spirit further specifies and supplements this account.

If, as Gunton often remarks, the Spirit is the 'eschatological member of the Trinity',[52] the one who proleptically brings the perfection of the eschaton into the present, and if revelation is ultimately eschatological—God becoming *fully* known—then any revelation occurring in past and present time will occur through the Spirit, who enables a foretaste of revelation to take place and 'so mediates revelation that we may say that the mysteries of God are made known in our time'.[53] As the perfecting Spirit, his work in the production of Scripture is to direct people toward the Father's redemptive *telos*. The biblical authors write as those who are caught in

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49 Barth, *GD*, pp. 222–26; Barth, *CD* I/2, pp. 504–6.

50 Warfield, 'Inspiration', p. 101.

51 He concludes: 'When we think of God the Lord giving by His Spirit a body of authoritative Scriptures to His people, we must remember that He is the God of providence and of grace as well as of revelation and inspiration, and that He holds all the lines of preparation as fully under His direction as He does the specific operation which we call... inspiration' (Warfield, 'Inspiration', pp. 102–3).

52 Gunton, *Christian Faith*, p. 155.

53 Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 120.

the wake of God's salvific work, and are instruments of the Spirit's eschatological perfecting of the people of God. The Spirit is the agent of God's preparation of the human authors of Scripture. He preserves and even establishes their creaturely freedom to write as they would, while bearing them so that they record what would communicate God's work and ways.

Still, however, this is too individual a picture of the Spirit's providential work. If the Spirit is the Spirit of communion, who incorporates a diverse people into Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), brings unity in Christ (Eph. 4:3), and leads the apostolic community into all truth (John 16:13), then it is not implausible to conceive of inspiration along more communal lines. Under the guidance of the Spirit, the original authors and communities interact concerning God's salvation in Jesus Christ, employing normal human faculties and ways of relating, to produce writings that may be called the word of God. The New Testament documents, for instance, emerge from and are fundamentally shaped by the engagement of the inspired author with his particular communities, so that inspiration need not be envisioned individually. Therefore, not only does God prepare a Paul, as Warfield asserted, but also the various communities of which Paul is a member. One might say that there is no Paul apart from the communities for and out of which the apostle exists. As Gunton puts it: 'Revelation thus takes place in an ecclesial relation between inspired teacher and inspired taught.'[54] Inspiration, in other words, occurs within a dialogue.

The Spirit's mediation of revelation in this scenario is perhaps more rich and complex; but the complexity helps to highlight how creaturely realities are God's chosen means to disclose his salvation in Christ. The words deployed in Scripture are ultimately, then, the word of God because of the proximity this community and its writers had to the event of revelation in Christ and the unique function they have in proclaiming his redemption. This is what Gunton calls 'the advantage of the contemporary'. The apostolic community testifies to Jesus in an utterly unique way, such that there is 'an intrinsic relation between revelation and the words used to enable it to come to expression'.[55] The words and phrases of the Bible truly matter, as they mediate redemptive revelation by the Spirit's handiwork. The precise nature of the intrinsic relation is not spelled out any further.

[54] Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, p. 77.
[55] Gunton, *Brief Theology of Revelation*, pp. 77–8.

CONCLUSION

Mediation indeed lies at the heart of Gunton's criticisms and constructive proposal. The Father presents himself through the Son and Spirit, and by them through various creaturely mediums. What is not unique in Gunton's account is the stress on the Spirit's providential involvement, or on the specifically salvific or Christocentric focus of the Spirit's work of inspiration, as both can be found among those he criticizes. However, because his relentless focus was on the question of the specific way the Spirit mediates revelation through means of inspiration, he turned his attention to the Christ-centred, community-forming operations of the Spirit. What results is a doctrine of Scripture's origins that factors in the sometimes-neglected place of the community. In the end, it appears that Gunton does not so much move beyond Barth in specifying why the apostolic writings might more straightforwardly be called the word of God, but supplements him with a way to more fully delineate the Spirit's intimate involvement in making the human authors' words God's own word.

EVANGELICALISM AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN ST KILDA, 1830-1841

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INTRODUCTION

Due to its remote location and storied past, the tiny Hebridean archipelago of St Kilda has received a considerable amount of interest over the past several decades. This phenomenon was noted and reflected upon from various angles in the 2010 edited collection *Rewriting St Kilda: New Views on Old Ideas*.[1] Taking a cue from the recent work of Donald Meek, Michael Robson, and others, the following focuses on a critical period in the life of the island in which the nature of local Christianity transitioned from a culture of religious transaction to cultural transformation. At the heart of the matter is the question of how the St Kildan people moved from relative unawareness and apathy to vital evangelicalism over a mere decade. In an attempt to answer that question, the following considers the character and role of the minister, the processes of transculturation, and the various ways in which minister and people interacted prior to a revival on the island in 1841.

Upon being presented to the people by the Rev. John MacDonald of Ferintosh in 1830 as the missionary minister of St Kilda, the Rev. Neil MacKenzie immediately knew that his goal of providing his parishioners with an orthodox Calvinist and deeply pietistic evangelical ministry would not come easily or quickly. But he stayed. He rolled up his sleeves and immersed himself in the lives and worldviews of the people of tiny Hebridean island. Weeks turned into months, months into years, and on the evening of Wednesday 28th May 1841, a revival began in the oil-lit church.[2] For thirteen-year-old islander Callum MacQueen, it was something he would never forget. Reminiscing in his later life, having emigrated to Australia in 1852, he vividly recounted:

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1 Bob Chambers (ed.), *Rewriting St Kilda: New Views on Old Ideas* (Isle of Lewis: The Islands Book Trust, 2010).

2 J.B. (John Bannatyne) MacKenzie, *Episode in the Life of the Rev. Neil MacKenzie at St. Kilda from 1829 to 1843* (Privately Printed, 1911), pp. 33-4.

> I remember Mrs. Gillies crying. There were nine or ten men in the meeting. I afterward heard one of the men telling some who were arriving with the boats from their day's work: 'I believe the Spirit of God was poured upon our congregation tonight.' This was the beginning of the revival.[3]

The revival that began that night continued on into the next year and had a profound effect on the life of the island. But it was more than a single event that caused such an effect. The occurrences of 1841 and 1842, as important and critical as they are to the history of Christianity on St Kilda, were just the tip of the iceberg. The years between 1830 and 1841 were pivotal, both for the minister and his family and for the people of St Kilda. At first there was disappointment. In the end, there was revival. In between, there was nothing less than a cultural transformation.[4]

NEIL MACKENZIE (CA. 1795-1879)

Much of what we know of Neil MacKenzie and his time on the island comes from the published account, *Episode in the Life of the Rev. Neil MacKenzie at St Kilda from 1829 to 1843*, gathered by his son, James Ban-

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[3] E.G. McQueen and K. McQueen, eds., *St. Kilda Heritage: Autobiography of Callum MacCuithinn (Malcolm MacQueen)* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Genealogy Society, 1995), p. 15.

[4] The themes and language of transformation and indigenization are also developed in Andrew Fleming, *St Kilda and the Wider World: Tales of an Iconic Island* (Bollington, Cheshire: Windgather Press Ltd, 2005), 123; Donald Meek, ' 'Eileanaich Cian a' Chuain" / 'The Remote Islanders of the Sea"? Towards a Reexamination of the Role of Church and Faith in St Kilda', in *Rewriting St Kilda: New Views on Old Ideas*, ed. by Bob Chambers (Isle of Lewis: The Islands Book Trust, 2010), p. 115. The study of MacKenzie and his role on the island draw most heavily from four primary sources: (1) E.G. McQueen and K. McQueen (eds), *St. Kilda Heritage: Autobiography of Callum MacCuithinn (Malcolm MacQueen)* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Genealogy Society, 1995); (2) J.B. MacKenzie (ed.), *Episode in the Life of the Rev. Neil MacKenzie at St Kilda from 1829 to 1843* (Privately Printed, 1911); (3) James Wilson, *A Voyage Round The Coasts of Scotland and the Isles,* vol. II (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1842); (4) Lachlan MacLean, 'Sketches of the Island Saint Kilda; comprising of Manners and Maxims of the Natives, Ancient and Modern; together with the Ornithology, Geology, Etymology, Domology, and other curiosities of that unique island; taken down, for the greater part, from the oral narration of the Rev. N. M'Kenzie, at present, and for the last eight years, Clergyman of the Island', *The Calcutta Christian Observer,* January to December, 1839.

natyne (J.B.) MacKenzie, and published in 1911.[5] In the front matter, the son provides the basics of his father's life and ministry. Neil MacKenzie was born in Glen Sannox, on the Isle of Arran, to a family originally from Kintail, Ross-shire. His father was a tenant 'of the mill and farm of Glen Sannox', and, according to J.B., a highly religious man who provided his family with a robust diet of Gaelic evangelical devotions. Somewhere in the middle of his university education, Neil MacKenzie witnessed the drowning of a friend and barely escaped the same fate. This highly charged experience caused a revitalization of his own Christian faith, whereupon he left the life of learning 'to become a preacher of the Gospel and to go somewhere as a missionary'.[6] He hoped to go to Canada to pursue these goals, but the place for which he applied had been filled. As he was willing 'to go to any place for which no one else could be got', he agreed in 1830 with Dr Daniel Dewar, the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK), and MacDonald of Ferintosh that he should prepare and go at once to shepherd the outlying Hebridean church.[7]

Of his character and role on St Kilda, his son recalled that his father acted as 'a sort of Governor of the island, presiding at their weekly meetings for settling the work they were to engage in during the week and arranging all kinds of petty disputes'. He also mentioned the religious temperament of his father: 'Though very strictly orthodox in his religious practices and beliefs, he was by no means a fanatic or ascetic'. MacKenzie's wife, Elizabeth Crawford MacKenzie, 'greatly assisted' her husband in his labours by teaching the St Kildan women new ways of conducting domestic chores, 'cooking and other sanitary matters', 'and of the virtues

5 MacKenzie, *Episode in the Life of the Rev. Neil MacKenzie*. According to J.B. MacKenzie, the data is Rev. MacKenzie's own, 'from some of whose notes this narrative has been compiled'. The son went on, 'His notes were written at various times, on all sorts of scraps of paper, and all that has been done by the Editor has been to piece them together, as far as possible, in the form of a more or less continuous narrative. It will easily be seen that they were never intended for publication, and that they were written by one who did his thinking in the Gaelic' (p. 3). Sadly, the son later went on to note that upon his father's leaving the island, the majority of his records were lost (p. 4).

6 With regard to the near-death experience jolting to life a dormant faith, MacKenzie joins other prominent evangelicals, such as Thomas Chalmers. Regarding his leaving school, James Wilson's account from 1841 corroborates this in noting that MacKenzie was 'probably not a person of finished education' (pp. 41-2).

7 MacKenzie, *Episode*, p. 3.

of soap and starch'.[8] She also raised several children on the island, whom James Wilson described as 'fine rosy-cheeked'.[9]

Other first-hand accounts provide further detail. James Wilson, who visited the island in 1841, made several descriptive comments regarding the minister. He wrote that he was 'a sincere, simple, kind-hearted, pious man, as we firmly believe from the impression which our subsequent intercourse with him produced'.[10] Regarding his roles on the island, Wilson noted that he bore the responsibility for the teaching and preaching, as well as numerous other unrelated duties, and was well-loved by the people for it.[11] During this same tour, Wilson invited the minister out to his boat for a visit, during which he discovered that MacKenzie was 'well-informed and intelligent'. The clergyman supplied the visitors with 'a great deal of information regarding the temporal as well as spiritual condition of the people, their habits of life, and customary occupation'.[12] Lachlan MacLean's earlier visit confirmed the same observation that the minister's care superseded his spiritual responsibilities, noting: 'He has labored there … paying assiduous attention not only to the religious, but to the moral and physical wants of the people'.[13] Finally, and in perhaps the most relevant of the firsthand accounts, Callum MacQueen recounted that MacKenzie was 'a good man and faithful preacher'.[14] In 1830, however, Neil MacKenzie had more pressing matters to attend to than the cultivation of his good character. Upon his arrival, he quickly realized that MacDonald of Ferintosh, who made several trips to St Kilda prior to MacKenzie's era, had overestimated the religious state of the islanders.

DISAPPOINTMENT

When MacKenzie arrived in 1830, he was dismayed with both the moral state of the St Kildans and the religious improvements MacDonald claimed to have made. Morally, he found the islanders wanting in virtue and lacking in 'every moral obligation', making note of their petty theft from the island's proprietor. Regarding their communitarian social ethics, he described how they shared the guilt of shorting the proprietor and were incredibly wary to guard themselves as a community from outsiders who might give information of their activities to the MacLeods of

8 Ibid., p. 4.
9 Wilson, *Voyage*, pp. 19, 10.
10 Wilson, *Voyage*, pp. 9-10.
11 Ibid., p. 12.
12 Ibid., pp. 41-2.
13 MacLean, 'Sketches', pp. 331-2.
14 McQueen and McQueen, *St. Kilda Heritage*, p. 15.

Dunvegan—who owned the island—or their agents. MacKenzie reported that they even went to murderous extremes by pushing a Skyeman off a cliff and strangling a woman who was the steward's servant. Beyond its violent expression, he further bemoaned their insistence on total egalitarianism. He wrote:

> Equal in their hopes and fears and habits, they in everything insisted upon an equality which had a deadening influence and effectually hindered any real progress. If anyone attempted to better himself he was set upon from all sides and persecuted by everyone. There must be no departure from what their fathers had done, unless, indeed, it were possible to do less. No one must be allowed to make himself much more comfortable than others.[15]

Other accounts also cite the ethos of equality as a hindrance to 'improvement'. Wilson wrote: 'The St. Kilda community may in many respects be regarded as a small republic, in which the individual members share most of their worldly goods in common…'. He went on: 'Indeed, a peculiar jealousy is alleged to exist on this head, no man being encouraged to go in advance of those about him in any thing…'.[16]

As for their spiritual state, MacKenzie wrote:

> When I went to the island in 1830 I was accompanied by my friend Dr. M'Donald, who during his short stay on the island preached several eloquent and powerful sermons, to which they apparently paid great attention; but I soon found that they were only charmed by his eloquence and energy, and had not knowledge enough to follow or understand his arguments. I found that it was the same with my own sermons—that they were too ignorant of the leading truths of Christianity and the practical effects which, under the influence of the Spirit of God, they were calculated to produce, to profit as I would like by my discourses.[17]

MacKenzie's assessment of the island's spiritual condition in 1830 poses a serious question: How could the St Kildan church, in light of MacDonald's seemingly effective preaching ministry over the course of the 1820s, have ended up lifeless and empty? On one hand, the four visits of the itinerating MacDonald indeed succeeded in introducing the people of St Kilda to the biblical, experiential, and theological world of evangelicalism.[18] This

15 MacKenzie, *Episode*, p. 30.

16 Wilson, *Voyage*, p. 24.

17 MacKenzie, *Episode*, pp. 31-2.

18 See John Kennedy, *The "Apostle of the North": The Life and Labours of the Rev. Dr. M'Donald* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1932; originally published 1866). The language of 'introduction' regarding MacDonald comes from Andrew

point must be stressed. Yet, this introduction was insufficiently transformational. What the St Kildan church needed in order to change was a minister who stayed for years, not weeks. As MacKenzie himself noted, 'To change the habits of such a people must be the work either of time or grace'.[19] What, then, could be done by MacKenzie to reach his goals of increased morality and 'practical effects'? The answer was simple. He needed to stay.

TRANSFORMATION

As MacKenzie continued his ministry on the island throughout the 1830s and into the next decade, the church and culture of St Kilda were transformed due to the interactions and exchanges between St Kilda's Gaelic culture and MacKenzie's evangelicalism, the all-encompassing improvements made by MacKenzie and the islanders, and a gradual rise of local self-determination. The transformation occurred in large part due to a two-way cultural transference. The dominant narrative of St Kilda church history from the more recent past paints a bleak picture of evangelicalism arriving on the island with MacDonald and subsequently wiping out the native culture through MacKenzie to replace it with a 'strict' or 'Puritanical' form of Christian culture.[20] This reading is overly reductionistic. If we take into serious account the world of ideas, it becomes clearer that the 'clash of cultures' on St Kilda in the period at hand involved a certain degree of transculturation.[21]

Fleming, *St Kilda and the Wider World: Tales of an Iconic Island* (Bollington, Cheshire: Windgather Press Ltd, 2005), p. 23.

19 Neil MacKenzie, journal extracts 1832-33, quoted in Michael Robson, *St Kilda: Church, Visitors and 'Natives'* (Isle of Lewis: The Islands Book Trust, 2005), p. 334.

20 Donald Meek notes the use of pejorative language like 'holy bigot' in Charles MacLean's *Island on the Edge of the World: Utopian St Kilda and Its Passing* (London: Tom Stacy Ltd., 1972), in Meek, 'Towards a Reexamination of the Role of Church and Faith in St Kilda', p. 132. Tom Steel attributes a degree of cultural death to the clergyman in *The Life and Death of St Kilda* (Edinburgh: R & R Clark, 1965), pp. 77-8. More balanced is Michael Robson's voluminous *St Kilda: Church, Visitors and 'Natives'*.

21 The 'clash of cultures' paradigm, focus on the world of ideas, and monist/dualist discussion that follow are used in David Bebbington's study of the Ferryden revival in Forfarshire in the later part of the century and have been helpful in my understanding of the St Kilda experience(s). See David Bebbington, *Victorian Religious Revivals: Culture and Piety in Local and Global Contexts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 159-92. 'Transculturation', as a concept, stresses the two-way channels that develop as two or

In the first case, there was indeed a cultural divide separating the islanders from the Evangelicals. However, rather than being a 'modern' as over against an 'uncivilized' split, as a nineteenth-century tourist might have seen it, it was instead a very real ideological divide between the pre-modern and modern in the philosophical sense of the words. The islanders held a highly embodied and supernaturalistic cosmology with little to no divide between nature and spirit. The Church, in a formal sense, influenced their worldview, but their day-to-day lives were influenced more by the pre-Christian and folk traditions of the island and other Hebrides from which their ancestors came.

MacDonald and MacKenzie, on the other hand, brought with them to the island a more modern worldview. Both trained for a time in the Scottish universities and would have been exposed to the dualistic world of the Enlightenment, which preached the twin gospels of reason and empiricism, while casting doubt on the supernatural. Scottish evangelicalism itself was coloured by the 'Spirit of the Age'. For David Bebbington, 'Evangelical theology … was simple, rational and practical. It shared the hallmarks of the Enlightenment.'[22] Scottish evangelicals were also influenced by the Locke-tinged theology of Jonathan Edwards as they 'learned … to place confidence in knowledge derived from sense experience'.[23] The evangelicals and the islanders, in sum, understood reality along different lines.

How did the transformation from two worldviews to one worldview take place? And which worldview predominated? Through the process of transculturation, a distinctly St Kildan form of evangelicalism emerged. There was no winner and loser, but a dialogical and gradual cosmological shift. A good example of this process comes via MacKenzie's relation of his discussion with the islanders on a specific folk tradition.[24] At one point during his tenure, he happened upon a group of St Kildans discussing a prophetic vision known as second sight. He heard them out and:

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more cultures interact over time. I owe thanks to Dr. Kathryn Long of Wheaton College (IL) for introducing me to this concept during my undergraduate degree.

22 D.W. Bebbington, 'Evangelicalism in Modern Scotland', *SBET* 9 (1991), 6.

23 Ibid.

24 As Robson here points out, MacKenzie's language and attitude toward the local customs and worldview were admittedly hostile and self-superior (i.e., calling them 'ridiculous and fanciful', 'folly and absurdity', and 'reveries'). My intention is not to 'whitewash' the elements of 'cultural imperialism' that did, in fact, appear from time to time in MacDonald and MacKenzie, but rather to provide a check to the idea of cultural 'invasion'. Cf. MacKenzie in Robson, *St Kilda*, p. 331 and Robson, *St Kilda,* p. 303.

> With an eye to the same thing, explained that part of the answer to the question, 'What is God?' 'God is a spirit'. I told them in the simplest manner what is a spirit, and what is not; that there are three spiritual existences, namely, the Supreme Spirit God, angels, and the souls of men; that the Supreme Being differed from all other spirits, in being infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in all his attributes; whereas angels and souls of men are but limited, changeable, and created beings.[25]

In this quote, upon hearing their views on spirits, MacKenzie attempted to outline the basics of orthodox Christian belief on the subject in order to provide a point of contact with which to further explain the evangelical message. Through the continuation of such conversations, the minister was able to draw the people from a pre-Christian belief to an evangelical faith that also took seriously the existence of a spiritual realm.[26]

In a second sense, cultural transformation also occurred between church and people as it related to St Kildan popular culture. To be sure, evangelicalism did impose an alien code of ethics in certain respects, such as its negative attitude toward dancing and 'music of a worldly character'.[27] However, the islanders' Gaelic culture was appreciated and recorded, as well as expanded and ultimately preserved, through the indigenization of evangelicalism on St Kilda.[28] The most vivid examples of this are the local enthusiasm for Gaelic psalm singing and the production of original Gaelic religious poetry.[29] Regarding the Gaelic psalm singing, Wilson recorded in 1841:

> The singing of psalms and hymns is even a favorite spiritual recreation of the people, and is resorted to frequently and voluntarily in their own houses, independent of the more formal meetings which may be occasionally called

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25 Neil MacKenzie, journal extracts 1832-1833, quoted in Robson, *St Kilda*, p. 331.

26 For more on this, see Elizabeth Ritchie, 'The faith of the crofters: Skye and South Uist, 1793-1843', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Guelph, 2010), pp. 138, 145.

27 Wilson, *Voyage*, pp. 23-4. Also see note 35. Wilson noted on his 1841 visit that 'Dancing is also now regarded by them as a frivolous amusement, and has ceased to be practiced even during their more joyous festivals.'

28 Donald Meek, 'Towards a Reexamination of the Role of Church and Faith in St Kilda', pp. 108-9.

29 David Paton provides a good analysis on evangelicalism and Gaelic poetry and singing in *The Clergy and the Clearances* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2006), pp. 114-120.

> for the express purpose. The spiritual songs may even be said to be of ordinary use almost as the *popular poetry* of the day.[30]

This was also not a phenomenon unique to St Kilda. Evangelicals throughout the Highlands and Islands of Scotland became known especially for their cherished Gaelic hymns.

As for native cultural production, MacKenzie later noted that, 'Before I left the island I got some of them to write out for me much of their poetry and traditions, but, unfortunately, almost all of these, and several other collections which I had made of things which had interested me, were lost on the way from St Kilda to Duror, and could never be recovered'.[31] As another indication that the minister encouraged cultural dynamism rather than eradication, J.B. MacKenzie remembers that his father 'encouraged the people during the long winter nights to cultivate the art of reciting their ancient stories and of singing their pathetic Gaelic songs'.[32]

Despite the accident between St Kilda and Duror, a number of the St Kildan poems survived and were published in the early part of the last century. Mary Harman provides two of them in their translated form. In the first sample, Neil Ferguson wrote of the 1841-1842 revival:

Alas, oh Lord, won't you help me
From my thoughts to an awakening
Before the time comes when I die
When there won't be time for repentance[33]

The second sample, by Finlay MacQueen, 'describes the nativity and the spread of the gospel to foreign lands and to St Kilda':

God of the moon, God of the sun,
God of the globe, God of the stars,
God of the waters, the land, and the skies,
Who ordained to us the King of promise.

It was Mary fair who went upon her knee,
It was the King of life who went upon her lap,
Darkness and tears were set behind,

30 Wilson, *Voyage*, pp. 23-4 (italics his).
31 MacKenzie, *Episode*, p. 32.
32 MacKenzie, *Episode*, p. 3. 'Pathetic' here is not derogatory, but rather descriptive, as the Gaelic bardic and poetic tradition emphasized elegy as a form.
33 Harman, *Hirte*, p. 241.

And the star of guidance went up early.

Illumined the land, illumined the world,
Illumined doldrum and current,
Grief was laid and joy was raised,
Music was set up with harp and pedal-harp.[34]

Both poems are rife with indications that by the time of their writing in the early 1840s, the process of worldview transformation introduced by MacDonald and furthered by MacKenzie was nearing completion. In Ferguson's revival poem, the line 'From my thoughts to an awakening' indicates that the islander had begun to adopt the evangelical preaching emphasis of the gospel's impact on the heart and affections as the ultimate source of conversion. The poem by Finlay MacQueen is equally telling, almost as if certain aspects of the transculturation process take verse form. The first stanza is especially unique. The first three lines extol the God of nature—a god with which the St Kildans could have associated prior to the introduction of evangelicalism. The final line, though, speaks of Jesus Christ as the 'ordained … King of promise'. Taken together, the stanza presents the new worldview—neither wholly St Kildan traditionalism nor alien evangelicalism, but rather St Kildan evangelicalism.

Along with the ideological and popular cultural elements, the transformation of St Kildan culture was also effected through a multifaceted attempt to improve the lives of the islanders. Ideas of social and agricultural improvement were tied up in the Enlightenment ideals of progress and societal betterment through scientific and modern means.[35] However, until the 1820s, very little attention was given toward the improvement of St Kilda. With the arrival of MacDonald of Ferintosh in 1822, the SSPCK and others began to take increased interest in the island's ecclesiastical provision. This not only resulted in the arrival of MacKenzie in 1830, but also with the erection of a new church and manse. James Wilson described the new buildings as a 'very respectable-looking slated house … with a little porch, and a longer and larger, but not much higher building (also slated) behind it, and separated by a narrow back court'.[36] It was this church and manse where MacKenzie spent much of his time between 1830 and his departure in 1843.

Under MacKenzie's guidance, the island as a whole underwent incredible changes—religiously and educationally, of course, but also agricul-

[34] Ibid., pp. 241-2.

[35] Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London: Pimlico, 1992), pp. 344-345, 363, 370.

[36] Wilson, *Voyage*, p. 10.

turally and domestically. As per his disappointment with MacDonald's spiritual impact, MacKenzie quickly got down to the business of building the foundations of Christian thought and practice in the heads and hearts of the islanders. He wrote: 'I at once began Wednesday evening meetings, where I explained to them the Shorter Catechism, clause by clause, and almost word by word. Before they could properly understand and profit by preaching they had to be taught step by step, and in the simplest way possible, the leading facts and truths of Christianity'.[37] Thus MacKenzie met the people at the level of their own ability, rather than continuing to preach above them, which seemed to have hamstrung MacDonald's efforts. He went on:

> To test their progress we at other times had meetings for catechizing. In this way several evenings in the week were occupied. … I encouraged them to ask me questions, and these at times led to very profitable discussions. I soon had the great pleasure in finding that they were advancing in knowledge, and taking more interest in the subject.[38]

Again we can see a dialogical, rather than dictatorial, relationship at work between the minister and the St Kildans, as they engaged with MacKenzie's teaching in the process of appropriating evangelicalism into their own worldview frameworks.

Callum MacQueen also noted the religious diet of the islanders during MacKenzie's ministry. He remembered that 'services on Sundays were 7 a.m. Gaelic, 11 a.m. Gaelic and before separating, English service', followed by 'afternoon Gaelic'. He also noted that 'at one time Bible class at 2 p.m. for 2 ½ hours, many married men and women', plus 'a meeting every Thursday to explain the Shorter Catechism', 'service in the church' on Wednesdays nights, a communicant meeting on Thursday evenings, and 'Friday evenings a preparatory class'.[39]

Despite the increase in Christian learning, however, MacKenzie remained unsatisfied. After all, he was preaching, as was characteristic of his evangelical foundations, toward the peoples' hearts. Though he improved their knowledge via catechesis and discussion, he 'could not see for several years any real spiritual fruit'.[40] It would take time, he was realizing, for the islanders to make his piety their own.

There was also an improvement in the islanders' education and literacy. MacKenzie wrote that he started a Sabbath School for the locals to

[37] MacKenzie, *Episode*, p. 32.
[38] Ibid.
[39] McQueen and McQueen, *St Kilda Heritage*, p. 15.
[40] MacKenzie, *Episode*, pp. 32-3.

further their Christian education. This was unsuccessful due to a high rate of illiteracy among St Kildans. To remedy the situation, the minister 'started a day school, and, as all attended, I was able to teach them not only to read but also write and do arithmetic, so that before long I left the island they were almost all good scholars. They could read fluently and write with accuracy and intelligence'.[41] By raising the islanders' beyond illiteracy to fluency, MacKenzie further transformed the culture of St Kilda.

What distinguished Neil MacKenzie from any previous minister, however, was not his attempt to evangelize and educate the people of St Kilda. He was much more successful than they in that respect, but that was not what made him stand out. Neil MacKenzie also laboured, alongside the locals, to improve the overall material wellbeing on the island. In the broadest sense, what MacKenzie accomplished agriculturally and domestically was the transition of the land from a centralized township with common land re-appropriated on three bases to a new system of crofting whereby each family lived separately in houses along a new village 'street' with individual plots of arable land and shared pastures.[42] This process was not uniquely St Kildan or original to MacKenzie, but took place throughout the Highlands and Islands.[43] Callum MacQueen noted that each man farmed 8 or 10 acres, indicating that this system had been initiated by the time he was a boy in the 1830s.[44] Along with the land redistribution, MacKenzie also introduced an 'English spade' to replace a less productive local tool and improved the land drainage.[45] Finally, J.B. MacKenzie mentioned that his father also built a sea wall to protect the crops from ocean spray and dug new wells.[46]

As for the domestic improvements, Wilson's account from 1841 provides an excellent, if somewhat stuffy, summary. He noted that:

> Some years ago an accomplished gentleman of fortune, Sir Thomas Dyke Ackland, visited St Kilda in his yacht, and being much interested in the natives, and distressed by an inspection of their incommodious, and as he thought highly unhealthy dwellings, he left a premium of twenty guineas with the

41 Ibid., p. 32.

42 Mary Harman, *An Isle Called Hirte: History and Culture of the St Kildans to 1930* (MacLean Press: Isle of Skye, 1997), pp. 198-201.

43 T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation: 1700-2007*, 2nd edn (London: Penguin Books, 2007), pp. 189-90.

44 McQueen and McQueen, *St Kilda Heritage*, p. 10.

45 Wilson, *Voyage*, p. 22.

46 MacKenzie, *Episode*, p. 3.

> minister, and to be given to the first person or persons who should demolish their old house and erect a new one on a more popular and convenient plan.[47]

MacQueen's memory corroborates Wilson's observations. He wrote, 'At the time of my father's marriage the houses were grouped together but my when I was 8 or 10 surveyors cut the place up in lots and each man had to go onto his own new low and new houses were put up.'[48] As Callum was born in 1828, this would place the building process between 1836 and 1838. After the houses were built, MacKenzie hoped that he might find a way to provide the islanders with a number of more modern furnishings. Lachlan MacLean noted that the minister went to Glasgow on 'an errand of mercy' around that time to acquire 'beds, chairs, stools, mills, nay, even glass windows!'[49]

In sum, St Kilda was rejuvenated through the efforts of Neil MacKenzie to holistically improve the lives of the islanders. However, it was not merely a case of an improving landlord forcing the people to change their ways of life. In all of his efforts—religiously, educationally, agriculturally, and domestically—the Rev. Neil MacKenzie worked alongside the people. His son remembered that 'all the time they were at work he remained with them, doing as hard work as any'.[50] MacKenzie knew that in order to reach the people of St Kilda with his evangelical message, he needed to work incarnationally within the community. His tired eyes, sweaty brow, and calloused hands would tell of his care for the people as much as his words.

The rise of insular self-determination was the third and final manner in which the culture of St Kilda was transformed during the ministry of Neil MacKenzie.[51] This process occurred primarily in the ecclesial context, yet enabled the locals through the means of the church to assert a greater degree of responsibility and independence. It was through this process, as well, that the St Kildans began to further appropriate the piety of evangelicalism into their own lives. The sacrament of communion, or the Lord's Supper, was reserved for those within a given church community who exhibited in their faith and daily lives the markings of being 'truly converted'. To be a communicant in a Highland church, then, was to be among the elect in both a socially powerful and personally assuring

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47 Wilson, *Voyage*, p. 32-3.

48 McQueen and McQueen, *St Kilda Heritage*, p. 6.

49 MacLean, *Sketches*, pp. 331-2.

50 MacKenzie, *Episode*, p. 3.

51 This theme has also been highlighted by Bill Lawson, 'Hiort in Pre-1930 Writings—An Overview', in *Rewriting St Kilda: New Views on Old Ideas*, ed. by Bob Chambers (South Lochs, Isle of Lewis: The Islands Book Trust, 2011), p. 21.

way. So it was, too, in the case of St Kilda. By 1838, MacKenzie was satisfied with the spiritual maturity of enough St Kildans to celebrate a communion.[52] As a result, the island received some visitors.

MacKenzie remembered: 'When this intention was made known to the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, the late venerable Dr. Dickson, its controller, along with Dr. M'Leod of Glasgow, came to the island in order to personally satisfy themselves of their fitness'.[53] Along with the goal of assuring that St Kilda's parishioners were ready for the sacrament, MacKenzie was hopeful that the two SSPCK envoys would satisfy another of his desires: 'to constitute a Kirk Session'.[54] Upon arrival, Dickson and MacLeod 'examined minutely those who were intending to partake of the holy ordinance, and found their knowledge and state of mind such as to justify them in putting into their hands the sacred symbols of the love of their crucified Savior'. In total, 'the number who at this time were admitted into the Church was fifteen or sixteen'.[55] When Wilson arrived three years later, he would report that 'There are about twenty communicants, and about twenty more who are under serious instruction and preparation with a view to the partaking of that sacred ordinance'. He further noted, 'Several of the older men among the natives are very fluent in prayer, and never fail to conduct a kind of public worship during the few occasions in which the minister is absent'.[56]

Two specific items from the testimonies of MacKenzie and Wilson speak most directly to the way in which the people of St Kilda came to assert a greater degree of communal identity and ambition. First, MacKenzie noted that he hoped to establish a kirk session on the island. Within Presbyterianism, the primary 'building blocks' of church polity are church or kirk sessions. A session is essentially a board of several elders who, along with the ordained parish minister, carry out or see to the carrying out of all that the local church does. What MacKenzie was attempting to do, then, was something that no previous St Kilda clergyman had ever done: give the islanders, through the eldership, a determinative role in the faith and culture or the island. Hence, MacKenzie further transformed the church into an institution through which local issues received local attention from local leaders.

The second way in which the evidence describes this rise in self-determination is fascinating and distinct to the evangelical traditions of the

52 MacKenzie, *Episode*, p. 33.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Wilson, *Voyage*, pp. 23-4.

Highland and Islands. Here, we refer to *na Daoine*, or 'the Men'. Surely, the 'older men among the natives' who Wilson observed to be both 'very fluent in prayer' and personally responsible for maintaining religious observance in the stead of MacKenzie bring to mind the characteristics of the class of lay catechists and elders who began to develop in the Western Islands around this time.[57]

CONCLUSION

In revisiting the original question, it becomes clear that it was the translation of evangelicalism into a St Kildan cultural context, the far-reaching improvements made by Neil MacKenzie both alongside and for the islanders, and the integration of the locals into the by-then-powerful ecclesiastical infrastructure that resulted in a true paradigm shift from a transactional church-culture relationship to a transformation of both church and culture. The process was not a one-sided game of evangelical colonizer vs. helpless native, but rather a complex and gradual dialogue, as evangelicalism became 'St Kilda-ized' and St Kilda became 'evangelical-ized'.

[57] Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, p. 373.

Scottish and Evangelical Elements in the 1915 Nyasaland Uprising (Part Two)

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MISSION AND MILLENNIALISM

In a classic treatment of millennial movements in the Christian Middle Ages, Norman Cohn concluded that outbreaks of revolutionary millenarianism occur in remarkably uniform situations, where familiar biblical themes of God's judgement on evil, Christ's return, and a coming age of peace and plenty receive new hearing in volatile situations of economic uncertainty, rapid population growth or decline, and disruption to the traditional social fabric. A group of people emerge who feel uprooted and vulnerable: they cannot look back for guidance because old traditions are rapidly crumbling; stuck on the periphery of power in their context, they look to the future with hope—which for many means anticipating Christ's return to throw down the oppressors and raise up the downtrodden.[1]

A previous article showed how the conditions noted by Cohn were very much present in some form or another in colonial Malawi.[2] Specifically, the liberal education promoted by the Scottish Presbyterian missionaries at their important mission station at Blantyre (as well as Livingstonia in the north) contributed to the creation of a group of African Christians whose religious conversion and modern education had distanced them from their African past, but who remained on the margins of the colonial landscape of the present despite their education, acquired skills, and ability. These so-called 'new men' in colonial Malawi, who included John Chilembwe and several other leaders in the violent 1915 uprising against the colonial administration, were frustrated by the inherent injustice of colonial society as well as the paternalism of mission Christianity, and found in a radical strain of eschatology that was being propagated by some evangelical missionaries and indigenous evangelists in the region

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1 N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (London: Granada, 1970), pp. 53-60, 314-15.

2 T. Statham, 'Scottish and Evangelical Elements in the 1915 Nyasaland Uprising (Part One)', *SBET* 33.1 (2015), 39-57.

in the first decade of the twentieth century a catalyst for a fundamentally new vision of Malawi's future.

What remains to be seen in this article is how millennialism was introduced into Nyasaland by evangelical missionaries, and how it was appropriated by its African hearers so as to become an important ingredient in the revolt that occurred in late January 1915 (what is often referred to as the Nyasaland Uprising or—after its main inspiration—the Chilembwe Rising). Two objections need to be briefly addressed before proceeding. First, some scholars have argued against a direct connection between the Chilembwe Rising and millennialism. Most influentially, in his classic account of the 1915 Uprising *Independent African*, George Shepperson argued that Chilembwe's political radicalism grew out of biblical social teaching rather than eschatology:

> Chilembwe…often taught his politics straight from the Bible like many a good Covenanter ancestor of the Scots who had tutored Nyasaland; and, as has been noted, the slogans which inspired his men came from such radical scriptures as James's Epistles.[3]

Noting that as late as 1910-1911 Chilembwe remained a model of respectability, grudgingly praised by the Blantyre Mission as 'above the ordinary type of mission native' (although Hetherwick did add 'that his work is sadly suffering from want of European control and superintendence'), and apparently unruffled by the apocalyptic current coursing through other parts of the country at the time, Shepperson dubbed him 'a simple Baptist to the end of his life'.[4] Apart from the fact that being a 'simple Baptist' at the turn of the century might have also committed one to premillennialism, it would be a mistake to assume that because there appears to be little contact on this issue between Chilembwe and Nyasaland's end time prophets like Eliot Kamwana, Charles Domingo, and his old mentor Booth (see below), then there was no relationship between Chilembwe and millenarianism. When the copious court testimonies of PIM adherents recorded *after* the Uprising (testimonies which Shepperson was not allowed to access in 1958) are taken into account, an eschatological agitation behind the revolt is conspicuous. 'I was told the kingdom of God

[3] G. Shepperson and T. Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915* (1958; reprint, Blantyre: CLAIM: 2000), p. 263.

[4] Shepperson, *Independent African*, pp. 163-4, 176, 263.

was at hand,' said one suspect. 'I heard these words John Chilembwe said *Tembenukani mitima* [the kingdom is coming] in January'.[5]

Second, it is widely thought that premillennialism, unlike postmillennialism, is inherently apolitical and socially disengaged. The German theologian Thomas Schirrmacher argues in reference to mission that premilliennialism is

> indifferent or even opposed to social action. Long-term investments in human well-being were said to divert missionary efforts from the high priority: preaching the gospel so that souls might be saved… This means that for evangelical Christians with a premillennial orientation their negative worldview inclines them to a low engagement with social, political and cultural affairs.[6]

This is a theological inference that is not sustainable as a historical generalization. As the Latin American scholar Julio de Santa Ana argues, throughout the history of the church, something like premillennial eschatology has often expressed both deep dissatisfaction with the present political, social and economic circumstances and fervent hope in radical future change. '"The day of the Lord is at hand: do not waver in your faith". This was expressed in an eschatological hope, bringing with it hope in the justice of God which was about to come'.[7] Indeed, in the 1915 Nyasaland Uprising, as at other times in Christian history, the imminent return of the King to establish *his* rule of righteousness and peace was believed to have direct political and social consequences for the rulers of the land.

'RECKLESS' BAPTISM

In correspondence with family in Scotland c. 1911, Napier of the Blantyre Mission remarked on two related items of interest. He criticized 'the reckless baptisers up-country' who 'baptise in a hurry without much

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5 Statements at the Commission of Inquiry, Malawi National Archives Files S/10/1/3. The landmark reinterpretation is J. Linden and I. Linden, 'John Chilembwe and the New Jerusalem', *Journal of African History* 12 (1971), 629-51.

6 T. Schirrmacher, 'Millennial Thought', in *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations*, ed. by J. Currie (Nottingham: IVP Academic, 2008), pp. 106-10. An excellent article by B. Stanley, 'The Future in the Past: Eschatological Vision in British and American Protestant Missionary History', *Tyndale Bulletin* 51 (2000), 101-20, offers a more historically informed view.

7 J. de Santa Ana, *Good News to the Poor: The Challenge of the Poor in the History of the Church* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1977), p. 87.

instruction,' concluding: 'This is a cause of trouble…'. He mentioned, second, that in his capacity as instructor to those Malawians studying for Presbyterian ministry—'a professor to a college of two'—he needed to study up on the 'Millennial Dawn teaching' which was rapidly growing in popularity, and for which his respectable Glasgow University education had not prepared him in the least.[8] In the decade prior to the 1915 Uprising, the long established Presbyterian and Anglican missions faced a new challenge from a slew of faith missions from America and Britain, all of which were credobaptist, and most of which were premillennialist. While premillennialism had been growing in popularity among evangelicals throughout the nineteenth century, its impulse to missionary activity became particularly strong toward the century's end, especially through the faith missions movement.[9]

Of course, the Scottish Presbyterian missions also typically practiced believers' baptism at this time, but they situated baptism at the end of a very long and strenuous probation which allowed them to carefully monitor and ultimately determine who would be part of the new community. Several of the evangelical faith missions, on the other hand, were, as Napier complained, 'reckless', baptizing people immediately upon profession of faith—an urgency underscored by their eschatology. The theological legitimacy of premillennialism and the propriety of 'rapid' baptism are moot points here. What is important is to appreciate in the context of colonial Africa the social significance of 'rapid' baptism in combination with this variant of eschatology. As noted above, despite its reputation, premillennialism *can* encapsulate a critique of the status quo simply by its anticipation of the coming of the One who will overturn it. Under specific circumstances, believers' baptism can express similar social discontent. In early colonial Malawi, Christian baptism was widely understood by missionaries, new Christians, and non-Christians alike as a rite of passage into a fundamentally new order of existence, namely, the modern order of Christianity and western civilization. As such the sacrament of baptism had a symbolic significance not unlike the wearing of a European hat: it marked one's entrance and status in a new secular and religious

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8 *Robert Hellier Napier in Nyasaland; Being His Letters to His Home Circle*, ed. by A. Hetherwick (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1925), pp. 15, 37, 55, 70-71.

9 On the origins and growth of premillennialism in the nineteenth century see D. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Leicester: IVP Academic, 2005), pp. 173-88. K. Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions* (Oxford: Regnum, 1994), especially pp. 272-91, examines the relationship between premillennialism and faith missions.

order.[10] Baptizing immediately upon profession of faith, then, could be seen as a implicit rejection of European paternalism: it rejected the stringent missionary criteria and control of the process, as well inserting—instantly and completely—the Malawian convert onto the new religious and political landscape created by colonialism.

Accordingly, the expectation of Christ's return in vindicate or rescue his troubled flock could easily become socially and politically radicalized when these new Christians realized that they remained very much on the pale of the colonial landscape they had joined in theory through their baptism.

The taproot of Christian radicalism in Nyasaland is generally considered to be Joseph Booth (1851-1932). Booth was an Australian-British faith missionary of fiercely independent mind and radically evangelical conviction. He was enormously influential in turn of the century Nyasaland as a church planter, proponent of African rights and tireless critic of British colonialism. In the mid 1890s Booth began his ministry in the shadow of Blantyre Mission and immediately began to irritate the Presbyterians. Harry Matecheta avidly remembered the uproar among new Christians when Booth made his first appearance at the Blantyre Mission church:

> When the Preacher was praying he [Booth] was behind the church but we often heard him saying 'Hallelujah, Amen'. When we got out of the church most Africans surrounded him such that he started preaching – 'Rise up and be blessed. Point to Morocco, save your country! The whites have taken everything leaving you only grass and water; in the past they bought you, now they want your land.[11]

In the next few years Booth established several industrial missions as (potentially) self-sufficiently stations for Christian community and African empowerment, offering Malawians much higher wages then what the Presbyterian and other missions offered, which triggered strikes and labour deflections. Along with baptizing former hearers, catechists, and students of the Presbyterian mission who had become attracted to his cause and message, Booth mocked the 'elegantly robed' Scottish missionaries, 'preaching a gospel of self-denial to men and women slaves' while they benefited from the colonial annexation of African territory.[12]

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10 Statham, 'Scottish and Evangelical Elements', p. 53.

11 H. K. Matecheta, *Blantyre Mission: Nkhani za Ciyambi Cace* (Blantyre: Hetherwick Press, 1951), p. 23.

12 Cited in H. Langworthy, *Africa for the African: A life of Joseph Booth* (Blantyre: CLAIM, 1996), p. 54.

> It seems to me that the greatest hindrance to the progress of God's work in Africa is the painful fact that as the Negro gets to know us Europeans and our little ways he calmly concludes that we are a nation of robbers, nothing less. He could tolerate the robbing better if we did not preach up honest so persistently.[13]

Throughout his two-decade career in Nyasaland—often interrupted by travels and deportation—Booth repeatedly called for the crown to dedicate all tax revenue from Africans to their own education, to grant Malawians self-government without delay, and to promise not to conscript Malawians into the British army, thereby making them shed the blood of other Africans. Booth tried as well (usually unsuccessfully) to organize various capital schemes for African entrepreneurs to help them become independent of European control and capital. The Blantyre Mission, in turn, used all available means to have the land grants for Booth's mission revoked; it criticized Booth for 'robbing our established mission' and decried the 'sectarian advantage' that permitted the faith missions like his to baptize upon profession of faith, i.e. without the lengthy catechesis mandated by the Presbyterians, as well as the exorbitant wages he offered to lure young people to his mission.[14] As a young boy Chilembwe left the Blantyre Mission to become Booth's 'houseboy', although the relationship they developed was genuinely affectionate and almost filial in nature.[15] Booth trained Chilembwe as his ministry apprentice and mentored him until they parted ways in America, and much of what Chilembwe took from Booth regarding African capability and white Christian duplicity would be reinforced by his American experience of African-American dynamism and rampant white racism.

'THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOUR, THE DAY OF VENGEANCE OF OUR GOD'

Booth bequeathed Chilembwe a socially conscious critique of European colonialism, including (but not always fairly, it should be added) the com-

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[13] J. Booth, *Africa for the Africans*, ed. by L. Perry, (Blantyre: CLAIM, 1996), p. 84.

[14] Blantyre Mission Council Minutes (January 1897), National Archives of Malawi File 50/BMC/1/1. See Langworthy, *Africa for the African*, pp. 35, 40, 53-61. Also useful is Langworthy, 'Joseph Booth, Prophet of Radical Change in Central and South Africa, 1891-1915', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 16 (1986), 22-43.

[15] So recalled Booth's daughter, E. Langworthy in *This Africa Was Mine* (London: Stirling Tract Enterprises, 1950), pp. 47, 143.

plicity of missionaries and imperialism. Booth had written in his 1897 tour de force *Africa for the African*:

> To the unprejudiced observer and to the educated African, she [Christian Europe] is a marvel of inconsistency, if not criminality, since by her national religion, she gratuitously and systematically asserts her belief in the commands:
> Thou shalt not covet;
> Thou shalt not steal;
> Thou shalt not kill;
> yet, most effectively, deliberately and continuously she does all three of these in pursuit of her African annexation policy. Her various Christian churches send forth into Africa in good faith, their messengers of 'peace on earth and good will toward men'; yet these often prove to be the forerunner of another set of men, sent to appropriate, to kill, to tax and subjugate. Our words are of peace, but our acts are of war.[16]

Yet when Booth committed himself in 1906 to radical premillennialism, Chilembwe was very much his own man and did not follow suit, nor had he in 1900 when Booth had become a sabbatarian. Booth adopted the imminent, apocalyptic eschatology of the Watchtower movement emanating from the United States in the early 1900s, which he probably encountered while on a fundraising trip to Scotland. Upon his return to southern Africa he formed a cell group of Africans in Capetown devoted to the study of eschatology which became a conduit throughout southern and central Africa for Watchtower teaching on the end times and imminent return of Christ. Booth's advocacy of Watchtower eschatology, which expected the return of Christ on a sinful generation in 1914 and the establishment of an earthly kingdom of peace and righteousness for the saints, attracted the attention of several Malawian Christian leaders, among the most important of whom were the northerners Charles Domingo (1875-?) and Eliot Kawmana (1872-1956), both of whom had abandoned the Livingstonia mission for independent ministry.[17]

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16 Booth, *Africa for the Africans*, pp. 11-12.

17 See especially J. Chakanza, *Voices of Preachers of Protest: The Ministry of Two Malawian Prophets: Eliot Kamwana and Wilfred Gudu* (Blantrye: CLAIM, 1998); K. Lohrentz, 'Joseph Booth, Charles Domingo, and the Seventh Day Baptists in Northern Nyasaland, 1910-1912,' *Journal of African History* 3 (1971), 461-80. Also useful are their respective entries in the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*. I did not have access to Karen Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

The Malawian appropriation of Watchtower teaching was not a commitment to comprehensive Jehovah Witness doctrine but rather the appropriation of this movement's eschatology. In Britain's colonies in southern Africa, Watchtower became a threat to the *pax Britannica* as it was funnelled into the region through preachers and pulp literature, finding receptive ears among the exploited mine workers and urban slum dwellers in the Rand and the Rhodesian Copperbelt, as well as the cotton and coffee plantations in Nyasaland. Isaiah 61:1-2 was a favourite passage of this movement, with its proclamation of good news for the poor and oppressed and vengeance on God's enemies. The millennial hope of this movement challenged the moral justification of colonialism—if Christ's return in judgement was imminent did Africans really need to endure a European 'trusteeship'?—even as it criticized what Kamwana called 'the satanic alliance' between mission church and colonial administration that kept Malawians and other African peoples marginal citizens of their own countries.[18] 'From 6 A.M. to 5 or 6 P.M there is too much breakage of God's pure law as seen in James Epistle, v. 4,' warned Domingo—and even on mission compounds.[19] Significantly, as Kamwana began his ministry of preaching, healing, and anti-witchcraft measures, he also demanded free education for all Malawians, baptizing ten thousand people in Lake Malawi in preparation of Armageddon, which would take place in 1914. When Christ returned, it was widely expected by those Malawians touched by the Watchtower eschatology that he would abolish the hut tax, expel Europeans from their country, and give the land back to the Africans.

It is also important to note how this current of radical apocalyptic chiliasm converged with the religious-political movement of 'Ethiopianism' that was widespread across colonial Africa.[20] The nomenclature is from Psalm 68:31, 'Ethiopia will stretch out her hands to God', a verse long cherished in the African diaspora as signifying God's love and value for their lost homeland, and infused with new political and social meaning for Africans suffering in discriminatory colonial contexts. Ethiopianism asserted African equality in the face of white discrimination and European paternalism, and expressed the belief that—like the free nation of Ethiopia and its ancient church—Africans were fully capable

[18] Cited by R. Edgar, 'New Religious Movements,' in *Missions and Empire*, ed. by N. Etherington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 231.

[19] Cited by Shepperson, *Independent African*, p. 163.

[20] See O. Kalu, 'Ethiopianism in African Christianity', in *African Christianity: An African Story*, ed. by O. Kalu (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007), pp. 227-44; for the Malawian context see J. Chakanza, 'The Independency Alternative: An Historical Survey', *Religion in Malawi* 4 (1994), 32-42.

of ruling themselves and running their own churches. In the later nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century Ethiopianism provided an impulse to the creation of African-led church denominations as well as anti-colonial political activism. It was not necessarily eschatological: many African church denominations were founded in this time that rejected missionary control of the church but maintained the ethos, doctrines, and liturgies inherited from western missionaries.[21]

In the first decade after his return from America, Chilembwe exemplified this type of Ethiopianism, aiming to establish PIM as the centre of a pan-African church—'from the African [Atlantic] to the Indian ocean' claimed a contemporary.[22] While critical of colonial society and the missionary-controlled churches, Chilembwe's PIM remained both resolutely orthodox Baptist and committed to 'civilizing' Africans for the modern world. Like the leading Malawian Presbyterians, Chilembwe was counselling patience regarding the slow pace of African progress in colonial society, taking his cue from the famous African-American intellectual, Booker T. Washington, 'that if the opportunities afforded the African were fully utilized by him, they offered prospects for individual and collective advancement that would otherwise have been utterly impossible'.[23] His approach, taking form in his indigenous-run church mission and criticism of colonialism, was classically 'Ethiopian' but not apocalyptic.

As such, Chilembwe was not a cause of serious worry for Nyasaland's government in the years prior to the Uprising, while Booth, Domingo, and Kamwana were labelled dangerous men and, not surprisingly, often kept under police surveillance, imprisoned, or even exiled from Malawi either before or after the 1915 Uprising. Booth, especially, was singled out by the *Report of the Commission* as the ultimate cause of the rebellion through his racial teaching and millennialism: 'his correspondence with Chilembwe directly influenced the latter and others in rebelling against

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21 A. Anderson, 'African Initiated Churches', in *Global Dictionary of Theology*, ed. by W. Dyrness and V.-M. Kärkkäinen (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), pp. 5-7.

22 Kundecha testimony in K. Ross, *Christianity in Malawi: A Source Book* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996), p. 152.

23 Cited in Shepperson, *Independent African*, p. 163. A famous Malawian expression of a non-prophetic and non-apocalyptic Ethiopianism is Yesaya Mwase [Mwasi], who broke away from the Livingstonia Synod to found the Blackman's Presbyterian Church, and explained his reasons in *My Essential and Paramount Reasons for Working Independently* (1933; reprint, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1999).

the Government'.[24] A direct connection is difficult to sustain, however. Booth was not even in southern Africa at the time of the Uprising, having been deported to Britain as an outspoken pacifist at the outbreak of the War, and his correspondence with Chilembwe in the years immediate to the Uprising was sparse.[25]

TOWARD REBELLION

While people at PIM certainly would have been unaware of the 'millennial dawn' agitating other parts of the country, Chilembwe did not have much direct contact with either Domingo or Kamwana. When they were at the peak of their influence, c. 1910, he was still strongly committed to the more mainstream 'Ethiopian' position and, as mentioned before, had earned a reputation even among the Scottish missionaries as a thoroughly respectable pastor.[26] A sure sign of his propriety was the fact that he served as a respondent to the questionnaire solicited by Commission II for the great World Missionary Conference that would be held in Edinburgh in 1910. Whether he held to evangelical premillennial doctrine as a 'simple Baptist' is unknown.

Yet in the few years before 1915 he appears to have gradually begun to accept certain tenets of the apocalyptic and millennialist eschatology that was pulsing through the colony, although it is impossible to determine precisely when and how. His turn to the radical Watchtower eschatology taught elsewhere in Nyasaland coincided with exasperation at the futility of the patient approach as problems deepened around him: there were intermittent famines between 1911 and 1913 that left many in the Shire highlands struggling to survive, especially the impoverished Lomwe immigrants from Portuguese East Africa who were swelling his congregation; the hated hut tax was raised yet again in 1912; animosity between Magomero Estates management like Livingstone and workers was waxing; Chilembwe himself had mounting debts in the wake of his ambitious attempts to expand PIM's infrastructure and ministry.[27] Finally, there was a 'tremendous upsurge of millennial expectation

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[24] *Report of the Commission Appointed by His Excellency the Governor to Inquire into Various Matters and Questions Concerned with the Native Rising in the Nyasaland Protectorate* (Zomba: Government of Nyasaland, 1916), pp. 11, 13. Finding a European mastermind to the Uprising, as the Report does, betrays racist assumptions typical of the day.

[25] For Booth's career at this time see Langworthy, *Africa for the African*, pp. 441-83.

[26] *The Church in the Mission Field* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1910), p. xvii.

[27] See Shepperson, *Independent African*, pp. 189-201.

caused by the World War', not only because Kamwana had prophesied the spiritual final battle to take place in 1914, but also because the imperial war machine aggravated many of the long standing grievances African leaders like Chilembwe held against the colonial administration by forcibly conscripting soldiers and porters into the army and devouring local resources for the war effort.[28]

Significantly, in the months immediately prior to January 1915 Chilembwe broke with the passive stance of both evangelical and Watchtower premillennialism: the 'New Jerusalem' would have to be initiated through force.[29] It is difficult to precisely date this fateful turn of mind, but we have a hint from the post-rebellion testimonies that it had happened at least 'a few months' prior, according to the testimony of a George Masango, who recalled debating the meaning of Isaiah 52 with David Kaduya, whom had been sent to Masango by Chilembwe to try to enlist him.

> He said do you read these things George? I said 'I can'. He said do you know what these words mean? I said 'what kind of words?' He replied 'Where the words of God says 'Awake! Awake' [52:1]. I told him 'I know what it means because I am a Christian'…I told him that these words mean to say we Christians must not be ignorant of the temptation of Satan…He said to me 'Oh, dear George you are still stumbling and know not what you are doing or what sort of Christian you are…But these words awake! Awake! mean to say that the people must fight for their own nation!'[30]

Further testimonies underscore and elaborate upon the pervasive millennial ferment at work in Chilembwe's congregation before and during the Uprising, even though it is difficult to piece them together into a coherent eschatological perspective. The 'beast from the sea' from the book of Revelation was being compared to the white settlers, missionaries, and colonial administration. The hated Livingstone was being referred to as an 'anti-Christ', and some scholars have suggested that the gruesome decapitation of the Estate manager and his impaled head in the church sanctu-

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28 Linden and Linden, 'John Chilembwe and the New Jerusalem', pp. 645-6.

29 Linden and Linden, 'John Chilembwe and the New Jerusalem', p. 640. The colonial administration received but ignored reports of seditious activity at PIM in the months before the Uprising, expecting that if trouble came, it would be from among the historically troublesome tribes like the Tonga or the Ngoni.

30 Malawi National Archives File S/10/1/2. (The irregular capitalization is in the original transcript). The testimonies below are derived from Statements at the Commission of Inquiry, Malawi National Archives Files S/10/1/2-5.

ary might have been a symbol of the defeat of evil by the forces of God.[31] Chilembwe and his elders were preaching just before the Uprising that Christ would return and 'all people except John Chilembwe's Christians would be killed. I believed it.' PIM was being likened to Noah's Ark, where Christ's people would wait out the deluge of God's judgement on a sinful world, and await the new earth. Other testimonies assert that Christ's return would bring the end of the old world, and a new kingdom would come with Africans in control of their own land and people; that would any person who fell in battle against evil would receive a martyr's crown and share in the new kingdom. Even as late as the morning of Sunday 24 January, Chilembwe declared the Kingdom of God was hand with highly apocalyptic imagery—'you will hear the bugles sounding', he preached to his congregation. Finally, after the Uprising the government was able to apprehend and prosecute rebels after recovering from Chilembwe's main church in Mtombwe a so-called "War Book", seemingly a list of church members who had pledged themselves to Chilembwe's cause, which itself suggests a similarity with the 'Book of Life' (e.g. Rev. 13:8). Accordingly, one woman who had surrendered herself to the authorities (receiving a lighter sentence of eighteen months hard labour and ten lashes), explained her name in this book to the prosecution with the language of perseverance typical of biblical apocalyptic literature: 'If my name appears in the War Roll Book I suppose it is because John Chilembwe wrote the names of all his Christians to fight for him and he thought I was strong'.

Clearly evangelical premillennialism had been transformed in the fulcrum of colonial African experience, and like the Scottish Presbyterian missionary emphasis on education, was now being directed toward radical ends. The traditional premillennial teaching on the return of Christ to gather his church from the growing darkness, then to initiate the millennial kingdom, had been radicalized by Watchtower emphasis on the *parousia* as God's judgement on the world, and indeed already been given a date (1914); within the peculiar African context, the negative pole of this doctrine was given explicitly an anti-colonial form, while the positive pole neatly aligned with emerging 'Ethiopianism' that looked for religious and national independency for Africans. Finally, against the backdrop of the War and waxing grievances among both the poor labourers and frustrated African 'bourgeoisie', this eschatology took a last step in its morphology: from passive to active resistance to inaugurate the millennial kingdom.

[31] P. Makondesa, *The Church History of Providence Industrial Mission* (Zomba: Kachere, 2006), p. 136.

A CHURCH OF THE DISINHERITED

Writing in 1929, H. Richard Niebuhr claimed the Methodist revival as 'the last great religious revolution of the disinherited in Christendom'.[32] It was not, although Niebuhr can be forgiven for not being aware of what was then happening on the African continent—few in the Christian West were. In the first three decades of the twentieth century colonial African Christianity was rippling with revivals, prophetic movements and church divisions. 'Ethiopian' churches were sprouting from the stock of mission churches, especially in South Africa and west Africa.

Around the time of the outbreak of the Great War, prophets William Wade Harris and Garrick Braide converted and baptized hundreds of thousands of people in west Africa. In 1921 Simon Kimbangu shook the Belgian colonial government to its core with his dramatic ministry of healing and prophecy in the Congo, at roughly the same time that Tomo Nyirenda in Northern Rhodesia [Zambia] and John Maranke in Southern Rhodesia [Zimbabwe] were attracting notoriety from the colonial administrations for their ministries of exorcism, witch-hunting and healing, as well as their resolutely anti-colonial rhetoric. Revival was sweeping through Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya in the 1920s, which, like the concurrent Aladura movement in Nigeria, was making the Christian gospel relevant to Africans in way unimaginable to missionary Christianity. These were very much movements of the disinherited, taking place at the points of friction in colonial society as well in the wake of the world wide turmoil wrought by the Great War. Inspired by the Christian gospel brought by the missionaries, these spiritual movements worked outside the channels of missionary Christianity, featuring independent African agency and emphasising the relevance of the Christian gospel to traditional African spiritual cosmologies and Africa's current colonial injustices. As a doyen of the study of African initiated Christian movements, David Barrett, noted, missionaries typically responded to these 'disturbing deviations from mission Christianity' by dismissing them or trivializing them as isolated events of fleeting duration:

> It is not surprising that the note of alarm should thus be sounded, for in most cases observers were reporting each on a single moment or regime and were under the impression that it was an isolated outbreak arising out of some local

[32] H. R. Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929; reprint, New York: Meridan, 1957), p. 60.

> misunderstanding of the Christian faith. Very few…realized that they were witnessing the local manifestations of a continent-wide phenomenon.[33]

The 1915 Nyasaland Uprising, which was dismissed then by both colonial and missionary authorities as local and limited, should be seen in this continent-wide phenomenon of African Christian initiative and independency, and was most certainly a 'religious revolution of the disinherited'. Niebuhr intended the phrase to refer specifically to the poor and oppressed who turned in desperation to an apocalyptic worldview or millennial expectation because their plight went unrecognized in magisterial Christian traditions (or was even theologically justified by them). 'The failure of the Reformation to meet the religious needs of peasants and other disenfranchised groups is a chapter writ large in history', he concluded.34 This assessment is likely true.

But the 1915 Nyasaland Uprising suggests not only the failure the Reformation but also its success: historians have rightly noted that Protestant Christianity in Nyasaland in the early twentieth century was a religion of a book, the Bible, and because of the efforts of Scottish Presbyterian missionaries, Malawian Protestants could read that book for themselves.[35] In that book they could read of the promise of a coming world more just and fair than their colonial world, and so develop a social and political critique of the unjust established order, including those Christian churches that tacitly supported it or benefited by it. Such were two substantial Christian currents that flowed into the 1915 Nyasaland Uprising, an event that was not only a landmark in Malawian history and in the development of nationalism in central Africa, but also a significant chapter in the respective histories of Scottish and evangelical missions, as well as yet another reminder from the story of world Christianity that the missionary transmission of the Christian faith bears unpredictable results—even violently challenging the agents of transmission in the very name of the message they had brought with them.

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33 D. Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 89-90.

34 Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, p. 34.

35 Linden and Linden, 'John Chilembwe and the New Jerusalem', pp. 630, 647. The authors point out that the Roman Catholic Church in Nyasaland at this time did not authorize the use of the Bible for indigenous Christians, but provided them rather with a book of selections from Scripture, which did not include the book of Revelation!

Professor Dawson on John Knox: A Review Article

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John Knox. By Jane Dawson. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-300-11473-7. viii + 373 pp. £25.00.

Professor Dawson confesses that John Knox has been a 'brooding presence' throughout her academic life. On the other hand he, were he alive, would have every right to claim that she has been a very intrusive presence in his, searching through all his private papers. She certainly has every right to assume, as she does, that she now has a more than passing acquaintance with the 'wee man in the quad', whose statue she has to walk past every day on her way to work at Edinburgh University's New College. Indeed, her acquaintance with the documentary evidence is well-nigh exhaustive. We even learn that in the case of one letter from the English exiles in Geneva to their fellow exiles in Frankfurt the two sides of the letter became separated and ended up on two different shelves in the Bodleian Library.

But what really excited Professor Dawson was the discovery of significant new material on Knox, and especially the manuscript papers of his friend, Christopher Goodman. These include thirty-five documents from the period of the Marian exile: documents which, according to Professor Dawson, transform our understanding of the years (1553-59) that Knox spent in Germany, Switzerland, and France, and especially our understanding of the troubles in Frankfurt during Knox's ministry to the English exiles there in the years 1554-5. The result is an 'entirely new account of this period in Knox's life'. Whether entirely new or not, it certainly makes for sombre reading.

LITURGICAL REFORM IN FRANKFURT

The exiles quickly divided over the issue of liturgical reform, one party insisting on adhering strictly to the 1552 *Book of Common Prayer*, the other seeing the exile as an opportunity to amend it. As Professor Dawson points out, this was not merely a battle for the soul of Anglicanism in Frankfurt. It was part of a broader battle for the future of the Church of

England itself. The lines of the later conflict between Puritans and High Churchmen were drawn in Frankfurt, and they are with us still.

Knox's presence there was due to the fact that after his release from the French galleys in the spring of 1549 he had found refuge in England, then ruled by the Protestant Edward VI. First at Berwick and latterly in London he exercised an effective ministry in the Church of England, becoming a Chaplain to the King, having a voice in the councils of the church and commanding sufficient confidence to be offered the Bishopric of Rochester and 'the plum archiepiscopal living' of All Hallows, Bread Street, London (Knox declined both offers).[1] The ascension of Mary Tudor in 1553 put an end to all this, and Knox was forced into exile. Christopher Goodman was in a similar position, having been dismissed from his position as Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at the University of Oxford. The two men quickly became key figures in the Frankfurt controversy over the Prayer Book, throwing their weight behind the arguments for reform and for closer conformity between the liturgy of the Church of England and those of continental Reformed churches.

Central to this was Knox's belief in the so-called Regulative or Puritan Principle, which had already found clear expression as the First Syllogism in his 1550 *Vindication of the Doctrine that the Sacrifice of the Mass is Idolatry*: 'All worshipping, honouring or service invented by the brain of man in the religion of God, without his own express commandment, is idolatry.'[2] Professor Dawson is clearly not enamoured of the principle, nor, indeed, is modern Evangelicalism, where liturgy is always a low priority, but it is already implicit in the appeal to *sola scriptura*. Luther himself insisted that, 'God wishes nothing to be said among Christians except that which we hold with certainty to be the Word of God';[3] and it was on this that he, too, had based his opposition to the doctrine that the Mass is a sacrifice. 'Where,' he asks, 'is it written that the mass is a sacrifice, or where has Christ taught that we should offer consecrated bread and wine to God … Why are you then so bold as to make a sacrifice out of this remembrance?'[4]

The alternative to Knox's position was that whatever is not forbidden is permitted. This was the position adopted in the Prayer Book, which acknowledged that certain ceremonies could claim no higher authority

1 See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 529.

2 *The Works of John Knox*, ed. David Laing, 6 vols. (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1846-64), Vol. 3, p. 34.

3 *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, 55 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-86), Vol. 36, p. 195.

4 *Luther's Works*, Vol. 36, pp. 146-7.

than that 'they have been devised by man' but should nevertheless be retained on the grounds of decent order and edification. In response to such thinking, Knox simply referred to Genesis 6:5, 'The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.' In view of this, the formula, 'I like', is a dangerous one in Christian liturgy.

Professor Dawson reduces the Regulative Principle to the 'rigid formula' that, 'everything in liturgy must be justified directly by Scripture' (p. 94). This is scarcely accurate. There were many details in *The Forme of Prayers and Ministration of the Sacraments* which Knox introduced to Scotland from Geneva which could not claim direct sanction from Scripture: for instance, the use of the Apostles' Creed in baptism. Nor was this a case of blatant inconsistency. Advocates of the Regulative Principle have always drawn a clear distinction between the *elements* of worship and the *circumstances* of worship. It was for the former, not the latter, that there had to be clear biblical sanction; and these elements, according to such documents as the Westminster Confession (21:3-5), were prayer, the reading of the Scriptures, the singing of psalms (and hymns and spiritual songs), the preaching of the Word, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. What was not sanctioned, directly or indirectly, were such 'elements' as the invocation of the Virgin, the veneration of saints, the adoration of the host, the use of images, statutory holy days and the mandatory use of clerical 'ornaments' (vestments).

On the other hand, neither Knox nor any other Puritan demanded direct biblical sanction for the *circumstances* of worship. These were to be ordered 'by the light of nature and Christian prudence' (Westminster Confession, 1:6); and they included not only such details as the time and place of worship, but also questions of clerical attire, the preferred version of the Bible, the appointing of Fast Days, the choice of Psalter and Hymnal, and the frequency of Communion (which, said Knox, shall be 'once a month, or so oft as the Congregation shall thinke expedient'). Even more important, instead of being bound to recite prescribed prayers and follow the order of the Christian Year, ministers were free to adapt their prayers and their homilies to local and weekly circumstances. In practice, then, far from binding worship by a 'rigid formula' the Knoxian principle gave more, rather than less, liturgical freedom. This is why, during a visit to London in 1641, Alexander Henderson, felt constrained to write a tract, *The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland*, precisely to counter the Episcopal claim that Presbyterians 'had no certain rule or direction for their public worship, but that every man following his own extemporary fansie, did preach and pray what seemed good in his own eyes'.

KNOX AND THE 'BLACK RUBRIC'

However, Knox's involvement in liturgical controversy (the sixteenth-century equivalent of our modern worship-wars) did not begin with his sojourn in Frankfurt. He had already been in dispute with Archbishop Cranmer over the Prayer Book, and particularly over the Archbishop's insistence that communicants should receive the Sacrament kneeling. Professor Dawson's account of the controversy closely follows that of Cranmer's 1996 biographer, Diarmaid MacCulloch, according to which it was 'game, set and match' to Cranmer, who reduced Knox's arguments (and particularly his use of the Regulative Principle) to rubble.

It is important to note that there was no fundamental difference between the two men with regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Cranmer no more believed in the bodily presence of Christ in the Sacrament than did Knox. It is also important to note that Cranmer's motives were no less worthy than Knox's. He saw kneeling at the Sacrament not as an adoration of the bread and wine, but as a gesture of humility and gratitude.

The dispute certainly highlighted Knox's limitations as a diplomat and political tactician (a theme which runs through Professor Dawson's biography). But was his position inherently indefensible (or, even worse, petty)? He was certainly right in his conviction that the administration of the Lord's Supper could not be a matter of man's devising. The Apostle Paul had made clear in 1 Corinthians 11:23-34 that the Order of the Lord's Supper must follow that of the Last Supper; and for Knox one key feature of that supper had been precisely that it was not a sacrifice, but a meal, and as such to be received not at an altar but at a table (Luke 22:21). The appropriate posture, therefore, would be that commonly assumed when sharing a meal.

There was nothing unusual in Knox's appeal to the Last Supper as the norm. Luther had taken exactly the same position, even with regard to the details of the Sacrament: 'the more closely our mass [*sic*!] resembles that first mass of all, which Christ performed at the Last Supper, the more Christian it will be!'[5] It was from this point of view that he answered the question (often put to him!) whether something other than wine should be used in the Sacrament: 'One shouldn't use anything other than wine. If a person can't drink wine, omit it [the Sacrament] altogether in order that no innovation be made or introduced.'[6] Knox would certainly have viewed kneeling at the Table as, at the very least, an innovation.

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5 *Luther's Works*, Vol. 36, p. 52.

6 *Luther's Works*, Vol. 54, p. 438.

Did Knox, then, lose 'game, set and match'? Cranmer claimed, in effect, that Knox was hoist with his own petard since 'scholarship conclusively showed' that first-century century Orientals did not sit down to dine, but ate their food 'lying upon the ground'. This may look like an unreturnable volley (to continue the tennis analogy), but it falls considerably short of proving that the disciples *knelt* when receiving the bread and wine at the Last Supper. Besides, Cranmer could have 'reduced Knox's argument to rubble' only by showing that the Greek verbs *anakeimai* (Mark 14:18) and *anapiptō* (Luke 22:14) should be translated, 'I lie flat on the ground'. No major English version has adopted this rendering: 'reclining', probably; 'lying flat on the ground', improbable. Whatever they were doing, they were doing it at a table (Luke 22:14, 21) and on this point Knox never 'caved in'. In Frankfurt, he refused to administer the Lord's Supper according to the 1552 Prayer Book, and in what came to be known as 'Knox's Liturgy' (the Genevan Service Book adopted by the General Assembly in 1564) it was clearly stipulated that, 'the Exhortation ended, the Minister commeth doune from the pulpit, and sitteth at the Table, every man and woman in likewise taking their place as occasion best serveth'. The Order concludes, 'so that without his worde and warrant, there is nothing in this holy action attempted'. This leaves Presbyterians little scope for 'innovative' ways of administering the Sacrament.

Cranmer may indeed have wrong-footed Knox in the political game, but it remains true, nonetheless, that the Archbishop found it politic to insert in the Prayer Book what came to be known as 'the Black Rubric'. Initially at least, it was not 'black' in the sense of 'sinister', but only in the more mundane sense that whereas the Prayer Book as a whole was printed in red ink, this rubric was a later insertion, the red ink had run out, and the printer had to set it in black. Later, however, High Anglicans came to view the insertion as a 'black' day for their cause, but whether it was a personal victory of Knox is another matter. What is undeniable is that, one way or another, sufficient pressure was generated to persuade Cranmer that some disclaimer was needed in order to make plain that the act of kneeling implied no adoration of the bread and wine, and no real presence of the body of Christ within them.

Incidentally, years later, despite their differences over the Prayer Book, Knox was generous in his tribute to Cranmer and his fellow Oxford martyrs, highlighting their 'lenity, sincere doctrine, pure life, godly conversation and discreet counsel', and at the same time singling out the Archbishop as 'the mild man of God'.[7]

[7] McCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, p. 622.

KNOX AND MARY

But if Knox's relations with Cranmer were somewhat fraught, his relations with Mary, Queen of Scots, were fraughter still. On his side, they were compromised from the beginning by his previous experiences of her mother, Mary of Guise; on hers, they were doomed by Knox's *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558).

Mary entered Edinburgh on the 2nd of September, 1561 and had her first meeting with Knox a mere two days later. The initiative did not come from Knox, and he himself was unsure whether it came from the Queen or from 'the counsel of others'. Professor Dawson is careful to warn us that virtually all we know about this meeting comes from Knox himself.[8] She also warns us that Knox's view of the young Queen was already set in stone (but then, so was hers of him); that when he wrote-up the account he had his own very specific objects in view; and that, as one who would have made a 'magnificent screenwriter', Knox creates a series of dramatic dialogues in which he gives the Queen 'one-line feeder comments' which allow him to defend himself at length and then, for good measure, to throw in some dramatic gestures, such as the Queen bursting into tears or staying silent for fifteen minutes.

Unfortunately we have no objective record by which to judge Knox's veracity or otherwise, and our assessment will no doubt depend on the opinion we have formed of him from other considerations. There is certainly no reason why an account should not be simultaneously dramatic and true, especially if the event was one of high drama in the first place. The high point of the dialogue comes when Mary challenges Knox, 'Think ye that subjects having power may resist their princes?' It was here that Knox introduced his famous analogy between a prince and a father. It is often overlooked that the basic premise of the analogy is that it is no more lawful to resist kings and princes than it is to resist your parents, but Knox went on to argue that if the father is stricken with a frenzy, and attempts to murder his children, they are fully justified in disarming and arresting him: 'It is even so, Madam, with princes that would murder the children of God that are subject unto them… to take the sword from them, to bind their hands, and to cast themselves in prison till that they brought to a more sober mind, is no disobedience against princes, but just obedience, because that it agreeth with the will of God.'[9]

Professor Dawson suggests that in making this comparison Knox jumped over several logical steps by making an association between mad-

[8] *John Knox's History of the Scottish Reformation*, 2 vols, ed. William Croft Dickinson (London and Edinburgh: Nelson, 1949), Vol. 2, pp. 13-19.

[9] Knox, *History of the Scottish Reformation*, Vol. 2, p. 17.

ness and persecution. Surely, however, Knox's point was not that it was legitimate to resist any king who became insane, but that it was legitimate to resist any sovereign who resorted to violence against their own subjects? Neither Mary of Guise nor Mary Tudor was clinically insane (any more Adolf Hitler) but their 'blind zeal' made them as dangerous as any psychopath. It was in this light that he viewed the Marian persecutions, as he had made plain in his *Faithful Admonition to the Professors of God's Truth in England* (1554): Jezebel 'never erected halfe so many gallowes in al Israel as myschevous Mary hath done within London alone'.[10]

Professor Dawson also offers the suggestion (p. 213) that if Knox was a revolutionary, he was an unsure and tentative one: 'Contrary to the modern image, Knox was not a revolutionary "action man". Though an excellent army chaplain, he was not a military commander or an urban freedom fighter.' It is certainly true that Knox was not a radical in the mould of Che Guevara or Mao Tse-tung. But then, neither was Karl Marx, yet in the long run Marx's impact was greater than that of any 'action man'. The same may be said of Knox, described by Professor J. W. Allen as 'one of the chief personal factors in the history of political thought in the sixteenth century'.[11] This influence would be seen not only in the impressive body of resistance literature produced in Scotland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,[12] but also in the emergence of later 'action men' such as Richard Cameron (1648-80).

Yet Knox was also a realist, and resistance was an issue over which, as he puts it, 'I began to dispute with myself'. He knew full well what civil war would mean, and in April 1558 he expressed his misgivings clearly in a letter to 'His Sisters in Edinburgh'. It would be hard, he wrote, to preach Christ, the author of peace, in a climate of war, sedition and tumult; the

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10 Knox, *Works*, Vol. 3, p. 294.

11 Quoted in Roderick Graham, *John Knox: Democrat* (London: Robert Hale, 2001), p. 119. Professor Dawson does not refer to this work.

12 See, for example, George Buchanan, *De Iure Regni apud Scotos* (Edinburgh, 1579. Reprinted Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1982); Alexander Henderson, *Instructions for Defensive Arms* (composed in 1639, but not intended for publication); Samuel Rutherford, *Lex Rex* (Edinburgh, 1644. Reprinted, Harrisonburg, Va: Sprinkle Publications, 1982) Questions XXVIII-XXXIV; John Brown, *An Apologetical Relation of the Particular Sufferings of the Faithful Ministers and Professors of the Church of Scotland since August 1660* (Rotterdam, 1665. Reprinted in The Presbyterian's Armoury, Edinburgh: Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846, Vol. 3); James Renwick, *An Informatory Vindication* (Utrecht: 1687); Alexander Shields, *A Hind Let Loose: an Historical Representation of the Testimonies of the Church of Scotland* (Utrecht: 1687).

gospel itself would be impugned as the cause of the ensuing calamities; and it would be heart-breaking to see one half of the nation rise up against the other.[13] He also knew that the oppressed were frequently in no position to offer *active* resistance. When Mary challenged him on the principle that subjects could not receive a religion other than the one allowed by their princes, Knox pointed out that the Israelites in Egypt had not taken their religion from Pharaoh, nor Daniel and his compatriots theirs from Nebuchadnezzar, nor the apostles theirs from the Roman emperors: 'And so, Madam, ye may perceive that subjects are not bound to the religion of their princes, albeit they are commanded to give them obedience.'[14] This was a well-trodden Protestant track: if the state commanded what God forbad or forbad what God commanded, believers had no option but to withhold compliance.

But then Mary pushed the argument a stage further: 'Yea, but none of these men raised the sword against their princes.' This immediately raised the question of how far Knox was prepared to go. 'Yet, Madam,' he replied, 'ye cannot deny but that they resisted: for those that obey not the commandments that are given, in some sort resist.' 'But yet,' responded the Queen, pursuing her case, 'they resisted not by the sword.' 'No,' replied Knox, 'because God had not given them the power.'

This was a clear (and realistic) doctrine of passive resistance, but at no point in his public life did Knox believe that this was the only option open to the oppressed. It may well be the case, as Professor Dawson points out, that Knox was radicalised by persecution and particularly by the ferocity of Mary Tudor against his friends in England. But belief in the legitimacy of active resistance was there from the beginning. When we first meet him he stands beside George Wishart, sword in hand; after Wishart's death, he immediately joined the Castilians under siege at St. Andrews; and during the Wars of the Congregation (1559-60) he served in the field as an army chaplain. Such actions bespeak a man who from the beginning had no compunction about bearing the sword against what he saw as tyranny. When Mary put her questions, she did so (as Professor Dawson points out) as one who was thoroughly conversant with the religious literature of her age and knew full well what Knox had advocated in such publications as the *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558) and his *Appellation [Appeal] from the Sentence Pronounced by the Bishops and Clergy* (1558). In the former, he had argued not only that the reign of Mary Tudor was illegitimate on account of her gender, but that she deserved deposition and punishment

[13] Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, p. 250.

[14] Knox, *History of the Reformation*, Vol. 2, p. 16.

because of her savage cruelty and her promotion of idolatry. He appealed, therefore, to the nobility of England: 'They must refuse to be her officers, because she is a traitoresse and rebell against God; and finallie, they must studie to represse her inordinate pride and tyrannie to the uttermost of their power.'[15] In the *Appellation*, he states categorically that it is the duty of every man in his vocation, but chiefly of the Nobility, to 'bridel and repress' princes who cruelly rage against their brethren.[16] Such statements make plain that Knox was committed to the principle of active resistance long before the debate with Maitland of Lethington in July 1564, when he famously commented, 'that the Prince may be resisted, and yet the ordinance of God not violated, it is evident'.[17]

But who, precisely, has the right to resist? Around the same time as Knox was penning his *First Blast*, his friend, Goodman, was publishing his tract, *How Superior Powers oght to be obeyd of their subjects: and wherin they may lawfully by God's worde be disobeyd and resisted*.[18] Ronald Graham suggests that Knox may have collaborated with Goodman in drafting the tract ('Large passages of it are, indeed, very Knoxian in tone')[19] but that is pure surmise, and there is a discernible difference of emphasis between the two friends. Goodman believed passionately that the common people had both a right and a duty to resist magistrates who despised the laws of God, and to do so without waiting for the nobility to take the initiative. He declares, 'And thoghe it appeare at the firste sight a great disordre, that the people shulde take unto them the punishment of transgression, yet, when the Magistrates and other officers cease to do their duetie, they are as it were without officers, yea, worse than if they had none at all, *and then God geveth the sworde in to the peoples hande*'.[20]

It would be hard to find in Knox any such empowering of the populace. Instead, he placed the responsibility for resisting tyranny and suppressing idolatry firmly on 'the Nobility and Estates of Scotland'. One reason for this would have been the influence of Calvin, who had spoken out clearly against private individuals violating the authority of magistrates, but had then gone to argue that 'the lesser magistrates' ('the magistrates of the people') were by God's appointment protectors of their communities and

15 Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, p. 415.

16 Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, p. 497.

17 Knox, *History of the Reformation*, Vol. 2, p. 117.

18 For a comparison of Goodman and Knox see Professor Dawson's article, 'Trumpeting Resistance: Christopher Goodman and John Knox' in Roger A. Mason (ed.), *John Knox and the British Reformations* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 130-53.

19 Graham, *John Knox: Democrat*, p. 121.

20 Quoted in Dawson, 'Trumpeting Resistance', p. 150; italics mine.

therefore duty-bound to oppose 'the fierce licentiousness of kings … who violently fall upon and assault the lowly common folk'.[21]

This was exactly the position Knox took, as appears in the terms he uses in his *Appellation*. Addressing the nobility, he writes: 'I thoght it expedient to admonish you, that before God it shall not excuse you to allege, We are no kings, and therefore neither can we reforme religion, nor yet defend such as be persecuted. Consider, my Lordes, that yee are powers ordened by God, and therefore doth the reformation of religion, and the defense of such as injustly are oppressed, appertain to your charge and care.'[22] Had the 'Lordes' not eventually accepted this charge there would have been no sixteenth century Scottish Reformation.

But Knox and all the other Protestant advocates of resistance also had to take care not to seem to contravene St. Paul's warning that anyone who rebelled against the governing authorities was violating the ordinance of God (Rom. 13:2). *Prima facie*, this was a very convenient shield for tyranny, but it was circumvented by arguing that the 'magistrates of the people' were themselves part of the governing authorities, charged with restraining vice, punishing iniquity and protecting the oppressed. This is why, in the *First Blast*, Knox laid down that it was the duty of the English Nobility to 'remove from authority all such persons as by usurpation, violence, or tyrannie, do possesse the same'.[23] Otherwise, by giving their consent to tyranny, they would be complicit in its crimes. Similarly if, north of the Border, the 'Lords of the Congregation' resisted the cruelties of a despotic Regent, that, in Knox's view, could not be castigated as the seditious resisting of a lawful power. They would merely be doing their duty as protectors of the people.

Above all, Knox was acutely aware that the common people had no power. This may be reflected in the way he worded the Queen's question in his account of their first meeting: 'Think ye that subjects *having power* may resist their princes?'[24] Similarly, when Mary pointed out that the early church had offered only passive resistance to the Roman emperors Knox responded, 'God, Madam, had not given unto them the *power* and the means' (italics mine). This may be no more than the pragmatism Jesus commended when he reminded his hearers that any king thinking of going to war against another must consider whether he is able with 10,000 men to defeat an adversary with 20,000 (Luke 14:31). Knox knew that the

[21] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols., ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), IV:XX, 31.

[22] Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, p. 498.

[23] Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, p. 416

[24] Knox, *History of the Reformation*, Vol. 2, p. 16 (italics mine).

people by themselves had no 'sword', no leadership and no organisation. Without its 'Lordes', therefore, the Congregation would be helpless in the face of state-might. Any merely popular uprising could end only in tears and bloodshed.

Yet Knox also knew that without revolution there could be no Reformation. In the very same epistle to his 'Sisters in Edinburgh' in which he made plain how he shrank from the horrors of civil war, he expressed equally clearly his despondency at the prospect of his native country being 'betrayed in the hands of strangers'.[25] So long as the House of Guise held the reins of power in Scotland, its freedoms (especially its religious freedom) would be suppressed by the military might of France. Only regime-change could bring reform: otherwise the principle, *cuius regio, eius religio*, would assert itself to destroy the nascent Protestantism, as it did in Italy, Spain and France, where brutal repression ensured that the green shoots of reform were never allowed to flourish.

KNOX'S RELATIONS WITH WOMEN

Readers will need no reminding of the offence caused by Knox's *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regimen of Women*. As he himself acknowledged, it blew away all his friends in England. It also exposed him to the implacable fury of England's Queen, Elizabeth, to the extent that he could never again safely set foot south of the Border. Even Calvin was mightily displeased, but his disavowal of the tract (in a letter written to William Cecil in May 1559)[26] was not enough to prevent an irreparable rift between Geneva and the Anglican establishment, with the fateful result that the Church of England would turn its back on a more radical agenda of reform and make life increasingly difficult for 'puritans' tarred with the Genevan brush.

Knox himself protested, in his first interview with Mary, that when he wrote the *Blast* it 'was written most especially against that wicked Jezebel of England,'[27] but as the Queen was quick to point out, 'Ye speak of women in general.' Yet at the heart of the outrage, then and now, there is a good deal of humbug. In the sixteenth century, reigning as a hereditary monarch was just about the only profession to a woman. Even as late as

[25] Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, p. 251.

[26] *John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, 7 vols., ed. Jules Bonnet, trans. Marcus Robert Gilchrist (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844-58. Repr. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2009), Vol. 7, pp. 46-8. Calvin even went so far as to declare, 'I shall nevertheless always cherish the most profound respect for your most excellent queen'.

[27] Knox, *History of the Reformation*, Vol. 2, p. 15.

the nineteenth century a woman could not practise law or medicine, enter parliament or (in the case of the novelist, Mary Ann Evans) get published under her own name.[28] Until well into the twentieth century she could not vote in Parliamentary elections. Even in the twenty-first century, the Church of England can still experience turmoil over women bishops, society still grudges women equal pay, the United States still has to elect its first woman President, and only in 2012 did the UK Parliament concede that a first-born royal daughter would be first in line to the Throne.

At the root of all this lies the very chauvinism we rightly deplore in Knox: a patriarchy which assumes that women are inherently inferior to men (except when they are heirs to a throne). But Knox's language was extreme by any standards. He was not content to speak of what is referred to today as functional subordination. He spoke plainly of ontological subordination. Women should have inferior roles because they were inferior: their [in]sight was blindness; their strength was weakness; their counsel, foolishness; their judgement, frenzy.[29] Nature itself painted them frail, impatient and foolish, and experience declared them inconstant, variable and cruel. She might be the image of God when compared to animals, but she was not the image of God compared to a man, and when the nobility of England quaked at the presence of a Queen they did what no male beast of the forest would do in the presence of a female.[30]

Yet over against the charge of outrageous misogyny we have to set the fact (to which Professor Dawson does full justice) that throughout his life Knox's closest friends and most loyal supporters were women,[31] and this is reflected in his surviving correspondence, consisting mainly of letters to his mother-in law, Elizabeth Bowes; to his 'loving sisters in Edinburgh', Mrs. Janet Guthrie and Mrs. Janet Anderson; and to Mrs. Anne Locke, wife of a London merchant. These women were literate, educated and well-connected, but unfortunately we have no way of knowing what they thought of the *Blast* since almost all the correspondence antedates its publication. It certainly did not disrupt relations with his mother-in-law, who moved in to the Knox household after his wife, Marjorie, died in 1560; nor did it put an end to Knox's correspondence with Anne Locke, who was still writing to him from Geneva in 1561. This suggests that neither woman took the sexist insults personally.

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28 Ms. Evans had to adopt a male pen-name, 'George Eliot'.

29 Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, p. 374.

30 Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, p. 396.

31 One of the most perceptive treatments of this question is Robert Louis Stevenson's essay, 'John Knox and his Relations to Women' in his *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (Nelson: n.l., n.d.,) pp. 241-86.

Apart from their bearing on the question of Knox's hatred of women, these letters show a side of his character quite different from the 'vehement furie' of such documents as his *Faithful Admonition to the Professors of God's Truth in England* and his 1565 *Sermon on Isaiah 26:13-20* (which led to his being banned from preaching in Edinburgh while the Queen and her Consort were in the city). They reveal a Knox who was self-accusing and even self-doubting, but above all they show a pastor bringing all his experience and all his theological acumen to bear upon the troubles of his correspondents, and particularly on the 'dolours' of the self-tormented Mrs. Bowes. Indeed, Mrs Bowes deserves her own place in the history of Protestant theology as a monument to the fact that the problem of assurance existed in the Reformed church long before the preaching of the magisterial Reformers was allegedly corrupted by the excesses of 'High Calvinism'. True, Luther and Calvin both taught that assurance was of the essence of faith (indeed, *was* the essence of faith), but Mrs. Bowes was tormented even while Calvin was still alive, and the root of the problem lies not in the doctrine of double predestination, but in the tension at the heart of Luther's paradox, *Simul iustus et peccator*. How can I be at one and the same time righteous and a sinner?

The wording of these letters is consistently well-chosen and tender. In one of the earliest (written in February 1552-53) we can even see the sort of language later associated with Samuel Rutherford: tranquillity of conscience, writes Knox, rests on the fact that we embrace Jesus as the only Saviour of the world 'and that we learne to apply the sueitnes of his name, which precelleth [excelleth] the odouris of all fragrant smelling spyces, to the corruptioun of our woundis'.[32] In another, he assures his 'Rycht deirly belovit Mother' that he remembers her 'strong battell', but also reminds her that he is in no way superior to her. On the contrary he, too, is a 'wrechit man, subject to syn and miserie lyk yourself', and he urges her to find comfort where he finds it himself: 'for Chrystis perfection is imputit to be yours be [by] faith whilk ye haif in his blude.'[33] And then, recognising that Mrs. Bowes is suffering from an 'infirmitie' he assures her that God is no more displeased with one of his children suffering from a disease of the soul than an earthly parent would be displeased with a child suffering from a disease of the body. He also expresses his own personal confidence that she has no need to fear for her soul, because wherever contempt of God has been replaced with a love of righteousness (as he is sure it has in her case) 'thair is the infallible seall and testimonie of the Holie Ghoist'.

[32] Knox, *Works*, Vol. 3, p. 348.
[33] Knox, *Works*, Vol. 3, p. 347.

Mrs. Bowes was a determined soul-barer, and though Knox deals with her patiently he also knew full well that sometimes the best therapy for doubt is to ignore it. On one occasion he has mislaid Mrs Bowes' letter (or so he says) and he writes inviting her to send him another copy. He then offers advice specifically targeted at an introspective depressive, suggesting, in effect, that she take a rest from worrying about whether she's saved and get on with the rest of her life: 'Be fervent in reiding, fervent in prayer, and mercifull to the pure, according to your power, and God shall put end to all dolouris.'[34]

Anne Locke, one of the few women of the Reformation to write for publication,[35] was clearly a different type of personality from Mrs. Bowes but she, too, is a 'loving sister', 'deirlie belovit', and has her own spiritual troubles. As with Mrs. Bowes, Knox assures her that her 'grevous complaint and ernist prayer' is a clear sign that she is not destitute of the Holy Spirit.[36] It is precisely when God shows us a little of our own weak corruption and his own anger against sin that we most glorify him by appealing to him as 'a trew, mercifull, and benyng Father towardis us'.

KNOX THE THEOLOGIAN

Behind Knox the pastoral counsellor lay Knox the theologian. He was not by temperament a contemplative or a man of the closet, and in any case the times would not have allowed it. His duty, as he saw it, was not to write, but 'to blow my Master's trumpet', and this makes it all too easy to overlook his intellect and education. He had sat under John Major at St Andrews University, been ordained to the priesthood, worked as a notary apostolic, travelled extensively in Europe, corresponded with other major reformers such as Calvin, Bullinger, and Beza, learned Hebrew during his time in Geneva, been welcomed as a kindred spirit by a Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, and was comforted on his death-bed by hearing Calvin's sermons read to him in French.

Yet his literary output was comparatively meagre. The spoken word was his natural medium, and unlike Luther and Calvin he did not have the benefit of a stenographer. The result, we can be sure, is that most of his output was lost; and most of what survived did so only because it had to be published to meet a pressing emergency.

Even Knox's major theological publication, his treatise on Predestination, fell into this category, bearing the title, *An Answer to a Great Nomber*

[34] Knox, *Works*, Vol. 3, p. 402.

[35] See Professor Dawson's discussion, pp. 147-9.

[36] Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, p. 237.

of blasphemous cauillations written by an Anabaptist, and aduersarie to God's eternal Predestination. Professor Dawson says little by way of comment on the theology of this work. She does, however, give valuable background. The doctrine had been attacked in Geneva by Jérôm Bolsec and Albert Pighius, and Calvin had published his own defence, *De aeterna Praedestinatione Dei*, in 1552,[37] but it had also been a matter of heated debate among Protestant prisoners awaiting prosecution in London for heresy. One of these, John Careless, executed in 1556, had stoutly defended the doctrine, but he in turn had been 'refuted' in a pamphlet whose title (*The Confutation of the Errors of the Careless by Necessity*) was a pun on his name. This pamphlet was passed to Knox, and his fellow exiles pressed him to reply to it. This reply was published in 1560, and an additional interest attaches to it in that it contains the first quotation in print from the Geneva Bible, published that same year. It is a symptom of the jitteriness of Geneva following the reaction to the *First Blast* that the City Council would not sanction its printing till they had carefully checked a Latin summary of its contents; and even then they insisted that another (trusted!) exile, William Whittingham, personally vouch for its orthodoxy.

Knox sets forth a doctrine identical to Calvin's, often in the same terms. Predestination, he writes, 'we call the eternall and immutable decree of God, by the which he hath once determined with himself what He will have to be done with everie man. For He hath not created all to be of one condition.'[38] Professor Dawson hints that this close agreement with Calvin was a deliberate attempt to mollify the Genevan Reformer, but surely the truth is that any statement of the Reformed doctrine of predestination is bound to echo Calvin (just as Calvin echoed Augustine)?

The *Scots Confession*, as is well known, contains no chapter on Predestination, while its chapter on Election is concerned mainly with Christology, and this is often taken to indicate that Knox thought the doctrine unimportant. Quite the contrary! 'The doctrine of God's eternal Predestination,' he writes, 'is so necessarie to the Church of God, that, without the same, can Faith neither be truely taught, nether surely established; man can never be broght to true humilitie and knowledge of himself; neither yet can he be ravished in admiration of God's eternal goodness'. [39]

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37 ET, *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, J. K. S. Reid (London: James Clarke, 1961).

38 Knox, *Works*, Vol. 5, p. 36. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes* III:XXI, 5.

39 Knox, *Works*, p. 25.

The key issue for Knox (as indeed for Augustine, Luther and Calvin) was 'the absolutely unconditional nature of God's grace'.[40] But any attempt to portray the early Reformers' doctrine of predestination as somehow more moderate than that of 'Westminster Calvinism' is misguided. The later formulation is much more carefully nuanced, and carefully avoids the idea of a symmetrical double predestination which bears in the same way on the elect and on the reprobate; or, in the language of Holy Willie, 'sends ane to heaven an' ten to hell, A' for thy glory!' The Westminster Confession, for example, nowhere speaks of a 'predestination' to destruction, but refers only to a 'passing by'; and it takes care to stress the reality of both liberty and contingency (Westminster Confession, 3:1). Even more important, it is clear that Knox's belief in predestination did not in any way inhibit his commitment to the universal and unconditional offer of the gospel. In his *Letter to the Commonalty of Scotland* he addresses his 'beloved brethren' and tells them, 'ye are Goddes creatures, created and formed to his own image and similitude, for whose redemption was shed the most pretious blood of the onlie beloved Son of God, [and] to whom he hath commanded his gospel and glad-tidings to be preached'. This 'blessed Evangile', he writes, God 'now offereth unto you'.[41]

David Calderwood, no mean critic (and not always a generous one) had a high view of Knox's work on Predestination: 'How profound he was in divinitie, that work of his upon Predestination may give evidence.'[42] But the most impressive of Knox's few theological publications is the much briefer *Sermon on the Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness: an exposition of Matthew IV*.[43] First preached in 1556, he later wrote it up for private circulation among his friends (notably his 'deir sisteris', in whose theological acumen he must have had considerable confidence). Published posthumously (1583) it reflects, throughout, a pastor's concern to relate the temptations of Jesus to the trials of his followers. He reminds them that grievous vexations of body and mind are never signs of God's displeasure: if they were, 'then should we condemn the best beloved children of God'. But Knox also shows an intriguing modesty. Addressing the question whether the temptations took place only in Jesus' spirit and imagination, he gave it as his own opinion that Christ suffered real hunger in a real desert and heard Satan's tempting words through the

40 Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), p. 16.

41 Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, p. 526.

42 David Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, 8 vols., ed. Thomas Thomson (Edinburgh: The Wodrow Society, 1842-1849), Vol. 8, p. 29.

43 Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 85-114.

'externall eare'. He acknowledges, however, that most expositors take the opposite view, and then adds: 'I will contend with no man in sic cassis, but patientlie will I suffer everie man in his awn knowledge'.[44] He merely asks that his view be weighed and measured by Christian charity.

Knox expounds the Temptation itself primarily in terms of victory. Christ, he writes, did not repel Satan by the power of his godhead, placing himself beyond the reach of all temptation. Instead, he permitted the Adversary to 'spend all his artillery', taking his strokes and assaults in his own body in order to render the tyrannous power of Satan impotent by his own longsuffering. There follows a splendid apostrophe, perhaps the most brilliant passage in the whole Knoxian corpus, in which the preacher pictures Jesus 'provoking' the enemy to battle: 'Lo, I am a man lyke to my brethren, having flesche amd blude and all properties of manis nature (sin, whilk is they vennoume, exceptit). Tempt, try and assault me … do what thou canst, I sall not fliue the place of battell: Yf thow become victor, thow may still continew in possession of thy kingdome in this wreachit world: Bu yf thow can not prevail aganis me, then must thy pray [prey] and unjust spoyle be takin from thee: Thow maun grant thyself vanquischit and confoundit, and must be compelled to leif off frome all accusation of the memberis of my body; for to thame doth appertane the frute of my battell; my victorie is thairs, as I am appoyntit to tak the punishment of their synnis in my bodie.'[45]

Here are the great gospel themes: the true humanity of Christ, vicarious atonement, union with Christ, even the *Christus Victor* motif associated with the so-called 'classic' doctrine of the cross.[46]

'O deir sisteris,' Knox concludes, 'what comfort aucht the remembrance of theis thingis be to our hairtis! Chryst Jesus hath fouchtin oure battell.'

THE MAN AND HIS WORK

There remains the question of Professor Dawson's overall assessment of Knox, the man and his work. The biography conveys the distinct impression that the longer she lived with him, the less she liked him, the earlier chapters being significantly more generous than the later, even to the extent that it looks as if after his return to Scotland in 1559 Knox could do nothing right. The final chapter offers an enigmatic summary: like Dr.

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44 Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, p. 106.

45 Knox, *Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 103-4.

46 See Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*, trans. A. G. Herbert (London: SPCK, 1931), especially Chapter III.

Martin Luther King, Knox was able to make 'that indefinable difference that redirected the future flow of events'. Specifically, he played an invaluable part in the Wars of the Congregation as preacher and propagandist: hardly fulsome praise in an age which views preachers and propagandists as scarcely honourable professions; and Knox is further demoted by the observation that most of the achievements linked to his name were in fact collaborative projects such as the *Scots Confession*, the *Book of Common Order* and the *First Book of Discipline*. Taking him all in all, his contribution to the establishment of the new Kirk was restricted, mainly 'because he could never see beyond the Old Testament model of disobedience to God's covenant'.

But, considering the formidable catalogue of faults to which we have been introduced in the preceding chapters, it would hardly be surprising if Knox's achievements were meagre. Apart altogether from his being a woman-hater, he was vindictive, unpleasant, heavy-handed and paranoid. In his 'self-appointed prophetic task' his thundering reached legendary status. His sermons were marked by extreme violence of language, always severe and uncompromising, often sharp and wounding, sometimes downright vitriolic and on occasion economical with the truth. The story he tells in his *History of the Reformation* is replete with propaganda and spin, he was given to re-writing the history with the benefit of hindsight, he quietly side-lined contributions when it suited him, there was often a defensive note in the way he described an episode, and he absolved himself of all responsibility for 'the mess' at Perth. He had a 'holy (?) hatred' for Mary of Guise and gloated over her death; he treated Mary, Queen of Scots's loss of her husband, childhood companion and friend as a purely political matter; he was given to heavy-handed and malicious humour; and he made a point of getting his retaliation in first. Defamatory insults came to him naturally, he was an abrasive leader who always needed around him men who could pour oil on troubled waters, and he had a hard-edged tone linked to his normal desire to flatten an opponent in a public fight. He was intransigent and disingenuous, and never mastered the art of apologising. Despite having an excellent intelligence network, he made serious tactical mistakes, was completely incapable of compromising in order to secure long-term goals, was locked into an incorrect analysis of the actual situation in Scotland, blind to many of the real challenges facing the Reformed Kirk, and drew comfort from being in a minority, even a minority of one. He started on the wrong foot in his first Edinburgh ministry and never quite fell in step with the burgh. In any case, he had no experience of the parish ministry, lacked the skills needed to alter the city's religious landscape, and was ill-suited in outlook and temperament for the challenges he faced as Minister of St. Giles. Even

his courage is questionable. At one dangerous moment, his colleague, John Willock, bravely stayed in the city when Knox left along with the Lords of the Congregation. And even in death, he showed his appreciation of the dramatic: 'he took care over his performance of the "good death" and consciously provided a legacy for his loyal supporters.'[47]

Any attempt, especially on my part, to offer a counter-picture would quickly lead to shouts of, 'Hagiography!' Nevertheless, questions remain. The most intriguing is why Professor Dawson allowed a man with whom she clearly has little sympathy to become a 'brooding presence' in her life. But there are other questions, too. How, for example, did such a nasty little man earn the admiration not only of his valet, but of contemporaries like James Melville? And how was such an incompetent, paranoid and tactless individual able to achieve anything?

The answer to that may be that he didn't, and that the Reformation project was a failure: an idea that should not be dismissed out of hand. The blame may not have been Knox's (in my view, it wasn't), but when he died, the Reformation was in the balance; it was still in the balance a hundred years later, and five hundred years later still, it has been airbrushed out of Scottish history. But the corollary of dismissing Knox and the Reformation as failures is that Scotland must stop blaming Calvinism for its ills. It was never the faith of her movers and shakers.

'Knox,' wrote R. L. Stevenson, 'has been from the first a man well hated'.[48] This book will not change that, but its rigorous research will ensure that it will long remain the standard point of departure for all future study of 'the wee man in the quad'. And it is a gripping read.

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47 This assessment is largely based on a very problematical use of the record kept by Knox's secretary, Richard Bannatyne, *Memorials of Transactions in Scotland*, a.d. MDLXIX – MDLXXII (Edinburgh: The Bannatyne Club, 1836).

48 Robert L. Stevenson, 'John Knox and His Relations to Women', p. 243.

How We Got the New Testament: Text, Transmission, Translation. By Stanley E. Porter. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-8010-4871-5. xviii + 222 pp. £14.49.

This volume includes Stanley Porter's Hayward Lectures delivered at Acadia Divinity College in Wolfville, Nova Scotia in October 2008. In the Introduction he notes that he has 'been interested in the origins of the New Testament for a considerable length of time,' (p. 1) and so the reader benefits in this volume from mature reflection upon the important questions under consideration.

In each of the three chapters Porter makes a significant contribution, not only in accurately summarising the current position of scholarship but more helpfully in offering thought-provoking proposals. Against the trend of publishing eclectic texts of the Greek New Testament, e.g. Nestle-Aland 27, Porter suggests, 'that we recognize what tacitly is the case and move away from an idealized eclectic text that never existed in any Christian community back to the codexes that still form the basis of our modern textual tradition' (p. 74). Porter's proposal is not that we return to some kind of received text which is privileged over all others, but that we have good manuscripts representing the Alexandrian text type which is the earliest text type and should be more confidently used.

The chapter on the transmission of the New Testament is of great interest in that Porter seeks to use the transmission evidence of the manuscripts of the New Testament to establish the text back to an early date. Especially helpful is his use of non-complete texts of the New Testament, such as liturgical texts. Rather than excluding these texts he shows there is great gain for the study of the transmission of the New Testament when they are included.

The final chapter is on the translation of the New Testament. Porter introduces the reader to a whole range of tools which should be used in translation: discourse analysis, relevance theory and cultural/postcolonial theory, all of which add to our understanding of language and thus our understanding of translation. He demonstrates the weaknesses of word for word attempts at translation noting perceptively that the meaning of a text is not carried in an individual word but in the arrangement of words into sentences into paragraphs and thus into texts.

Stanley Porter's long engagement with the text of the New Testament ensures this is a volume which cannot be ignored by anyone interested in the text, transmission and translation of the New Testament. His propos-

als will not be welcomed by all but in considering them we grow in our understanding of the story of the text of the New Testament.

Gordon Kennedy, Edinburgh

Antinomianism: Reformed Theology's Unwelcome Guest? By Mark Jones. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2013. ISBN: 978-1596388154. xix + 145 pp. £12.99.

Antinomianism: Reformed Theology's Unwelcome Guest? is a revival of the seventeenth century struggle over antinomianism among puritans. While antinomianism is usually defined as the rejection of God's law, Jones defines it differently as 'fundamentally a Christological problem,' (pp. 17–18, 43) which is more about a neglect or subordination of Christ's person to Christ's work than it is about the more narrow issue of divine law.

Chapter one introduces the historical debates. Luther's conflict with John Agricola is cited as the earliest instantiation of antinomianism of the Reformation era, and Luther is absolved of antinomianism because he was not against God's law (p. 5). For some reason, though Jones insists that 'being against God's law' is too narrow a definition of antinomianism, Luther is excused along these narrow grounds.

Chapter two focuses on imitating Christ's person. Unique here is Jones' application of Hebrews 10:38-39's exhortation to live by faith, to Christ himself. But unparalleled is the assertion that believers are to increase in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man—just as Christ did in Luke 2:52. Thus, just as Jesus was dependent upon the Holy Spirit to sanctify him, so believers are dependent upon the Spirit as they work toward holiness.

Chapter three deals with the role of God's law in the Christian life. Jones acknowledges that many orthodox Reformed have variously understood the law as it is embedded in the Mosaic covenant. Jones appeals to puritans, antinomians and a handful of Scripture passages to argue that the law is a means of sanctification.

Chapter four contends that there is a distinctly reformed doctrine of law and gospel. Jones says the Reformed, Lutherans and antinomians were all agreed that our works and God's grace were opposed in the matter of justification. Some puritans said the gospel should be understood both 'largely' (i.e., all apostolic doctrine), and 'strictly' (i.e., good news). On this basis, Jones makes the case that the gospel contains and makes threats. Fascinatingly, he cites one of The Canons of Dort in the original Latin, Dutch and French as saying that the gospel threatens.

The fifth chapter is about believers' good works being 'the way to life.' Jones emphasizes the reformed distinction between the work of Christ in history (impetration) and the Spirit's application of Christ's work in the lives of believers, noting that antinomians have historically focused on the former. Jones refutes the antinomian application of Isaiah 64:6 to believer's good works; then the rest of the chapter argues that rewards are a good and proper motivation for good works because Jesus was rewarded for his good works (pp. 76–8).

In chapter six, Jones argues that God does not love his elect equally. Instead, he draws upon Samuel Rutherford's three-fold distinction between God's love of *benevolence* in election, love of *beneficence* in redemption, and love of *complacency* in rewarding the elect according to their holiness. Jones argues that the Father complacently loved the Son from a lesser to a greater degree; likewise, Jesus loves the elect complacently. The antinomian error is allegedly to emphasize God's benevolence over against his complacency.

The seventh chapter covers the conflict over the matter of assurance of salvation and whether sanctification was an evidence of justification. Jones contends that there is an analogous relationship between Christ's assurance, that he is God's Son and that God is pleased with him, and our assurance of our salvation. Thus, antinomians focused too much on justification, whereas puritans tended to give proper attention to sanctification.

Chapter eight addresses the rhetoric and violations of the ninth commandment in the historical debates. Here Jones names Tullian Tchividjian as a contemporary antinomian because Tchividjian argues that our obedience (or lack thereof) does not affect our relationship with God, and that sanctification is the daily hard work of going back to the reality of our justification (pp. 90–1, 116, 128). Chapter nine reiterates Jones' thesis that antinomianism is a Christological problem in that antinomians speak much of Christ's work, but neglect his person. The solution, says Jones, is for reformed preachers to call Christians to imitate Jesus.

Jones does reformed churches a real service by revealing doctrines held by many puritans—such as the threatenings of the gospel, and God's complacent love for the elect—which may come as a surprise to many contemporary reformed theologians. However, *Antinomianism* conceals at least as much as it reveals. For example, the debates concerning antinomianism were almost exclusively an English phenomenon. Yet this book does not address why that is the case. If antinomianism is such an acute problem, should we not expect to find it in every place and time? Why does a book on the errors of antinomianism need to focus on the seventeenth century English?

One of Jones' main secondary sources, T. D. Bozeman's *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion & Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (University of North Carolina Press, 2004), answers these questions by observing that unlike the continental Reformation, puritans could never persuade their reigning monarch to completely endorse and enforce Calvinism. Thus, frustrated that they could not reform the Church, English Calvinists turned inward and intensified their efforts—this time, focusing on reforming individuals (Bozeman, pp. 64–8). Thus Bozeman identifies puritanism as the true genesis of pietism, drawing striking parallels between puritan piety and medieval Roman Catholic devotion (Bozeman, pp. 74–83, 130–1, 154). He also reports that some puritans even despaired in the face of such pietism, and committed suicide (Bozeman, pp. 176–80, esp. note 12).

Though Jones asserts that antinomianism means more than a rejection of the third use of the law, consulting reformed confessions seems a safer way to define antinomianism than by quoting reformed exponents. Thus it is notable that while a few early modern reformed confessions allude to antinomianism (Theodore Beza's Confession, 7.9; The Second Helvetic Confession, 12; Sandomir Consensus, XII; Confession of the Evangelical Church in Germany, 13.XXVII-XXVIII), the term 'antinomian' or 'against the law,' (depending on the English translation of the original languages) tends to occur under the locus of the law of God. Given the etymology of the term 'antinomian,' perhaps it would be more honest and helpful to come up with a new, more accurate and descriptive name for those about whom Jones is so concerned.

Since Jones is focused on ways of being an antinomian, it is significant that he omits certain criteria. Though he treats theological and ethical antinomianism, he omits political antinomianism (p. xiv). Yet for most puritans (save, perhaps Roger Williams), and per the unanimous testimony of the reformed confessions, the civil magistrate was believed to have cultic duties. Thus, those who denied this were antinomians. There was also the criterion of guilt by association. John Bunyan was considered an antinomian because he willingly and knowingly preached a Christmas sermon for the antinomian William Dell in 1659. Furthermore, Jones neglects the historical fact that Baptists were antinomians simply for being Baptists. The writings of Samuel Rutherford, Anthony Burgess, Robert Baillie and Thomas Edwards demonstrate this. Thus, it is at least ironic, if not also problematic that Jones uses Baptists like Ernest Kevan and Andrew Fuller to argue against antinomianism.

These oversights in Jones's scholarship mean he does not address charges of antinomianism made against some of his reformed puritans. For example, Richard Baxter accused John Owen of theological antino-

mianism. Baxter was also sure that Owen's support of the English Parliament over against King Charles I meant that Owen was a political antinomian. In fact, when agents of the civil magistrate raided Owen's residence, they found and seized a cache of guns which were suspected of being there for use in attacking and overthrowing the monarchy. Finally, Owen's status as an Independent was a sure sign of antinomianism to Rutherford, Baillie and Edwards.

Lastly, Jones admits it is possible that the anti-antinomians misread and misunderstood the alleged antinomians. But Anthony Burgess positively violated the ninth commandment when he castigated Tobias Crisp for Crisp's sermon on John 8:36. Crisp said that Christians have no more to do with the *curses* of the law than Englishmen have to do with the laws of Spain or Turkey (emphasis added to *Christ Alone Exalted* [1643], pp. 244–5). However, Burgess (in *Vindiciae legis* [1647], 15) put unreformed words in Crisp's mouth: 'Therefore, it is a very wilde comparison of [margin: Dr Crisp] one, that a man under grace hath no more to do with the Law, then an English-man hath with the lawes of Spain or Turkie.' Samuel Rutherford soon repeated a variation on Burgess's error (in *Survey of spirituall antichrist* [1648], p. 121): 'but wee are no more under the Law, say *Saltmarsh, Crisp, Towne,* and *Denne,* than an Englishman can fail against the Lawes of Spaine.' Since Crisp's sermons had been in print since 1643, the reader will have to decide why Burgess and Rutherford wrote what they did.

Jones' book will likely cause some controversy among reformed churches. It is the sincere hope of this reviewer that readers will search the Scriptures diligently to see if what Jones says is true.

Chris Caughey, William Jessup University, USA

Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness. By Richard B. Hays. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-4813-0232-6. xxii + 155 pp. £29.50.

In this small collection of lectures, first delivered at Cambridge in 2013-14, Hays draws attention to the way the Gospel writers read the Old Testament, and demonstrates helpfully how this in turn illuminates their respective Christologies. He argues that the Gospel writers regarded the OT fundamentally as a network or narrative of images and persons that *prefigure* Jesus. Unlike mere proof-texts or predictive prophecies, these prefigurements are seen only retrospectively. Not only does the OT teach us how to read the Gospels, the Gospels teach us how to read the OT—backwards. And in doing so, a 'figural Christology' emerges: The Gospel

writers univocally affirm that Jesus is the presence of the God of Israel's Scriptures.

After an introductory chapter, Hays devotes one chapter (lecture) to each of the four gospels to illustrate how this hermeneutic functions in each. For Mark, both the OT and Jesus' identity are a mystery, hidden in order to be disclosed. Through intertexts, such as Isaiah 40:3 in the prologue, or Daniel 7 in chapter 13, Mark alludes subtly to Jesus' identification with the Father. Matthew makes Jesus' relationship to the OT more explicit through his 'fulfilment' citations. But he also presents the narrative of Jesus in terms of figural readings of Scripture, as in the echo of Exodus in Herod's slaughter of the innocents. Moreover, Matthew places Jesus in the role occupied by God in the OT as one who promises his 'presence' to Jacob (p. 50). Jesus is 'God with us,' and thus is 'worshiped' by his followers. Luke 24:25-27 pushes readers to see in the rest of Luke a retrospective reading of the OT, featuring 'previously hidden figural correspondences' between Jesus and OT texts and figures (p. 57). Many of these correspondences are implied by Luke's narrative, which invites readers to make an analogy between the story of Jesus and 'God's saving acts for Israel in the past' (p. 59). For John, Scripture is a 'huge web of signifiers' which can prefigure Jesus because he is the preexistent Logos (p. 92). John's strategy of reading Scripture 'backwards' in light of the resurrection is made explicit in 2:22, and encourages readers to see Jesus identity as deeply embedded in the texts and traditions of Israel—particularly the Temple and feasts (p. 82).

In a final chapter, Hays concludes that, with their unique voices, each of the Gospel writers affirm, in retrospect, the OT speaks of Jesus (John 5:45), and that Jesus embodies the presence of Israel's God. He suggests we too, may begin to read Scripture as they did, by allowing the narrative of Scripture to indwell us and shape our imagination.

Hays has provided Christians and scholars alike with a study, rich in insight, and broad in scope. His work is significant for at least three reasons: First, Hays emphasizes the importance of the OT for understanding the Christologies of the Gospels. It is often only by attending to OT intertexts that we gain a grasp of how 'high' a Christology the evangelists held. Second, Hays helps to nuance our understanding of how the Gospel writers approached the OT. Their aim was not merely apologetic, and their hermeneutic not fundamentally a simple 'prediction-fulfilment,' but rather *figural*. They did not simply 'use' the OT, but inhabited it. For them, Scripture was to be regarded as an integrated whole which spoke with a coherent voice, ultimately about Jesus. Third, many readers may find intriguing Hays' suggestion that the hermeneutic of the evangelists may be adopted by readers who share their (high) Christological convic-

tions. He rightly acknowledges that such a hermeneutic only works from within the assumption that God is living and active, and the author of Scripture (p. 109). Consequently, his book is a model of biblical scholarship on the one hand, whilst on the other it is an invitation to read Scripture unapologetically as Christians.

Criticism of the book may be qualified, in part, by the fact that Hays presents it as the harbinger of a fuller study, still in process. Nevertheless, it would have been helpful in following the discussion at points if Hays could have been clearer how he understands and uses key terms such as 'intertext,' 'echo,' 'allusion,' 'citation,' and 'type' and 'antitype.' This would be helpful, both to those uninitiated who have not heard of, for example, an 'intertext,' as well as for specialists in the field of 'intertextuality,' where much can hang on how these features are defined. Also, there were a few instances where the allusions and echoes which he found to OT passages in the gospels may have been better supported by more developed argumentation. For instance, Hays suggests the comment that God alone forgives sin in Mark 2:7 may allude to a specific passage such as Exodus 34:6–7 or Isaiah 43:25 (pp. 21–2); but could it not equally indicate that Mark shared a general conviction which is reflected similarly in various OT passages? Similarly, the language of 'visitation' in Luke 1:78 need not necessarily evoke the divine subject of the same verb in certain Psalms (pp. 67–8). However, these minor points may simply be the consequence of the constraints imposed by the lecture format in which these chapters first appeared. Overall, Hays is to be commended for a lucid and rich study which does a great service to both the Church and the academy.

Joshua Coutts, University of Edinburgh

The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision. By Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015. ISBN: 978-0310516828. 192 pp. £11.99.

In *The Pastor Theologian*, authors Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson contend that the church suffers from 'theological anemia,' while academic theology tends to be 'ecclesially weak.' In order to remedy this epidemic plaguing the church and the academy, the authors propose a return to the days when pastors were the primary theologians of the church and composed works that were 'richly theological, deeply biblical, historically informed, culturally aware, explicitly pastoral, and prophetic,' in the vein of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin (p. 86). They refer to this paradigm as the 'pastor theologian,' a paradigm for which they argue well.

To begin their work, the authors trace the history of the pastor theologian paradigm, arguing that 'what was once normative—theologians

as pastors—is now novel' (p. 23). For the first eighteen centuries of the church's existence, the majority of theologians served in a pastoral vocation (including Irenaeus, Augustine, and Athanasius in the early church, and Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin before and during the Reformation). However, as the Enlightenment began to influence the intellectual culture of the west, the locus of theological discourse shifted from the church to the academy. This inevitably led to the sharp division between pastors and theologians we see today; we often expect pastors to tend only for the needs of his or her local congregation with little reflection on theological matters, while academic theologians often remain disconnected from the pressing theological needs of the local church.

To bridge this gap between the pastorate and theological scholarship, the authors propose a return to the paradigm of the pastor theologian. They provide a helpful taxonomy, conceiving of the pastor theologian in three ways: as *local theologian*, (who allows theological scholarship to influence their preaching and teaching), as *popular theologian* (taking academic theology and making it accessible to the average layperson), and finally as *ecclesial theologian* (who tends to the needs of his/her congregation, while contributing to theological scholarship which benefits the church at large).

Hiestand and Wilson argue primary for the pastor theologian as ecclesial theologian, and explore this paradigm in depth. Ecclesial theologians inhabit and embrace their place in the local church, allow their context to shape their theological work and method, aim for clarity of language and concepts in their writing, and work across a spectrum of theological disciplines. The authors describe practical ways in which pastors called to a life of both ministry and theological scholarship can best live into the identity of an ecclesial theologian. Many of these suggestions are helpful, such as the need for further graduate education, casting the vision to church leadership, and setting aside ample time for theological reading and writing.

Hiestand and Wilson succeed in casting a vision for the pastor theologian in modern evangelicalism. They describe the situation of the modern church with clarity and argue logically and coherently for their vision. The breadth of their work spans from sky-high analyses of church history and theology to hammering out the pastor theologian vision in contemporary local church contexts. For academics, the book serves as a call to engage in the life of the local church through writing theology *for* the church, and encouraging gifted students to pursue the vocation of an ecclesial theologian. It challenges pastors to take seriously their role as leaders in the theological formation of God's people. For students in seminaries and graduate schools wondering if they need to choose between a

life of ministry and the life of the mind, the authors provide the vision and strategy for blending the two together. I fully expect the work of Hiestand and Wilson to resonate with people in both the academy and the local church, and recommend this work to all pastors and seminarians who desire a life of ministry that includes robust theological scholarship.

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Homiletical Theology: Preaching as Doing Theology. Edited by David Schnasa Jacobsen. The Promise of Homiletical Theology, Volume 1; Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-62564-565-4. xiii + 186 pp. £15.00.

Like squabbling siblings, preaching and theology often struggle to get on. Many preachers confess they'd rather not look up from their pulpits to see the theologian's disapproving spectacles lining the back pew. Theologians, too, often confess to finding sermon-listening one of the most frustrating elements of church life. Unfortunately, homiletics—the subdiscipline intended to bridge this impasse—often tends more towards communication theory than theology proper, and most theologians happily leave the homileticians to their data games. Jacobsen's *Homiletic Theology* project has been in the pipeline for some time now, and aims to reverse this problem. This initial volume is intended 'to start conversations across theology and among theological disciplines' as 'a different way of *doing* theology' in light of preaching, and vice-versa. Contributions include three introductory pieces by Jacobsen himself, alongside an array of diverse chapters from other leading homileticians, on preaching and the Spirit (Powery), preaching as wisdom (McKenzie), preaching, liturgy and congregational response (McClure), Bonhoeffer as homiletical theological exemplar (Pasquarello III), and preaching and theological method (Allen; Eisenlohr).

Although such thematic mixture is vibrant, unfortunately it obstructs the project's definition and distinctiveness, whereby it remains unclear what homiletical theology actually *is*. Jacobsen is fully aware of this, and admits this volume is no more than 'a conversation', and that 'homiletical theology' may have many possible avenues. As such, each contributor tries to grapple with homiletical theology's classification before applying their own themes *to* it. But this definitional pluralism risks diluting the project to little more than a rebranded rehearsal of broadly postmodern listener-oriented homiletical trends from the last two decades. McClure's chapter, for example, draws upon sociological analyses of sermon-listening to argue that the *way* a listener listens should impact the way a preacher preaches. What makes this 'homiletical theology'

in a way which differs from his other 'homiletical' work? Indeed, what renders it distinctly 'theological' at all? This is a problem throughout the volume, though it is alleviated at times by more promising engagements. Allen's essay illumines the process of dramatic theological redirection, highlighting Barth's and Niebuhr's rejections of liberalism, and Whitehead's rejection of Newtonian order, as examples of what 'homiletical theology' might describe. Eisenlohr offers a helpful narratival example of what responsible homiletical theology might look like in a real pastoral community, including the issues and idiosyncrasies which affect the shaping of a sermon. Throughout, as expected from a project which hails from David Buttrick's homiletical legacy, Barth appears sporadically, like a half-departed ghost—occasionally referenced but rarely dealt with on *theological* terms or with theological depth. They don't quite know what to do with him. But it seems that whatever a homiletical theologian is supposed to be, Barth *was* one, and *par excellence*.

Any attempt to make connections between theology and preaching are important and to be encouraged. It just seems that at the very heart of this project is an over-commitment to the *concept* of the 'open conversation' itself, which proves substantially obfuscating. Although much here will be homiletically helpful for the practicing preacher—especially given the manifest ear-to-practice—in its current guise the project may struggle to bridge the theology-homiletics divide. Future volumes might do well to not only unify the overall vision, but to deepen the meta-level assumptions which undergird what preaching is about. For this, perhaps more *theologians* may be required. Otherwise, *Homiletical Theology* risks becoming nothing more than an 'in-house' homiletics debate, allowing theologians to continue ignoring it (which would be a shame).

Aaron Edwards, Aberdeen

Universal Salvation: Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner. By Morwenna Ludlow. Oxford Theological Monographs. 2000; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-19-827022-5. xiv + 304 pp. £142.50.

Although published about fifteen years ago, Morwenna Ludlow's comparison of the eschatologies of a fourth-century and a twentieth-century theologian—Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner—remains an important introduction not only to the thought of these two theologians but also to the questions surrounding universal salvation. Ludlow's book, initially written as a D.Phil. thesis at Oxford, lucidly describes the approaches of Gregory and Rahner, subjecting both authors to careful analysis, constantly asking of each author to what extent their argumentation is inter-

nally consistent. One of the wholesome elements of Ludlow's approach is that she does not restrict herself to historical or textual analysis but asks the question of what, if anything, remains of value in the eschatology of both authors. While she is sympathetic to Gregory's motivation for positively asserting a restoration (*apokatastasis*) involving universal salvation, she does not find it prudent to move beyond Rahner's general approach that we have warrant for *hoping* that all will be saved—while maintaining the genuine threat of the eternal punishment of hell.

The book is divided into two parts, one on each theologian (chapters 1–3 and 4–7), and it concludes with a chapter that provides a comparative analysis of the two authors (chapter 8). Both parts begin with a general introduction to the author's context and overall theological approach (with Gregory only getting one chapter and Rahner two, which allows Ludlow to give a careful discussion of the transcendental Thomism that undergirds Rahner's theology). She then discusses Gregory's understanding of humanity's return to paradise in the eschaton (chapter 2) along with his rationale for asserting universal salvation (chapter 3); as well as Rahner's view of the consummation of the individual life, resulting from a life lived in freedom (chapter 6) and his understanding of the eschaton as the consummation of our communal world history (chapter 7). Ludlow explains that Gregory bases his universalism both on his understanding of the nature of evil (whose finite character implies for Gregory that it cannot last forever) and on the unity of humanity (which cannot be sustained along with a dual final outcome). She argues that for Rahner, hope for universal salvation stems from the conviction that God communicates himself to every human being, since all have some apprehension (albeit perhaps merely un-thematic) of God. Rahner's controversial notion of 'anonymous Christianity' is thus closely intertwined with his belief that we may hope for universal salvation.

Ludlow concludes that the eschatologies of Gregory and Rahner are remarkably similar: (1) Gregory's notion of restoration (*apokatastasis*) and Rahner's idea of consummation (*Vollendung*) both imply a teleological understanding of the creation of human beings, for whom the image of God is only perfected in the eschaton; (2) both understand this fulfilment as the perfection of the salvation as it is experienced in this life—whether that fulfilment is described in terms of love and knowledge (Gregory) or as beatific vision (Rahner), so that for both, eternal salvation implies infinite movement within the mystery of God himself; (3) both take seriously the materiality of creation within the eschaton; and (4) both ultimately ground their expectation (Gregory) or hope (Rahner) of universal salvation in the overwhelming love of God (pp. 258–62). Ludlow is by no means blithe with respect either to the differences between the

two authors or to the problems inhering in their respective theologies. She rigorously interrogates both authors and highlights the problems she sees in both, as well as the possible ways of overcoming the difficulties she encounters. Although she highlights more of Rahner's than of Gregory's problems and inconsistencies, in the end she favours Rahner's more modest approach with regard to universalism (pp. 248, 277).

Ludlow's salutary study is not convincing on every point. Her assertion that Gregory's understanding of post-mortem purgation implies temporality in the eschaton (p. 261) requires at least more substantiation. While she may be quite right to try and resolve Gregory's dilemma between *apokatastasis* and free will by suggesting that in the afterlife people become most truly free since to be drawn into the life of God constitutes true freedom (pp. 110–11, 264), it is not clear to me that Gregory actually attempted such an Augustinian resolution. I am also not convinced that Rahner is inconsistent in holding both to election to salvation and to the possibility of hell and genuine free will (p. 186). Most importantly, it seems to me that Ludlow too quickly dismisses the Platonic tradition (and thus much at least of the form of Gregory's exegesis and theology) as out-of-date (pp. 238–40, 270–1). Consistently, she acknowledges that also Rahner's reliance on existentialism and transcendental Thomism may be dated (p. 271), and her understanding of doctrinal development demands a continual re-expression of Christian doctrine. Although she is clearly concerned not to lapse into relativism (p. 269), Ludlow's charting of a path for the future (pp. 270–7) remains rather tentative. While at one level this is entirely legitimate (prophetic insight hardly being a requirement for good theology), it would have been good to see a theological discussion as to why either Platonism or transcendental Thomism needs revision or dismissal. These comments notwithstanding, Ludlow's book will undoubtedly continue to be consulted both by students of Gregory and Rahner and by those interested in questions surrounding universal salvation. Both the careful analysis of the sources and the precision of the analysis give this study its abiding value.

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Ruth. By James McKeown. The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6385-0. x + 152pp. £14.99.

This publication dealing with one of the most loved books of the Old Testament contains four main sections. The Introduction deals with authorship, date, and purpose, as well as genre, story line and synopsis, and outline. The Commentary proper breaks the narrative into twenty

short segments. The Introduction and Commentary are followed by two further sections addressing the theology of the book. The first of these is entitled 'Theological Horizons', the second 'Theological Issues, Themes, and Approaches.'

McKeown assumes Ruth was written in the late pre-exilic or early post-exilic period. Its depiction of Bethlehem as a peaceful community contrasts markedly with the violence and lawlessness depicted by the Book of Judges as prevailing in the wider physical environment of the time. Another contrast is the presence of two women as the central characters in an ancient patriarchal society. The commentary highlights the narrator's ability to make readers feel part of the story and to communicate the emotions of the characters. McKeown is somewhat ambivalent about the purpose of Ruth. Was it written during the kingship period to support David and his dynasty? Or does it set out to present a sympathetic view of foreign women in an ethnocentric post-exilic Israel? For the author both possibilities are live options. He recognises that the genealogy at the close of the book exhibits an important Davidic motif. At the same time, McKeown freely acknowledges the new insights into the text highlighted by feminist writers. However, he is wary of attempts to interpret Ruth as a protest against Ezra and Nehemiah's treatment of foreign wives.

The verse-by-verse comments are non-technical and rich in content, as can be seen if we explore a four verse sample in chapter 1. The expositions there offered—of the Hebrew verb *paqad* in the phrase 'the Lord has visited his people' (1:6); of the important term *hesed* in 'May the Lord show kindness to you' (1:8); and of *menuhah* in 'find rest' (1:9) are all grist for the preacher's mill. This is no ivory tower commentary, for it repeatedly points to practical applications for today. One example is the comment relating to the triple tragedy that struck Naomi while in Moab: *viz*., — 'The absence of any explanation in the book of Ruth about why this family should suffer so much is one of the strengths of the story because it relates well to life as we know it; we do not always have answers when things go wrong' (p. 18).

The section 'Theological Horizons' highlights the linguistic relationship of Ruth to its canonical context particularly to Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Judges and the Books of Samuel. Ruth also plays an import role theologically. It is 'far from being an independent story,' and is 'a piece in the jigsaw puzzle of the overall message of the Bible' (p. 71). This section of the commentary contains insightful character studies of Elimelech, Orpah, Ruth, Naomi, Boaz and Boaz's foreman.

The concluding section of the commentary covers 'Theological Issues, Themes and Approaches'. Here McKeown sees *Ruth* as providing a framework for the following themes: the hiddenness of God, the topic of Land,

the land of Moab, redemption, universalism (as distinct from nationalism), feminist studies, and the book's missiological significance. On this final point, we are told that 'the concept of Israel's role as a witness to YHWH was an important issue in the book of Ruth, providing a contrast with the general picture given in the book of Judges' (p. 138). More specifically, against a background in which Moabites and Israelites killed each other, 'in the book of Ruth the Moabites provided food and shelter for an Israelite family, and the Israelites provided a secure home for a Moabite woman who embraced not only her Israelite mother-in-law but also her God' (p. 139).

For James McKeown Ruth is a story of faith, particularly the faith of Naomi and Ruth. Naomi's faith, despite being overwhelmed by tragedy (1:20–1), is rekindled when she asks Yahweh to bless Boaz for his great generosity to Ruth (2:20). For McKeown, this is 'a turning point in the book when the old woman's faith is rekindled and the bitterness against her God is beginning to dissipate' (p. 8). Ruth's faith journey was perhaps equally traumatic. Like Abraham, but in contrast to her sister-in-law, she turns her back on her family and the only world she knew. She chooses Yahweh instead of Chemosh (1:15). 'The book of Ruth is more than just a charming story' (p. 140) is one of McKeown's final comments. Read this excellent commentary and you will rediscover just how true that statement is.

Fergus Macdonald, Edinburgh

Equal to Rule: Leading the Jesus Way. Why Men and Women are Equal to Serve in Leadership in the Christian Church. By Trevor Morrow. Dublin: Columba Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-78218-149-1. 118 pp. £8.50.

This little book from the pen of a former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is written for those wrestling with the issue of gender equality in the church. Although it alludes to contemporary biblical scholarship, it is written for a popular church audience, and is a good example of writing theology at street level. The author takes a position that is at the same time both egalitarian and complementarian, or, as he puts it, women and men are 'equal, but not equivalent.'

Morrow argues that Adam and Eve were created to rule over creation individually, together and equally. Male headship, far from being a creation ordinance, is a consequence of the Fall (Gen. 2:16b). Examples of the postlapsarian subordination of women in the Old Covenant period are cited from the Hebrew Bible, the Deutero-canon and rabbinical Judaism. These indicate that 'a woman could be part of Israel only through her father or husband, or a brother, or son' (p. 33).

This situation changes dramatically in the Gospels which tell of Jesus according a new status to women enabling them to play an active role in his ministry. Helpful reference is made to Kenneth Bailey's identification of twenty-seven couplets in Luke of men and women being discipled together. However, the claim that when Mary of Bethany 'sat at the Lord's feet' (Luke 10:38–42) she was being trained to become a rabbi is surely less than robust. The relevance of this incident is rather that that in all likelihood Mary was being taught along with the disciples in a religious culture where rabbis were supposed never to speak to a woman in public and where teaching women was regarded as almost blasphemous.

The longest section in the book deals with four pastoral issues in the early church created by Jesus' affirmation of women. The author transitions into this section with the following paragraph: 'We need to understand that each of these situations emerged out of the apostolic Church seeking to live out the implications of the "new mankind" over against the Jewish, Greek and Roman world. These were real issues for the early Church only because they were doing things differently from the prevailing culture' (p. 43). The four issues identified are: marriage, worship, discipling, and electing to serve. The relevant Pauline passages are reviewed. There is a convincing argument that the headship of husbands (Eph. 5:22–24) does not give them authority over their wives. The submission of wives implies deference, not obedience, to husbands, for the passage is prefaced by an exhortation to 'submit to one another' (Eph. 5:21). Paul's other references to 'head' (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22–3; 4:15–16; Col. 1:18; 2:19) are most naturally understood as meaning source or origin rather than hierarchy of authority.

The texts highlighting the role of women in worship (1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2:8–15) are more complex. Morrow, like many others, understands them as situational rather than principial. In Corinth worship services had got out of control, so for order and mutual benefit Paul urges three groups of people to be quiet: tongue-speakers without an interpreter, prophets to speak one at a time, and women to stop chattering during worship. The Timothy passage is seen against the local dominance of the temple of Artemis where women ruled supreme.

The passages highlighting church office-bearers as men (1 Tim. 3:1–12 and Titus 1:7–9) are interpreted as reflecting the masculine language of all legal documents of the time which do not necessarily exclude reference to women. A comparison is made with OT divorce legislation which also has a male orientation, yet is interpreted by Jesus to cover women initiating divorce (Mark 10:12).

Although Trevor Morrow says he did not write this book to persuade those who hold a different view, it is nevertheless a persuasive piece of

work. It is written in an irenic spirit and with a firm commitment to Scriptural authority. While hopefully complementarians will respect the author's integrity and, like Agrippa on another issue, may even be 'almost persuaded' by the cogency of his case, no doubt some will think his argument is over-dependent on hypothetical features of first century social and cultural reality which lack specific reference in the text. Two further observations. First, a stronger emphasis on the nature of the epistles *per se* as documents naturally adapted to the special circumstances and particular needs of the first readers might have reinforced the exegesis offered. Second, the overall argument would have been strengthened by more elaboration of 'equal, but not equivalent' through, for example, exploring ways where the distinctive gifts of men and those of women are being (or might be) harmonised complementarily rather than disparately in local church ministry.

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God with Us: Divine Condescension and the Attributes of God. By K. Scott Oliphint. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-4335-0902-5. 302 pp. £13.99.

In *God with Us*, Scott Oliphint offers a modified approach to one of theology's oldest questions—if God is *a se* (from himself; in need of nothing outside of himself to be who he is), how do we understand his interaction with a finite, dependant creation? In articulating his reply to this question, Oliphint hopes to respond to the challenges offered by everyone from Peter Enns to Karl Barth to Clark Pinnock.

Critical to Oliphint's response is his distinction between God's 'essential properties' and his 'covenantal properties' (Oliphint uses 'properties' and 'attributes' synonymously; p. 13). First, Oliphint identifies aseity as God's core property and then describes other properties 'entailed by' (p. 17) that aseity (e.g. eternity, immutability). These attributes, since they pertain to God as God, Oliphint terms 'essential properties'. God's 'covenantal properties', conversely, pertain to God as he interacts with his creation. In Oliphint's argumentation, when the self-existent God created anything outside of himself, the resulting need for *ad extra* interactions and relations meant that God 'freely determined to take on attributes, characteristics, and properties that he did not have, and would not have, without creation' (p. 110) Since these properties are connected with God's condescending to create; and in keeping with the *Westminster Confession of Faith* 7.1 that God always has condescended by way of covenant; Oliphint categorises these properties as 'covenantal properties'. In any discussion of God and his interaction with creation, this distinction between

God's essential properties and his covenantal properties must be remembered.

To understand the interplay between essential and covenantal properties, Oliphint focuses on the quintessential instance of God's condescension—the incarnation. Oliphint argues that from the very first of creation, God has condescended to, and revealed himself to, the creation only in and through the Second Person of the Trinity. In the incarnation, this eternal Son of God took to himself permanently the sort of condescending, covenantal properties that he previously had adopted only partially and temporarily (p. 198). In Jesus Christ, then, we see how God is able to possess both essential and covenantal properties; remaining unchanged in his essence and yet interacting with, and even reacting to, his dependant creation (e.g. pp. 220–1).

Christ is Oliphint's paradigm for how the God who is *a se* interacts with his dependant creation. Oliphint concludes his work by demonstrating that paradigm's ability to address the two issues of the divine decree and God's providence.

In Oliphint's work, there is much that is helpful. Oliphint's presentation of aseity as God's central attribute is persuasive (chapter 1); his exegesis of Exodus 3 is compelling (pp. 52–62); his overall discussion of the divine attributes in chapter 1 is very strong; and his attention to several Christological issues in chapter 3 is well-handled at many points. In these areas, *God with Us* promises fruit to those who consider it.

Ultimately, however, several areas of Oliphint's work demand caution. For brevity, we will consider just two of them. First, Oliphint's notion of 'covenantal properties' contains the peculiar assumption that God's interaction with his creation 'entails that he take on properties that he otherwise would not have had' (p. 188; cf. p. 182). However, the problematic assumption that interaction, even if it is with a dependant creation, demands new properties seems, at the very least, to minimise the Triunity of God. God eternally has been all of his attributes in fellowship and communion with himself. Interacting with his creation therefore involves not the necessary adoption of additional properties, but rather the display *ad extra* of those properties which he always has displayed *ad intra*. For example, Oliphint classifies the wrath of God as a covenantal property (p. 187); something that God lacked prior to creation and added thereafter to relate to his (fallen) creation. This, however, seems a wrong understanding. God eternally has been righteous and just; and he eternally has been righteous and just in all of his 'interactions'. Each of the Persons of the Trinity eternally has treated the other Persons in accordance with their 'moral character'. Given the holiness of God, this righteousness and justice has meant an eternity of unbroken and blissful communion. When

that same, eternal righteousness and justice comes into contact with a fallen creation, the 'result' is divine wrath. However, that wrath is not a covenantal property that God has added; rather, it is the dependant creation coming into contact with the unchangeably righteous and just God (cf. Oliphint's discussion of 'vindictive justice' on pp. 216–17). God does not need to add properties; he is *a se*. What Oliphint classes as 'covenantal properties' seem often to be the character of God applied not among the Persons of the Trinity, but to a dependent and then fallen creation.

Secondly, Oliphint argues that all of God's revelation always has come through the Son (chapter 3). The Son has revealed all three Persons, but that revelation has always come via the Son. While this suggestion itself seems a bit precarious (for example, how does it account for instances such as Matthew 3:16–17; Acts 2:1–4?), the way in which Oliphint expounds it becomes problematic. As Oliphint argues, God always has condescended to interact with his creation through the Son's assumption of covenantal properties. This voluntary and limiting assumption of covenantal properties then reached its climax in the incarnation. While Oliphint repeatedly stipulates that the incarnation is *sui generis*, his notion of covenantal properties and his insistence that the Son has adopted them throughout history unavoidably diminishes the uniqueness of the incarnation (e.g. pp. 208–9). As Oliphint himself argues in his exegesis of Philippians 2, Scripture sees the *kenosis* of the Son as Christ 'becoming something that he was not previously' (p. 119) and it locates that *kenosis* uniquely in the incarnation. However, Oliphint's suggestion that the Son has adopted covenantal properties (thereby '[taking] on properties that he otherwise would not have had' [p. 188]) throughout the Old Testament unavoidably pushes this *kenosis* prior to the incarnation (e.g. p. 222). At the very least, Oliphint seems to be expanding the 'temporal' commencement of the Son's humiliation as defined in the Westminster Standards (WCF 8.2; WLC 46–50; WSC 27); something that those from confessional communions need to consider carefully.

God with Us is a stimulating and, at times, compelling work. However, it proves problematic due to its peculiar notion of covenantal properties and the manifold implications of those properties. The issues Oliphint considers are serious, but his solution is unsatisfying.

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Finding and Seeking: Ethics as Theology, Volume 2. By Oliver O'Donovan. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7187-9. 259 pp. £18.99.

This is the second volume of Oliver O'Donovan's *Ethics as Theology* project—see *SBET* 33.1 for articles on the first volume, *Self, World and Time* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013)—and the third is yet to come. O'Donovan ranges widely over Scripture and mainstream Christian tradition, as well as art and literature more generally. He provides here an account of moral agency and purpose but also of the possibility of Christian ethics or moral theology itself. For all of these reasons, this is a demanding book to read and even the learned reader will need to have time to understand and to reflect on the arguments in the book but also its general direction.

O'Donovan describes ethics or moral theology as distinct from moral thought, on the one hand, and from moral teaching, on the other. It offers, rather, systematic reflection on the concerns of each. In this volume his special concerns are to follow moral thought from self-awareness to decision and, secondly, to examine how we pursue moral ends.

There is sustained reflection on human agency and the freedom which it presupposes. This latter is not just emancipation from external constraint but it is living and acting in accordance with our true nature and that of the world we inhabit. Faith is seen here as the moral centre of personhood around which the other virtues cohere. An awareness of the moral law is not just making heteronomous law our own by a process of internalisation it is, rather, believing that a moral universe is seen uniquely in God's story of salvation, coming to a climax in Christ, and continuing in the Church. It is to accept as gift Christ's interpretation of the moral law, fulfilled in himself, and to live it with the help of the Spirit. God is faithful to the good he has made and that is why the divine command is to be obeyed. Christian ethics is 'realist' in that it believes we can make sense of the Universe but also in its acknowledgement of inherent goodness in creation, as well as its goodness for us. Such a recognition of the goodness of creation and the demands it makes on us is universalizable and is, thus, a vindication of monotheism.

O'Donovan is aware, of course, of the 'canker' in creation, that is the fact of evil. In line with much Christian thought, he sees this negatively as a privation of being. It is true that sin is often failing to 'hit the mark' and even sins of commission are often an attack on a good creation. In the light of world events, however, we must ask again about radical evil, about persons and wills, which really exist, which are completely contrary to the good purpose of the Creator. Sin cannot be confused with mere guilt,

which can be dealt with therapeutically, but with real wrongness which demands repentance and turning away from a course of action or style of life. Nor can this be only a 'one time' event at the beginning of the Christian life but a continual attitude which recognises our sinful nature and its consequences—even in the justified person.

There is considerable polemic against Anders Nygren's polarisation of *agape* and *eros*. O'Donovan does not believe that first century usage justifies such polarisation. He does agree, however, that distinctions among types of love are 'inevitable', as long as they are used flexibly. O'Donovan agrees also that whatever needs to be said about ethics can be said in terms of love. But he points out that there are different kinds of love; our love of God, which flows out from him and returns to him, the natural love of a child for his or her mother, 'erotic' love which desires the good as seen in a person or object and what he calls, after St. Augustine, 'corrupt love', love which has gone wrong and seeks to love persons and things in ways not intended by God and contrary to how creation is meant to be.

Rejecting various reductive ideologies as a basis for knowledge, he takes the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a touchstone or vantage point which illumines the goods of the universe and their meaning. A fallen world, at odds with its own logic, is reconciled in the paradigm of the resurrection. In Christ, we find the representative moment that makes the whole course of the world intelligible and salvific; to know would not be enough. We need also to see its value for us. We find testimony to this event by the Father and the Spirit at the baptism of Jesus. Jesus testifies to it at his trials, both Jewish and Roman. There is then the special testimony of Scripture which must be read reverently and 'with the grain' rather than with suspicion. It is true that all reading is interpretation but interpretation from the pulpit and the commentary are necessary for any adequate reading of Scripture, even if the text already contains within it what these bring out. One question, which is mentioned, but which could have been tackled at greater length because of its contemporary relevance, is that of authoritatively declaring the faith of the Church in this or that circumstance. How is it to be done? Who will do it? Are the faithful bound to receive it?

The final volume in this series will be about the eschatological dimension of ethics. It is fitting, therefore, that this volume should point us in that direction with its discussion on hope. The theological virtue of hope is not just about political or social programmes, though it may impact upon them. It is not about progress, as such, but about *promise*. It is, as Peter Berger has pointed out, about the vindication of goodness and of the good. It *is* a basis for acting but always directing our action towards the

Kingdom of Heaven. It looks towards the decisive completion of faith and hope in love, the basis of creation and the story of our redemption.

This is not an easy book to read but it repays careful study and, if not providing all the answers to contemporary moral issues, it shows us how to ask the right questions and where to look for the right answers.

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Faith, Freedom, and the Spirit: The Economic Trinity in Barth, Torrance and Contemporary Theology. By Paul D. Molnar. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8308-3905-6. 448 pp. £26.30.

The debate over Karl Barth's actualistic ontology continues. One side of the debate maintains that, in Barth's theology, God is act-in-being and being-in-act, such that his economic acts of reconciliation toward creatures are a true revelation of who he eternally is in his immanent life. The second side argues that Barth's theology is primed for a more radical development: an understanding of God's electing act as logically prior to and constitutive of his eternal Triune being. At the heart of the debate is disagreement over how far Barth was (or should have been) willing to go in his destabilization and deconstruction of traditional Western Christian substance metaphysics.

Paul Molnar belongs to the former side of the debate. His contention in this volume is that the post-Barthian developments of the second side undermine God's freedom. For readers new to the debate that claim might seem counter-intuitive, as the second side of the debate posits a logically anterior free act of election. Divine free activity is so emphatic in this view that classic dogmatic terms may be verbalized, e.g. God 'triunes' himself (p. 175), and there is a divine act of 'essence-ing' (p. 248). However, Molnar observes that, if God's being is constituted by his election to be in covenant with creatures, then he is not truly sovereign and free. Rather, creation is necessary for divine existence and self-fulfilment. God subsists in 'a mutually constitutive relationship with us,' which collapses the creator-creature distinction (p. 285).

Perhaps Molnar's most illuminating claim is that the aforementioned collapse undermines a proper view of the role that faith plays in our knowledge of the Trinity. In the first chapter, Molnar emphasizes that 'faith does indeed involve our experience of God, but in that experience we know that it is God and not our experience of God who is the object of faith and of knowledge' (p. 22). The second chapter then relates epistemology and pneumatology, arguing on the basis of the creator-creature

distinction that faith is a miracle wrought by the Holy Spirit rather than a self-originated human act.

Molnar revisits this argument when he charges that Bruce McCormack, the leading proponent of the second side of the debate, 'allows events in history to determine who God is in eternity' (p. 284), thus forcing the church's theology to be founded 'on its experiences or ideas' of a God who 'ultimately becomes indistinguishable from history and so is no longer recognizable as the basis of our human freedom' (pp. 295–6). In attempting 'to eradicate the type of metaphysical thinking he believes led Barth to assert that the Word would still be the Word without the incarnation, McCormack ends up substituting an abstract metaphysics for the revelation of God in Jesus Christ' (p. 282). That critique will no doubt be controversial among those sympathetic to McCormack's view who hold that actualistic ontology is not a metaphysical system, but rather an attempt to pursue a theological methodology which carries in its soul the power of the Gospel to interrupt all our attempts to box God within metaphysical categories. In other words, post-Barthian actualism is not the establishment of a new ontology but the undermining of ontological speculation. Yet the question that Molnar poses—as to whether such attempts have not in fact formed a historicized metaphysic that imprisons God's being in his economic activity towards us—is not to be easily dispensed with. Molnar rightly observes that 'this is the heart of the matter' (p. 282), and the argument that builds to this point throughout the book is comprehensive and persuasive.

In the third chapter, Molnar responds to the various proposals of Benjamin Myers, Kevin Hector, Paul Dafydd Jones, and Paul Nimmo, arguing that each ultimately reduces God to a deity dependent upon his creation. The relation between time and eternity is discussed in chapter four, and Molnar argues for Thomas F. Torrance's understanding of a 'before and after' in the divine life which secures the newness of God's acts of creation and incarnation. This leads into the fifth chapter's comparison of Torrance's dynamic Christology with the historicized Christology of Robert Jenson and McCormack. In chapter six, Molnar defends Barth against McCormack's claims that there are inconsistencies between his doctrine of election and Christology. Molnar then in the seventh chapter follows Torrance in taking Barth to task for a different inconsistency, i.e. the introduction of an element of subordinationism in the Trinity via his understanding of the obedience of the Son. Lastly, in chapter eight, Molnar explores what true human freedom in relation to the being and activity of God looks like. Such freedom, Molnar concludes, 'is the freedom to live by the grace of God,' and 'to live by grace means literally to surrender ourselves to God in Christ' (pp. 428-29).

Molnar's argumentation is clear, perspicacious, and spirited. However, the material is dense and the chapters are each ambitious in scope. Readers who have little prior familiarity with the nuances of this debate may be overwhelmed by the material. Nonetheless, for any scholar interested in the thought of Karl Barth or the theology of the Trinity, Molnar's work deserves careful consideration.

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Revelation as Testimony: A Philosophical-Theological Study. By Mats Wahlberg. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6988-3. x + 256 pp. £12.99.

In *Revelation as Testimony*, Swedish Catholic theologian Mats Wahlberg offers a compelling and erudite retrieval of the premodern contention that revelation is best understood as God's testimony about himself to his creatures. At issue for Wahlberg is whether Christians can *know* that God exists, or at least be rationally justified in their belief that he exists. His central claim is that, contrary to the sensibility of many contemporary theologians, propositional revelation and a 'potent' natural theology are the only avenues to knowledge of God's existence. He contends negatively that understanding revelation as manifestational only is insufficient to provide rational justified belief in the existence of God. In service of contemporary theological discourse, Wahlberg attempts to revamp testimony as an epistemological category capable itself of being a viable source of knowledge. Combining philosophical precision and theological alertness, he lucidly grounds, develops, and applies the idea of revelation as testimony.

Wahlberg devotes his first substantive chapter (chapter two) to discussing the role of propositions in manifestational and propositional accounts of revelation. Despite the common assumption, the difference between these two kinds of models does not consist in the presence or absence of propositions, but rather in the *means* of revelation. Manifestational revelation discloses knowledge about something by means of a 'natural sign of the actuality revealed' (p. 29). Wahlberg provides the example of a man whose identity is revealed from behind a curtain. The man himself is the reality and his visual appearance is the natural sign. Propositional revelation discloses information through linguistic entities (e.g., words and sentences).

While Wahlberg affirms the intuition of modern theology that revelation encompasses more than information, he refutes the common claim that it can be less than information-giving. Subsequently, he addresses the Kantian challenge facing modern theology, which was more recently

picked up by Gordon Kaufman: a human subject cannot obtain knowledge of God because she cannot justifiably pick out an object within her experience *as* the infinite God of theism—'a necessary and all-sufficient original being' (p. 43)—through perception, memory, or inference. The consequence of this problem is, according to Wahlberg, that these standard sources of knowledge cannot deliver knowledge of God as God.

In chapter three, Wahlberg aims to dismantle accounts of revelation are manifestational to the exclusion of linguistic entities. He examines merely manifestational accounts including four models previously outlined by Avery Dulles in his *Models of Revelation* (1983)—namely, 'Revelation as History', 'Revelation as Inner Experience', 'Revelation as Dialectical Presence', and 'Revelation as New Awareness'—and two prominent postliberal accounts. With the principal aim of convincing his reader that these theories are insufficiently flat and are in every case dependent upon the use of linguistic entities, Wahlberg disproves their capacity to provide knowledge without any use of linguistic entities. In other words, Wahlberg substantiates the need for divine linguistic testimony—'the idea that God transmits knowledge of himself by speaking' (p. 102).

Wahlberg, in chapter four, draws from Nicholas Wolterstorff's *Divine Discourse* (1995) to explain one possibility for what it might *mean* to say that God speaks. God could speak through double-agency discourse by authorizing or appropriating human speech, such that he is the divine author of the biblical canon: God performs illocutionary acts through the locutions of the human authors, yet without suspending the will and mind of the human authors. For God to make use of double agency Wahlberg suggests that God must at some point have performed a locutionary act by which he deputized or appropriated the divine discourse found in the Bible, yet he provides multiple potential avenues by which God could perform the illocutionary act. Having proposed an account of God speaking, Wahlberg moves on in chapters five and six to address the question of how one might verify the veridicality of an instance of God speaking.

Chapter five outlines and defends John McDowell's 'anti-reductionist view of testimonial knowledge' according to which testimony is a viable source of knowledge, not reducible to smaller parts such as memory, perception, and inference. In following McDowell's scheme, Wahlberg adopts an externalism that accords a meaningful role to the external world in the justification of beliefs. Testimonial knowledge is dependent on external factors, much the same way as knowledge formed on the basis of memory or perception. Perceptions must be accurate to justify true belief; testimony works similarly. To believe a falsehood on the basis of testimony may appear the same as believing a truthful report. However, despite appearances, the truthful report gives the believing subject more

justification than the false report. The reliability of testimony must be determined by 'an exercise of rationality,' which requires that a person evaluate testimony in light of relevant background knowledge (p. 139). This epistemic requirement is the practice of 'doxastic responsibility'. Practicing doxastic responsibility is a negative but necessary condition for justifiably believing testimony. It involves applying rational sensitivity by considering whether the testifying subject is untrustworthy or the testimony itself is doubtful. However, doxastic responsibility is a necessary, but not sufficient condition, for the informant's testimony must actually supply knowledge for belief in the testimony to be justified.

Chapter six addresses how a human person could identify divine speech mediated through human lips. Doxastic responsibility is a precondition for the acquisition of justified testimonial belief, but the justification itself lies in the knowledge and truthfulness of the informant. There is, contends Wahlberg, a scenario in which a prophet such as Jesus could testify to speaking in the name of God—representing God who knows such things and relaying a divine assertion—and thereby express knowledge. Provided one has background knowledge about Jesus which suggests that he is not fraudulent, as one might expect of a person making such a claim, but a truthful, reliable person, then it seems one could responsibly believe his testimony. In the case of Jesus, the disciples witnessed the miracles he performed and the post-resurrection appearances he made. This background information allowed them to be doxastically responsible in their belief about Jesus' testimony that he spoke in the name of God. Wahlberg's claim concerning the function of miracles is not that they can themselves make belief in Jesus' claim about speaking in God's name doxastically responsible, but that within the context of Jesus' life and teaching in addition to Old Testament prophecy they can provide the requisite defeater for equitable suspicions about a person who claims to speak for God.

Chapter seven assesses whether the Gospels can provide modern persons with knowledge of Jesus. He argues that there is a plausible position within New Testament Studies that supports a reading of the Gospels as testimony to the life and teaching of Jesus such that it is doxastically responsible to read them as such, for there is no positive reason according to which the Gospel's '*general* portrait' about Jesus should not be trusted (p. 177). Contra Hume, Wahlberg argues that some miracle reports could be responsibly believed. The Gospels' testimony about the resurrection of Jesus is Wahlberg's paragon of such a miracle report. He argues for doxastic responsibility in belief about the Gospels' testimony to Jesus' resurrection on the basis of historical studies, the growth of the Church, and the beauty of the Christian message, contending that the actual historical

occurrence of the resurrection is the best possible explanation for these phenomena.

In chapter eight, Wahlberg claims that the kind of knowledge he has argued Christians can have on the basis of testimony is in keeping with the way that faith has been conceived in the Christian tradition. The central thrust of this claim is that as in the Christian tradition, this testimonial account of knowledge is reliant upon trust, such that cognitive assent and trust are inseparable components of a person's knowledge of God. Finally, Wahlberg concludes that his testimonial account of knowledge avoids both fideism and the modern pitfall of holding God's revelation to a prior independent criterion of rational justification. To these two modern shareholders, Wahlberg asserts that the 'ground' or justification of testimonial knowledge is reliable testimony *per se*.

Wahlberg's fine manuscript has two weaknesses worth mentioning. The first is that Wahlberg pays only fleeting attention to the doctors of the Church who putatively support his account. The second drawback is the lack of attention to how the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit functions in the process of forming knowledge of God.

Wahlberg's cogent account of revelation has brought philosophy and theology together in exemplary fashion, drawing on some of contemporary philosophy's keenest insights to answer some of theology's most penetrating questions. This is evident in the way he combines classic statements from various figures within the Christian tradition (e.g., Aquinas, Calvin, *et al*) together with twentieth-century analytic philosophy, both to combat the recent denial of propositional revelation by Barthian and postliberal theologians and to construct a fresh account of revelation as testimony. Some of Wahlberg's foremost contributions include his bold *apologia* for propositional revelation, his argument for testimony as its own viable source of knowledge, and his engagement with miracles and testimony. *Revelation as Testimony* reminds theologians and philosophers alike that revelation requires no external justification, for it bears the sufficient conditions to justify belief in the God of Christian faith.

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The Real God for the Real World. By John McClean. Summer Hill, Australia: Gospel Groundwork, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-922110-10-7. 236 pp. $20 AUD, £4.99 eBook.

Most readers of *SBET* will agree that there is a crying need today for good resources to train Christians to think biblically and theologically. In an age when there are so many pressures in an unhelpful direction, not least diary pressures curtailing for many the time available for in-depth read-

ing, this short and well-written book meets a clear need very successfully. It is designed for use either as a course for small groups or for individual study. It could also form the basis of a preaching series on basic doctrines for new or young Christians given its wealth of pointers for illustration and application.

A short overview with helpful Notes for Leaders is followed by nine chapters covering the major doctrines. The book is mainly based on Colossians, with plentiful other biblical references as appropriate. Rather than the traditional approach of beginning with either God or the Bible, McClean starts with a chapter helpfully anchoring all subsequent discussion in the Gospel of redemption: 'The real God saves the real world.' While the subject matter of subsequent chapters is traditional (God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Bible, Creation, Church, Last Things and Christian Living), the imaginative and appealing titles for each chapter will get past the radar of those who are unfamiliar with doctrine and its terminology, particularly those with little or no Christian background. Thus the Holy Spirit chapter is 'God in us: life in the Spirit', Creation is 'The good world of the good God' and the Last Things is 'Sure hope for God's future.'

Selected further reading is provided at the end of each chapter: relevant sections of Bruce Milne's *Know the Truth* (3rd edn; IVP, 2009) and Michael Horton's *Pilgrim Theology* (Zondervan, 2011) are supplemented by two topic-specific works—for example Christopher Ash's *Marriage: Sex in the Service of God* (IVP, 2003) in the chapter on Creation, and Kevin DeYoung's *Taking God at his Word* (Crossway, 2014) in the chapter on Scripture ('God's Trustworthy Word'). Other recommendations include works by Don Carson, Tim Chester, Edmund Clowney, Graham Cole, Sinclair Ferguson, Timothy Ward, David Wilkinson, N. T. Wright and John Stott. Matters on which there is disagreement among Christians, such as the different views on origins (p. 133) and the millennium (p. 199), are rehearsed briefly but fairly in highlighted panels. Concerning the former topic, dogmatism is avoided both on timescales and on the relation of science to the Bible, and a helpful distinction is made between science and scientism (p. 134). A literal Adam is argued for because of the implications for salvation of the relation of Adam to Christ in Romans 5. Similar panel treatment is provided for matters on which orthodox belief is under attack and on which believers need to be increasingly well-briefed, for example 'Is Jesus' death the suffering of an innocent third party?' (p. 58) and questions of the canon of Scripture (p. 118), sovereign grace (p. 80) and hell (p. 184).

Theology in this volume is happily characterised by being an activity for doers and not merely hearers of the word. A relevant item of praise is given at the end of each chapter. All but one of these is drawn from

classic traditional hymns, the one exception being Graham Kendrick's christologically-robust *Meekness and Majesty* in the chapter 'Jesus Christ: fully God and fully man'. The choices of praise are sound, but with good scripture-based modern songs being rather more common today than a decade or two ago perhaps more of a balance between old and new might have been reached.

Perhaps the most surprising inclusion in a book of such modest length is that it provides an excellent beginner's guide to historical theology, using in each chapter excerpts from original writings helpfully placed in context by a brief historical and theological introduction. The various sections are entitled 'From the Treasure Chest' and subtitled by topic. The brief excerpts quoted are worth listing in full to get a flavour of their historical range and theological breadth and depth: the Heidelberg Confession (Question 1 on our only comfort in life and death); Augustine's *Confessions* (four paragraphs on God the Father); Athanasius and the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople; Calvin on union with Christ (*Institutes* III.i.1); Luther on Scripture (*Theses* nos. 64-68); Irenaeus on the goodness of creation (*Against Heresies* IV.11.2 and V.21.1); Newbigin on the Church (*The Household of God*, Friendship Press, 1954, pp. 162-64); Jonathan Edwards' *Heaven is a World of Love*; and Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship* (SCM, 1959). Carefully-chosen questions on each passage feature in the various chapters under boxed and numbered exercises, and at the end of the book there is a five-page bibliography.

Clearly a work of this length has its limitations. But given the constraints of space, it is remarkable that the author has managed to compress such a wealth of theological riches into such brief compass, and to introduce reflection on classical theological sources and appropriate items of praise along with an exposition of the main biblical doctrines—without dumbing down. If you are looking for a practical and accessible resource to get people launched in the right direction while whetting their appetite for more, then this book is well worth considering.

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The Son of God Beyond the Flesh: A Historical and Theological Study of the extra Calvinisticum. By Andrew M. McGinnis. London & New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-5676-5579-0. 240 pp. £65.

Andrew McGinnis contributes a substantial monograph in the area of historical and systematic Christology. He explores a fairly underdeveloped doctrine in contemporary literature called the *extra Calvinisticum*. He makes a significant contribution to Reformed Christology by explic-

itly linking it to ancient Christianity, showing its historical development, and showing the link to contemporary theology.

Extra Calvinisticum is the view that Christ, in his divinity, exists and acts beyond the boundaries of his human nature. McGinnis begins by rooting the discussion in ancient and medieval literature, e.g., Cyril of Alexandria and Thomas Aquinas (chapters 2–3). He thoughtfully traces the doctrine through the Reformation and Lutheran discussions on the *communicatio idiomatum* concerning Christ and the Lord's Supper (chapters 4–5). And, he discusses the decline of interest during the modern/enlightenment period (chapter 6). Finally he shows how it is that recent contemporaries have taken up the discussion once again in fresh ways, and, offers some concluding thoughts on the *extra*. In what follows, I mention some of the highlights and toward the end I address one very minor way in which the book might have been strengthened.

First, McGinnis motivates the discussion by showing that the *extra Calvinisticum* begins not with Calvin (as is commonly assumed) but finds traction in the patristics and the medievals, hence he makes a useful historical contribution. Whilst *extra Calvinisticum* may be linguistically novel in the context of Reformation and Lutheran discussions, it is conceptually present much earlier.

Second, McGinnis thoughtfully situates his study in the seventeenth century discussions on the Lord's Supper. A deeply involved question emerges during this time between Lutherans and Protestants regarding the location of Christ's body. Lutherans affirm the notion that Christ's body shares in divine properties, hence Christ's body is capable of multiple locations. Reformers by way of contrast, since Calvin, have strongly rejected this sharing of divine properties with human properties. Reformers distinguish Christ's properties in his divinity from his humanity—lending itself to the heresy of Nestorianism that affirms the assumption of a human person—at least according to Lutherans. McGinnis shows how this heated discussion, while vibrant in the seventeenth century, is on its way out in the modern era.

The shift from vibrant discussions of the *extra* to little to no discussions occurs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because of the Church's movement toward ecumenism and the avoidance of doctrinal dissension, this is the third highlight (see chapter 6). All hope is not lost says McGinnis, however. There are traces of hope as seen in a variety of contemporary renovations and revivals of the doctrine (chapter 7).

Karl Barth and Helmut Thielicke represent the most significant contributors to the discussion—this is the fourth highlight. McGinnis shows that Barth, while carefully situated in the Reformation, affirms the distinction of both the divine and human natures of Christ, yet Barth sug-

gests (motivated by Lutheran concerns) that Christ's human nature can exist beyond what is normally construed in human ontology. Christ's humanity exhibits distinct properties in virtue of the incarnation, yet all the while maintaining his humanity. Barth explains that Christ's humanity shares in Christ's divine location of sitting at the right hand of God the Father. And, in virtue of our union with Christ's body, we too share in his assumption of the throne. This is a unique constructive development, which opens up new theological *vistas*. Thielicke, too, advances the discussion in unique and interesting ways, yet, arguably, extends the doctrine too far. He applies the *extra* to a variety of doctrinal *loci* (e.g., ecclesiology and epistemology). McGinnis rightly notes that such an expansion is unhelpfully beyond the boundaries of what the Reformers originally conceived as a Christological concern (p. 189). Having said this, I suggest that the critique of Thielicke should not exclude additional reflection on the *extra* as it applies to other doctrines.

Whilst it is difficult to criticise McGinnis's fine work, the reader may note one desirable that is, arguably, lacking in his study. McGinnis stops short of taking an additional step to show in what ways the constructive theologian might develop the doctrine in contemporary thought. What he does is show how the *extra* has been used by the Reformation tradition. He suggests that the Reformation use of the doctrine establishes the boundary markers for additional reflection. In making this point he offers no further reflection beyond the limits of *extra* as developed by the Reformers. Beyond these limits, he suggests nothing constructively novel. However, a constructive theologian might consider the connection between the *extra* as applied to other doctrines such as ecclesiology.

Leaving aside this minor suggestion, McGinnis offers the theological community an excellent monograph in an already respected series on systematic theology. He is clear, careful, measured, rich, and he establishes the foundation for additional research. *The Son of God Beyond the Flesh* deserves a wide readership by historical and systematic theologians.

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Traces of the Trinity: Signs of God in Creation and Human Experience. By Peter J. Leithart. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-4412-2251-0. 177 pp. £10.99.

I really enjoyed this slim volume from the pen of Peter Leithart. It is an imaginative and thought-provoking piece of work, which stands loosely in the ancient *vestigia trinitatis* tradition. Like other works in this tradition, its basic premise is that God the Creator has left traces of his handiwork within creation and so the book encourages us to look for traces of

the artist in his work of art. However, there the similarity ends. Many exercises in seeking vestiges of God in creation are essentially exercises in natural theology: such vestiges are taken to be evidence for the existence of God. By contrast, Leithart is more interested in looking at the world with the eye of faith.

Specifically, Leithart latches on to perichoresis or coinherence—allegedly the most abstract concept of Trinitarian theology—and looks systematically for traces of such mutual indwelling in creation. The result is an extended meditation on the importance of relationality in the created order.

Beginning with our relationship with the things around us, he calls into question modernity's emphasis on things at the expense of their interconnectedness, for example reminding us that a hammer is only a meaningless lump of metal and wood when abstracted from its appropriate environment in the hand of a craftsman. More generally, creatures only make sense when seen in their appropriate environments, in the network of relationships that gives them meaning.

In Chapter 2 he turns to interpersonal relationships, criticizing in passing the individualism that has been such a feature of Western society for the last couple of centuries. Perhaps he could have lingered slightly longer over friendships (e.g. C. S. Lewis's remarks on the death of Charles Williams could have been expanded helpfully in this context), but it is a short book and so he moves quickly on in Chapter 3 to sexual relationships.

The next three chapters offer a change of direction, moving from the social world to the world of the intellect. First he explores our perception of temporality, which he presents as a mutual indwelling of past and future in the present. In Chapter 5, he turns his attention to the nature of language, emphasizing the interpenetration and interdependence of ideal and sensible. And Chapter 6 brings together time and human expression in an exploration of the perichoretic nature of music.

Having thus traced the outlines of a perichoretic ontology, Leithart asks in Chapter 7 how this way of looking at the world informs ethics. He argues that such an ontology implies an ethics of loving openness to the other rather than a deontological or a situational ethics. Chapter 8 explores the practical implications for human and specifically Christian existence of suggesting that rationality is itself perichoretic. This leads him to re-present several well-known binary oppositions, including liberal versus conservative and divine foreknowledge versus human freedom, in terms of mutual dependence. Given the brevity of the volume, he can do no more than hint at ways forward, but the material is certainly

thought-provoking. The final chapter, 'I in Thee, Thou in Me', is a discussion of perichoresis in light of John 17.

The whole might be seen as an exercise in relational Trinitarianism, which is sometimes misleadingly referred to as social Trinitarianism and dismissed as tritheistic. But Leithart is not about to take such misrepresentation lying down. A concluding appendix offers a brief defence of the kind of Trinitarianism promoted by the likes of Colin Gunton.

The book is easy to read and written in a popular style with a minimum of footnotes, but there is nothing simplistic about it. It amounts to a profound devotional exercise in learning to look at the world through a Trinitarian lens. As such it ought to be compulsory reading for undergraduate theologians about to embark on a study of the Trinity. Equally it could be mined by clergy and Christian educators seeking material to enable congregations to begin to grasp some of the implications of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Lawrence Osborn, Glasgow

Unashamed Workmen: How Expositors Prepare and Preach. Edited by Rhett Dodson. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-78191-319-2. 256 pp. £11.99.

The purpose of Rhett Dodson's *Unashamed Workmen* is to provide a number of different methods and styles of sermon preparation. Each of the ten contributors writes two chapters. In the first, the writer outlines and explains how he writes sermons. The detail provided here not only explains the methodology, but also explores how the individual fits this task within the wider work of leading a church or other Christian community. This is followed by an exemplar sermon, the purpose of which is to show how the methodology is 'put into practice'.

In his preface Dodson explains the book is intended for both experienced and inexperienced preachers. For those with little experience, 'my prayer is that these chapters will inspire you to cultivate a systematic way to pursue your studies' (p. 15). To others with experience and an established routine, 'I hope that you will find ways here to improve your preparation process or, at the very least, be inspired to work harder at the task' (p. 15). This book goes some way to achieving all that Dodson hopes it would, but does have some limitations.

The chapters which focus on the methodology employed by individual preachers contain some helpful tips and pointers with regard to preparing a sermon. Each contributor writes from within his own context (all the contributors are male). These contexts range from leading a local church (in a variety of geographical locations), to being involved in international

ministries. This, added to the fact that each writer comes with his own set of preferences and approaches, leads to a wide variety of chapters, each containing some useful ideas as to how one might write a sermon.

Equally helpful is the fact that each of the contributors is currently engaged in some form of full-time pastoral ministry. These authors not only explain their approach to writing and shaping a sermon, but also explain how this task fits within the wider framework of pastoral ministry. This ranges from fitting sermon preparation and writing into a 'normal' week of leading a church, to how one can appropriately use pastoral experience to inform and develop points within the sermon.

There is, however, one main issue with the chapters on methodology, and this stems from the fact that all the contributors share a common commitment as the book's subtitle suggests—an expository style of preaching. Commitment to expository preaching is not the issue. Rather it is that each contributor, obviously writing independently from all the others, goes to some lengths in their chapter to outline why they are committed to expository preaching, the underlying principles of expository preaching, and how to prepare an expository sermon (within the style of their own methodology). Outlining this is not inherently bad, nor is the fact that each contributor states it in his own terms. It does, however, create a sense of repetition which can, at times, become distracting. The reader can sometimes feel it necessary to read through the same material again and again in order to find the unique tips and guidelines regarding how individual preachers prepare their sermon. Ploughing through these similar sections can be worthwhile, as the unique perspective of each preacher is valuable, but feels time consuming.

There is one other danger about which inexperienced preachers need to be aware. While it can be helpful to read about how others prepare sermons, and there are some useful pieces of advice throughout the book, there may be a temptation to 'carbon copy' a method which has particular resonance. While there is no explicit warning against this in the book, there are hints (an example being p.15, quoted above) that the purpose of this work is not to provide outlines as to how sermon preparation should be done. What it does is provide a stimulus or sounding board which can be used to refine our own personal the method of sermon preparation.

The inclusion of an exemplar sermon is helpful. It allows contributors to demonstrate their methods, and allows readers to see how the preacher moves from a particular text to a finished sermon. Unfortunately this is somewhat artificial because this is a sermon script being read, not a sermon being delivered. Delivery of a sermon is an integral part of the process, and this will always be missing when a sermon text is read rather than preached.

Another slight issue here is the fact that it is not always obvious how the contributor used his method to go from text to sermon. It sometimes takes some careful deduction on the part of the reader to see how the steps were employed in putting the sermon together.

Overall, and despite some of the issues identified in this review, this is a useful and helpful book which gives some insight into the variety of methods which can be employed when writing an expository sermon. The gems of advice present in this are well worth mining through the relatively repetitive material. The exemplar sermons often show how these methods work, but even when this is not completely clear; it is still edifying to read another's take on the Word of God.

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Early Evangelicalism: A Reader. Edited by Jonathan M. Yeager. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-19-991697-9. 404 pp. £23.49.

Persons concerned to gain familiarity with the many 'voices' of the eighteenth-century revival of religion known in the United Kingdom as the 'Evangelical Revival' and in North America as the 'Great Awakening' have not lacked the means to do so. Among the prepared anthologies containing documents and voices, already made available over the past half-century, are those of Perry Miller, who with Alan Heimert prepared *The Great Awakening* (1967). This was a work compiled by literary scholars. Within two years of the appearance of that volume, the historian of American religion, Richard L. Bushman, edited a somewhat more selective collection, *The Great Awakening: Documents on the Revival of Religion 1740-1745* (1969). The strength of these was the assemblage of documents; there was minimal historical commentary added. Both collections can still readily be obtained.

Yet the publishing world deemed that there was still room for further entries into this field. Thus, by 2008 there appeared a new and compact anthology edited by the now widely-respected historian of early American Christianity, Thomas S. Kidd. Having written a standard volume on the era of revival, *The Great Awakening* (2007) as well as its precursor, *The Protestant Interest: New England after Puritanism* (2004), Kidd produced *The Great Awakening: A Brief History with Documents*. The latter volume, while the slenderest of the three anthologies named, proceeded in a new and beneficial direction by its supplying a compact historical account of the era of religious awakening which precedes the document collection, and all in a mere 156 pages. Was there anything left still to be attended to? There was indeed, and Jonathan M. Yeager, Associate Professor of Reli-

gion in the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga has aimed at filling what, over time, has been recognized as a significant lacunae.

The last twenty five years have seen not only unabated interest in the era of eighteenth century religious awakening (with fresh biographies on many of the leading figures of the period) but an unprecedented attention to the international and transatlantic manifestations of what is now recognized to be a widespread movement expressing itself in central Europe, Saxony, the Low Countries, Britain, the then-thirteen American colonies and early Canada. This was demonstrated especially through such writings of the late R. W. Ward (1925–2010) as *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (1992) and *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History* (2006). Two volumes generated by the former Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals (Wheaton), *Amazing Grace* (1993) and *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies* (1994) also drew attention to the fact that international currents of Protestant awakening moved across boundaries and oceans through migrant preachers and their flocks, peripatetic evangelists, and a print culture which made possible the bidirectional circulation of news and views between South India and Halle, between London, Boston and New York.

This expansion of research has necessitated a different approach to the study of the period of awakening in the eighteenth century. Every anthology previously available, from Miller-Heimert, through Bushman and Kidd provided documents pertaining solely to the 'new world'. The curious on the other side of the Atlantic were left to fend for themselves in gathering pertinent sources—of which there is no well-known collection in existence.

What does Yeager offer, never before available within a single set of covers? He provides a collection of documents which as to their geographic range and chronological sweep goes far beyond anything previously available to us. And each document is prefaced by sufficient biographical detail about the particular 'voice' from the awakening era to enable the reader to place the document (and the one who generated it) in the larger context of the times. A few examples will buttress this assertion.

A collection of this kind would, of course, be expected to offer us excerpts from the writings or sermons of a Jonathan Edwards, a David Brainerd, a George Whitfield and a John Wesley. But the Yeager collection includes the voices of von Zinzendorf, the Saxon leader of the Moravians (or United Brethren), of Howell Harris of Wales, and James Robe of Kilsyth, Scotland. Female voices are well-represented: one encounters Susanna Anthony, Sarah Prince Gill, Sarah Osborn and Hannah More (to name but a few). We have a contemporary account of Protestant religious awakening in the Low Countries, at Cambuslang, Scotland as well

as among African Americans in Virginia. Here too we find other than homiletical documents illustrating the concern in the era of awakening to inculcate virtuous conduct, to develop devotional habits, and to advocate for humanitarian causes such as the abolition of slavery. The selections extend also into the period at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries, so that we hear the voices of John Newton, William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson, the pioneer missionary William Carey and Yale president, Timothy Dwight. Four pages of helpful bibliography for further reading round out the collection.

The availability of such a superior anthology will surely require those who teach this material to expand the scope of their instruction, perhaps in tandem with the IVP volume of Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: the Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (2004). Thanks to editor, Yeager, and the past quarter-centuries profusion of research about religious awakening as an international and transatlantic phenomenon, we must stand back and observe that the patterns of God's working in that time extend much farther than we had ever thought.

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Reading Koine Greek: An Introduction and Integrated Workbook. By Rodney J. Decker. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8010-3928-7. xxxi + 672 pp. £32.95.

Despite all kinds of challenges, the task of learning New Testament Greek it is still a fundamental part of theological education. And rightly so. There is, therefore, still a market for introductory textbooks on Greek grammar. There have been many developments, however, in approaches to teaching Greek since the days when every Greek student knew the name 'Wenham'. There have also been significant developments in the way in which scholars understand the Greek of the New Testament, but Greek textbooks have not always reflected these developments.

Rodney Decker was, until his untimely death in 2014, a significant voice in the discussions about the impact of recent linguistic research on our understanding of New Testament Greek. His own new introductory textbook is, therefore, to be warmly welcomed. There are several notable features of this book:

First, it is attractively produced. The book is a well-produced hardback volume and the two-colour pages are laid out clearly and attractively in readable type. Various other Greek textbooks have also improved their visual appeal greatly over the years. A user-friendly design is always appreciated.

Second, it draws on good teaching practice, such as clear outlines of the material to be covered in a chapter, explanations of technical terms, friendly language encouraging student participation, well-pitched exercises, occasional text boxes with tips and interesting information, sections of real text (including texts from the NT, the LXX and early Christian writings) to read from the earliest stages, and more besides.

Third, it draws on current linguistic research. I might mention three ways in which this is evident. It is reflected in the way tenses are discussed. Decker highlights the significance of 'aspect' (the way in which an author chooses to present an action) in discussion of the various tense forms as opposed to time or *Aktionsart* (the actual nature of the action). Recent research is also incorporated by the complete absence of the word 'deponent'. You will not find that term anywhere in the index or in the book (as far as I could see)! Instead, verbs which would once have been described as 'deponent' are described as 'middle-only verbs', thus taking account of the distinct tone of the middle voice. Finally, when Greek vocabulary is introduced at the end of a chapter, it is given with a substantial definition as well as briefer 'glosses', so as to show something of the richness of the words and to avoid a simplistic identification of the word with a single gloss. These are valuable contributions.

Fourth, as the subtitle indicates, this book contains both teaching material and exercises in a single volume. While this makes for a rather substantial book, it is convenient for students and helps keep the overall cost fairly reasonable.

Fifth, the level of explanation in the book has been designed to go somewhat beyond the most basic elements of the study of Greek so that more advanced students and even experienced readers of the Greek New Testament will find help in the discussions of grammatical points.

Not all readers will agree with every decision that Decker has made with regard to how to teach New Testament Greek. But this textbook has a good claim to provide a well-informed introduction for students who are learning in a class or independently. I hope many will benefit from it and that, through it, many will discover the delight of reading Koine Greek for themselves.

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A Reader's Lexicon of the Apostolic Fathers. Edited by Daniel B.Wallace, Brittany C. Burnette and Terri Darby Moore. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-8254-3949-0. 256 pp. £23.99.

The stated aim of this book is to 'spur many students of the New Testament, especially evangelicals, to get into the Apostolic Fathers (AF) and

wrestle with their content, theology, praxis, use of the New Testament, and devotion to the risen Lord' (p. 11). However, this makes too limited a claim, and the volume will provide a useful tool for the church historian and theologian alike, provided, that is, that they have a working grasp of NT Greek.

The book anticipates that most of its readers will approach the subject through NT Greek, so it lists only words that occur thirty times or less in the NT canon. Note that it is thirty times, not fifty times as for the *New Reader's Lexicon of the New Testament* (Kregel, 2006), as it is expected that users of this book will be fairly competent in their NT Greek.

The layout and format is very straightforward and clear. The words are laid out in two columns per page. The vocabulary for each text is listed verse by verse. Within the verse, the lexical form is listed alphabetically, with a gloss based on either BDAG (2000[3]); Lampe (1961); Liddell and Scott (1968[9]) or Lightfoot (1981). For each entry, the additional statistics are given: the number of occurrences of the word in that particular text, in the author's other works (in this volume) and in the AF.

The volume covers First and Second Clement, seven of Ignatius' letters, Polycarp to the Philippians, the Martyrdom of Polycarp, Letter to Barnabus, Shepherd of Hermas, Diognetes, Quadratus, Papias and Traditions of the Elders. The lexicon follows the text in Michael Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007); though not having access to this, I used the lexicon successfully with the Kirsopp Lake edition freely available on the internet (ccel.org). This work provides an invaluable tool for any who wish to engage with the AF in depth.

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Did the Reformers Misread Paul: A Historical-Theological Critique of the New Perspective. By Aaron O'Kelley. Studies in Christian History and Thought; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-84227-794-2. 170 pp. £24.99.

The New Perspective on Paul, associated with E. P. Sanders, J. D. G. Dunn and N. T. Wright, has provoked a number of responses remarking on its inadequacy as an account of Second Temple Judaism and as an account of the theology of the Apostle to the Gentiles. What has been lacking is a testing of its characterisation of the Protestant Reformation. This slightly modified form of Aaron O'Kelley's doctoral dissertation (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, under the supervision of Gregg Allison) goes a very long way towards filling that gap. Here is the scholarly work needed to address the question in the title 'Did the Reformers Misread Paul?' Here too is a serious *theological* account rather than simply an exegeti-

cal or historical one, despite the fact that it is shaped by an examination of key historical contributions (from the Medievals, the Reformers, and the Post-Reformation Protestants) and concludes with exegetical observations on Galatians 3:10–14, Romans 9:30–10:13 and Philippians 3:2–11.

The first chapter is an introduction to the New Perspective on Paul, a movement within New Testament studies which takes its origin from E. P. Sanders but has developed his insights in different directions. Nevertheless, common to each of the proponents, O'Kelley suggests, is a 'hermeneutical presupposition': 'Covenantal nomism could not have served as Paul's foil in the promotion of a doctrine of justification that resembles that of the Reformation' (p. 18). Unlike Medieval Catholicism, the Judaism of Paul's time was not legalistic but operated within a framework of grace. As O'Kelley will say in his concluding chapter, those of the New Perspective insist the antithesis between grace and works in Paul's theology ought to be understood in sociological and ecclesiological terms rather than as 'an anthropological and soteriological reality' (p. 117).

The second chapter examines Late Medieval Catholicism and from the start recognises that this was not monolithic. There were differences between Lombard, Aquinas, Bonaventure, the *Via Moderna* and Trent. Once again, however, O'Kelley discerns a common element which would in time provoke the Reformation. This is a monocovenantalism, which blurs the distinction between the Old Covenant and the New, and especially between law and grace. Positively, it acknowledged that God is the initiator of salvation. Problematically, life before God was seen as a combination of grace and works-based merit, until one reaches the beatific vision (p. 118). Pelagianism could be uniformly denied by Catholic theologians, since they agreed upon the necessity of preparatory grace made available through baptism. What Late Medieval Catholicism presented was 'a synthesis between divine provision and human effort', expressed with slightly different emphases in each case (p. 52). The purpose of grace was 'to provide necessary assistance for keeping the law' (p. 96).

O'Kelley moves on in the third chapter to explore what it actually was that distinguished the Reformation doctrine of justification from that Late Medieval Catholicism. Through an examination of Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin, which duly notes the differences between them, he highlights a common recognition that the righteousness we have in justification is an 'alien righteousness' (a righteousness external to us that is given to us) as the decisive difference. Two theological issues are deeply entwined at this point, namely 'the divine demand for perfect obedience' and 'the necessity of a clear distinction between law and gospel, that is, between the principles of divine demand and divine provision' (p. 54). O'Kelley concludes 'the Reformation doctrine is predicated, not on the

antithesis of salvation by grace and salvation by works, but rather on the bicovenantal distinction between law and gospel and the monocovenantal synthesis of the two' (p. 97).

Chapter 4 traces the way three key elements of the doctrine of justification embraced and proclaimed by the Reformers—the divine demand for perfect obedience, the bicovenantal structure of law and grace, and the key idea of an alien righteousness—were developed in the post-Reformation period. Through a representative sample of confessions (Belgic Confession, Formula of Concord, Heidelberg Confession, Synod of Dort, and theologians of the period (Ursinus, Chemnitz, Quendstedt, Owen, Wollebius, Hunnius and Turretin) O'Kelley demonstrates that the developments in post-Reformation theology 'follow the trajectory of the Reformers and, in many cases, give further theological nuance to their formulations' (p. 115).

O'Kelley's conclusion is clear and well-established: 'The hermeneutical presupposition that drives the new perspective's revised readings of Paul does not accurately represent the Reformation doctrine of justification as it developed in history' (p. 116). It was never a simple dichotomy between grace and works, but instead '[t]he Reformation doctrine of justification arose specifically in response to the monocovenantal doctrine of Rome, a doctrine of justification in which law and gospel are not clearly distinguished, and right standing with God is attained by grace-empowered merit' (p. 121).

The final chapter summarises O'Kelley's argument and presents this conclusion. It also provides a brief exegetical examination of three biblical texts with the question of bicovenantalism in mind and an even briefer foray into the debates about judgment according to works and the relationship of Paul's teaching to that of James.

This is a book worth reading. It is not at all polemical in tone and well anchored in the primary sources in each period it examines. It is not the final word on the subject. There is plenty of room for further work. Some further theological reflection upon the unity of God's purposes across the two testaments and Paul's insistence that justification has always been by faith would have been helpful. So too would have been more detail on what constitutes semi-Pelagianism, a construction that does not really come into regular use before the late sixteenth century (in association with both the Formula of Concord and the teaching of Luis de Molina). Nevertheless this book goes a long way towards answering the question that it poses as well as the caricature of Reformation theology that has so often been part of the presentations of the New Perspective on Paul.

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