EDITORIAL

Late in May, when I learned the sad news of John Webster's unexpected death, I had just embarked on reading his Holy Scripture.[1] 'News', as N.T. Wright—John's colleague in St Andrews—puts it, 'is something that happens, as a result of which the world is a different place'. Just so. At that point last May, I already had a short-list of items I hoped to chat with John about, when the next opportunity came—but there is no longer opportunity in this life.

My slow read through that book recently concluded, enriched by exploration of further products of John's pen. He finishes his 'dogmatic sketch' in Holy Scripture with reflections on 'Scripture, theology, and the theological school', not a destination I would have anticipated at the start of the journey. The unexpected destination has an unlikely inspiration: the inaugural address of the young Zacharius Ursinus, delivered in 1558 as he took up a post at the Elisabeth-Schule, Breslau. In Webster's hands, it leads to a rich and challenging reflection on the nature of theological education, especially in relation to Scripture, a theme that runs through a number of John's writings, from his own Oxford inaugural lecture, via his autobiographical reflections in a contribution to a collection on Shaping a Theological Mind, to his 2011 article on 'Curiosity'.[2] A consistent picture emerges of a unified enterprise carried out in community, deepening knowledge of and response to the true and triune God, by hearing and explicating Scripture. Webster sums it up this way (pp. 115–6): 'There is simply the task of reading Holy Scripture, learning and teaching Scripture in such a way that godliness is promoted and the church more truthfully established as the kingdom of Jesus. . . . Theology is thus more a process of moral and spiritual training and an exercise in the promotion of the common life than it is a scholarly discipline.'

This is not, however, the mode in which theological education is typically framed. Webster describes the common pattern which 'arranges theology by a four-fold division into biblical, historical, systematic-doctrinal and practical theology sub-disciplines' (p. 120). The fragmentation thus incurred is exacerbated by the inclination of these 'sub-disciplines' to take

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1 John Webster, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch* (Current Issues in Theology, 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); page numbers cited in what follows refer to this work, unless otherwise indicated.

2 *Theological Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); 'Discovering Dogmatics', in *Shaping a Theological Mind: Theological Context and Methodology*, ed. by D. C. Marks (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 129–36; 'Curiosity', in *Theology and Human Flourishing: Essays in Honour of Timothy J. Gorringe*, ed. by M. Higton, J. Law, and C. Rowland (Eugene: Cascade, 2011), pp. 212–23.

their lead from 'cognate non-theological disciplines in the academy'. His parade example is one I recognize well: 'Thus, for example, theological study of the Old Testament comes to enjoy a much closer relation to Near Eastern studies than it does to dogmatics' (p. 122). The 'non-theological discipline' provides the tools, rationale, and acceptable forms of question and argument, so that the objects of study lie under the authority of the analyses, diagnoses, and attempts at improvement (or repair) of the specialist.

For Webster, such a situation in theological education is simply incommensurate with the nature of theology. Rather than standing over its object, theology defers to it (p. 114), since it knows both that it is subject to God's judgement, and that it bears the signs of God's gift of life.

Webster does not make an explicit link to this discussion in his later article on 'Curiosity'; it would be fascinating to know something more about the gestation of the latter. The two are mutually informing. For me—having furnished any number of eager university applicants enquiring about how to frame their 'personal statements' with the advice to demonstrate a healthy and informed 'curiosity' about their intended subject of study—it came as something of a shock to see 'curiosity' treated as a vice, in contrast to the virtue of 'studiousness'. Webster's exposition draws largely on Augustine and Aquinas to display curiosity as a creaturely appetite which has much to do with pride, and too much resemblance to greed. Studiousness, on the other hand, is 'the activity of the well-ordered intellect in coming-to-know', the creaturely devotion to understanding 'fitting objects', and directed to right ends. A turn to the Long Psalm captures something of theological studiousness:

> In theology, the affections, will and intellect are 'fixed' on the 'ways' of God (Ps 119:15), 'delighting in' and 'cleaving to' the divine testimonies (Ps 119:24), turned from 'vanities' (Ps 119:37) in order to 'meditate' on the divine law (Ps 119:48), eager to be taught knowledge (Ps 119:66). Such is the studious theological intellect sanctified and schooled by divine grace.[3]

So, then, 'theological coming-to-know does not terminate in the acquisition and storing of knowledge but in its exercise, in adoration of God and edification of others' ('Curiosity', p. 222). Or, as Ursinus put it,

> we serve too far from our scope or marke, unlesse we be settled in this purpose, that we ought to be busily employed in these Ant-hills and Bee-hives of Christ, not only to be more skilled in learning, but also more adorned with

[3] 'Curiosity', p. 221.

> a good and holy conversation, that we may be more acceptable to God and men.[4]

It should be readily apparent that such attitudes and activities are simply alien, or at best liminal, to the culture of the modern institutional home for much of what passes for theological education today—in Scotland, at least, but further afield also. Theological education as I know it typically serves to prepare students for participation in the discourse of the scholarly disciplines which provide the structural homes for our courses, conferences, and research grants and 'outputs'. What it is not interested in is discipleship or godliness (cf. Titus 1:1), or any sort of unified framework fitted to understanding the gospel or for carrying out ministry in the church—although still for quite a few in schools of 'divinity', that destination is what has called them into study. And I don't think this is true only of 'non-confessional' institutions.

The two modes of preparation are not necessarily incompatible. It is a sign of grace that sometimes, even in our fragmented and professionalized modes of learning, one can believe the psalmist's prayer is answered: 'Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name' (Ps. 86:11). It is, sadly, equally true that the opposite can be the case: that a critical handling of holy things sullies them, and beguiles a faith that is deluded, derided, and abandoned (cf. Col. 2:1–10). I would not like to guess what the relative frequency of those two experiences might be. But even if these modes somehow co-exist, it remains the case that Webster's frankly 'utopian' vision for theological education has no place in the modern university, and finds few counterparts even among theological colleges where the disciplinary model in secular settings finds a consistent echo. Perhaps with the upsurge in church-based 'internships' there will be new opportunities of realizing an integration of church and Word, such as Webster discerned in Ursinus's oration.

> For what must the theologian be? Holy, teachable, repentant, attentive to the confession of the Church, resistant to the temptation to dissipate mind and spirit by attending to sources of fascination other than those held out by the Gospel. In short: the operation of theological reason is an exercise in mortification. But mortification is only possible and fruitful if it is generated by the the vivifying power of the Spirit of Christ in which the Gospel is announced and its converting power made actual. And it is for this reason that theology must not only begin with but also be accompanied at every moment by prayer for the coming of the Spirit, in whose hands alone lie our minds and speeches.[5]

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4 As cited by Webster, *Holy Scripture*, p. 116.

5 'Discovering Dogmatics', p. 136.

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Observations on New Atheism

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Anything which calls itself or is called 'new' in our day suffers from a double disadvantage. Firstly, novelty soon wears off and the trademark 'new' soon appears to more fittingly and demeaningly designated 'old'. Secondly, because its novelty passes, it is easily supposed that its relevance and significance pass as well, when it comes to the world of ideas. This latter point should make us vigilant. What it dubbed 'new' may be new because it breaks the social and cultural surface in a way it had not before, but has erupted from soil long prepared and is destined to scatter its matter far abroad and long after it has lost its novelty status. So it surely is with new atheism.[1]

ORIENTATION

In 2004, Alister McGrath published *The Twilight of Atheism*, in which he contended that 'the sun has begun to set' on an empire of the mind, namely, the empire of atheism. Atheism is a phenomenon which 'seems to have lost so much of its potency in recent years…', a 'tidal wave… gradually receding'.[2] These words have the ring of misplaced optimism. There are social conditions under which the cultural power of ideas can grow even as their intellectual force diminishes, just as Hellenistic culture could expand even as the Greek (Macedonian) empire declined centuries before Christ. If there ever was an epoch when intellectual strength was a condition of cultural success and intellectual weakness a guarantor of cultural marginalization, it is certainly not ours.

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1 Thomas Carlyle gave striking expression to the principle of how we might read the relation of intellectual to social history: 'While the unspeakable confusion is every where weltering within, and through so many cracks in the surface sulphur-smoke is issuing, the question arises: Through what crevice will the main Explosion carry itself? Through which of the old craters or chimneys; or must it, at once, form a new crater for itself? In every Society are such chimneys, are Institutions serving as such…'. *History of the French Revolution* (London, Melbourne, Toronto: Ward, Lock & Co., 1891), p. 48.

2 Sub-titled, *The Rise and Fall of Disbelief in the Modern World* (London : Rider, 2004), pp. xi-xii; 3.

Judged by the quality of its literature, what has come to be called 'new atheist' thinking is usually intellectually unimpressive. Much of it invites psychological explanation more than argumentative refutation. This is illustrated, for example, by the way in which Scripture is handled. According to Sam Harris, 'Jesus seems to have suggested, in John 15:6, further [i.e., beyond the Old Testament] refinements to the practice of killing heretics and unbelievers'.[3] He says this with a straight face. Richard Dawkins, eager to show that we do not, in practice, 'get our morals from scripture'—and that this is just as well—cites the accounts of the destruction of Sodom in Genesis and the rape of the Levite's concubine in Judges in support of his contention.[4] It is hard to disagree with Tina Beattie's conclusion, picking up a remark made by Christopher Hitchens in *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, that '[o]ne cannot possibly have an intelligent debate with this kind of polemic, for Hitchens is so defiantly obtuse in his representation of Scripture and its role in the Christian life that there is no point of entry into a sensible and informed discussion.'[5] Ignorance need not, of itself, be a problem, where the ignorant are willing to learn. However, it is hard to rustle up the confidence that such new atheist willingness is abroad. In one respect, unwillingness is understandable: how many of us who find a world-view profoundly distasteful will spend time dispassionately studying and sympathetically trying to understand the texts which underlie it?

Should we, then, be contemptuous and dismissive of new atheism? Certainly not. Quite generally, contempt has no place in life and there are at least two important reasons for not dismissing this phenomenon. Firstly, it is influential. Secondly, there are arguments for atheism which, even if not well formulated (as a rule) in the most prominent new atheist literature, have long deserved intellectual consideration. Of course, questions legitimately arise about both the point and the method of an apologetic response to new atheism in a world of sound-bites, blogs, and atheist summer camps for school-children. Even those who generally accord to apologetic reason an important place in such a world may doubt its usefulness in the case of new atheism. However, without either adopting a particular view of apologetics or apologetic method, three reasons may be adduced for taking new atheism with apologetic seriousness.

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3 Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2005), p. 82.

4 *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam, 2006), p. 283; see pp. 269-83.

5 T. Beattie, *The New Atheists: The Twilight of Reason and the War on Religion* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007), p. 53.

Firstly, apologetic engagement is worth it for the sake of the one in a thousand who might listen and there are spaces and cultures where the audience is larger than that.[6] Secondly, new atheists are not immune from the possibility of a change of mind. Last, but not least, as Christians in a pluralist world we should constantly be thinking about the grounds and nature of our own beliefs. If theology is faith thoroughly seeking understanding, some of us will not espy a wide or fixed gulf between theology and apologetics. All this holds good even as we acknowledge that the times in which we live lend themselves to massively sustained and illusory detachment from reality. In thinking that she saw that the tree of good and evil was desirable for gaining wisdom, Eve succumbed to illusion. Sustained illusion may be classified as a species of insanity. Nevertheless, reasoning has its place.

Is there such a thing as genuine atheism? Many conclude that there is not, particularly on the basis of Paul's observations in Romans 1:19-20 which appear to declare God's existence to be evident, whatever human suppression and distortion accomplish. It is certainly true that new atheists often come over as theists who intensely dislike God. Nonetheless, while I do not wish to interpret Romans 1 dogmatically, we must be cautious. The chapter as a whole portrays a dynamic: as humans persist in rejection, so God hands them over to concomitant states and consequences. This invites the question of whether Paul is committed to the claim that cultures can *never* degenerate and decay to a point where there is genuine atheism. We have to attend to the testimony of converts from atheism here. All that I assume in what follows is that, whatever we conclude on this matter, it is in order to speak in terms of 'atheism'. In doing so, we note that atheists sometimes designate themselves more positively as 'humanists'.[7]

If we aspire to capture new atheism in a single formula, the sub-title of the work by Sam Harris cited earlier helps us: *Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason*. While the logical sequence is not mapped out in the following way, the relevant claims can be schematically rendered thus: (a) religion is irrational; (b) irrationality breeds dogmatism; (c) dogmatism breeds intolerance; (d) intolerance breeds violence. That last proposition makes the attack on religious irrationality socially vital and urgent.

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6 This figure is lifted from Ecclesiastes 7: 28, a rather obscure text. Its observation on women calls to mind Beattie's judgement that the debate surrounding new atheism is 'testosterone-charged', *The New Atheists*, p. 10.

7 See, e.g., Peter Cave, *Humanism: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009); A. C. Grayling, *The God Argument: The Case against Religion and for Humanism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

A good deal of new atheist passion has been fuelled by the conviction that religion is a—even, you sometimes get the impression, 'the'—cause of war. In response, Christians will doubtless (a) urge that the general category of 'religion' can be unhelpful; (b) emphasize that, however we read the Old Testament accounts of war and slaughter, Jesus Christ inaugurates a new dispensation and (c) draw attention to the violence perpetrated by atheist states precisely in the name of irreligion. All this needs to be said; however, the scene may now be changing a little. It is hard to say, but if statements by Richard Dawkins widely reported earlier this year are anything to go by, there may now be a greater willingness than there was some years ago to make religious distinctions between Islam and Christianity in relation to violence.[8] Whatever the significance of this concession, it is sobering to read J.C. Ryle's comment on Jesus' rebuke to James and John when they entertained the thought of fire from heaven destroying Samaritan villages (Luke 9:54): 'No saying of our Lord's, perhaps, has been so totally overlooked by Christ's church as this one. Nothing can be imagined more contrary to Christ's will than the religious wars and persecutions which disgrace the pages of church history.'[9]

We should welcome the gain in instilling into popular consciousness the assurance that firm Christian conviction is no recipe for war. Yet, the gain must not be exaggerated. The penultimate step in the sequence of atheist reasoning which I, perhaps artificially, formalized above remains decisive: Christianity is socially intolerant. Social oppression remains even if military aggression fades. War is just the contingent expression of a perverse social mentality. The mentality is the problem.

In 1864, Nietzsche remarked that 'the ice-filled stream of the Middle Ages…has begun to thaw and is rushing on with devastating power. Ice floe is piled upon ice floe, all shores are being flooded and threatened.'[10] Later, he came up with his celebrated and dramatic expression of the belief that God was dead and, in that same work, he also said that we must get rid of God's shadow.[11] Christian morality is the shadow. New atheism is apparently founded on the claim that science has dislodged religious

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8 According to reports on the web, Dawkins apparently said that Christianity might be a bulwark against something worse. In noting this, I am not assuming anything about Islam one way or another.

9 J.C. Ryle, *Luke* (Wheaton, Illinois/Nottingham: Crossway, 1997) p. 133.

10 Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Schopenhauer As Educator', in *Unfashionable Observations*, tr. by Richard Gray (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 200.

11 'After Buddha was dead, they still showed his shadow in a cave for centuries—a tremendous, gruesome shadow. God is dead; but given the way people are, there may still for millennia be caves in which they show his shadow.' Frie-

belief, but is Christian morality equally as offensive or even more offensive to it than is epistemological folly? Without trying to ascribe relative weights to various causes of offence, we turn now to the matter of morality.

MORALITY

'[W]ho wishes that there was a permanent, unalterable celestial despotism that subjected us to continual surveillance and could convict us of thought-crime and who regarded us as its private property even after we died?' Thus, the late and prominent new atheist, Christopher Hitchens.[12] Supposing that we answered the question like this: 'Well, I wish it. All my thoughts are humble and generous, pure and kind. I should be disappointed if no one were there to observe all this. Further, I am more than happy to be his private property at death, because that is the only way I shall make it to the new earth and earthly virtue receive its immortal reward.' This caricature of a response points to what underlies Hitchens' question. It is not so much the formal quality of divine omniscience that perturbs the new atheist as the material quality of what omniscience perceives. Nietzsche was agonizingly honest: God '*had* to die: he saw with eyes that saw *everything*—he saw the depths and grounds of the human, all its veiled disgrace and ugliness. His pity knew no shame: he crawled into my filthiest corner.'[13] Omniscience decked out in pity or compassion does not mollify Nietzsche; it compounds his revulsion. Nothing so antagonized him about Christianity as its moral teaching and it is hard to read leading new atheist writings without suspecting that it is much the same here.

Just as it is not the formal quality of omniscience, so it is not God's purely formal quality as a transcendent lawgiver, robbing us of dignified, rationally-based morality, that is the real trouble. Supposing Christians believed that there was certainly, even necessarily, a God who gave the moral law, its exhaustive content being that we should do what we liked in life as long as we did all that we could to avoid hurting others. Would such a belief provoke spirited atheistic disbelief? Scarcely. It has been claimed

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drich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, ed. by Bernard Williams, tr. by Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 109.

12 Quoted in Peter S. Williams, *A Sceptic's Guide to Atheism* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), p. 105. I heartily recommend this volume.

13 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and Nobody*, tr. Graham Parkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), § 4.7, p. 232. Cf. the new atheist, Daniel C. Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), p. 227.

that much in the moral substance of Christianity is agreeable to new atheists, whose protest is principally that this substance is wrongly grounded in revelation rather than reason.[14] This is an exaggeration. Nothing is more prominent in new atheist criticisms of Christian morality than substantive issues surrounding sexual morality.[15] When Grayling, in the very first page of his 'Introduction', refers to 'individuals struggling with feelings of sinfulness because of perfectly natural desires', this is clearly what he has in mind.[16]

New atheists are not moral relativists and they sometimes not only advocate universal moral truths but also seek to ground them in science.[17] Our response to them at this point must be cautious. Two familiar claims bear mention. The first is that there is a distinction between facts and values such that a moral 'ought' cannot be derived from a factual 'is'. If that is the case, any ambition to derive values from science is misplaced. The second is that the Enlightenment project to establish a universal rational morality is misguided. It wrongly accords normative status to a culturally specific rationality. We may sympathize with both these objections but sympathize also with at least elements of what someone like Sam Harris is up to. On the first point, we surely wish that all eyes would see the unity of fact and value, e.g., the biological fact of the unborn child's dependence on the mother and the value of her loving care or the physical fact of human or animal suffering and the value of being relieved of it.[18] On the second, we long for universal consensus on the good and the evil, the right and the wrong, and if reason could sometimes get us there, we could but rejoice. One argument often deployed against atheism old and new is that it is impossible to account for moral right and wrong, i.e., for the proper objectivity of our moral sense, unless there is a divine

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14 Craig Hovey, *What Makes Us Moral? Science, Religion, and the Shaping of the Moral Landscape: A Christian Response to Sam Harris* (London: SPCK, 2012), pp. xiv, 73.

15 See Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (London: Atlantic, 2007), pp. 3-4. Note what Sam Harris takes to be the nature of Jesus' eschatological judgment of humans: *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values* (London: Transworld, 2012), p. 215. See Williams, A Sceptic's Guide, pp. 106-8.

16 A. C. Grayling, *The God Argument*, 1. See the contextually forceful chapter on 'Marzipan' in Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass* (New York etc: Scholastic Press, 2000), the third volume of the trilogy titled: *His Dark Materials*.

17 On the blurb of Sam Harris' book, *The Moral Landscape*, Richard Dawkins intimates that the author persuaded him on that score.

18 Admittedly I both make this point loosely and only loosely connect it with, e.g., Sam Harris' approach.

author and lawgiver. This contention has had a long run under the title: 'The moral argument for the existence of God'. I am not commenting here on its validity or force. However, if some of the substantive content of Christian morality is objectionable, the argument that God is necessary to explain morality will not get far off the ground as far as new atheists are concerned, holding, as they do, that some obnoxious material goods may be packed in that basket labelled 'morality'.

In considering the new atheist critique of Christian morality, we cannot play down the foundational truths of God's right to command and our innate human desire to want our own way. At the end of the eighteenth century, Schleiermacher sought to inculcate in the cultured despisers of religion a taste for the infinite, but the theological infinite repels new atheists.[19] 'What decides against Christianity now is our taste—not our reasons', said Nietzsche three-quarters of a century after Schleiermacher's *Speeches* and while new atheists will disagree with the second, they will agree with the first of his propositions.[20] We should not stereotype the dispositions of contemporary new atheists. The literature, however, is characteristically militant. Bearing this in mind, we might think about morality in at least two ways which we are liable to neglect more than we should.

The first is in the form of wisdom. In this connection, the book of Proverbs is instructive. It looks at action in terms of wisdom, prudence and consequences, though not only in these terms. Consider the vexed, emotive and sensitive subject of sexual morality. Sam Harris despises the thought of a creator of the universe who is concerned about hem-lines.[21] So let us imagine the caring atheist father—let us call him 'Sam'—of a thirteen-year old daughter who is going out to a weekend party in what he regards as an excessively short dress. He is very worried lest she become sexually active. His pleas that she wears something less suggestive fall on deaf ears. Finally, resolute atheist though he is, knowing that she has a religious friend going to the same party, he appeals to his daughter to emulate the dress-sense which he assumes will be that of her more modest religious friend. His daughter answers: 'She'll be dressed much the same as me, Dad, because she said that God is not concerned about hem-lines.' Sam none-too quietly curses such a God.

The second is in terms of beauty. '…The beautiful', said Kant, 'is the symbol of the morally good' and, if we may domesticate its meaning a

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19 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, tr.. Richard Crouter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

20 *The Gay Science*, 3, p. 132.

21 *The End of Faith*, p. 46.

little, this is an important word for those of us who stand in a Christian tradition where talk of truth and goodness have usually eclipsed talk of beauty.[22] Beauty may be regarded not only as something alongside truth and goodness but (loosely speaking) as a quality of truth and goodness. If our selfishness or culture did not blind us, we should see and feel the evil all around us all the time. An encounter with manifest evil has a singular capacity to open people up to reality. An atheist, like a religious believer, may encounter a moral ugliness so extreme that it cannot simply be described in those terms; rather, it must be named as evil. Talk of God as holy and good should then take on new meaning. The idea of God is the idea of a being who is the antithesis of evil. This is the beauty of holiness. It ought not to repel but to deeply attract anyone who has encountered evil.

Morality is rooted in God's holy goodness. Because we are fallen, we experience moral law as an imposition, but, in fact, it enshrines a revelation of what goes with the grain of our humanity, not an attack on it. When we describe the law of the nature of any being, animate or inanimate, we are not describing something imposed upon it; we are describing its innate constitution. Its constitution only limits any being because all existing entities are 'limited'; an indeterminate form of existence would not be anything at all. Morality, which seems to limit humans, actually helps to give them their definition.

If God's moral commands inform us, in the form of an imperative, of the law proper to our nature, we can understand the reason for the prohibition in Eden.[23] The prohibition that Adam and Eve should eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was neither an arbitrary test nor a divine temptation. It was informative. Since there exists a sphere which humans are capable of entering, they need to be told about it and told not to enter it. We prohibit children from touching fire because it is the law of fire to burn and this imperative arises from the indicative fact of how the body is constituted. We do not prohibit just for the sake of prohibiting, still less of tempting.

To believe that morality has a transcendent source should be no threat to reason. Reason itself might convince me that morality has an (ontologically or epistemologically) transcendent source. I am summoned to moral action in some important spheres of my life long before I have the capacity to think things through, even if I confidently reckon that my

[22] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, tr. by J. H. Bernard (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1951), p. 198.

[23] It is not suggested that all God's commandments must be understood in this way.

reason is functioning properly. It is entirely rational to trust a transcendent source of instruction, conveying moral truth to me long before I can reason anything out. If only new atheists could see that this source is a transcendent goodness!

SCIENCE

New atheists allege that a scientific world-view eliminates the possibility of religious, certainly of theistic, truth. This is so for two reasons. Firstly, our scientific world-view is both the product and exemplifies the operation of rational principles of thought and enquiry, whereas religion is not only a matter of blind and ungrounded faith, but even makes a virtue of it. Secondly, it is Darwinian or neo-Darwinian and this is taken to eliminate the postulate of a Creator and creation. Proper exploration of this second reason would lead us into areas both too detailed and too contentious to discuss in this article, so I confine myself to just two comments on it.

Firstly, new atheists are clueless in connection with the Christian understanding of God.[24] Richard Dawkins claims that, since the evolutionary process is one where biological simplicities mutate into greater complexities, then, if there were a God, he would have to emerge at the end of and could not initiate the process, since he transcends the world in terms of his complexity.[25] In response, some will invoke the classical tradition of divine simplicity. However, it is not necessary and may not be productive to do so; arguably, all we need to note is the absence on the part of new atheists of any kind of conceptual or imaginative grip on the notion of a being who is not material and not to be understood in material categories.[26] What accounts for this intellectual failure may not be easy to pinpoint and Paul Holmer's observation of almost forty years ago remains apt: '[J]ust what religious unbelief is among the educated today is… difficult to say. Exactly what the breakdown of concepts has to do with it is a very complicated matter.'[27] A. C. Grayling suggests that we substitute the name 'Fred' or the description 'the supreme egg' for 'God' in such sentences as 'God created the universe' or 'God forbids homosexual acts' to demonstrate that '[t]here is no greater explanatory power or meaning

[24] We could refer to 'theism' rather than Christianity, but I leave it to the reader to enlarge, where appropriate, the application of what I say about Christianity.

[25] *The God Delusion*, chapter 4.

[26] In his *Confessions*, Augustine records his pre-Christian struggle to make sense of the notion of a spiritual substance.

[27] Paul Holmer, *A Grammar of Faith* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 125.

if one puts 'god', 'God' or 'the supreme being' in place of 'Fred' or 'the supreme egg'.[28] I am reminded of the old schoolboy joke: 'What's the difference between an elephant and a mail-box?' 'I don't know.' 'In that case, I wouldn't trust you to post a letter.' We cannot trust Dawkins and Grayling when they post words on God if they really do not detect any relevant difference between God and a supreme egg.

Secondly, if we step away from the question of specifically biological evolution to the general question of cosmic origins, we note the current consensus amongst astrophysicists that, if we are operating with a linear notion of time, the universe must have had its beginning in time and cannot have been eternal in the sense of time extending unendingly backwards. This invites attention to cosmological arguments which purport to show that the causal nexus of the cosmos is inexplicable without reference to a unique and divine creative causality. Without committing myself one way or another either to the following argument or to any version of the cosmological argument, I once asked a militantly atheistic scientist what he made of the following. '(1) Whatever begins to exist has a cause; (2) the universe began to exist; (3) therefore, the universe has (or had) a cause.'[29] In a surprisingly polite letter, he agreed that the a-causal inception of the the universe presented him with a problem but complained that religious believers were so irrational that they did not even worry their heads about such things. A little knowledge of intellectual history would have muted his complaint. This returns us to the first of the two considerations mentioned at the beginning of this article: the perception that religion is irrational.

The turn against Christianity in the West can be described from many angles, so here we pick out just one factor. The religious strife which characterized sixteenth century Europe and which included magisterial Protestant antagonism towards Anabaptists as well as Catholic-Protestant conflict, rumbled on until a vital phase of it culminated in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which concluded the Thirty Years War. Simultaneously, the sixteenth century witnessed the printing of works of classical Greco-Roman Scepticism.[30] In an Europe where adherents of diverse Christian confessions regarded themselves as right and everybody else as wrong—I deliberately exaggerate—the challenge offered by ancient Sceptics to confident knowledge-claims had social and not just philosophical potency. In the same epoch, a promising alternative source of knowledge

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28 *The God Argument*, pp. 24-25.

29 This is the *kalām* cosmological argument.

30 See Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1979).

was making headway: science. Whatever its original status, in time, science came to be widely perceived as an epistemic and social alternative to religious belief. Science trades in the wares of observation and demonstration, whereas religion enjoys commerce in opinion and faith. Science is the paradigm of rationality, religion of credulity. So it seemed.

It is easy to dislodge these suppositions. New atheists characteristically misunderstand both reason and faith. Secular critics of the claims of reason, as these are advanced by new atheists, are not wanting, whether we think of Nietzsche's conviction that philosophy is driven by moral aims and that reason is instrumental in that purpose or of the postmodernist line that there is no such thing as universal, neutral, undifferentiated and normative Reason.[31] More congenial to new atheists than either of theses is the figure of John Locke, the 'intellectual ruler of the eighteenth century'.[32] Locke let reason loose with no holds barred; no religious veto reined it in.[33] Yet, the result was reason's discovery of its own severe limitations.

In the New Testament, faith is grounded in three of our five familiar empirical senses: sight, hearing and touch (1 John 1:1). Our inability to investigate the biblical witness directly is not due to the fact that Scripture seals faith off from any form of investigation as a matter of principle. It is because, centuries on, we are removed from the scene as a matter of practice. Where Jesus told Thomas that those who have believed without seeing are blessed, Richard Dawkins judged Thomas 'the only really admirable member of the twelve apostles' because he insisted on evidence.[34] However, Jesus was here contrasting faith with our own sight, not with the sight of others, which is the foundation of apostolic testimony. Members of a jury who insisted that, on principle, they would not believe any testimony unless they had themselves seen the alleged incidents, would not be hailed as heroes of unswerving rationality. True, the testimony to the resurrection is remarkable in a way different from standard court-room testimony, but it was not as though Thomas did not share the theistic presuppositions of his comrades or had any reason to think either

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31 See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil/On the Genealogy of Morality*, tr. by Adrian Del Caro (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014), p. 9.

32 Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 1 (London: Smith Elder, 1876), p. 86.

33 See the whole of Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed., Peter Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975). From a different point of view, see too Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, tr. A. J. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin, 1966), section 1.13.

34 *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 330.

that their senses were less reliable or that their persons less responsible than his own.

In practice, none of this will get us very far with new atheists most of the time; unfortunately, rational argument does not usually get far with such champions of reason. It is a moot point to what extent they represent or have succumbed to the intellectual and cultural phenomenon which we call 'scientism': the belief that cognitive values are basically scientific and that any knowledge or belief-claim which does not measure up to that status is, at best, epistemically extremely inferior. Perhaps the thinker most outstandingly credited with enabling this move in modern times is Francis Bacon, whose influence, in this respect, came to its zenith in the nineteenth century, a century when the distinct figure of 'the scientist' came to cultural prominence.[35] Bacon himself may have been free of scientism, but the cultural context of his nineteenth century reception made him eminently available for its promotion. It has been seriously argued—and invites our sober reflection—that, in his own day, Bacon subtly declared holy war on religion in the name of science.[36] This is what new atheists do without subtlety.

I leave open the question of the complicity of new atheists in 'scientism'. Generalization is surely impossible and I have nowhere set out criteria for who should count as new atheists. However, both the substance and effect of their critique of religion in the name of science contribute to the perilous contemporary atrophy of a range of human non-scientific sensibilities. To appreciate what is at stake, we can do little better than ponder Iain McGilchrist's thesis that the calculative left hemisphere of our Western brain has usurped the place of its rightful, right-hemispheric master and is displacing the humanly basic foundations of our civilization.[37] McGilchrist's analytic and historical *tour de force* is open to both theological and neuro-scientific criticism, but the underlying thesis is one which we ignore at our peril.

Deep divisions in the Christian world on the relationship between neo-Darwinism and Christianity or between evolution and creation hinder a

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35 See Stephen Gaukroger, *Francis Bacon and the Transformation of Early-Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

36 Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times: A Study of Bacon, Descartes and Nietzsche* (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 1993), Part One.

37 Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and his Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 2012).

united response to new atheism in this area.[38] Differing intra-Christian views on reason and rationality likewise hinder a united epistemological response, although these cut across broader intra-secular disagreements on epistemology and bear more on the philosophical than on the scientific commitments of new atheism. Nevertheless, a positive and vigorous, glad and grateful use of the reasoning capacities of our Christian minds, whether in relation to Scripture or to science, should help to defang new atheist accusations of irrationality—at least for those with eyes to see and ears to hear. The atheist has a ready riposte: what those with eyes to see will see and those with ears to hear will hear is the agony of human suffering. To this we finally turn.

SUFFERING

According to Sam Harris, '[t]he entirety of atheism is contained in this response', the response in question being an unqualified 'No' to the possible existence of a God simultaneously all-good and all-powerful.[39] A homicidally maniacal being who created multiple cruel diseases and 'intentionally loosed such horrors upon the earth would be ground to dust for his crimes.'[40] When he expressed cognate thoughts, the comedian and television personality, Stephen Fry, attracted much publicity. Richard Dawkins wrote a book whose title was drawn from Darwin's words, *A Devil's Chaplain*.[41] Expressed in logical form, the claims is that it is impossible to square three propositions: (a) God has sufficient power to prevent suffering; (b) God is good; (c) There is suffering.[42] Existential difficulty remains even if logical consistency is demonstrated.

Obviously, this is a not a peculiarly new atheist objection, but it would be a complete misrepresentation of new atheism if we narrowly concentrated our gaze on any new atheist distinctives (and I have not troubled to ask precisely what is distinctive in new atheism). We should miss what they had to say. Of all objections to Christian belief, this is surely the one with which Christians most sympathize, for they themselves will often

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38 For an introduction to non-Darwinian evolutionary schemes, see Thomas B. Fowler and Daniel Kuebler, *The Evolution Controversy: A Survey of Competing Theories* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007) chapter 8.

39 *Letter to a Christian Nation* (London: Bantam, 2007), p. 51.

40 Harris, *The End of Faith*, p. 172.

41 The sub-title is *Reflections on Hope, Lies, Science and Love* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003).

42 Alternative formulations are possible. A standard text-book in logic is capable of giving this as an example of logical difficulty; see Wilfrid Hodges, *Logic* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1977), pp. 44-5.

be perplexed by the co-existence of divine goodness and power not only with suffering but also with evil. 'The force behind the movement of time is a mourning that will not be comforted.'[43] Perhaps it is worth venturing three reflections on this question.

Firstly, the existence of evil is a mystery flagged up in Scripture itself. However the Genesis story is read on the literary level, it announces a dark mystery: how is there in, or in proximity to, the garden of Eden a serpent, explicitly described as a God-made creature in a God-made creation explicitly described as 'good' or 'very good'—a serpent which successfully verbally seduces Eve? Nowhere is the question answered or mystery dispelled in Scripture. Evil is not a problem introduced by atheists to Jews or Christians; it is a problem introduced in their shared Scripture. In principle, theology is not forbidden from attempting to throw light on the mystery. In practice, many of us judge that it does not throw much. We might even venture to say that belief precisely in the darkly and intellectually *problematic* nature of the existence of evil is a Christian tenet. Theology may say true things in connection with evil and suffering, things which need to be said and which contribute to dispelling complete incomprehension on this point or that, but these things just do not add up to an explanation.[44]

Secondly, if there is no theological resolution, there is no extra-theological resolution either. In any proper treatment of the relevant matters, we should need to distinguish between evil and suffering and between the different forms of each.[45] Here, let us simply restrict ourselves to saying that metaphysical or moral evil and the resultant suffering are inexplicable on any religious or non-religious account. This point may be put in more than one way. We could say they are inexplicable in connection with the existence of the world: the fact that the world exists at all is inexplicable a-theistically so, in that connection, the existence of evil in particular is indirectly inexplicable. Alternatively, we could say that evil is directly inexplicable: no one can explain how such a phenomenon—seen in its reality, impelling our agonized apprehension of evil as objective—can

[43] Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeping* (New York, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980), p. 192.

[44] If those who are persuaded by John Walton's argument in *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2015), Proposition 14, pp. 128-49, demur from my emphasis on Genesis 3, my point can be made more widely in relation to the canonical witness of Old and New Testaments.

[45] It would be too cumbersome to keep qualifying terminology throughout this article; I assume that readers will make appropriate applications when I use the terminology of evil or suffering.

emerge in a non-divine material universe. The failure to explain applies to non-Christian religious traditions as well as to atheism. I cannot spell out this argument here, but, if we come to this conclusion, then Christianity is not at an explanatory disadvantage.

Thirdly, what we should resist is the move from the inexplicability of evil and suffering to the affirmation that God does not exist. In attending to one major aspect of reality, we are always in danger of drawing unwarranted conclusions about the whole of it. If evil and suffering were all that characterized the cosmos, that would be one thing and an atheistic conclusion or a conclusion that the world was created by a malevolent being might be drawn. But the world is not simply like that. If we search for someone in a house, we do not enter a vacant room and conclude that there is no one in the house. Our world might be likened to a three-roomed house. One is pitch black. That is the room marked: 'Evil'. Let us agree that we shall not find God there. Another is somewhat light, judgement on how light it is varying from person to person. That is the room marked: 'Cosmos', signifying not only the fact that something rather than nothing exists, but also the various properties of the world, including its inhabitants and their histories. People will find there more or less evidence for the existence of God. The third is sheer light. It is marked: 'Jesus Christ'. Those who have seen the Son have seen God present in glory, whatever they have seen or not seen in the other rooms. Evil and suffering do not disprove the existence of God because a world exists which contains in it things other than evil and suffering. In particular, it contains Jesus Christ, who absorbed evil and suffering.

Faith is not the same as explanation nor does it contain total explanations. That is not to say that faith is irrational. This is a persistent new atheist mistake on which we have already commented. It is just to say that Christian faith is not a total and comprehensive explanation. It is irrational, not rational, to suppose that we are warranted only in believing that which is explicable.[46] No one of us can comprehend in one conceptual sweep all that there is to be comprehended more than I can look at every part of a vast building at the same time. Indeed, if humanity pooled the totality of its knowledge and wisdom, it would still be a vain attempt to catch sight of an ontic and noetic sphere far too vast to be encompassed by human comprehension. The Christian confession is that 'God is light and in him there is no darkness at all' (1 John 1:5). It has an empirical foundation (1:1) and a soteriological implication (1:6-9). What it lacks is

[46] Joseph Butler famously spelled out a version of this line of thought in *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, first published in 1736 and available in various editions.

the accompaniment of total philosophical or intellectual illumination. It has this in common with every other world-view.

CONCLUSION

New atheism feeds into and partially reflects the practical atheism of our time, which has lost sight of transcendent reality whether in hedonism, despair or hedonistic despair.[47] Scientific and moral thought have destroyed the credibility of Christianity, whose internal coherence is, in any case, wrecked by the realities of suffering. In response, we must bring out treasures old and new which are more than sufficient to meet the needs of atheism old and new. The old are found in plenty not only in Scripture but also in the rich heritage of theological and philosophical reflection which we are in danger of forfeiting in the churches as capacity for thought and serious ability to step outside the moral and cognitive framework prescribed for us by the social mainstream decline alarmingly. It would be a foolish and invidious business to pontificate on the production of the new, but such works as James Orr's *The Christian View of God and the World* and Abraham Kuyper's *Lectures on Calvinism* surely beckon us to consider the need to state Christian truth in terms of a comprehensive world-view or life-system relevant to contemporary times. Yet, such endeavours will have little or no effect unless the renovating Spirit transforms our lives in their very detail as the ground from which thought will emerge and to which it will return in the form of enriched obedience.

[47] To his oft-quoted words, 'The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation', Thoreau added: 'A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind.' *Walden and Other Writings* (New York, NY: Modern Library, 2000), p. 8.

WAS BULLINGER'S GOSPEL SYNERGISTIC OR UNIVERSALISTIC? AN EXAMINATION OF SERMON IV.1 OF *THE DECADES*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The impact of the Swiss Reformer Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575) on Scottish political theory has been well documented.[1] What is less appreciated is his impact on the Scottish church. For example, in 1554 he gave some advice to John Knox concerning the complex issues that Knox was wrestling with in respect to how believers should view the monarchy biblically.[2] Bullinger may well have had some significant influence on the Scottish church but documentary evidence for this is scant.

In point of fact, Bullinger's writings have often been misunderstood. In particular, he has been wrongly adjudged to have taught both a synergistc and a universalistic gospel. This article seeks to examine how the Zurich Reformer unpacked his understanding of the gospel in *The Decades* with a particular reference to sermon IV.1 in order to counter these claims.

The fact that Bullinger's works have often been wrongly read and incorrectly quoted can be illustrated by the way the Remonstrants cited Bullinger in their defence at the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) when they sought to claim that his writings revealed a proto-Arminian stance.[3] The

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1 Andreas Raath and Shaun de Freitas, 'From Heinrich Bullinger to Samuel Rutherford: The Impact of Reformation Zurich on Seventeenth-Century Scottish Political Theory', in *Heinrich Bullinger: Life, Thought, Influence* ed. by Emidio Campi and Peter Opitz (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2005), pp. 853-79.

2 Jane Dawson, *John Knox* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 85-6; Ryan M. Reeves, *English Evangelicals and Tudor Obedience, c. 1527-1570* (Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, 167; Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 139-40.

3 Walter Hollweg, *Heinrich Bullingers Hausbuch: Eine Untersuchung über die Anfänge der reformierten Predigliteratur* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag,

then *Antistes* of Zurich, Johann Jacob Breitinger, who led the Swiss delegation, had to defend Bullinger's views in a speech to the Synod.[4] Breitinger pointed out that Bullinger had signed the *Zürich Gutachen* ('Zurich Opinions') which were drawn up in 1560 to defend Hieronymus Zanchius (Girolamo Zanchi 1516-1590) regarding his doctrine of predestination. But as Emidio Campi has observed of Breitinger's speech at Dort: 'Nowadays we know that the question is more complex than Breitinger had led his contemporaries to believe.'[5] J. Wayne Baker had earlier, incorrectly in our opinion, doubted that Breitinger was correct in asserting that Bullinger subscribed to double predestination. Because Baker was mistakenly convinced that Bullinger did not hold to reprobation, he concludes: 'In short, Bullinger was no scholastic. At Dort he would have been completely out of place. Bullinger would have disagreed with Breitinger on Bullinger.'[6]

Moreover, many scholars, following in the footsteps of Baker, conclude that, for Bullinger, God's covenant with mankind was a bilateral pact or treaty with conditions to be fulfilled by both sides. Baker further suggests that Bullinger was leaning towards synergism or semi-Pelagianism or that the covenant conditions had to be fulfilled before receiving the blessings of the covenant.[7] This is somewhat ironic in view of the fact that, in the context of explaining the biblical understanding of grace in sermon IV.1 of *The Decades*, Bullinger specifically referred to the conflict between Augustine and Pelagius.[8] However, despite the embracing study of Cornelis Venema,[9] many scholars, nonetheless, interpret Bullinger's

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1956), pp. 294-338.

4 James I. Good, *History of the Swiss Reformed Church Since the Reformation* (Philadelphia: Publication and Sunday School Board of the Reformed Church in the United States, 1913), pp. 22-4.

5 Emidio Campi, 'Probing Similarities and Differences between John Calvin and Heinrich Bullinger', in *Calvinus Clarissimus Theologus: Papers of the Tenth International Congress on Calvin Research*, ed. by Herman J. Selderhuis (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), p. 94.

6 J. Wayne Baker, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1980), p. 48.

7 In addition to *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant*, see Baker's 'Heinrich Bullinger, the Covenant, and the Reformed Tradition in Retrospect', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 29 (1998), 359-76.

8 Peter Opitz, *Heinrich Heinrich Bullinger Theologische Schriften*, Band 3, *Sermonum Decades quinque de potissimus Christianae religionis capitibus* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2008), p. 496.

9 Cornelis P. Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination: Author of 'the Other Reformed Tradition'?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002).

works as attesting to a form of synergism. Stephen Strehle is representative of such scholars.[10] Furthermore, because many believe that Bullinger downplayed election in his works they conclude, incorrectly, that Bullinger was universalistic or that his writings were open to a hypothetical universalism interpretation. In this connection, Richard Muller, for example, deduced that 'Clear statements of nonspeculative hypothetical universalism can be found (as Davenant recognized) in Heinrich Bullinger's *Decades* and commentary on the *Apocalypse*'.[11]

This study seeks to affirm that Bullinger's understanding and exposition of the gospel was clearly in the centre of the reformed tradition. His was not 'the other reformed tradition' as claimed by Baker. On the contrary, this study reveals that Bullinger emphasized the same basic tenets of the gospel and the outworking of the gospel as taught by the other reformers, *viz*. reconciliation with God, union with God, imputation of Christ's alien righteousness, adoption, the three solas and election.

Bullinger never wrote in a vacuum. Sermon IV.1 of *The Decades* was effectively a polemic against Rome's departure from the gospel as outlined in the canon of Scripture and as taught by the church Fathers. At the same time, this sermon was a necessary corrective to the extreme views of sanctification promulgated by the Anabaptists.

II. THE GOSPEL IN *THE DECADES*

The Decades was Bullinger's most extensive work. As it was written against the background of the Council of Trent, it is clear from the terminology used that Bullinger hoped to win converts from the Roman faith to the Reformed faith. It was also written just prior to his major tome against the Anabaptists, *Der Widertoeufferen Ursprung* (1561). Although the gospel was referred to by Bullinger several times earlier in *The Decades*, he set

[10] Stephen Strehle, *Calvinism, Federalism, and Scholasticism: A Study of the Reformed Doctrine of Covenant* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1988), pp. 134-40; *The Catholic Roots of the Reformed Gospel: Encounter Between the Middle Ages and the Reformation* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 53-8.

[11] Richard A. Muller's review of Jonathan D. Moore, *English Hypothetical Universalism: John Preston and the Softening of Reformed Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), in *Calvin Theological Journal* 43 (2008), 149-50. Cf. Peter White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic Conflict and Consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 79.

out a full and extended discussion of the gospel in sermon IV.1 which had been flagged as a 'treatise on the gospel' in sermon III.9.[12]

Bullinger gave sermon IV.1 the title: *Of the gospel of the grace of God who gave his Son to the world and in whom is given everything for true salvation that those who believe in him might obtain eternal life*.[13] It is evident, as in his *The Old Faith* (1534), that Bullinger was making a stark contrast between 'true' faith and 'false' faith. Following on from Zwingli's *True and False Religion* (1525), Bullinger underscored in *The Decades* that the reformed faith is *vera, vetus, indubitata, authentica, orthodoxa & catholica*.[14]

In sermon IV.1, of some 22 folios in length, Bullinger outlined a summary of the gospel on two separate occasions:

> The gospel is the heavenly preaching of God's grace to us, through which, to the whole world, which is under the wrath and indignation of God, is declared that God the Father of heaven is reconciled in his only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom as he promised to the holy fathers, he has now exhibited to us in him fully all things for a blessed life and eternal salvation inasmuch as who for us was incarnate, died, raised from death again and taken up into heaven and made our only Lord and Saviour if only, through acknowledging our sins, we believe in him.[15]

> This is the summary of the whole gospel: that we are justified, that is, absolved from sins, from the sentence of death and damnation, and sanctified and indeed adopted into the number of the sons of God by faith, that is, by trust in the name of Christ, who was given by the Father to be our only Saviour. And here by name works are excluded, lest we be given any opportunity to entangle faith with works or to attribute to works the glory which is due to faith alone or rather to Christ the Lord, upon whom faith depends and is bound to.[16]

From these two citations it is evident that Bullinger's gospel was clearly reformed. It is about reconciliation with God and forgiveness of sins through the propitiation of his wrath achieved through the incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, his only begotten Son, our only Saviour as was promised to the holy fathers. The gospel is of heav-

12 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 432. Unless otherwise stated, translations are those of the author.
13 Ibid., p. 491.
14 Ibid., p. 34.
15 Ibid., p. 492.
16 Ibid., p. 516.

enly origin and all of God's grace with the result that works are explicitly excluded as a basis for salvation. Bullinger made a point to emphasize that 'the only cause and true source of the gospel' is the free love of God.[17] There appears to be an indirect rejoinder here to the various 'causes' for justification outlined in chapter 7 of the Decree of the Sixth Session of the Council of Trent. Bullinger further clarified that God loves mankind on account of the Son (*propter filium*) and not for any other cause.[18] Moreover, the gospel is to be proclaimed to the whole world to challenge men and women to repent and believe in Jesus. Believers are justified, sanctified and adopted as sons of God. In step with the other reformers, Bullinger asserted that there is assurance of salvation for the true believer in the here and now.[19]

Bullinger made a point of citing the use of *euangelisasthai* in the LXX of Isaiah 61:1 and Luke 4:18 as indicating that the gospel was already proclaimed proleptically in the Old Testament. Bullinger was basically reiterating what he had set forth in *De testamento* (1534) and *The Old Faith* (1537), viz. that the saints of the Old Testament were saved by the same gospel of the New Testament through faith (proleptically) in Christ. He also emphasized that the 'gospel is in the exposition of the law'.[20] This reflects his understanding of the overall message of the canon which he had earlier expressed in *The Old Faith* as follows: 'The law and the Scriptures of the prophets constitute the text, the exposition is the Scriptures of the evangelists and the apostles.' [21] Thus Bullinger viewed one gospel proclaimed in both the Old Testament and the New Testament as he referred to 'the same historical gospel'.

Bullinger's understanding of the gospel reflected an understanding of the economic Trinity. Out of his grace, the Father had prepared a way for the elect to be reconciled to him through his Son. The elect respond in faith through the inner working of the Holy Spirit. In this connection, Bullinger further made a deliberate point to refer to the two natures of Christ. Indeed, the incarnation is foundational to Bullinger's understanding of the gospel.[22] Bullinger's specific reference to the two natures

17 Ibid., p. 496.

18 Ibid., p. 495. *Vide* Opitz, *Decades*, pp. 494, 496 (×2) for Bullinger's use of *propter Christum*.

19 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 506.

20 Ibid., p. 491.

21 Heinrich Bullinger, *Der alt gloub. Das der Christen gloub von anfang der wält gewart habe / der recht waar al vnnd vngezwyflet gloub sye / klare bewysung Heinrychen Bullingers*, (Zürich 1539), sig. G v(r).

22 There appear to be some parallels with Irenaeus' emphasis on the incarnation which is also apparent in Zwingli. See G.W. Bromiley, *Zwingli and Bullinger*

in Christ served, on one level, to respond to Luther's charge of Nestorianism against Zwingli and the Zurichers.[23] The fact that Bullinger referred several times to the crushing of Satan and the release of believers from his grasp in conjunction with an emphasis on the deity and humanity of Christ indicate unmistakeable echoes of both Anselm's *Christus Victor* and *Cur Deus Homo*. Bullinger further explained that the Holy Spirit prepares the elect to receive the Son and believe in him. Indeed, the Holy Spirit 'is poured into our hearts', leads men and women to faith, brings about the second birth and effects union with Christ.

III. THE GOSPEL AND RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation was clearly an integral aspect of Bullinger's gospel. What was on view here, for Bullinger, was both the reconciliation of mankind to God as well as the reconciliation of God to mankind. As was his usual practice, which he commenced in 1523, on the title page of *The Decades* Bullinger cited Matthew 17:5 with *placata* ('reconciled') instead of *placita* ('pleased'). Significantly, in sermon IV.1 of *The Decades* Bullinger used *placatus* rather than *placitus* as many as six times.[24] Thus, Bullinger's understanding of the theological significance of Matthew 17:5 clearly underlies his first statement about the gospel, cited above.[25] Moreover, Bullinger declared: 'The heavenly Father truly set forth his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for our propitiation, certainly to be our reconciliation (*reconciliatio*), on account of God being reconciled (*placatus*) we might be adopted into the (number of the) sons of God.'[26] He further explained that: 'However many believe in Christ, assuredly because of him, the Father is reconciled to us and because of him we are considered to be just (*iusti*) and holy (*sancti*).'[27]

The citing of Matthew 17:5 in the same manner on the title page of all his works points to Bullinger's understanding of Christ as the goal of the whole canon. For Bullinger, Christ's transfiguration in the presence

(Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), p. 347, notes 16, 25, 27. See Opitz, *Decades*, p. 390: 'God who is rich in mercy and goodness sent his Son into the world, so that he being incarnate might die for us and take away the sins of our imperfection and transfer to us, in faith, his perfection who is the perfection and fulfilment of the law.'

23 Bruce Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 76-7.

24 Opitz, *Decades*, pp. 492, 493, 497, 505, 506 (×2).

25 Ibid., p. 492.

26 Ibid., p. 514.

27 Ibid., p. 515.

of Moses and Elijah indicated that the Torah and the Prophets find their climax in Christ and were fulfilled in him. It is evident, therefore, that Bullinger cited Matthew 17:5 to make it clear to the reader that the elect are partakers of Christ by faith and, thereby, reconciled to God. He emphasized that reconciliation with God is only possible if only one were to be in Christ. In this connection, Peter Opitz notes that Bullinger's understanding of Matthew 17:5 'characterizes also his exegesis of Romans. But listening to Christ means having faith in Christ, which is possible only in pneumatical union with Christ, that is, in participation in Christ's spirit of love.'[28]

IV. THE GOSPEL AND UNION WITH CHRIST/UNION WITH GOD

Union with Christ was clearly a foundational aspect of the outworking of the gospel for Bullinger. This is reflected, for example, in several sections of the *Consensus Tigurinus* (1549).[29] It is also clearly to be seen in the title of sermon IV.1 (*in hoc verae salutis omnia*). Bullinger's focus on union with Christ mirrors his insistence that the covenant is not so much about God giving his promises or his blessings but, rather, God giving himself. In his most direct comment on union with Christ in sermon IV.1 Bullinger stated: 'Eternal salvation is the seeing and enjoying the eternal God and consequently being joined in inseparable union with him.'[30]

For Bullinger, the outworking of the gospel in a believer's life is union with Christ through the Holy Spirit. Indeed, union with Christ as an outworking of the gospel was of fundamental importance for Bullinger's understanding of the reality of salvation. Thus union with Christ or union with God was emphasized repeatedly in this sermon.[31] It is why Burrows distils Bullinger's understanding of the gospel in terms of *Christus extra nos sed intra nos vivens* where, on the one hand, Christ's alien righteousness is imputed to the believer while, on the other hand, the believer is united to Christ who lives in the believer through the Spirit.[32]

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28 Peter Opitz, 'Bullinger on Romans', in *Reformation Readings of Romans*, ed. by Kathy Ehrensberger and R. Ward Holder (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2008), p. 155.

29 Articles 5, 6, 9, 10, 14 and 19. Cf. Emidio Campi and Ruedi Reich, eds., *Consensus Tigurinus: Heinrich Bullinger und Johannes Calvin über das Abendmahl* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2009), pp. 258-67.

30 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 507.

31 Ibid., pp. 502, 507, 510, 511 (×2), 512, 513, 521.

32 Mark. S. Burrows, '"Christus intra nos Vivens": The Peculiar Genius of Bullinger's Doctrine of Sanctification', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 98 (1987), 48-69.

It is also to be noted that one of Bullinger's favourite phrases occurs several times in sermon IV.1, *viz*. '(God) wholly poured himself with all his good things (*cum omnibus bonis*) into believers'.[33] Here Bullinger was appropriating Augustine's understanding of the infusion language of Romans 5:5 through the prism of Lombard's *Sentences*. The key point is that Romans 5:5 was understood by Bullinger not so much as God pouring his love (*caritas*) into the hearts of believers but, rather, God pouring himself into the hearts of believers through the Holy Spirit. In doing so, Bullinger was clearly interacting with terminology used at Trent which spoke of the infusion of hope, faith and love. That Bullinger referred to *gratia infusa*[34] in tandem with *sola fides* is a pointed corrective to chapter 7 of the Decree of the Sixth Session of Trent. The deliberate choice of this terminology taken over from Augustine served to point to the fact that salvation is all of God and all from God.

This perspective of Bullinger's understanding of the dynamics of salvation is reflected by the fact that in sermon IV.1 he also asserted that, by faith, believers 'are made partakers of all the good things (*omnium bonorum*) of Christ'.[35] Bullinger further declared that, in Christ, God has given believers 'all things fully for a blessed life and eternal salvation'.[36] Indeed, in one of his summaries of the gospel, Bullinger stated that God has given believers, in Christ, 'all things for a blessed life' (*omnia vitae beatae*).[37] A parallel phrase was employed when he explained that God gives us his treasures (*thesauros*) in Christ.[38] In the same breath, he pointed out that true preaching of the Gospel will proclaim that through Christ the Lord, who is the true Messiah, is the only source of 'all things (*omnia*) for salvation and life'.[39] He employed a similar phrase elsewhere both in *The Decades* and in *De testamento*. For example, at the end of sermon I.8 he wrote, 'From there (i.e. the right hand of the Father in heaven) he pours into us the abundance of all good things (*omnium bonorum copiam*): his Holy Spirit, and communicates himself wholly to us joining us to him with an indissoluble bond'.[40] The title of sermon IV.1 declares that in Christ is

33 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 502.
34 Ibid., p. 497.
35 Ibid., p. 510.
36 Ibid., p. 497—*in quo etiam dederit nobis plene vitae beatae et salutis aeternae*; a few lines earlier Bullinger has *in ipso omnia plene beatae vitae aeternaeque salutis*. The former phrase is repeated on p. 506. *Nobisque omnia vitae et salutis plene exhiberet* is used on p. 509.
37 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 492.
38 Ibid., p. 509.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., p. 99.

verae salutis omnia. This is further explicated in the sermon itself where Bullinger explained that 'God the Father has given us in his Son entirely all things (*plene omnia*) for a sanctified life and eternal salvation'.[41]

Indeed, several times in sermon IV.1 Bullinger referred to the believer receiving *omnia* through union with Christ. This must be viewed through the perspective of Bullinger's reference to God as *cornucopia* and Christ as *omnis plenitudo*. Opitz also notes that Bullinger regards that Paul highlights Christ as *omnis plenitudo* in Romans, Galatians and Hebrews.[42] Bullinger's point is that with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit most abundantly in the age of the new covenant, Christ, who is *omnis plenitudo*, dwells in the heart of the believer and, thereby, God (*cornucopia*) is united to the believer who thus receives his blessings.

V. THE GOSPEL AND THE IMPUTATION OF CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

For Bullinger, 'Christian righteousness is imputative'.[43] Citing Titus 3:5 in sermon IV.1, Bullinger differentiated between the righteousness that comes from God and the righteousness that mankind deems it can merit through its works.[44] Like the other reformers, Bullinger underscored that salvation is only possible through the gift of righteousness from God through faith in Christ. Hence, towards the end of sermon IV.1 Bullinger has a section that highlights the imputation of Christ's alien righteousness to believers. This section, which has the marginal comment *Christianorum iustitia imputativa* (the righteousness of Christians is imputed), emphasizes *iustitia extra nos posita* several times.[45] Bullinger not only affirmed here the forensic nature of justification but he also squarely placed the imputation of Christ's righteousness alongside the believer's relationship with and participation in Christ. He thus emphasized the imputation of alien righteousness in tandem with participation in Christ, indicating his understanding of the participational character of justification. Bullinger phrased it in terms of 'God truly communicated his righteousness to all believers'.[46] For Bullinger it was *iustitia Christi extra nos, sed Christus in nobis*.

41 Ibid., p. 506.
42 Opitz, 'Bullinger on Romans', p. 154.
43 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 517.
44 Ibid., p. 495 refers to *non ex operibus iustitiae nostrae*.
45 Ibid., pp. 517-518 (×2).
46 Ibid., p. 515.

VI. THE GOSPEL AND ADOPTION

Julie Canlis has correctly identified that adoption is a key theme in Calvin's understanding of the gift of salvation.[47] Not surprisingly, the theme of adoption is also present in Bullinger's unpacking of the gospel. Including Scripture references to Christ as the 'Son' or the 'Son of God', the word *filius* occurs as many as sixty times in the sermon. It is in this context that one must view the several times where Bullinger reiterated that, through the gospel, believers are adopted as sons of God. Election is clearly on view because he emphatically declared that it is adoption 'into the number of the sons of God'. Indeed, he stated that: 'For we learn indeed that justification is only but sanctification (*beatificatio*), the forgiveness of sins and adoption into the number of the sons of God'.[48] Union with Christ is effected in the elect through the Holy Spirit and is the basis of their justification and sanctification. As the adopted sons of God, believers receive the riches of the covenant blessings given by God, *El Shaddai*, who is *cornucopia*. They are heirs of eternal life.

VII. THE GOSPEL AND *SOLA GRATIA*, *SOLA FIDES*, AND *SOLUS CHRISTUS*

There is an unmistakeable emphasis on *sola gratia* in sermon IV.1. The word *gratia* appears in the title of the sermon ('Of the gospel of the grace of God') and as many as ninety-four times throughout the sermon, while the phrase 'mere grace' (*mera gratia*) occurs six times.[49] 'The free grace of God' (*gratuita dei gratia*) occurs in the summary at the end of the sermon.[50] What is particularly striking is the number of marginal comments that mention *gratia*.[51] Bullinger pointedly indicated that he was very cognisant of the medieval writings on *gratia*. But he was more concerned for the biblical understanding of and use of *gratia*. In place of an analysis of the medieval discussions on *gratia* which undergirded the Roman church at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Bullinger chose to 'rather cite sentences of holy Scripture (which is the one and only rule to make an opinion or to judge rightly) so thereby, I maintain, Scripture prescribes how we should think (that is, about *gratia*)'.[52] Significantly, on several of

47 Julie Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), pp. 130-6.

48 Opitz, *Decades*, pp. 518-9.

49 Ibid., pp. 497, 513-4 (×3), 518.

50 Ibid., 522; cf. also ibid., pp. 495-6.

51 *Gratia, gratia dei qui sit, caussa gratia divinae, operatio gratiae divinae, gratia iustificamur, in Christo exhibit suam nobis gratiam deus.*

52 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 497.

the occasions when Bullinger referred to *mera gratia*, he made a point to hammer home that salvation is not at all attributed to any work or merit. Furthermore, Bullinger cited Augustine who taught that if anyone joined together humility or obedience as a help to grace then that person is contrary to the teaching of the apostle Paul.[53] Against those who argue that there is even a hint of synergism in Bullinger's thought, the following citation should silence such a hasty conclusion:

> In fact by no means is it admitted that justification is attributed partly to faith and partly to the mercy of God, partly to the works of faith and partly to our merits. If this were the case then the gospel is plundered. Therefore I decree to all of us solely and unceasingly to urge that the faithful are justified, saved or sanctified by faith without works, by the grace and mercy of God, I repeat, through Christ alone.[54]

Moreover, echoing what he had explained in sermon III.9 that justification is neither by works nor faith plus works,[55] in the section which has the marginal comment 'Christ is received by faith not by works' Bullinger declared:

> For we are freely saved through faith without any regard to our works either prior or subsequent (to faith). And although this argument has been treated again and again in our sermons because, all the same, on it revolves the hinge of evangelical doctrine, in fact this dogma (namely Christ is received by faith and not by works) is fiercely attacked by many.[56]

Bullinger also clearly taught that the gospel is *sola fides*. That faith is at the heart of the gospel is evidenced by the fact that Bullinger referred to *fides* as many as seventy-six times in sermon IV.1. Indeed, he declared that: 'Sincere faith takes hold of the mere grace in Christ'.[57] On three separate occasions in the sermon he referred to *sola fides*.[58] In his discussion of Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus, Bullinger declared that 'no one should be in any doubt whatsoever' that 'by faith we are made partakers of Christ'.[59] Bullinger brought to a close his discussion of the importance of *sola fides* by citing five reasons for the importance of this doctrine, *viz*. the testimony of the saints and the councils of the church over the

53 Ibid., p. 496.
54 Ibid., p. 519.
55 Ibid., p. 433.
56 Ibid., p. 512.
57 Ibid., p. 497.
58 Ibid., pp. 513, 516, 519.
59 Ibid., p. 513.

centuries; it points to the glory of Christ; its link with the certainty of our salvation; the image of God is repaired in us and our understanding of sin. Quite pointedly, Bullinger concluded the sermon with what appears to be a direct attack on Rome: 'I could add to these more reasons why it is fitting for all men to strive and endeavour that this doctrine (the grace of God in God's only begotten Son through faith and not by works justifies the catholic church) be kept sincere and uncorrupted in the church.'[60]

Bullinger further understood the gospel in terms of *solus Christus*. In sermon IV.1 Bullinger clearly highlighted the sacrifice of Christ in terms of propitiation in order to reconcile mankind to God. Moreover, he reiterated five times in the sermon that salvation is through Christ alone.[61] It is through Christ alone that we can come to the Father. Forgiveness of sins and eternal life is only through Christ alone. Christ alone is the life and salvation of the elect. Righteousness is through Christ alone and is received by faith.[62] Bullinger sought to assure his readers that 'Christ alone is our life and salvation, that is to say, our most absolute (*absolutissima*) salvation and life'.[63]

VIII. THE GOSPEL AND THE PROTOEVANGELIUM

The linking of the *protoevangelium* of Genesis 3:15 and the covenant through which God calls and reconciles the elect is a recurring theme in Bullinger's works.[64] In sermon IV.1 of *The Decades* Bullinger referred to the *protoevangelium* on several occasions.[65] Bullinger declared that the gospel is of heavenly origin and that God had preached to Adam and Eve that his promised Son would crush the serpent's head.[66] He reiterated that there is one gospel in human history. There is also frequent unmistakeable reference to *The Old Faith* (1537) where the *protoevangelium* is particularly highlighted. Indeed, Aurelio Garcia Archilla observes that 'Bullinger's exegesis of Genesis 3:15 has found in it the whole New Testament Gospel: virgin birth, two-natures Christology, justification by faith alone'.[67] According to Bullinger, the gospel was already proclaimed

60 Ibid., p. 522.

61 Ibid., pp. 507, 508 (×3), 515.

62 Ibid., p. 508.

63 Ibid., p. 507.

64 Apart from sermon IV.1 Bullinger refers to the *protoevanglieum* in *The Decades* at Opitz, *Decades*, pp. 85, 300, 345-6, 390, 635, 646, 799, 1014.

65 Opitz, *Decades*, pp. 493, 498 (×2). See Opitz, *Bullinger als Theologe*, pp. 80-2.

66 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 493.

67 Aurelio A. Garcia Archilla, *The Theology of History and Apologetic Historiography in Heinrich Bullinger: Truth in History* (San Francisco: Mellen Research

directly by God to Adam and Eve immediately after the Fall. This promise is 'the pillar and foundation of all Christian religion and preaching of the gospel'.[68]

Significantly, in sermon IV.1 of *The Decades* Bullinger made a point to drive home the fact that Christ is, first and foremost, the seed of Mary, thereby indicating his Mariological interpretation of the *protoevangelium*.[69] Bullinger also clarified that the promise at the heart of the *protoevangelium* finds its goal in Christ who is the seed of Adam as well as the seed of Eve and who thus fulfils both Genesis 22:18 and Galatians 3:16. Following the targums, Bullinger further interpreted Genesis 49:10 messianically with the promised coming of 'Schilo' whom he pointed out is 'the source of all good things (*copiae cornu*) and the abundance of all good and excellent things. In fact, Christ is the treasury of all good things'.[70] In so doing, Bullinger pointed to Christ as the one who would fulfil the covenant of God with mankind as expounded by him in his *De testamento* where he emphasized that God is *cornucopia* and who initiates and fulfils the covenant because of his grace.

IX. THE GOSPEL AND ELECTION

Bullinger's understanding of the faithful remnant of Israel or true Israel within Israel[71] is reflected when he underlined (of all true believers) that 'we are the chosen nation'.[72] He referred to 'all the faithful of both the testaments'.[73] He cited both 1 Timothy 2:4 and Titus 2:11[74] where his understanding of 'all men' points to the fact that the gospel is for all nations.[75] The gospel is to be preached to 'the whole world'. Significantly, in citing the Timothy passage, Bullinger has *cunctos homines* instead of the Vulgate's *omnes homines*. He also has *cunctos homines* in his commentary on

University Press, 1992), p. 23.

68 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 498.

69 Garcia Archilla, *History*, p. 21.

70 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 499 (*Thesaurus enim omnium bonorum Christus est*).

71 This is a theme touched on by Bullinger in both *De testamento* and *The Old Faith*.

72 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 505.

73 Ibid., p. 515.

74 Ibid., p. 510. 1 Timothy 2:4 is cited in other sermons at pp. 32, 41, 48, and 144.

75 This is clear from the marginal comment *Omnium esse salutem evangelicam*, Opitz, *Decades*, p. 509. Cf. Martin Foord, 'God wills all people to be saved—or does he? Calvin's reading of 1 Timothy 2:4', in *Engaging with Calvin: Aspects of the Reformer's Legacy for Today*, ed. by Mark D. Thompson (Nottingham: Apollos, 2009), pp. 192-3.

1 Timothy.[76] Bullinger made a point of distilling the import of Ephesians 1:3-14 where he explained that Paul 'referred to the whole gamut of election and salvation, together with all its parts, to the grace of God'.[77]

Clearly, Bullinger had in mind the salvation of the 'faithful' or 'all the faithful' in sermon IV.1. This is evident from the marginal comment *Salvantur fideles*.[78] Those who are saved are all who truly believe (*omni quidem credenti*).[79] Only believers are purged of their sins through Christ.[80] Christ is the absolute fullness (*plenitudo absolutissima*) of believers.[81] Indeed, Christ is the door for the sheep and 'those, therefore, whoever strive towards eternal life and salvation through other means than through Christ are thieves and robbers. For they rob from Christ his glory, who is and remains the only Saviour, and massacre their own souls'.[82] Pointedly, Bullinger frequently referred in sermon IV.1 to 'the number of the sons of God'.[83] Those who put their trust in God and his promises 'are received into the number of the sons of God'.[84] Indeed, 'by God's eternal counsel (*aeterno suo consilio*)' Christ was sent that believers 'might be adopted into the (number of the) sons of God'.[85] Bullinger asserted that not all will be saved as indicated by the marginal comment *Quare non salventur omnes homines*.[86] In this section he cited Matthew 20:16, the parable of the banquet (Luke 14:15-24), and John 3:19 which refers to the reprobate who not only do not believe but who also choose darkness rather than light.[87] Moreover, the elect confess Christ and believe in him only through the 'pouring in and inspiration of the Holy Spirit'.[88] Conversely, those who are not saved are those who do not believe the Word of

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76 Heinrich Bullinger, *In omnes apostolicas epistolas, divi videlicet Pauli XIII, et VII. canonicas, commentarii Heinrychi Bullingeri, ab ipso iam recogniti, et nonullis in locis aucti* (Zürich, 1537), p. 564.

77 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 496.

78 Ibid., p. 510.

79 Ibid., pp. 492, 500, 508, 515, 522.

80 Ibid., p. 507.

81 Ibid., p. 508.

82 Ibid. Although there is no marginal indication, it is possible that Bullinger was thinking of Psalm 118:19, 20 here. Bullinger does, however, appear to have in mind Article 3 of Zwingli's *67 Articles* (1523), *Huldrych Zwingli Schriften II* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1995), pp. 31-3.

83 Opitz, *Decades*, p. 516.

84 Ibid., p. 512.

85 Ibid., p. 514.

86 Ibid., p. 510.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid., p. 496.

God preached to them and who despise and reject it.[89] In this connection, Bullinger made a point in this sermon to refer to Romans 1:5 and 16:26. It is only the elect from all nations who will respond in terms of the 'faith of obedience (*in obedientiam fidei*)'.[90]

There is also in sermon IV.1 a significant comment on predestination to which the Remonstrants appealed at Dort. This section is cited here in full:

> And although by all these it may be concluded, one way or another, to whom that salvation belongs and to whom grace is seen to be preached, however, the very matter itself demands that we show expressly and eloquently that Christ and the grace of Christ belongs to be introduced and announced to all (ad omnes) through the gospel. We should not imagine that in heaven there are placed two books, in the one are read the (names) inscribed of those who are to be saved who are saved, of necessity, even though they struggle against the word of God and commit atrocious crimes it is refutable that they will be saved. In the other book, however, is contained (the names of) those sealed for damnation who, whatever they do, however devoutly they live, are to be damned. Let us hold, rather, that the holy gospel of Christ preaches generally to the whole world (universo mundo) the grace of God, the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting.[91]

This is, clearly, not the only place in *The Decades* where Bullinger touched on the topic of predestination. Building on the groundwork of Peter Walser,[92] Venema has ably identified that Bullinger referred to predestination in *The Decades* in five sections, *viz*. the definition of predestination, the question of personal election, the problems of doubt and certainty, the means of election and the importance of faith and trust.[93] Venema's conclusion and analysis is that: 'Bullinger's doctrine of predestination in the *Decades*, while it appears to be quite strong in his formal definition—possibly a doctrine of double predestination—is actually quite moderately stated by contrast to comparable works of Calvin, Luther and Zwingli'.[94] This indicates Bullinger's commitment to express doctrine, as much as possible, in terms and expressions used by the Bible rather than by logical extrapolation from Scripture.

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89 Ibid., p. 493.
90 Ibid., pp. 492, 510.
91 Ibid., p. 509.
92 Peter Walser, *Die Prädestination bei Heinrich Bullinger* (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag Zürich, 1957).
93 Venema, *Predestination*, pp. 43-9.
94 Ibid., p. 49.

Sermon IV.1 echoes one of the features of *The Old Faith*: the frequent reference to an Augustinian view of the two cities. Believers are of the seed of Christ while unbelievers are of the seed of the devil. Bullinger explained that because 'the heel of the virgin's seed is well trodden upon' thus, throughout salvation history, the seed of Christ would strive with the seed of the devil. Moreover, for Bullinger, the faithful preaching of the Gospel to 'all' people will draw out the elect while those who are the seed of the devil will choose to reject it.

In almost the final comment of sermon IV.1, with a clear allusion to John 3:36, Bullinger made a direct reference to the reprobate: 'Those who indeed because of their unbelief and hardness of heart do not receive Christ are given over to eternal punishment and chains. For the wrath of God remains on them.'[95]

X. PREACHING AND THE GOSPEL

That preaching and the gospel are intimately linked is evident from Bullinger's summary of the gospel cited above where he explained: 'The gospel is the heavenly preaching of God's grace to us…'. God is the source of the gospel but Christ is its focus: 'For Christ is king and high priest, that is, he is our saviour, the scopus, the star and the very sun of the preaching of the gospel.'[96] Several times throughout the course of the sermon Bullinger emphasized that the gospel is to be preached to all nations. He unpacked how Christ preached the gospel to Nicodemus and that in Christ's own preaching he elicited repentance and faith.

This same pattern of preaching was also seen by Bullinger in Paul's preaching. In citing Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders he identified that the goal of preaching is that it produces 'repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus'. Furthermore, in order to underscore his point about *sola gratia* Bullinger even phrased what he wanted to say in a negative way: 'Hence, by the way, we conclude that the gospel is not sincerely preached when it is taught that we are made partakers of the life of Christ on account of our works or merits.'[97] Indeed, Bullinger made a point to have a section on the 'insincere preaching of the gospel' or preaching that does not truly proclaim the finished work of Christ and the benefits given to believers through faith in him.[98] For Bullinger, true preaching is preaching the very Word of God. Furthermore, 'even today, the heavenly voice (of God) resounds to us through the mouths of minis-

[95] Opitz, *Decades*, p. 522.
[96] Ibid., p. 497.
[97] Ibid., p. 512.
[98] Ibid., p. 509.

ters when they sincerely preach the gospel'.[99] There are two responses to this preaching: 'those who believe, believe the word of the eternal God. Those who do not believe despise and reject the word of God'.[100]

XI. CONCLUSION

Bullinger's gospel was neither synergistic nor universalistic. Like the other reformers, his gospel clearly reflected *sola gratia*, *sola fides* and *solus Christus*. Furthermore, Bullinger's approach was both *sola Scriptura* and *tota Scriptura* as he saw the gospel proclaimed in both the Old Testament and the New Testament as the outworking of the *protoevangelium* of Genesis 3:15. His view of the message of Scripture was truly christoscopic.[101] Bullinger further underscored the imputation of Christ's alien righteousness (*iustitia extra nos posita*) to the believer in tandem with the believer's union with Christ (*Christus intra nos vivens*). This union with Christ is effected through the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. Moreover, in the face of the teaching of Rome, Bullinger underlined that believers have assurance of salvation because in the here and now they have a sure hope. This was a clear rejoinder to chapter 9 of the Decree of the Sixth Session of Trent ('Against the vain confidence of heretics').

In all his writings, Bullinger encouraged his readers to live righteously in view of who they are in Christ. That is why his works are characterised by focus on the *pietatis praxis*. For Bullinger, pious living arises from a right understanding of the gospel and its implications. In sermon IV.1 of *The Decades* Bullinger made it clear that the gospel he proclaimed is not only faithful to a true interpretation of Scripture but that it is also the same gospel proclaimed by the church fathers. It is this gospel which had been subsequently corrupted by the Church of Rome. He further used this sermon to emphasize, against the Anabaptists, that believers are not yet perfect even though they may be termed *iustus*. Nonetheless, the elect are called to live righteously (*integer*) in the present world as they are engrafted into Christ (*insiti Christo*). Bullinger constantly reminded his readers of the progressive dimension to sanctification and urged them to live as faithful members of the new covenant community established by Christ and his blood. Hence, in his preaching, Bullinger challenged men and women with a view to repentance to God and faith in the Lord Jesus through the in-working of the Holy Spirit.

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99 Ibid., p. 494.

100 Ibid., p. 493.

101 This term has been coined by Jeff Fisher in his *A Christoscopic Reading of Scripture: Johannes Oecolampadius on Hebrews* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2016).

Calling All Christians! Calvin's Doctrine Of Vocation

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INTRODUCTION

The term *vocation* comes from the Latin, *voco*, which means 'call'. In Scripture it pertains to a divine summons to become part of God's people and to accept the responsibilities that entails. The Greek term *kaleo* too means a call or summons, and it, like the Hebrew *qāhal*, refers to the people of God meeting for worship, that is, called together for that purpose. When the New Testament appeared in Greek, *ekklēsia* became the name for a body of worshipers called together, as the word *klēsis* indicates. *Ek klēsis* signifies people called out of ordinary pursuits to worship God and then to go forth into the world to serve him. In the epistle to the Hebrews (3:1) the members of this assembly are 'partakers of a heavenly calling', which in 2 Timothy 1:9 is a 'holy calling'.[1] This *vocation* comes to all believers in Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 7:17–24, the Apostle Paul admonished his readers to understand that each one had received a calling/vocation with particular responsibilities to fulfil accordingly. In a striking manner he told Christians to accept the status God, in his providence, had assigned to them. To some believers that meant accepting the position of slaves, although he told them to accept freedom, if it became attainable. If emancipation does not occur, they need not fret, because 'he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freeman' (1 Cor. 7:22). In this context calling signifies a status such as being married, being circumcised, or living as a slave or a freeman, etc. Regardless of one's occupation or social standing, he or she is called to serve God.

VOCATION IN THE EARLY CHURCH

In the apostolic and early post-apostolic era, Christians at times suffered persecution at the hands of Roman imperial officials, so they scorned

[1] Unless otherwise noted, biblical texts are cited according to the NASB.

some occupations as evil because people within them operated as agents of oppression and adherents to pagan religion. Sometimes the church required converts from paganism to renounce civil and military positions before receiving baptism.

After Emperor Constantine professed Christianity and granted official toleration to the church, Christians supported the imperial government gratefully, and being a Christian gradually became a status symbol of social acceptance. Conditions of life improved considerably, but in this atmosphere of favour many church members became lax in zeal, even in morality. This led devout people to withdraw from society to form enclaves of committed believers who professed a special vocation to live in conformity to *evangelical counsels*, as in subscription to vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Although the first expressions appeared in the third century, the newly acquired favour for Christianity in the fourth century and the corresponding decline in fervour among church members prompted many more people to seek the life of seclusion in religious communities. Those who retreated from the world valued the contemplative life of prayer and meditation over the active life of service to society. A sacred-secular dichotomy developed within Christian circles and gradually became a permanent feature of the developing ecclesiastical establishment.

VOCATION IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

After Emperor Theodosius II elevated Christianity to the status of the imperial religion in the fifth century, 'Christianity became more worldly and less costly. Christians saw the empire as God's servant.... Monastic movements emerged... partly in response to this comfortable and compromised Christianity.'[2] The gap between clergy and laity became ever wider, until the term *vocation* referred only to priests, monks, and nuns, who were presumed to be members of a *spiritual estate*, separate from and superior to, laymen in a *secular estate*. By the thirteenth century, when Thomas Aquinas (c. 1227–74) became the leading Catholic theologian, the distinction between spiritual and secular living had become entrenched. Thomas urged people who performed manual labour to do so for monks who could then devote themselves to the higher life of scholarship and meditation. The work of the clergy was then more pleasing to God than

[2] Douglas J. Schuurman, 'Vocation', in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. by Erwin Fahlbusch, *et al.* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 5, p. 693. This article is an excellent coverage of the topic.

the toil of common people performed with their hands.[3] The modern Roman Catholic Church, although it has adopted new teachings about vocation, continues in practice to apply that term primarily to the clergy.[4] In the document entitled *Dogmatic Constitution of the Church*, Vatican Council II (1962-65) affirmed the traditional view of calling as it relates to the *religious* life. Section forty-three of this statement hails a particular vocation to the religious life. Those who experience such a call 'receive an invitation in faith to manifest the presence of God through their lives as religious, *observing the evangelical counsels by vows or other ties*'.[5] The medieval conception remains prominent in the Catholic Church. There are still communities of monks and nuns seeking to escape the evil world by practicing a contemplative life in chosen isolation from society. In doing this they operate on the premise that God's commands pertain to everyone, but divine *counsels* pertain to the higher life of the clergy, which very devout persons choose, as they pursue their own salvation and pray for that of others.

The church in the Middle Ages often denigrated manual labour for wages as degrading, and it regarded those engaged in such toil as inferior people. Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153), for example, viewed monks as living on a higher plane than farmers, an idea which appears to reflect the enduring teaching of Pope Gregory I (r. 590-604), which exalted the contemplative life.

Some medieval teachers mistakenly regarded work (especially manual toil) as a penalty for original sin, a view scarcely better than the classical Greek idea that manual toil was for slaves and the lowest classes of society. It is of paramount importance that Christians realize God directed Adam and Eve to perform manual labour to maintain the order of creation, and he did so before the fall, so work is not a necessary evil but a divinely ordained obligation to be fulfilled within one's vocation.[6] Medieval monks were badly in error when they arrogated the term *vocation* to themselves and maintained only superior believers could fulfil the duties of a divine call. They thought the call to love God entailed separation from society so there would be no distracting worldly associations. As this belief gained credence in Western Europe, *religio* became a term to

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3 A helpful collection of studies of this nature is Paul E. Sigmund (ed.), *Politics and Ethics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988).

4 'Decree on Priestly Formation', in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. by Walter M. Abbot, S.J. (New York: Association Press, 1966), pp. 437-61. (emphasis mine)

5 Ibid., 'Dogmatic Constitution on the Church', pp. 14-101.

6 See the fine treatment of this subject in George W. Forrell, 'Work and the Christian Calling', *The Lutheran Quarterly* 8 (1956), 105-18.

identify a member of an order of monks or nuns, each one being known as a *religious*, and the monastic life was known as a *profession*.

Eventually scholastic theologians came to realize that all Christians, regardless of occupation, are called to glorify God, and they may do so in so-called secular work. These scholars tried to connect vocation with secular pursuits, but in doing so they created a hierarchy of categories to assign comparative value to various occupations. Members of the clerical establishment stood at the top of the scale, with lesser occupations below them in descending order. The spiritual elite then had the highest calling. There were perceptive thinkers who saw the error in denigrating the laity, but they continued to extol the clergy as though its members were the religious aristocracy in the kingdom of God.[7] This attitude conflicts sharply with the Apostle Paul's use of *klēsis* in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29. There he admonished his readers to 'consider your calling... there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;... so no man may boast before God'. Every Christian receives an effectual call to salvation, and every Christian has a divinely ordained vocation to perform.

VOCATION IN THE REFORMATION

Although medieval writers discoursed about fulfilling the *counsels of perfection* within the clerical and monastic establishments, some earnest students of Scripture discovered a far broader and deeper meaning of vocation, one causally connected with the doctrine of divine providence. Among those who made this discovery Martin Luther (1483-1546) was the pioneer, although a few preceding thinkers had been moving in the same direction. Luther associated vocation with God's creation and ordering of the world, that is, within his providence. Aside from the salvific call to embrace Christ as revealed in the Gospel, Luther directed Christians to focus their concerns on earth and the needs of God's creatures there. He saw vocation as a means to implement God's command to love one's neighbours, thereby to contribute to the proper ordering of society. Believers, in the exercise of their divinely bestowed talents, are agents of providence.

Rather than withdrawing from the world to seek salvation through works of piety, true Christians serve within the world by attending to the needs of others. All believers, regardless of their social standing, are to be engaged in fulfilling the duties of their priesthood, for all are members of

[7] Karl Holl, 'The History of the Word *Vocation*', tr. by Heleu F. Peacock, *Review and Expositor* 55 (1958), 127-40.

the *sacred/spiritual estate*, and the contributions of one are not inherently superior to those of another.[8] To show his disdain for medieval teaching about vocation Luther wrote *The Judgment of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows*, in which he asked, 'What would the monks and nuns do, if they heard that, in the sight of God, they are not a bit better than married people or mud-stained farmers?'[9]

Following the lead of Martin Luther, John Calvin too denied the traditional doctrine of vocation, and he contended the Roman Catholic exaltation of the monastic life had 'set up a double Christianity' in which 'hooded sophists' comprised a 'conventical of schismatics disturbing the order of the church and cut off from the lawful society of believers'.[10] Luke Luther, Calvin denied emphatically that anyone could either obtain or maintain the spiritual perfection required by the so-called evangelical counsels which monks aspired to achieve. Calvin maintained a dynamic concept of God's providence as of a 'watchful, effective sort, engaged in ceaseless activity..., governing heaven and earth... and he so regulates all things that nothing takes place without his deliberation'.[11] Calvin discouraged speculation about God's essence and advocated that Christians study the divine character as revealed in Scripture, in order to please him. It is not profitable to be concerned about what God is 'in himself'. It is very beneficial, however, to focus on God 'as he is toward us'.[12]

There is not a trace of fatalism in this reformer's thinking. His firm affirmation of God's complete sovereignty did not incline Calvin toward resignation or indolence. It, on the contrary, motivated him to tireless activity in God's service. He rejected meaningless chance and mechanical determinism in favour of benevolent providence that gives meaning to history and calls humans to participate in the progress of God's kingdom on earth. He emphasized God's constant involvement with his creatures whose actions serve his sovereign purpose. Divine engagement with the elect is especially significant, and to them he has granted marvellous privileges, as they become knowing and willing collaborators in his design.

In his *Catechism of the Church of Geneva* (1545), Calvin declared the chief end of human life is 'to know God by whom men were created... because he created us and placed us in this world... to be glorified in us....

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8 'The Judgment of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows', *Luther's Works*, tr. by James Atkinson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 44, pp. 245-400.

9 Ibid., 305.

10 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. by John T. McNeill, tr. by Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster Press, 1960), IV.xiii.14.

11 Ibid., I.xiv.3.

12 Ibid., I.x.2; cf. III.ii.6.

Our life should be devoted to his glory.'[13] This being so, all Christians must serve God obediently, and there can be no double standard, as when the medieval church required vows of complete obedience from its *religious* but did not expect that from laymen. Where the Roman Church assigned superior value and merit to ascetic withdrawal from the world, Protestants, Calvin prominent among them, emphasized living within society and there fulfilling the duties incumbent upon their various callings. Christians must be constantly aware that God 'sustains, nourishes, and cares for everything he has made, even to the least sparrow'.[14]

Obedience rendered gladly does not impair human happiness. It, on the contrary, promotes it. A due sense of providence and the role of one's vocation leads to genuine joy and deep contentment, as the people of God enjoy his provisions. When severe ascetics gave directions for godly living, they erred in advising Christians to use only those goods required for survival. Their mistake, as Calvin put it, was to 'fetter consciences more tightly than does the word of the Lord–a very dangerous thing'.[15] In his kindly providence God designed creation to be beautiful and to supply in abundance delights for humans to enjoy. Believers should avail themselves of these benefits which exceed the satisfaction of their basic needs. In accord with their vocation as stewards of their Father's gifts, they must discipline their use of those favours and guard against 'turning helps into hindrances'. An effective way to accomplish this is to remember that God has commanded us to place the needs of others above our own. 'We are stewards of everything God has conferred on us by which we are able to help your neighbour and are required to render an account of our stewardship'.[16] By obeying the divine command to love their neighbours, Christians progress in personal piety, as they discharge the duties of their respective vocations.

Calvin assigned such importance to the concept of vocation that he admonished believers to understand 'the Lord bids each one of us in all life's actions to look to his calling.... He has appointed duties for every man in his particular way of life.'[17] As a modern interpreter of the Reformation observed, all Christians have a calling 'to share in the *opus Dei*, to mirror the work of the Creator in their work by establishing human relationships and in creating human community in response to God's

[13] John Calvin, 'Catechism of the Church of Geneva', in Calvin's *Selected Works* II, tr. by Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983 rpt. of 1849 edn), p. 37.

[14] Calvin, *Institutes*, I.xvi.1.

[15] Ibid., III.x.1.

[16] Ibid., III.vii.5.

[17] Ibid., III.x.6.

affirmation of human life'.[18] This being so, all honourable occupations are divine callings. It is an egregious error to regard people who perform ordinary jobs, doing only what is necessary for their survival, as being without vocations.[19]

Even unbelievers have vocations, although they are not aware of them. Their work, as well as that of the elect, contributes to the orderly operation of providential arrangements, without which life could not continue. Christians perform the duties of their calling knowingly and willingly, while unbelievers do so in ignorance.[20] Christians must acknowledge the contributions of non-Christians and respect them as bearers of the *imago Dei*, even though sin has distorted that image. They are nevertheless neighbours. In explaining the parable of the Good Samaritan, Calvin said Jesus taught 'the word 'neighbour' extends indiscriminately to every man, because the whole human race is united by a sacred bond of fellowship'.[21] Christians must regard as neighbours even those who hate them.[22]

In addition to their calling to become disciples of Christ, believers receive other callings relative to the positions they hold in God's providential order for their lives. In all relationships, they must implement the requirements of stewardship, whether they be engaged as employees, employers, spouses, parents, church members, citizens, etc. Being a husband, for example, obligates a man to assist his wife in daily domestic chores, even rising in the middle of the night to attend to a crying infant. Husbands and wives are to be mutually submissive, as circumstances require them to be. Here the 'law of love' must govern their attitudes and actions.[23]

In their role as subjects/citizens their vocation requires God's people to obey, respect, and support civil rulers, even when those officials are unjust. This is not a demand for unqualified obedience, since civil rulers may order their subjects to sin, in which case, disobedience becomes a

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18 Iain Nicol, 'Vocation and the People of God', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 33 (1980), 372.

19 Ibid., p. 365.

20 Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative*, tr. by Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press), p. 221. Although hostile toward Calvin's view of theology proper, Brunner expressed appreciation for his concept of Vocation.

21 John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists* III, tr. by William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000 rpt.), p. 61.

22 John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, tr. by William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009 rpt.), pp. 160-1.

23 John Calvin, *Commentary on the Catholic Epistles*, tr. by John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2009 rpt.), pp. 147-8.

moral responsibility, a duty incumbent upon their vocation. In contrast with the view of the Anabaptists, Calvin taught Christians to become involved in social and political affairs and to regard them as opportunities to serve God. The reformer cited the biblical Daniel as an example to guide believers when civil disobedience becomes necessary.[24] When rulers become harsh and cruel, Calvin urged their subjects to realize such officials 'have been raised up by him [God] to punish the wickedness of the people.... A wicked king is the Lord's wrath upon the earth.'[25] In case of oppression from ecclesiastical authorities, Calvin cited the papacy, which he assailed sarcastically by saying 'as to the pope himself, it is in his power to condemn the whole world, while he exempts himself from all blame'.[26]

By affirming the duty of disobedience when rulers require their subjects to sin, Calvin showed that believing in providence does not mean passive acceptance of evil. While Christians must bear with patience and humility the abuse of their enemies, they must not regard iniquity with resignation. Stoic resignation is an expression of pride. Christians must refuse to collaborate with evil and patiently await divine deliverance in time or, ultimately, in eternity.[27] In those exceptional instances where Christians exercise civil authority, Calvin admonished them to regard their positions as their calling and to govern fairly, since they hold those positions only by delegation from God, to whom they are accountable.[28]

All who exercise authority in the conduct of their callings should be aware of God's sovereignty over them and so perform their proper tasks with devotion to him and due concern for the well-being of those they govern. As the reformer stated this matter:

> The magistrate will discharge his functions more willingly; the head of the household will confine himself to his duty; each man will bear and swallow the discomforts, vexations, weariness and anxieties of his way of life, when he has been persuaded that the burden was laid upon him by God. From this will arise... a singular consolation; that no task will be so sorid and base provided

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24 Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xx.32.

25 Ibid., IV.xx.25.

26 John Calvin, *Commentary on the Prophet Ezekiel* I, tr. by Thomas Myers (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2009 rpt.), p. 348. A lucid analysis of Calvin's teaching on the duties of subjects appears in William Mueller, *Church and State in Luther and Calvin* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954).

27 John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* IV, tr. by James Anderson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2009 rpt.), p. 20; *Institutes*, III.viii.11.

28 Mueller, *Church and State*, pp. 150-2.

> you obey your calling in it that it will not shine and be reckoned very precious in God's sight.[29]

John Calvin believed the faithful performance of one's vocation glorifies God and benefits both society and the person who is faithful. He urged Christians to consider occupations 'which yield the greatest advantage to one's neighbours'.[30] Since believers need not work for salvation, they are free to dedicate themselves to serving others, and that includes all kinds of people, regardless of their social standing or their faith or lack thereof. As Calvin put this matter, 'we ought to embrace the whole human race without exception in a single feeling of love'.[31]

The elect are 'justified not without works, but not through [by] works', and their vocation is the fruit of their election. The sign of vocation is faith, but the sign of faith is sanctification, that is, good works. The elect will display 'a passion to bear fruit in transforming service to all mankind'.[32] Regardless of how obviously depraved people may be, Christians are obliged to seek their welfare through the ministry of charity. As Calvin remarked, God 'bids us to extend to all men the love we bear to him, that this may be an unchanging principle: whatever the character of the man, we must yet love him because we love God'.[33]

In Geneva this concern led to the practice of special ministries to sick people, prisoners, elderly and infirmed residents, even to foreigners who had fled there to escape persecution in Catholic lands. Officials of church and state considered themselves co-workers with God to support his purpose for the benefit of needy people.[34] They viewed this work as their vocation. Calvin urged Genevan Christians to realize there was nothing they could do for God, who is self-sufficient. He told them therefore, 'since then your generosity cannot extend to him [God], you must practice it toward the saints on earth'.[35]

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29 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.x.6.

30 Calvin, *Commentary on Ephesians*, p. 300. There is a summary of Calvin's teaching about the role of various callings in *Institutes*, II.viii.46.

31 Ibid., II.viii.55.

32 Ray C. Petry, 'Calvin's Conception of the *Communio Sanctorum*', *Church History* 5 (1936), 231.

33 Calvin, *Institutes*, II.viii.55.

34 See Petry, 'Calvin's Conception', and the following essays by Robert M. Kingdom: 'Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva', *American Historical Review* 76 (1971), 50-69; and 'Calvinism and Social Welfare', *Calvin Theological Journal* 17 (1982), 212-30.

35 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.viii.5.

Calvin, as indicated above, did not restrict the ministry of charity to the saints alone. He understood humanity's most urgent need is, not for physical health and sustenance, but for eternal salvation. Humanitarian aid is not enough. As one modern Calvinist put it, the inadequacy of such assistance is 'it alleviates, but it fails to redeem'.[36] Whether or not the ministry of charity leads to conversion of lost people, Calvin maintained the Christians' duty is the same. He wrote, 'though there are many that are undeserving, while others abuse our liberality, we must not on this account leave off helping those that need our aid'.[37]

One class of people well able to participate in charity were the merchants of Geneva, whose vocation, Calvin said, was an honourable one when they conducted trade honestly and thereby performed a valuable service to the community. Since Geneva was a haven for persecuted Protestants, its merchants had many opportunities to help them. As their pastor, Calvin associated with them and with people of all occupations guiding them in the matter of their social responsibilities, thereby fulfilling their vocational duties.[38] Calvin noted how important work diligently performed is to a healthful economy, and he taught that such labour is part of the creation God intended to continue always, even if the fall had not occurred. In spite of the fall, those who toil honourably will find joy and satisfaction in their labour. Calvin cited Psalm 8:6–8 to show God's providential arrangement for humans to be his vicegerents in developing the assets of the earth—a task which requires continuous work.[39]

In his providence, God arranges the circumstances that determine the callings he has ordained for his creatures, and he equips them with the necessary talents to perform them. Realizing this is so, Calvin and other Protestant reformers promoted education for all classes of people, so all may be prepared to accept their calling to work for God's glory.[40] In Calvin's judgment 'ignorance of providence is the ultimate of all miseries,

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36 J.G. Matheson, 'Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 2 (1947), 53. This is a rather critical appraisal of Calvin's thinking, but one which duly recognizes his great contributions.

37 John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, tr. by John Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2009 rpt.), pp. 358-9.

38 Georges A. Barrois, 'Calvin and the Genevans', *Theology Today* 21 (1965), 458-65 is a helpful study of the reformer's relations with the various classes of Genevan society.

39 Jack Buckley, 'Calvin's View of Work', *Radix* 15 (1984), 8-12; 28. A splendid treatment of vocation is that of Gene Edward Veith, Jr., God at Work (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002).

40 Ibid., 17-21.

and the highest blessedness lies in the knowledge of it'.[41] This is especially relevant when, in the pursuit of their callings, believers encounter cruel opposition and must suffer for their loyalty to Christ. Calvin urged confidence that God has made the care of his people his personal concern. In the reformer's words, 'Faith is certain that God is true in all things, whether he promise or threaten; and it... obediently receives his commandments, observes his prohibitions, heeds his threats. Nevertheless, faith properly begins with the promise, rests in it, and ends in it.'[42] '…God humbles his children under various trials, that his defence of them may be the more remarkable, and that he may show himself to be their deliverer, as well as their preserver.'[43]

VOCATION IN MODERN TIMES

In accord with other Protestant reformers, Calvin rejected the secular humanism of Italian Renaissance scholars, with their emphasis on self-esteem and material rewards for their achievements. The Protestant rebuttal featured the insistence that God determines how and where humans are to serve him. Rather than regard vocation as only a human choice of occupations, the reformers stressed the role of divine calling which is sometimes contrary to human choice. It is interesting to note that the fathers of both Luther and Calvin directed their sons to prepare for careers as lawyers, but God called them to be church reformers and theologians. Calvin himself desired the life of a scholar and had no intention to become involved in the ecclesiastical disputes of his era. God, however, used William Farel (1489-1565) and Martin Bucer (1491-1551) to lead him into the calling the Lord had designated for him. Where the humanists stressed personal choice, the reformers emphasized divine mandates.

Most Italian humanists (and some in northern Europe) were driven by a desire for fame and fortune, but the reformers sought to glorify God by serving the spiritual and material needs of their neighbours. The contrast between these views is especially evident in their different concerns about the goal of education. Duly famous Italian school masters such as Pietro Vergerio (1370-1444) and Vitterino da Feltre (1378-1446) did not envision broad public education but concentrated instead on teaching children of the social elite in exclusive academies. Luther and Calvin, however, sought

41 Calvin, *Institutes*, I.xvii.11.

42 Ibid., III.ii.19.

43 John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* V, tr. by James Anderson (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1869), p. 204. See too *John Calvin: Suffering: Understanding the Love of God*. Comp. & Ed. Joseph Hill (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2005).

to provide at least elementary instruction for everyone, as they realized implementation of the priesthood of all believers required literacy.[44] The extension of education to the public at large came as Protestant churches, often with support from civil rulers, established schools for every level of instruction. The Roman Catholics, of course, could not ignore this progress without losing credibility, so they too enlarged their educational endeavors, especially when the Jesuits promoted them. One of the most enduring contributions of the Reformation to the modern world is availability of education to all socio-economic classes.

The Protestant doctrine of vocation, derived from a proper appreciation for divine providence, has exerted substantial influence upon the economic development of the modern world through its concept of the work ethic. The Protestants sanctified all occupations performed for God's glory, and thereby they elevated even menial tasks to a status of honour and dignity. Calvin in particular urged Christians to discard selfish ambition and quest for fame and to focus on pleasing God through conscientious performance of the work their Lord had prescribed in granting them the privileges of their respective vocations.[45]

Although Calvin was not an economic theoretician and so did not present a systematic program for economic development, he encouraged the ethical growth of commerce and industry in Geneva, and his disciples in France, the Netherlands, and elsewhere became leaders in those enterprises. Calvin stressed the sanctity of private property, and he approved the practice of usury, but only as regulated by the state so as to prevent exploitation of the poor. He did not endorse the *laissez-faire* philosophy now associated with Adam Smith (1732-90) and his free market treatise *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), the work of a humanist who assumed the inherent goodness of human nature. The decline of the work ethic in modern times has occurred as even Christians have discarded the Reformation view of vocation and have detached their daily employment from their relationship to God. The effect of this detachment has been the denigration of humans while people ignore the claims of God.[46]

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[44] Coverage of this matter appears in Douglas, 'Talent and Vocation', and in James Edward McGoldrick, 'John Calvin: Erudite Educator', *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 21 (2010), 121-32. A convenient collection of Luther's writings on education is F.V.N. Painter (ed.), *Luther on Education* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928).

[45] See Michael Monheit, 'The Ambition for an Illustrious Name: Humanism, Patronage, and Calvin's Doctrine of Calling', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23 (1992), 267-89 for an excellent study of this topic.

[46] For further information about Calvin's view of economics, see C. Gregg Singer, 'Calvin and the Social Order', in *John Calvin, Contemporary Prophet,*

In early modern Europe, as some church members became prosperous, many lost the sense of calling to serve and instead saw vocation as the pursuit of upward social mobility rather than a summons to charity toward their neighbours. The Roman Catholic Church in this era continued to promote the sacred-secular dichotomy and thereby magnified the role of the clergy and used the term *vocation* to identify adoption of the religious life. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries popes such as Leo XIII (1878-1903) and John Paul II (1978-2005) encouraged laymen to regard their work as a vocation, but popular usage in Catholic circles continues to apply that term primarily to the *religious* life.

In the Bible, God's calling often appears as a summons to action, as for example, when he called Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and others. Amos received a divine summons even though he had no previous experience as a prophet and no specific training to prepare him for that task. In a very dramatic episode of calling, Saul, a persecutor of Christians, became Paul the Apostle, as God inducted him into Christian service. There is an observable pattern in Scripture, as God made his will known to people he had providentially chosen for specific forms of service. Only a conspicuous few received miraculous calls, but all believers had roles to fulfil in the overall plan to their Creator.[47]

Among Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century, there was unanimous subscription to the priesthood of all believers, so Calvin's view was not exceptional, but he understood clearly the connection between this precious truth and its relevance for ordinary work Christians perform. This reformer regarded all work as a religious activity, and he maintained that everyone should work, even those who do not need the income from wages. Working is a divine command, and those who do not need the income from their labours can use it to aid people in distress.

Calvin was emphatic in denouncing idleness.[48] He therefore warned sternly: 'We are God's; let his wisdom and will... rule all our actions.... [C]onsulting our self-interest is the pestilence that most effectively leads

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ed. by Jacob T. Hoogstra (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959), pp. 227-41; Donnio Walters, 'The Reformation and Transformation of Western Culture', *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 2 (1975), 109-14.

47 A helpful treatment of calling is John Hutchison, 'The Biblical Idea of Vocation', *Christianity and Society* 13 (1948), 9-16.

48 The entire matter of Calvin's concern for the social responsibilities of the Christian life has received thorough examination in André Bieler, *Calvin's Economic and Social Thought*, ed. by Edward Dommen, tr. by James Grieg (Geneva: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 2005). A briefer study by the same author is *The Social Humanism of Calvin*, tr. by Paul T. Fuhrmann (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press (1964).

to our destruction'.[49] Believers must never therefore regard commerce, politics, education, etc. as autonomous domains separated from religion. No area of life is secular, and work is an honour, not a necessary evil to be endured. It is a visible way to display the reality of one's saving faith.

One of the great tragedies of modern times is the tendency, even among Christians, to regard providence as operating only in exceptional events. As this assumption has gained acceptance, a corresponding loss of confidence in divine sovereignty has become evident. Without firm belief in providence life is without meaning, and history is just a meaningless series of incidents and accidents. As Shakespeare phrased it, 'Life is a tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing'. The biblical cure for this pernicious malady calls all Christians to receive God's call with gratitude and to perform the duties of their respective vocations with the goal of pleasing their Saviour, who has commanded them, 'Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 5:16). Yes, God is still calling all Christians.[50]

[49] Calvin, *Institutes*, III.vii.1.

[50] A biographical essay which deals with some of the features of Calvin's thinking about vocation is James Edward McGoldrick, 'John Calvin, Theologian of Head, Heart, and Hands', *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29 (2011), 177-95. For a modern explanation of the decline of confidence in divine providence, see Langdon B. Gilkey, 'The Concept of Providence in Contemporary Theology', *Journal of Religion* 43 (1963), 171-92.

The Psalms in Nineteenth-Century Mission Theology

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INTRODUCTION:

Many recent studies proclaim a new era in missiology. According to a now standard argument, the shift in the demographic centre of Christianity from the West to the global South and East, as well as the breathtaking acceleration of globalization and its myriad discontents, has rendered many of the assumptions of the modern missionary movement incoherent and even dangerous.[1] Missiologists generally begin their presentation of the emerging model of mission by emphasizing the limitations of the Post-Enlightenment worldview that dominated the missionary movement from the days of William Carey to the late twentieth century. To highlight the contrast between historical understandings of mission and the new model, they generally lean heavily upon David Bosch's magisterial *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*. This study, which drew on Thomas Kuhn's concept of scientific revolutions to argue that Christianity has historically been driven by succes-

[1] The following textbooks are representative: F. J. Verstraelen, et al, eds. *Missiology, An Ecumenical Introduction: Texts and Contexts of Global Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 2003); A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical and Practical Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004); Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005); Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010); Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies*, 2nd edn (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014); Zane Pratt, M. David Sills, and Jeff K. Walters, *Introduction to Global Missions* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2014); Michael W. Goheen, *Introducing Christian Mission Today: Scripture, History and Issues* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 2015); and John Mark Terry, ed. *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History and Strategies of World Mission*, 2nd edn (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2015).

sive shifting paradigms of the missionary mandate, has been among the most influential theological works of the last generation. According to Bosch, the modern missionary movement was grounded upon Enlightenment notions of progress and scientific innovation while continuing to uphold the old medieval commitment to Christendom, accepted largely uncritically the beneficence of Western imperialism, and pursued an individualistic and instrumentalist approach to evangelism that reduced mission either to soul-saving in heathen lands or campaigns to spread the blessings of modern civilization to those still burdened by antiquated social traditions. In short, most Christians with a post-Enlightenment worldview myopically conceived of mission as a geographical movement of ideas and institutions from Western Christian to non-Christian lands, with the concomitant extension of modernity on a global scale.[2] In response to seismic changes in the global church, the argument runs, missiologists must articulate a new and more holistic understanding of mission that more faithfully reflects biblical teaching.

The overall thrust of this argument is accurate, but to the extent that it rests upon broad generalizations it inescapably simplifies history and at times exaggerates the discontinuity between past and present. For example, following Bosch's lead, many authors now assert that nineteenth-century missionaries paid little attention to rigorous biblical studies and typically relied upon proof-texts from Scripture (primarily the New Testament) that seemingly provided legitimacy for their missionary crusades. Victorians, it is said, thought in terms of 'missions' undertaken by denominations or voluntary societies, and sought in Scripture a 'biblical foundation' for their varied missionary enterprises. Bosch emphasized that in every period of Christian history, there has been a tendency 'to take one specific biblical verse as *the* missionary text'. This text, he suggested, was not necessarily frequently quoted in actual sermons or theological writings: 'Still, even where it was hardly referred to, it somehow embodied the missionary paradigm of the period.'[3] Bosch acknowledged that it was hard to select the one paradigmatic missionary text for the Post-Enlightenment era of mission history, but after weighing several New Testament options he settled upon Matthew 28:18-20 as the passage that 'certainly was most widely used during the entire period' from Carey onward. In the course of time, obedience to Christ's 'Great Commission' tended 'to drown' out all other biblical motifs. Bosch quoted numerous leading missionary luminaries (all from the late nineteenth century) to

[2] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), especially pp. 262-84.

[3] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 339.

illustrate the tremendous significance assigned to this text, especially in Anglo-American Protestant circles.[4]

Bosch strongly critiqued this approach to mission theology and urged missiologists to devote greater attention to biblical studies, advocating a 'missional reading' of Scripture that recognizes the relevance of every text in both Old and New Testaments. Rather than seeking the 'biblical foundation' for 'missions' in selected New Testament verses, Bosch identified mission with God's work of redemption throughout history and therefore as the central motif of the entire Bible: 'either mission, properly understood, lies at the heart of the biblical message or it is so peripheral to that message that we need not be overly concerned with it.'[5] This understanding of mission as first and foremost the *missio dei* was not original with Bosch. Articulated by Karl Barth as early as 1933, it figured prominently in the Willingen Conference of the IMC in 1952, and subsequently was embraced by theologians working in virtually every ecclesiastical tradition.[6] Bosch's landmark book, however, popularized the term *missio dei*, and today it is the starting point for virtually all mission theology.

The question I wish to explore in this essay is whether the extremely impressionistic portrait sketched by Bosch accurately depicts Victorian mission theology, or whether it stands more as a caricature that distorts as much as it clarifies about the historical evolution of mission theory. While Matthew 28:18-20 was undoubtedly an important influence upon William Carey and the modern missionary enterprise, is it truly the case that, in the words of Craig Van Gelder, the 'theology undergirding these movements' was shaped almost entirely by 'an understanding of the necessity to obey Christ in seeking to fulfill the Great Commission'?[7] Following Bosch, recent missiology textbooks have emphasized the missional nature of the entire Bible, giving detailed attention to the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Psalms, and often explicitly claim that this approach is a necessary correction to older treatments of mission theology built upon limited New Testament proof-texts. Thus, in one important recent study, Michael W. Goheen observes in his discussion of Acts

4 Ibid., pp. 340-41.

5 Bosch, 'Reflections on Biblical Models of Mission', in *Toward the Twenty-First Century in Christian Mission: Essays in Honor of Gerald H. Anderson*, ed. by James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 177.

6 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 389-91.

7 Craig Van Gelder, 'How Missiology Can Help Inform the Conversation About the Missional Church in Context', in *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry*, ed. by Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), p. 17.

that 'we must be careful not to impose a nineteenth-century view of mission on this book. A central theme in Acts is the way the Old Testament vision of God's eschatological program will come to fulfillment.' Based upon Bosch's survey of mission history, Goheen assumes that Victorian theologians had a truncated understanding of mission that ignored the missional nature of the Old Testament.[8]

Missiology as an academic discipline is primarily a twentieth-century development, and the missionary movement occupied a peripheral place in the published writings of most Victorian theologians.[9] Thus the source material needed to reconstruct nineteenth-century mission theology is scattered throughout the uncatalogued pages of countless tracts, missionary treatises, and newspaper accounts of missionary deputations, conferences, and sermons. To date, remarkably few scholars have mined this material to clarify the use of Scripture in nineteenth-century mission theology, so that we lack substantive research to confirm, modify or contradict Bosch's account of the post-Enlightenment paradigm. The following paragraphs, then, on the place of the Psalms in nineteenth-century Protestant missionary thought can necessarily open up only one small part of a much larger project. Though my findings are preliminary rather than exhaustive, they suggest that missionary leaders of the past were not as unfamiliar with the concept of *missio dei* as recent studies presuppose.

MISSIONARY USES OF THE PSALTER

Bosch's assertion that 'paradigmatic' biblical texts may have been rarely used in Christian proclamation ought to give readers pause. Short of solid empirical evidence to substantiate a given text's importance to the theology of an era, how can we know that its purportedly paradigmatic nature is not simply a subjective impression in the minds of later scholars? It seems far better to seek the key missionary texts within the documentary sources of each era of Christian history, looking for those biblical passages that were actually used in the construction of mission theology. This essay rests upon hundreds of ordination sermons, proceedings of local and national missionary organizations, and missionary treatises published between 1800 and 1914.[10] My goal was simply to identify what

8 Goheen, *Introducing Christian Mission Today*, p. 63.

9 On the historical evolution of missiology see Jan A. B. Jongneel, 'Is Missiology an Academic Discipline?', in *Christianity and Education: Shaping Christian Thinking in Context*, ed. by David Emmanuel Singh and Bernard C. Farr (Oxford: Regnum International, 2011), pp. 225-36.

10 I have relied heavily upon missionary memoirs in Google Books, as well as the following digital databases: American Periodical Series (available at many

biblical texts preachers and theologians regarded as especially missional in nature, and to understand how they employed these texts in constructing mission theology. Although Bosch identified Matthew 28:18-20 as 'certainly the most widely used text' throughout the Modern Era, my research suggests that its pre-eminence was confined to the two generations after 1880—the so-called Age of High Imperialism—and that previous apologists for mission employed myriad texts from the entire sweep of Scripture, with Isaiah and Psalms figuring prominently. Indeed, the most commonly quoted biblical verses in missionary sermons throughout most of the nineteenth century were drawn from the Psalter, which many Victorians considered the 'missionary text' *par excellence*.

Given the Reformed tradition's strong insistence upon the unity of Scripture and the tremendous importance of the Psalter in Christian worship and devotional practice, it would be remarkable indeed if the Psalms had not figured prominently in the burgeoning Protestant missionary movement. From the days of Carey onward, Protestant missionaries everywhere made the translation of Scripture into local vernacular languages their first order of business, and alongside the New Testament and Pentateuch the Psalms invariably stood first in priority. In part this reflected the desire to replicate the supposed biblical model of worship. Throughout what Kenneth Scott Latourette dubbed 'the great century' of Christian expansion,[11] converts throughout the world praised God in translated Psalms, a fact so well-recognized that one LMS missionary in South Africa noted in 1830 a common criticism levelled by 'persons unfriendly to the great cause of missionary exertion': 'It has frequently been said... that Psalm singing was all that they taught the people.'[12] In part, however, the priority of the Psalms rested upon the apologetic import of the messianic passages scattered throughout the Psalter, which missionaries often emphasized in their evangelistic presentations on the authority of Jesus. Thus by 1802, when Carey and his colleagues had not yet completed their translation of the Old Testament into Bengali, they already had produced a vernacular version of Psalms and Isaiah, which they printed together as a 'class book' for their students.[13]

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research libraries through Proquest); British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk); Early Canadiana Online (www.canadiana.ca/en/eco); and Genealogybank (www.genealogybank.com).

11 Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, Volume 4. *The Great Century: Europe and the United States, 1800-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1941).

12 Boston *Christian Watchman*, 12 August 1831, p. 1, reprinting an account first published in the *South Africa Commercial Advertiser*, 15 December 1830.

13 *New York Missionary Magazine*, 1 June 1803.

Far from ignoring Christ's fulfilment of the Old Testament's eschatological vision for the nations, this theme was absolutely central to nineteenth-century Protestant mission theology. It is striking that when missionary sermons in the early Victorian era occasionally quoted the Great Commission it was often linked explicitly to Old Testament messianic passages rather than taken as a self-sufficient authority for missionary outreach. Just one typical example is provided by ABCFM missionary Samuel C. Damon, who in 1866 delivered a discourse on 'Puritan Missions to the Pacific' before the Hawaiian Evangelical Association. Taking as his texts Isaiah 42:4 and Matthew 28:19, Damon insisted that modern missions had been envisioned by Isaiah, who 'glanced his prophetic eye down the vista of the coming centuries' and saw the 'conversion of the Gentile world to the Messiah'. Foreign Missions, Damon asserted, must be 'contemplated in the light of Hebrew prophecy', for the last command of the saviour had been anticipated centuries earlier by 'the enraptured minds of Isaiah, Daniel, and Malachi', whose hopes and labours all converged 'on the promised Messiah as the central figure in that grand panoramic picture of coming events'.[14]

Although Damon built his discourse around Isaiah, missionary leaders more frequently appealed to the many Psalms that speak of God's ultimate redemption of the nations. Throughout the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, the two most commonly cited missionary texts were Psalms 67 and 72, which featured so frequently in missionary lectures and the proceedings of evangelical organizations that they were commonly referred to as 'the Missionary Psalm' and the 'Missionary Hymn' respectively. This latter reference reflected the remarkable popularity of Isaac Watts' paraphrase of Psalm 72:12-19, originally published in 1719 as a fourteen stanza hymn entitled 'Christ's Kingdom Among the Gentiles', but by William Carey's time more commonly known by its opening line, 'Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun'.[15] Accounts of missionary gatherings from the start of the century show that Watts' paraphrase was already sometimes employed in worship on such occasions.[16] However, the song really came into its own during the Victorian Age, when British evangelicals sang it at the commencement of their 'Anniversary meetings' at

[14] Damon's address was published as a special supplement to the Honolulu *Friend*, 2 July 1866, p. 1.

[15] Most hymnals since the late nineteenth century have included a five stanza condensation. For Watts' original version, and a helpful summary of the history of this psalm in English hymnody, see <http://cyberhymnal.org/htm/j/s/jsreign.htm> (Accessed June 10, 2016).

[16] (Philadelphia) *Churchman's Magazine*, July & August 1808, p. 293.

Exeter Hall each May, often accompanied by the reading of Psalm 67.[17] This practice, noted by one writer as early as 1848, had become so familiar by 1886 that Edinburgh minister John Ker identified Psalm 67 as 'by special distinction *the missionary psalm*' in his treatise *The Psalms in History and Biography*, while the Reformed Presbyterian scholar William Goold dubbed it 'The Mission Hymn of the Hebrew Church'.[18]

WILLIAM BINNIE'S MISSION THEOLOGY

Let us examine how several Scottish Presbyterian theologians of the Victorian Age handled the Psalms as missionary texts. We will begin with William Binnie (1823-1886), Professor of Systematic Theology at the Divinity Hall of Scotland's Reformed Presbyterian Church, who in 1870 published a treatise on the theology and history of the Psalms that developed their missionary implications in especially great depth.[19] Binnie, a student at the University of Glasgow and the Reformed Presbyterian Divinity Hall before pursuing postgraduate study under Neander and Hengstenberg in Berlin, possessed a comprehensive mastery of the literature on Psalms. His conclusions often reflected scholarly consensus, and this certainly was true of the argument he developed in his chapter on 'the future glories of the Church', that the Psalms had 'for eight and twenty

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17 The practice was noted in an 1848 essay, 'Thoughts on the Sixty-seventh Psalm', originally published in the (London) *Christian Observer* and later reprinted in the (Philadelphia) *Episcopal Recorder*, 11 November 1848, p. 137. A Manchester minister noted that the custom was still observed more than a decade later: *Manchester Currier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 24 November 1860.

18 John Ker, *The Psalms in History and Biography* (Edinburgh: Morrison and Gibb, 1886), p. 94; W. H. Goold, 'The Mission Hymn of the Hebrew Church', in *The Reformed Presbyterian Magazine*, 1 January 1866, pp. 1-12.

19 William Binnie, *The Psalms: Their History, Teachings and Use* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1870), which subsequently appeared in a revised and expanded edition as *A Pathway into the Psalter. The Psalms: Their History, Teachings and Use* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1886). Professor Benjamin Shaw of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh brought out a reprinting of this 1886 edition: William Binnie, *A Pathway into the Psalter* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005), and it is the pagination of this American edition that I will cite in the following notes. In his introduction Shaw provides a helpful overview of Binnie's life, but additional biographical details can be found in the following obituaries: *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 23 September 1886, and *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 23 September 1886. Binnie moved to Aberdeen in 1875 to assume the Chair of Church History at the Free Church College there, and held this post until his death.

centuries' been 'bearing witness that God's visible Church is destined to embrace all nations whom God has created on the face of the whole earth'. Binnie opened with an explication of Psalm 86:9 and 22:27, which unmistakably announced God's missionary purpose: 'They are as unambiguous as anything that can be spoken by the most sanguine advocate of Christian missions in this nineteenth century. Yet they come from the age... of David.'[20]

Binnie emphasized that the Psalms articulated an eschatological vision that was much older than the Hebrew monarchy: 'the Psalms are not so much the vehicle of new revelations as the authentic response of the Church to revelations elsewhere delivered.' Later psalmists perhaps listened to the voice of Isaiah and other prophets, Binnie reasoned, but the Davidic Psalms reflected the promise made by God to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, that his descendants would bless all the nations of the earth. Binnie found the Table of the Nations in Genesis 10 particularly significant, coming just at the juncture between the early chapters that treat universal history and the remainder of the Pentateuch which narrows the focus to the history of the covenanted people. 'May we not discern in this an intimation that, although the nations were to be suffered to walk in their own ways, it was to be only for a season?' The Table of the Nations, Binnie gibed, 'was not set down in the Tenth of Genesis merely to guide the researches and gratify the thirst of our modern archaeologists', but was to remind the Hebrew Church of 'the Lord's interest in the nations'. Far from being bigoted sectarians, as some Christians foolishly imagined, the Hebrews throughout Old Testament times 'carried the hope of the Gentiles; so that when our Lord declared that many should come from east and west, and should sit down with the patriarchs in the gospel kingdom, it was not a novel announcement that He made. He simply recalled attention to an announcement coeval with Abraham.'[21]

The Psalms 'were in perpetual use in public worship', Binnie observed, and therefore reflected the 'common mind of the Hebrew Church' toward the Gentiles rather than the understanding of individual poets. Although 'neither called nor qualified to be a missionary society'—a development that unfolded only with the dawning of the New Testament dispensation—the Hebrew people through their hymns kept alive the memory of the Abrahamic covenant, so that Israel 'never ceased to desire and hope for the conversion of the nations'. The Old Testament cannot give us 'detailed instructions with respect to the missionary enterprises of the Church', Binnie reflected; these must be found in Acts and the Pauline epistles. Yet

[20] Binnie, *A Pathway Into the Psalter*, p. 306.
[21] Ibid., pp. 312-13.

Christians 'need something more than practical directions regarding the fit manner of carrying on their Lord's work on the earth'. To accomplish their missionary calling, Binnie insisted that believers require the 'motive power' which has always been supplied by the Hebrew Scriptures:

> We stand in need... of such general views of the enterprise and its results as will fire the imagination and warm the heart; and for these we are chiefly indebted to the Prophets and the Psalmists. Missionary sermons are generally preached from Old Testament texts. The best missionary hymns that ever were written,—those which have the power of keeping abreast of every new generation,—are the Hymns in the Psalter. It is certainly a remarkable fact, that although the Old Testament Church was not a Missionary Church, the flame of its piety was fed with missionary hymns; and that the Psalter anticipated, by much more than the space of two thousand years, that efflorescence of evangelistic song which has of late shed a new glory on our modern poetry.[22]

From the Psalms, Binnie observed, Christians could clearly see God's unchanging purposes for the Church throughout history. Without detailing missionary methods, the Psalms set forth in unmatched beauty and power the end of all missionary endeavours: the future renovation of the entire earth under the reign of 'David's greater son, the true Prince of Peace'. The Psalms also indicated the means by which the church would fulfil its purpose: unceasing prayer and the faithful declaration of the truth in Jesus Christ. In a lengthy exposition of Psalm 67, Binnie concluded that missionary success depended upon the spiritual health of Christians:

> ...*the world is to be brought to God by means of the prayers and labours of a revived Church.* There must be preaching, and praying, and the giving of men's substance; yet the Lord's effectual blessing will not attend these if they are only the constrained offerings and mechanical services of a dead Church. The blessing will be sent to crown the hearty services of a Church whose heart is fired with love to God, with zeal for His house, with gratitude for His mercy, with Christ-like compassion for souls. Prayer for revival at home and prayer for a blessing abroad ought always, therefore, to go hand in hand.[23]

Commenting upon Psalm 72, Binnie emphasized that God's purposes went far beyond the conversion of individual Gentiles, to the restoration of creation to the harmony lost at the dawn of human history. When the 'Peaceful Prince' establishes his dominion from sea to sea, Binnie

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22 Ibid., pp. 317-18.

23 Ibid., pp. 318-19. Italics are Binnie's.

reflected, he will 'sweep away the institutions by which injustice has entrenched itself' and will purge the earth 'of wars and oppressions and cruelties' of every kind. 'What a store of comfort for the downtrodden, the enslaved, the needy, is laid up in the announcement that the Lord is coming to be the Avenger of all such!'[24]

WILLIAM GOOLD

Binnie acknowledged as his most influential source his 'honoured friend' William H. Goold (1815-1897), Professor of Biblical Literature and Church History at the Reformed Presbyterian Divinity Hall in Paisley. In November 1865, Goold presided at the ordination of three new Reformed Presbyterian missionaries to the New Hebrides, and his sermon on Psalm 67 was later published by the Paisley Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Goold opened with a strong affirmation of the missionary spirit of the Old Testament: 'We have before us... the impassioned yearnings of a believing heart for the conversion of the world to God.' In truth, Goold observed, 'fifteen centuries of the present dispensation rolled away before the Church of Christ had wakened up to any such conviction... as breathes in every verse of this fervent hymn of the old Hebrew Church'. Although ancient Israel was not a missionary body, Goold averred, all that Christ accomplished on the cross and will someday bring to consummation was already foreshadowed in the hopes and prayers of the Hebrew people, as 'the oak' is present 'in the acorn'.[25]

Goold stressed the public nature of Psalm 67; it was 'a Church's hope, a nation's song' of trust in the final salvation of the earth. It was a 'triumphal' messianic hymn, proclaiming the conversion of the Gentiles to Abraham's God as future fact: 'the battle is fought, the victory won', so that Christians might have assurance that their faithful missionary labours must ultimately bear fruit. Based upon his reading of the sixth verse, Goold also proclaimed that Psalm 67 was a '*festival* hymn' intended for use at the close of harvest, probably at the Feast of Weeks – the Pentecost – and thus it prefigured the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that later launched the Christian church's missionary outreach to the nations. Indeed, Goold queried, 'is it not a missionary hymn—*the* missionary hymn?' In singing Psalm 67 the church, in unity with ancient Israel, prayed for God's blessings upon the entire world:

> We identify ourselves in common interest with the whole family of man; and hence, by a feature of exquisite adaptation to the subject and whole scope of

[24] Ibid., pp. 324-25.

[25] William H. Goold, 'The Mission Hymn of the Hebrew Church', pp. 1-2.

> the Psalm, it is the common name, Elohim, God, expressive of relationship to the whole world, not the covenant name, Jehovah, expressive of relationship to a special people, that is throughout employed. For all nations are one in a common ruin; one, too... in the offer of a common redemption.[26]

Psalm 67 also indicated the means that God would use to accomplish this work of redemption: 'The agency to be employed is men to whom God is merciful, on whom His blessing rests, on whom His face is made to shine.' Only those who recognized their own unworthiness and weakness, and who relied solely upon the blessings of the Lord could be fit instruments for this work of grace. This was the calling not of priests alone but of every believer:

> The entire covenanted interest of the Almighty upon the earth, the whole race of Abraham, the whole Church of God, even in that ancient age, was charged with the conversion of the world as the highest of its prayers, the highest end of its efforts.... In other words, the Church is evangelistic or it is nothing. No matter whether the field you should choose be the next street, your neighbor's household, nay even your own, or whether your mission should be to the millions of India, the shores of Labrador, the isles of the South Sea, how can you be light if you never shine... [27]

Goold lamented that many Christians misunderstood the evangelistic nature of the church, wrongly assuming that God would accomplish the salvation of the world through ordained missionaries. Psalm 67 commanded every believer to participate in God's mission of salvation: 'If you are Christians, the claims of business and of trade, all secular interests and pursuits, are as dust in the balance weighed against the duty to make God's way known upon the earth, His saving health among all nations.'[28] This obligation fell not only upon individual Christians and denominations, but upon entire nations. Thus Goold reasoned that God's mission alone could legitimize the global reach of the British flag, for God providentially allowed the expansion of Victoria's empire solely to prosecute his own purposes. Should Britain instead pursue wealth and imperial power as an end, he warned, it invited the same divine punishment that fell upon Old Testament Israel when it forgot its covenant with the Lord.[29]

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[26] Ibid., p. 4.
[27] Ibid., p. 9.
[28] Ibid., p. 10.
[29] Ibid., p. 9.

ALEXANDER DUFF IN SCOTLAND AND AMERICA

Goold's sermon echoed themes that had been repeatedly trumpeted for two decades by Alexander Duff (1806-1878), first foreign missionary of the Church of Scotland and later Convener of the Free Church Foreign Mission Committee, who enjoyed enormous respect on both sides of the Atlantic. Often dubbed 'the prince of modern missions', Duff's letters from Calcutta appeared regularly in Protestant magazines throughout the world, and his many books and tracts on the missionary enterprise were likewise familiar to mission enthusiasts globally. During the last decade of his life Duff held the chair in 'Evangelistic Theology' at each of Scotland's Free Church divinity schools, and he is generally regarded as the first academic missiologist.[30] His thinking, then, bears particular weight in considering the place of the Psalms in Victorian mission theology.

During his first furlough in March 1839, Duff preached at the ordination of Thomas Smith, who would join him as a Church of Scotland missionary in Calcutta. Later he published an expanded version of his remarks as a treatise on mission theology and practice, *Missions the Chief End of the Christian Church* (1839), which remained essential reading for missionary candidates for the following two generations. The key themes that Duff repeatedly underscored throughout his career were clearly set forth in this early discourse, which he built around a close explication of Psalm 67.[31] It was perfectly obvious to Duff that from God's first revelation to Abraham the Hebrews understood the goal of history as the salvation of all nations on the earth. In Psalm 67 the 'Royal Psalmist, in the spirit of inspiration, personating the Church of the redeemed in every age', set forth with clarity the same divine charter that Isaiah proclaimed and that Christ later bequeathed to his disciples when he constituted the church to be his '*delegated representative* as the world's evangelist'. The

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[30] See Olav Guttorm Myklebust, *The Study of Missions in Theological Education, Volume 1: to 1910* (Oslo: Egede Instituttet, 1955), Chapter Four, on Duff's missionary chair; and Andrew F. Walls, 'Missiological Education in Historical Perspective', in *Missiological Education for the Twenty-first Century; The Book, the Circle & the Sandals: Essays in Honor of Daniel E. Pierson*, ed. by J. Dudley Woodberry, Charles Van Engen & Edgar J. Elliston (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), pp. 14-15. There is no modern critical biography of Duff. For a useful assessment of his career see Michael A. Laird, 'Alexander Duff, 1806-1878: Western Education as Preparation for the Gospel', in *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of the Modern Missionary Movement*, ed. by Gerald H. Anderson, et al (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), pp. 271-6.

[31] Alexander Duff, *Missions the Chief End of the Christian Church; also the Qualifications, Duties, and Trials of an Indian Missionary* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1839).

calling of the church in the nineteenth century was essentially the same as it had always been since the patriarchal age: to implore God's light and spiritual blessings '*so that*' it might be equipped for *'the impartation of God's saving health to all nations*'.[32] Duff discerned the full meaning of the 'grand charter' recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 in the light of various Old Testament verses, but especially Psalm 67:1-2:

> It thus appears abundantly manifest from multiplied Scripture evidence, that the *chief end* for which the Christian Church is constituted—the *leading design* for which she is made the repository of heavenly blessings... is, in the name and stead of her glorified Head and Redeemer, unceasingly, to act the part of an evangelist to *all the world*. The divine charter which conveys to her the warrant to teach and preach the Gospel at all, binds her to teach and preach it to *all nations*.[33]

Over the following four decades Duff proclaimed this conclusion in literally hundreds of public addresses: that Christian churches that fail to engage in world evangelisation cannot expect to receive continued spiritual blessings. The 'whole history of the Christian Church' served as 'one perpetual proof and illustration' of this grand thesis: *'that an evangelistic or missionary Church is a spiritually flourishing Church; and that a Church which drops the evangelistic or missionary character, speedily lapses into superannuation and decay!'*[34]

Just as Old Testament Israel was not called to actively convert the nations, and yet never lost sight of the salvation of the nations as its priestly calling, so, too, not every Christian could engage directly in foreign missions, nor could Christians collectively reach every nation at the same moment in history. Nonetheless, Duff insisted, all believers were called to pray without ceasing for the final redemption of every nation, actively sharing the gospel wherever their influence extended while remaining ready to proclaim the truth to unreached peoples whenever God might open a door. Since the entire world was the field of God's mission, those who laboured at home had the same calling as those who travelled far, yet even those who witnessed only in their own local communities were bound by Scripture to always keep the '*grand end*' in mind:

> But, should they lose sight of the ultimate end, and wilfully or indolently stop short of its accomplishment, do they not plainly incur a forfeiture of what they have already acquired? The field for Christian husbandry is the world,—

[32] Ibid., pp. 6-8.
[33] Ibid., p. 14.
[34] Ibid., p. 15. Italics are Duff's.

> and nothing short of its universal cultivation will suit the Divine design, or implement the obligation of the Christian Church.[35]

Duff spent 1850-1855 on an extended furlough, and during these years he travelled incessantly throughout Scotland in an effort to redirect evangelical energies away from local and sectarian concerns towards the cause of world evangelisation. He visited every Free Church presbytery and most congregations, successfully organizing hundreds of local missionary associations to raise funds for the cause throughout the year rather than rely upon the customary annual collections. Throughout this campaign his standard missionary address was built around Psalm 72, a text which, he assured a thousand Presbyterians gathered in Wick, better conveyed his message than any other verse in the Bible. Duff noted that although the original occasion of the hymn appeared to be the coronation of Solomon, yet the inspired Psalmist was enabled by the Holy Spirit 'to refer from things present to things future', and thus the psalm clearly pointed to the distant messianic age when the Prince of Peace would establish his dominion over the world and gather all nations to himself: 'Indeed, the whole psalm was a prophecy of the ultimate consummation of the Redeemer's triumph, whose name should be great among the Gentiles from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.' In light of the clear import of this prophecy, Duff lamented, he witnessed in sorrow and shame the relative insignificance of Scotland's contribution to world evangelisation, for even sincere Presbyterians prayed and sacrificed less for the redemption of the nations than they did for a host of worldly enterprises that were doomed to wither like grass.[36]

The highlight of Duff's furlough was his 1854 lecture tour of North America, where he drew huge and enthusiastic crowds from Philadelphia to St. Louis and as far north as Montreal. Duff turned repeatedly to the Psalms for the substance of his appeals, as he did in his Concert Hall Address in Philadelphia at the start of his visit, when he contrasted at great length the majestic vision of Psalm 67 with the impoverished spirit of modern Christianity. 'How glorious... the example of the Psalmist! What does he say? How does he proceed? The moment he prays for himself, he immediately forgets himself. This is divine—this is genuine self-denial.' How vastly different was the attitude of most Christians in both Europe and America, he warned, who prayed constantly for blessings for themselves and their own loved ones but who cared 'not one jot or tittle about the millions who are perishing' around the globe. In light

[35] Ibid., p. 9.

[36] 'Dr. Duff in Wick', *John O'Groat Journal*, 16 July 1852, p. 2.

of Psalm 67, Duff pleaded, 'is it not high time... that every one of you, of all denominations, should be awakened to your responsibility more than ever?'[37]

Duff capped his North American tour by chairing the world's first ecumenical missionary conference, which convened at the Broadway Tabernacle in New York City and concluded with a grand public address before an audience of thousands drawn from every Protestant denomination. Duff's sermon, which Presbyterian luminary Theodore Cuyler later recollected as the most powerful evangelistic appeal he had ever witnessed,[38] was based upon Psalm 72, and followed closely the same line of argument that he had developed in his missionary appeals to the Scottish Free Churches. Although the Psalmist clearly spied the consummation of history for which all believers are bound to pray and labour without ceasing, Duff argued, Christians everywhere were manifestly failing to keep their covenanted obligation to advance the Redeemer's Kingdom. Duff found every verse of the Psalm directly relevant to the missionary calling of the Christian church, even drawing significance from the closing line, which most Victorian exegetes understood as a straightforward statement that Psalm 72 concludes one of the numerous ancient collections of verse that had been brought together to form the Psalter.[39] Duff set this interpretation aside in favour of a more eccentric reading that better suited his missionary proclamation:

> Now, then, if the Earth be fully replenished with the glory of the Great Jehovah, what more with reference to the world's blessedness can any soul desire or ever pray for? Hence the emphasis of the inspired writer, when he concludes the Psalm: 'The prayers of David, the Son of Jesse, are ended.' What more had he to pray for with regard to the consummation of this World's Evangelization? When this grand conception is realized, then prayer for that object is ended; because the object is fully accomplished. Let us try to realize the grandeur of this expectation, that our own souls may be filled with it as the soul of the Psalmist, and then we shall partake somewhat of his seraphic fire, and be up and doing with reference to the progress and advancement of it.[40]

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37 'Rev. Dr. Duff's Speech at Concert Hall', (New York) *Christian Observer*, 4 March 1854, p. 33.

38 Theodore Ledyard Cuyler, *Reflections of a Long Life: An Autobiography* (New York, 1902), pp. 187-9.

39 On the various interpretations of this verse in early nineteenth-century commentaries, see *American Baptist Magazine*, November 1832, p. 340.

40 *Proceedings of the Union Missionary Convention held in New York, May 4th and 5th, 1854; Together with the Address of the Rev. Dr. Duff, at the Public Meeting in the Broadway Tabernacle* (New York: Taylor & Negg, 1854), p. 29.

CONCLUSION

The writings of Binnie, Goold, and Duff demonstrate that Scottish Presbyterians in the Victorian Era were very familiar with the concept of *missio dei*, although they obviously employed different terminology, and that the eschatological vision of the Old Testament was central to their mission theology. This certainly included the understanding that salvation entailed the radical transformation of oppressive social institutions and the renovation of all creation. It would be easy to multiply parallel statements from missionary sermons delivered by Protestants of other communions throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, and from both sides of the Atlantic. Thus, for example, at the 1858 annual meeting of the American Missionary Association, a Congregationalist preacher pointedly observed of Psalm 72 that 'the care and deliverance of those oppressed is the main thing commanded'; this, then, must be 'the work of missionary efforts, and the test of the missionary spirit'. In light of myriad Old and New Testament texts, the minister insisted, 'missionary work has as much to do with slavery as idolatry', and the missionary, if truly empowered by the divine spirit, will seek 'the redemption of the needy and the deliverance of victims from the Moloch of oppression'.[41]

These considerations suggest that we need to revise our understanding of nineteenth-century mission theology, to acknowledge that many key biblical themes emphasized by contemporary missiologists were indeed vitally important to Protestant mission theorists of the Victorian Era. It belongs to another essay to explain why missionaries of the High Imperial Age may have held a less expansive biblical theology of mission than their predecessors. Here it is sufficient to conclude that recent theologies of mission, which emphasize the missional nature of the Old Testament, do not correct a faulty grasp of Scripture that plagued our Victorian forebears; they restate theological truths that most Victorian mission apologists knew intimately but that were apparently obscured in twentieth-century missionary discourse.[42]

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41 *Boston Weekly Advertiser*, 2 June 1858, p. 4.

42 In addition to the missiology texts cited above, the following otherwise excellent studies all apparently assume that the missional nature of the Old Testament was unrecognized until recently: George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody, 1984); Walter C. Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000); Andreas J. Kostenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2001); Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grover: IVP, 2006).

THE ELECT AND NON-ELECT AS HISTORICALLY DYNAMIC CATEGORIES: LESSLIE NEWBIGIN'S RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

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INTRODUCTION

Lesslie Newbigin's explication of the doctrine of election is not very well known outside the field of mission studies. It is not usually mentioned in historical surveys of the doctrine or the relevant entries in theological dictionaries. Newbigin's approach, however, has the potential to breathe new life into the somewhat staid and repetitive debates which have taken place over this contentious topic in the history of Christian thought, especially in the traditions of the West. It opens new possibilities for reconceptualising this article of faith in a way which might help reconcile what has previously been conceived of as diametrically opposing positions.

We begin by giving a description of Newbigin's understanding of election. This will be done through an examination of the way he defends this doctrine from a significant charge levelled against it. Our description draws mainly from two of Newbigin's later works, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (first published in 1978)[1] and *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (1989).[2] These two sources contain Newbigin's mature thought on the topic of election, presented in a relatively systematised manner. Election is, of course, also mentioned in Newbigin's numerous other works. George R. Hunsberger has made a significant contribution to the scholarship in this area by making a careful survey of Newbigin's statements on election throughout the latter's wide corpus of writings, divided into the 'earlier', 'middle' and 'later' periods.[3] An analy-

1 Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978. A revised edition was issued in 1995 by the same publisher.

2 Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.

3 George R. Hunsberger, *Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of Cultural Plurality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), chap. 2. Geoffrey Wainwright records a conversation he had with Newbigin, where the latter mentioned his disagreement with Hunsberger's thesis that elec-

sis of Hunsberger's survey reveals that Newbigin is remarkably consistent in his view of election throughout his life, and that the concepts mentioned (at times in rather inchoate forms) in Newbigin's earlier works are given fuller and more systematic expression in the two later works we mentioned.[4]

After setting out Newbigin's position, we propose to interact with it, examining its viability and suggesting a few refinements which we think might be helpful for clarifying and strengthening his position. Finally, we explore the potential of Newbigin's approach for helping to reconcile opposing positions in this field, thus contributing to the possible overcoming of an impasse which has plagued the doctrine of election in the Western tradition for a significant period of time.

NEWBIGIN'S UNDERSTANDING OF ELECTION

Overturning the Scandal of Particularity.

Newbigin opens his reflections by noting that 'there is surely no part of Christian teaching which has been the subject of so much ridicule and indignant rejection as the doctrine of election'.[5] He traces the cause of this rejection to the doctrine's incompatibility with the worldview which conceives of salvation as a direct, almost context-free encounter between an individual human soul and the divine. This worldview is to be found in the Indian traditions, as well as modern Western culture, which stress the autonomous use of human reason to arrive at timeless truths. This leads, in turn, to 'the scandal of particularity'. Surely, if God had wanted, he could have revealed himself to every single individual in the entire human race in this direct fashion? Why, then, does he play favourites? Why does he choose certain persons and communities over all the others

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tion has consistently been the controlling theme in his theology (Geoffrey Wainwright, *Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], p. 443, n. 51). This does not detract from Hunsberger's competent survey of Newbigin's writings on the topic.

4 Hunsberger states that, 'While at a couple of points the election argument is expanded and more fully elaborated, none of the details in [Newbigin's] use of the doctrine of election in *The Open Secret* are new' (*Bearing the Witness*, p. 68). Hunsberger also mentions on p. 81 that there is an 'expansion' of Newbigin's theme of the 'inner logic' of election in chap. 7 of the latter's *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. There is possibly one exception to the rule that these two later works of Newbigin's contain all his key thoughts on the doctrine of election, which will be mentioned when we evaluate if Newbigin's approach to election leads to a reductionistic view of the church.

5 Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society,* p. 80.

to bestow his saving grace? These are questions posed to the doctrine of election by both traditional Indian beliefs and the rationalism of the Western Enlightenment.[6]

Newbigin addresses this objection by pointing out that Christianity is based upon a very different worldview. Its conception of God as triune tells us that 'interpersonal relatedness belongs to the very being of God'. The human creature who has been bestowed the image of this God is therefore meant to live in a state of 'relatedness' to other human beings.[7] This provides the first justification for the doctrine of election. God uses election as his method of salvation because it fosters the 'relatedness' which is itself a goal of salvation. The elected person or community is mandated to bless those around them by bringing the good news of God's saving grace through both their words and deeds.[8] This binds the elect community in a profound way to those it has blessed. It brings about reconciliation where there has been conflict, and realises the mutual dependence we are meant to have upon one another.[9] In one of Newbigin's favourite metaphor, God has not designed his saving revelation to come to us through the skylight. Instead, we have to open our doors to the neighbour he sends as his appointed messenger, with whom we are then to permanently share our home.[10] So, for Newbigin, the first justification for the doctrine of election is that 'the means by which the good news of salvation is propagated must be congruous with the nature of the salvation itself'.[11]

The second justification for election is based on Newbigin's conception of the gospel, which rests, in turn, on his critically realistic epistemology. At its root, the gospel is not a set of timeless propositions or an experiential encounter.[12] It has its own 'plausibility structure', and hence offers a particular perception of reality and way of living. A 'plausibility structure', however, is not an abstract body of ideas. It must be embodied

6 Ibid., pp. 80-81.

7 Newbigin, *Open Secret*, rev. ed., p. 70.

8 Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, chap. 11.

9 Ibid., p. 82. See also Hunsberger, *Bearing the Witness*, p. 50. Newbigin sees this mutual dependence also operating on a more macro level in the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. He cites Paul's teaching in Rom 9-11 that the 'transgression' of the Jews had allowed the gospel to reach the Gentiles, while the salvation of the Gentiles will in turn provoke Israel to jealousy (*Open Secret*, p. 76).

10 Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, pp. 82–3.

11 Hunsberger, *Bearing the Witness*, p. 54.

12 Newbigin speaks approvingly of George Lindbeck's rejection of both the 'Propositional' and the 'Experiential' models in favour of the latter's 'Cultural Linguistic' approach (*Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, p. 24).

in actual human communities.[13] 'The gospel,' therefore, 'always comes as the testimony of a community which, if it is faithful, is trying to live out the meaning of the gospel in a certain style of life, certain ways of holding property, of maintaining law and order, or carrying on production and consumption, and so on'. Moreover, because all human communities exist in particular cultural contexts, there is no 'pure gospel' in the sense of a timeless culture-free version. 'Every interpretation of the gospel', Newbigin insists, 'is embodied in some cultural form'. This leads us to the 'logic of election'.[14] There is simply no way for the gospel to be presented except through its embodiment in a community which indwells the Biblical narrative and 'reasons and loves' according to its plausibility structure.[15] Hence, God elects Israel in the Old Testament and the Church in the New in order for these communities to testify to the gospel and draw others into their fellowship. The method of election, therefore, is not only justified with regard to the goal of salvation, but also the nature of human knowing and the nature of the gospel.

From this, Newbigin moves to purge the doctrine of the 'scandal of particularity'. Contrary to major strands of his own Reformed tradition, Newbigin affirms only a single predestination,[16] and he insists it is a predestination to service. Because (for the reasons given earlier) it was necessary for God to utilize election as his method of salvation,[17] the elect have been given a weighty responsibility to show forth the gospel. Election should therefore not be conceived of as an elevation to a privileged position before God. Instead, to be elect is to be given an unenviable obligation, one likely to involve suffering, reproach and humiliation. We see this in the most prominent instances of the elect in both the Old and New Testaments, i.e., the nation of Israel and the person of Jesus.[18] Moreover, the elect have no special claim on God. They have no basis for saying, 'We are chosen while the others are not!' Newbigin conceives of the 'elect' as a dynamic category. It is not to be understood as a definite number of individuals fixed in the eternal decrees of God. As George Hunsberger puts it, 'election', for Newbigin, 'designates God's acting personally and

13 Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, pp. 85, 98–9.

14 Ibid., pp. 144-5. See also chap. 15.

15 Ibid., p. 85.

16 Ibid., p. 86.

17 Hunsberger explains the sense in which Newbigin understands it was 'necessary' for God to elect a people to bear his witness: 'Necessity only comes by the requirements of God's own personal nature and the way the world has been made to be lived in relationship to God' (*Bearing the Witness*, p. 321 n. 12).

18 Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, p. 84.

particularly in history, selecting a people to be uniquely his own'.[19] As history progresses, the people who are chosen to bear God's witness shifts depending on where the gospel bears fruit. Newbigin therefore states emphatically that 'to be chosen, to be elect… does not mean that the elect are saved and the rest are lost'. Instead, the elect are chosen 'in Christ', and this means that they are incorporated into the mission of Christ Jesus to the world.[20] Although Newbigin does not say so explicitly, it would be entirely in line with his emphasis on the awful responsibility of the elect and their corresponding lack of special privileges to assert that the elect actually exists for the sake of the non-elect; for those who have yet to come to salvation in Christ. Therefore, while Newbigin continues to insist on the 'particularity' of election, he dispels the 'scandal' in a radical fashion. He comes close to overturning the traditional conception of the categories and depicting the non-elect as the more privileged class.

An Approach Sub Specie Temporis.

Paul Jewett has helpfully classified the historical approaches to election as those which try to view the doctrine from God's perspective (*sub specie aeternitatis*) and those which treat it *sub specie temporis*.[21] Newbigin's position clearly belongs to the second category. From God's point of view, the elect might indeed be a fixed class of individuals (whether stemming from his foreknowledge or will), but Newbigin does not see this as the correct starting point for considering this doctrine. Election is instead to be viewed as a historical phenomenon; something dynamic which is actualised in space and time, with profound practical implications for those who have been chosen. Hunsberger goes so far as to say that, for Newbigin, the focus of attention in election falls on the '"selection" established by the historical converting action of the Spirit', rather than the '"decree" of the Father' or the '"decision" in the Son'.[22] As Newbigin himself puts it, Christians betray their trust when they 'are concerned more to probe backwards from their election into the reasons for it in the secret counsel of God than to press forward from their election to the purpose for it, which is that they should be Christ's ambassadors and witnesses to the

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19 Hunsberger, *Bearing the Witness*, p. 86.

20 Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, pp. 86–7.

21 Paul K. Jewett, *Election and Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), pp. 65–6.

22 *Bearing the Witness*, 86. This brings Newbigin quite close to the approach of Moise Amyraut, who sees the Spirit as the chief agent of election. (Jewett, *Election and Predestination*, pp. 101–2 has a concise description of Amyraut's position.)

ends of the earth'.[23] This *sub specie temporis* treatment is, for Newbigin, the proper Christocentric approach to election. It takes 'as the starting point of our thought the fact of Christ', since it places 'the actual work of Christ in history' at the 'determinative centre' of the doctrine, rather than unwarranted speculation about the composition of the elect.[24]

INTERACTION WITH NEWBIGIN'S POSITION

A Reductionistic View of the Church?

A point of evaluation which has been made concerning Newbigin's understanding of election is that it results in a reductionistic view of the Church. John Roxborogh has suggested that Newbigin 'appears to have widened our understanding of the mission of Israel, and narrowed that of the church to those things we call mission'.[25] If we look at Newbigin's later works (as summarised above), there is indeed the sense that he has over-emphasised the missional aspect of election, and correspondingly over-instrumentalized the elect. The danger is present that one might lapse into an overly 'activist' view of the church, and view her identity mainly in terms of what she does. This tendency can perhaps be traced to Newbigin's inadequate exposition in these works of what it means for us to be elected 'in Christ'. As mentioned earlier, he sees this mainly in terms of us being incorporated into *the mission* of Christ, and largely neglects to mention the rich vein of reflection his own Reformed tradition has accumulated on the benefits accruing to those chosen 'in Christ', including the exaltation to the status of being the sons and daughters of God, as we are joined to Jesus the Son of God.[26]

This charge, however, of over-instrumentalizing the elect is effectively refuted when we look at an older work of Newbigin's, *The Household of God* (1953). After quoting Emil Brunner's well-known assertion that 'the Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning', and insisting that mis-

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[23] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church* (London: SCM Press, 1953), p. 101.

[24] Ibid., p. 102.

[25] These comments of John Roxborogh are quoted in Michael T. Heneise, 'A Critical Evaluation of Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of Mission in the Light of Western Pluralism', *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 4 (2004), 49. Heneise citations were taken from the paper mounted on Roxborogh's website, but it is now at a different URL: <http://roxborogh.com/Articles/ANZAMS%20II%20delivered.htm> [accessed 16 October 2016].

[26] Jewett, *Election and Predestination*, pp. 55–6 has a good summary of the insights of the Reformed position on this point.

sions is the *esse*, and not merely the *bene esse*, of the Church,[27] Newbigin issues a corrective by protesting against the view of J.C. Hockendijk, who suggested that the nature of the Church could be quite exhaustively defined by her function. A more balanced view is to see the Church both as 'a means and an end', because it is only when she is 'a real foretaste of heaven' that she is able to be 'the witness and instrument of the kingdom of heaven. It is precisely because she is not *merely* instrumental that she can be instrumental'.[28] Moreover, because the means by which the gospel is spread is to be congruous with the nature of salvation, the Church can carry out her mission only 'in so far as she is herself living in Christ, a reconciled fellowship in Him, bound together in the love of the Father'.[29] There are certainly ample warnings here about the dangers of having a reductionist view of the Church, which views her only in terms of her mission.[30] The question remains as to why Newbigin did not reiterate these warnings in his later works. Perhaps, in his effort to overcome the 'scandal of particularity' (which he saw as the main stumbling block to the acceptance of the doctrine in both the Indian and Western contexts), Newbigin felt the need to stress almost exclusively the responsibilities of the elect, in order to drive home his point that being elected is not in any way indicative of God's special favour.

The Goal of Election.

Another comment along similar lines concerns Newbigin's understanding of the goal of election. In his writings on the topic, he often does not mention any higher goal than the call for the elect to bear witness to the gospel. However, in his more general comments on missions, he states explicitly that 'the goal of missions is the glory of God'.[31] We can infer from this (since election is a call to missions) that Newbigin would concur with the traditional Reformed axiom that the final goal of election is the glory of God. However, because Newbigin departs from the traditional Reformed assertion of a double predestination, he would have to conceive of this glory in a different manner. His scheme would not sit well with the strand of Reformed theology which argues that election manifests the

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27 Newbigin, *Household of God*, pp. 142-3.

28 Ibid., pp. 147-8 (emphasis in original).

29 Ibid., p. 148.

30 Hunsberger also relies on passages from *Household of God* to argue that Newbigin sees 'a union of salvation and service, beneficiary and bearer, means and end' in his teaching on election: *Bearing the Witness*, pp. 104–7.

31 Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, p. 180.

glory of God in that it demonstrates his attributes of grace (in his dealings with the elect) and justice (in his treatment of the reprobate).[32]

Our suggestion is that Newbigin can come up with a different conception of God's glory based on his critically realistic epistemology. His contention is that the Christian faith 'grows' as the mission of the Church extends to the ends of the earth. 'New treasures are brought into the life of the Church' as believers from previously unreached cultures illumine aspects of the gospel not previously seen due to the culture-bound nature of human perception.[33] Newbigin writes,

> As we confess Jesus as Lord in a plural society, and as the Church grows through the coming of people from many different cultural and religious traditions to faith in Christ, we are enabled to learn more of the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God (Eph 3:14-19) than we can in a monochrome society.[34]

So, 'only at the end shall we know what it means that Jesus is Lord of all… God's perfect reign cannot be made manifest to all until the mission of the Church to all nations is complete'.[35] What is achieved through election is therefore the completion of our understanding of the gospel and the realization of God's perfect reign over the numerous diverse groupings of this world. This, we suggest, could form a basis for Newbigin's reconceptualization of the traditional Reformed axiom that election has the ultimate goal of the glory of God. It certainly seems to offer a more positive and holistic view of God's glory than the traditional exposition.

The Means for Post-Mortem Conversion.

Concerning the extent of salvation, Newbigin, while rejecting a dogmatic universalism based on rationalistic grounds, believes in the possibility of salvation for those who died without coming to faith in Christ.[36] In fact, he seems to be open to the possibility of a universal salvation.[37] New-

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[32] See, e.g., John Calvin's well-known assertion in his *Institutes* III.24.14 that '[the reprobate] have been given over to this depravity because they have been raised up by the just but inscrutable judgement of God to show forth his glory in their condemnation'.

[33] Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, pp. 123–4.

[34] Ibid., p. 244.

[35] Ibid., p. 124.

[36] Ibid., pp. 88, 125.

[37] One of Newbigin's oft-cited passages from Scripture is Rom 11:32: 'For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.' (*Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, pp. 83, 85 and 125.)

bigin, however, eschews the idea that we can be saved 'over our heads'. A personal conversion experience is an essential aspect of the salvation process.[38] How, then, might those who had died as non-Christians go through this experience subsequently? Newbigin becomes somewhat reticent at this juncture. The only thing he is willing to say is that there will be a great 'eschatological event in which the fathomless depths of God's wisdom and grace will be revealed'.[39] This might conceivably be the time when unbelievers are given the opportunity of personally coming to faith in Christ. But the problem is that it is not clear if this is salvation which is wrought through the historical process of election. Having expounded at length on the necessity of election for God's saving purpose, it would seem inconsistent to embrace the possibility that other methods (e.g. a direct 'contextless' kind of encounter between God and individual human beings) might be utilised at the 'eschatological event'.

It behoves Newbigin to offer more details, at the risk of being speculative, on how he envisages the process of election to be relevant to persons who pass from this world without coming to faith in Christ.[40] Otherwise, it would appear that election is not a particularly effective method for reaching the world. In the long history of humankind, an unimaginable number have passed from this world without any opportunity to come into contact with God's elect communities. There was no appointed neighbour to whom they could have opened their doors and with whom they could have shared their lives. If election is ultimately to prove irrelevant to this substantial proportion of the human race (even if they are eventually saved via other means), both the necessity and significance of the doctrine might be questioned.

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38 Hunsberger, *Bearing the Witness*, pp. 167–8 sets out Newbigin's position on this matter.

39 Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, p. 125.

40 One available scheme (which would fit quite comfortably into Newbigin's framework) is that suggested by his fellow British theologian P.T. Forsyth. Forsyth envisages the process of election to continue beyond this life. The non-elect will have post-mortem opportunities to encounter the elect and be blessed by them. Hence, as the afterlife continues through various cycles, the number of the non-elect gets progressively fewer, until a possible universal salvation occurs. (Forsyth, like Newbigin, is adverse to a dogmatic universalism asserted on a purely rational basis.) Under this scheme, election remains, from the start to the end, God's chosen method of salvation. For more details of Forsyth's position, see Theng Huat Leow, *The Theodicy of Peter Taylor Forsyth: A 'Crucial' Justification of the Ways of God to Man* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2011), pp. 69–70.

Relationship with Karl Barth's Understanding of Election.
Any meaningful discussion of election in contemporary theology finds it difficult to escape the long shadow cast by Karl Barth's explication of the doctrine. In some ways, it can be said to rest on the opposite end of the spectrum from that of Newbigin's.[41] While Newbigin quite clearly approaches the doctrine *sub specie temporis*, Barth could arguably be the theologian who seeks to extract the greatest mileage from the doctrine in order to explicate the eternal being of God. It is not necessary, for our purposes, to describe Barth's approach in all its multi-faceted details. We focus only on Barth's well-known assertion that the doctrine of election is 'the sum of the gospel',[42] because it describes first and foremost that primal decision of God's where he constituted himself as the God who is for human beings. In Barth's own words, 'This self-determination [of God] is identical with the decree of His movement towards men.'[43] Some interpreters of Barth have, as is well-known, tried to read the Swiss-German theologian as going so far as to assert that God's very triunity was constituted by his logically (though not temporally) prior decision to elect. This has led to the rise of opposing views from other commentators on Barth.[44] We cite the existence of this debate to illustrate how radically *sub specie aeternitatis* Barth's approach has been understood to be, at least in some quarters.

Given how fundamentally different Barth's approach is from Newbigin's, is there any possibility that each might complement the other? The answer is yes. Barth's attempt to utilize the doctrine of election to explicate the eternal being of God offers something lacking in Newbigin's position. It provides the church with a clearer picture of the God who has elected her members and (as a corollary) is sending them as his witnesses to the non-elect. It is a picture of a God who in his freedom has elected to love the entire human race. Such an understanding of God would provide a greater impetus for the Church's mission, since it grounds this mission in the more solid foundation of an eternal election which is entirely consistent with it, rather than an election understood only in terms of its materialization in the history of our world. It also provides a far richer

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41 Hunsberger has a good analysis of the differences in approach between Newbigin and Barth in *Bearing the Witness*, pp. 85-7.

42 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics, Vol. II/2: The Doctrine of God*, Part 2, ed. by G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. by G.W. Bromiley et al. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), p. 3. This source will hereafter be referred to as *CD II/2*.

43 *CD II/2*, pp. 91-2.

44 A good summary of the debate is given in Michael T. Dempsey, 'Introduction', in *Trinity and Election in Contemporary Theology*, ed. by Michael T. Dempsey (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), pp. 1–28.

content to the gospel to be preached by the church as its carries out her mission—a gospel which has election not only as its method, but also a fundamental part of its message.[45]

The converse is also true. Newbigin's approach could well complement Barth's position by supplying an additional layer of meaning to the concept of 'election'. This meaning is derived from the perspective of the concrete history of our world, and imposes important obligations on the elect in their daily existence. This would go a long way in preventing election from being viewed as a kind of 'heavenly decision' which takes place completely over the heads of human beings and which has little relevance for the moral choices we have to make in the here and now. This is a pitfall which the Reformed tradition has not always been successful in avoiding. Newbigin's focus on election as it is fulfilled in the history of the world through concrete events of interaction between the elect and non-elect also provides a more plausible explanation as to why a dogmatic universalism should not be asserted. There are historical barriers to the effective spread of the gospel, whether through the failures of the elect or cultural and individual impediments facing the non-elect, which provide a level of explanation as to why some might eventually not be saved.[46] Barth, with his focus on election as God's eternal primal decision, with correspondingly less attention paid to its historical outworking, has faced difficulties in his attempts to refute a dogmatic universalism.[47]

In concluding this section, we wish to point out that Barth and Newbigin both claim to be Christocentric in their understanding of election. We might not have to choose between the two, since both of them might be correct—at the level of their perspectives. Both, certainly, agree that the traditional Reformed understanding of the doctrine which divides the human race into two fixed categories according to the inscrutable elect-

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45 This distinction between method and content has been pointed out by Hunsberger, *Bearing the Witness*, p. 85.

46 If we adopt P.T. Forsyth's understanding of how election might function in the afterlife to bring those who have died as non-Christians into the faith (as described in an earlier footnote), the impact of these historical barriers might persist even in the afterlife, due to the strong continuity between this life and the next, as envisaged by Forsyth. See Leow, *The Theodicy of Peter Taylor Forsyth*, p. 70-71 for more details on Forsyth's position.

47 Barth's denial of *apokatastasis* has been challenged by, amongst others, Emil Brunner (*The Christian Doctrine of God*, Dogmatics: Vol. I., trans. by Olive Wyon [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946], pp. 348-9) and Hans Urs von Balthasar (*The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*, trans. by Edward T. Oakes [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992], pp. 183-7).

ing will of God is based more on unwarranted speculation than a genuine Christocentricism.

NEWBIGIN'S APPROACH AS A WAY OF RECONCILING OPPOSING POSITIONS

We mentioned in our introduction the impasse over the doctrine of election in significant segments of the Western tradition. This is most clearly exemplified in the struggle between the 'Calvinist' and 'Arminian' sectors of the Church, which began from the acrimonious debate between the Remonstrants and their compatriots in Reformed Orthodoxy in the Netherlands in the late 16th century. We have, in the previous section, argued that Newbigin's perspective *sub specie temporis* might be well complemented by a particular kind of eternal perspective—that proposed by Barth. In this section, we wish to examine how Newbigin's challenge to another kind of approach *sub specie aeternitatis* (i.e. that offered by both the 'Calvinist' and 'Arminian' camps) has the potential to move both positions towards some measure of reconciliation. It does so by seeing the debate over issues like whether God has eternally predestined a fixed number of the elect or whether he elects us based upon his foreknowledge of who would freely receive the gospel message as illegitimate Promethean attempts to storm the heavens in order to gain a perspective not granted to us.

From his preferred creaturely viewpoint, Newbigin argues that we need to allocate a significant scope for the operation of God's mysterious sovereignty in our salvation. In *The Household of God*, Newbigin speaks approvingly of Calvin's notion of 'the secret working of the Holy Spirit' in the process of Christian conversion. 'We are bound,' Newbigin asserts, 'to go on to confess that this gift of the Holy Spirit is of God's pure grace, given to those whom He chooses according to the secret counsel of His will.'[48] This position follows quite naturally from Newbigin's critically realistic epistemology, which dictates that the human decision alone is unable to fully explain the 'miracle' of conversion. Conversion, for him, involves the embrace of the plausibility structure of the Christian faith as it stands, and not on the basis of some more ultimate framework of belief. Otherwise, of course, that more ultimate framework would constitute one's true faith, rather than Christianity. How then do we explain why some people are willing to forgo their former plausibility structures for that of the Christian faith? Newbigin's reply falls back on the notion of God's mysterious sovereignty:

[48] Newbigin, *Household of God*, pp. 101-2.

> I do not choose this, but I am chosen. If I am pressed to answer the question, this is the only final answer. God in his mysterious providence has chosen and called me, through means which are only partly known to me, to be part of this community of faith for the sake of sharing his secret with the whole world.[49]

However, because we are chosen 'for the sake of sharing his secret', there is, correspondingly, a profound sense of human responsibility in election. We have no licence to appeal to any immutable distinction between the elect and non-elect in an attempt to evade this responsibility. From our perspective, the categories are dynamic, and the elect have been given the onerous commission of presenting the gospel to the non-elect in order for them to become the predestined. The 'secret working of the Holy Spirit' which Newbigin speaks approvingly of pertains only to the sequence of salvation, and not the ultimate composition of the elect. Furthermore, Newbigin's insistence on election as a necessary means for the spread of the gospel implies that the community which is supposed to embody the gospel has a heavy responsibility to do it well, since there is no other way for the message to be presented. This statement of his sums this up well:

> It is true that at every step of the process there is an element of ultimate mystery which the mind of man cannot fathom. No one can say why it is that one was chosen and another not, why it is that here the word came 'not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost' (1 Thess 1.5), while there the same word carried no regenerating power. The answer to that question is known only to God. But if we cannot know for what *reason* one was chosen, we can most certainly know for what *purpose* he was chosen: he was chosen in order to be a fruit-bearing branch of the one true vine (John 15.16), a witness through whom others might be saved.[50]

Newbigin's approach can therefore be said to hold the tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility in the realm of election without resolving it rationally in favour of one or the other. Because of this, the concerns of each opposing side to maintain their position for the sake of the Christian life are quite satisfactorily addressed. Newbigin's emphasis on God's sovereignty leaves little room for a 'Pelagian' reliance on human effort to secure one's own salvation or that of others. With that, the accompanying problems of human pride, anxiety over whether one

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[49] Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, p. 100. Newbigin also warns of a 'Pelagianism' which has infected the Church, leading her to think that people are converted due to her techniques or efforts at evangelism (*Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, pp. 224 and 243).

[50] Newbigin, *Household of God*, pp. 100-101 (emphasis in original).

has done enough, and service to God which stems not from gratitude but a desire to win his favour are avoided. Moreover, Newbigin's naming of God's glory as the ultimate goal of election serves as a powerful antidote to the anthropocentric tendencies which sometimes appear with an over-emphasis on human responsibility in election.[51] But if 'Calvinist' concerns are assuaged, 'Arminian' worries over the need for Christians to take responsibility for their Christian life and ministry are also relieved, in the ways we have noted earlier. Furthermore, the somewhat thorny issue of how to view the relationship between God and sin in a Calvinist scheme is rendered moot. This includes the debates which have taken place within the Reformed tradition as to whether God can properly be said to be the 'author of sin' (see, e.g., the contrary assertions of the Westminster Confession[52] and F.D.E. Schleiermacher[53]), and whether evil is in any sense necessary to God's purposes for his creation.

I have previously written on the need at times to hold seemingly opposing theological notions in tension with one another.[54] In such cases, it might not be desirable to resolve this tension in a rational manner, as this might have an adverse impact on one's Christian life. Rather, if there is to be a resolution or synthesis, it should be one worked out in the context of practical Christian living. I therefore issued the call for us to allow goodness (in the sense of right living) to serve as a legitimate end of Christian theology, instead of being constantly obsessed with finding a rational resolution. The focus of my previous arguments was on the practice of petitionary prayer. Newbigin's understanding of election might serve as another example of the need for such tension in the service of

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51 P.T. Forsyth is one who appreciates the role the traditional Reformed emphasis on the glory of God plays in challenging an anthropocentric Christianity. While he rejects the traditional Calvinist conception of a double predestination, he praises it for being the 'most mighty of all [dogmas] for personal faith': *Faith, Freedom and the Future* (London: Independent Press, 1955), p. 310. This is due to the theocentric nature of the doctrine, located in its greater eagerness to uphold God's freedom than that of the human creature: *The Principle of Authority in Relation to Certainty, Sanctity and Society: An Essay in the Philosophy of Experimental Religion*, 2nd ed. (London: Independent Press, 1952), p. 255.

52 Chap. III, para. 1.

53 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 2nd edn, ed. by H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), p. 328 (para. 80, 2).

54 Theng Huat Leow, '"For Goodness' Sake": Some Observations on the Justification for Dialectics in Christian Theology', in *What Young Asian Theologians Are Thinking*, ed. by Theng Huat Leow, Christianity in Southeast Asia Series (Singapore: Trinity Theological College, 2014), pp. 115-27.

goodness.[55] The greatest strengths of the 'Calvinist' and 'Arminian' positions might always have been their utility for practical Christian living. This could be the reason why they have persisted for so long, appearing in different movements throughout the history of the Church, in spite of strong opposition from the other camp. Is it possible to have the best of both worlds; to incorporate the benefits of both positions for a Christian trying to live out his life and testimony to the world? It might be—if we are willing to forgo the approach *sub specie aeternitatis*, as defined by the proponents of both camps, and be contented with what we can properly know as creatures. This kind of approach will not answer all our questions, but it might prove especially conducive for the life and mission of the elect.

[55] Newbigin does demonstrate an awareness of the need for a tension which is in the service of the Christian life. See, e.g., *Open Secret*, pp. 80–81.

CHRISTIANITY AND VIOLENCE: JUST WAR AND CHRISTIAN TRADITION

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1. INTRODUCTION

It cannot be denied that aside from ethnicity,[1] religion plays a significant role in various social conflicts that have taken many lives.[2] The main cause of the World Trade Centre tragedy on September 11, 2001, for example, cannot be separated from the spirit of *jihad* claimed by the Muslim terrorists. Indeed, not a single religion can ever free itself from any form of violence.[3] As a conflict instigator, religion is considered dangerous. Therefore John Rawls pushes religion away from the public arena. For Rawls, the public domain has to remain neutral, so as not to be distorted by religious values.[4] Consequently, religion is marginalized to the private domain.

However, in his book, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*, R. Scott Appleby tries to show that religion is ambivalent rather than dangerous. He describes the ambivalence of religion as lying on the fact that on the one hand it is capable of instigating conflict, but on the other, for the same reason, of bringing about peace. For Appleby, religions that produces fanaticism for violence (the extrem-

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1 See Stefan Wolff, *Ethnic Conflict: A Global Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Scott Strauss, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006); and Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

2 See, for example, Martin E. Marty and R.Scott Appleby, eds., *Religion, Ethnicity and Self-Identity: Nations in Turmoil* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1997).

3 See, for example, Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Minds of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003); and Mark Juergensmeyer and Margo Kitts, eds., *Princeton Readings in Religion and Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

4 John Rawls, 'The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 7 (1987), 1, 4, 12-13.

ist) can just as easily produce fanaticism for peace (the peacemaker).[5] As he puts it: 'Both the extremist and the peacemaker are militants. Both types 'go to extremes' of self-sacrifice in devotion to the sacred; both claim to be 'radical,' or rooted in and renewing the fundamental truths of their religious traditions.'[6]

A survey through Christian tradition would show that with regard to religious ambivalence we have to admit that many conflicts and violence had happened,[7] but on the other hand, Christian tradition also records Christianity as a peacemaker. It is interesting to note that when having to deal with conflict and violence, Christian theology proposes the concept of just war which, according to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, is 'probably the most influential perspective on the ethics of war and peace'.[8] The application of the just war theory is not limited to Christian circles only but has reached a wider community—it has become a resource for philosophers as well as non-Christian politicians in their struggle against oppressors and in upholding justice.[9]

Without overlooking the origins of just war in Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, this article presents the theological thoughts of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, as well as Martin Luther and John Calvin, in the formation of a structural and systematic concept of just war and its theological and ethical contents—thoughts that are later developed further by 'canonists, theologians, codes of military practice, and political philosophers'.[10] Critiques to this theory will also be discussed in order to establish its validity, as well as the respective backgrounds and struggles

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5 '[T]he peacemaker', says Appleby, 'renounces violence as an acceptable extreme and restrict the war against oppressors and injustice to noncoercive means,' the extremist, 'by contrast, exalts violence as a religious prerogative or even as a spiritual *imperative* in the quest for justice.' R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), p. 11.

6 Ibid.

7 See, for example, Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

8 B. Orend, 'War', in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 edition),* ed. by Edward N. Zalta <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/war/> [accessed 10 October 2016].

9 See, for example, Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

10 Richard B. Miller, 'Introduction', in *War in the Twentieth-Century: Sources in Theological Ethics*, ed. Richard B. Miller (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), p. xiii.

of the above-mentioned church theologians in their attempt to find the legitimation of war in light of Scripture.

2. THE LEGITIMATION OF WAR

In Christianity war has often been viewed as closely related to the Fall of humanity into sin (Gen. 3:1-24). At the beginning of creation, the relation between the first humans was characterized by a mutual suitability and mutual assistance between the partners (Gen. 2:18). A mutually suitable relationship between two parties implies that both parties are of the same standing, although they are not of the same order. For example, the relation between husband and wife is a relationship between two persons who are of the same standing but of a different order, since God has given to the husband an authority of headship—albeit limited—to become the head of the wife. However, as a result of sin, there occurs in human beings a desire to dominate or control one over the other, as Genesis 3:16 states: 'Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' Reinhold Niebuhr has correctly observed that prior to the Fall man has the will-to-live, but after the Fall man has the will-to-power. While the will-to-live has led human beings to creativity, the will-to-power, on the other hand, has resulted in destruction due to the rise of conflicts and wars.[11]

Now since war occurs because of sin, it is deemed evil and laden with cruelty, violence and brutality—all of which result from the wickedness and avarice of man. It is therefore useless to hope for reaching a meeting-point between war and Christianity, as the Anabaptist Menno Simons observes, 'Tell me, how can a Christian defend Scripturally retaliation, rebellion, war, striking, slaying, torturing, stealing, robbing and plundering and burning cities, and conquering countries?'[12] Thus it is concluded that the existence of war cannot be justified for whatever reason.

But is it true that war is basically evil? If war is evil and against the will of God, so Martin Luther argues, then we have to judge Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and other biblical figures who served God by engaging in war.[13] And if war is evil, adds Augustine, how do we explain Jesus' praise

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[11] Reinhold Niebuhr writes, 'Man's pride and will-to-power disturb the harmony of creation.' Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation*, Vol. 1, *Human Nature* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), p. 179.

[12] Menno Simons, 'Reply to False Accusations,' in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, ed. by John Christian Wenger, trans. by Leonard Verduin (Scottdale, Arizona: Herald Press, 1966), p. 555.

[13] Martin Luther, 'Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved', in *Luther's Works* 46, ed. by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 97-8.

of the Roman centurion in Capernaum in saying that 'no one in Israel [has He] found such faith' (Matt. 8:10). Likewise, how do we explain the fact that Cornelius, another Roman centurion, had his prayer and alms received by God, who then sent the apostle Peter to preach the gospel to him (Acts 10:1-48)? And how should we take the answer that John the Baptist gave the soldiers who asked him what they should do, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages' (Luke 3:14)? By advising the soldiers to be content with their wages, John seems to agree with their profession.[14] Thus it could be concluded that war, in itself, is not evil. What is evil of war, says Augustine, is the motivation that lies behind it: 'The real evils in war are love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, and the lust of power, and such like.'[15] Luther calls this evil motivation of war 'the wars of desire'.[16]

Without denying the close connection between war and sin, John Calvin sees war as an inseparable part of the institution of government as Paul describes in Romans 13. Governments belong to God's creation ordinance since they were created by God before the Fall. After the Fall, however, God gave them the sword—a new dimension in the execution of their duties. Governments bear the sword in order to avenge evildoers—carrying out God's wrath on the wrongdoer (Rom. 13:4).[17] Calvin's view in this case is very similar to Luther's. Roland Bainton describes Luther's view about governments in this statement: 'The state goes back to the order of creation and arose in paradise because of man's urge to association. The coercive power of the state was introduced after the Fall by reason of Cain's murder in order to prevent a general anarchy of revenge.'[18] In other words, before the Fall, the main duty of the government is focused on distributive justice, namely, the distribution and allocation of goods, such as access to education and to society. After the Fall, however, the government's duties include retributive justice, which is the avenge of evil. So

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14 Augustine, 'Letter CLXXXIX, to Boniface', in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 1st Series, Vol. I, ed. by Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), § 4, p. 553.

15 Augustine, 'Reply to Faustus the Manichæan', in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 1st Series, Vol. IV, ed. by Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), § xxii.74, p. 301.

16 Luther, 'Soldiers', p. 121.

17 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. by John T.McNeill, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), IV.xx.10-11.

18 Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 137.

for Calvin, war has to be seen in this context of retributive justice; in this sense war, if motivated by the execution of God's judgment on those who practice evil, could be justified.

> But here a seemingly hard and difficult question arises: if the law of God forbids all Christians to kill (Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17; Matt. 5:21), and the prophet prophesies concerning God's holy mountain (the church) that in it men shall not afflict or hurt (Isa.11:9; 65:25)—how can magistrates be pious men and shedders of blood at the same time? Yet if we understand that the magistrate in administering punishment does nothing by himself, but carries out the very judgments of God, we shall not be hampered by this scruple. The law of the Lord forbids killing; but, that murders may not go unpunished, the Lawgiver himself puts into the hand of his ministers a sword to be drawn against all murderers.[19]

Luther calls war, in this context, 'wars of necessity'.[20] Hence, not only is the existence of war not sinful, instead it is a necessity. It means that if war is understood as 'wars of necessity' but it is not executed, then it becomes sin.

This means that although sin has resulted in war, the occurrence of war must be seen first of all as God's providence to curb sin. Augustine, according to Frederick Russell, understands war not merely as 'a consequence of sin' but also as 'a remedy for it'.[21] We remember what Joseph said to his brothers, 'As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today' (Gen. 50:20). From Joseph's story we learn that no matter how grand the plans of man and the devil are, they are still far below God's plan. The Lord declares, 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts' (Is. 55:8-9). In Reformed theology this principle is known as the Creator-creature distinction.[22] Creatures cannot be

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19 Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xx.10.

20 Luther, 'Soldiers', p. 121.

21 Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 16.

22 Herman Bavinck writes, 'From the very first moment, true religion distinguishes itself from all other religions by the fact that it construes the relation between God and the world, including man, as that between the Creator and his creature. The idea of an existence apart and independently from God occurs nowhere in Scripture. God is the sole, unique, and absolute cause of all that exists.' Herman Bavinck, *In the Beginning: Foundations of Creation Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), p. 24.

compared to the Creator because there exists between them what Søren Kierkegaard terms as the 'infinite qualitative distinction'[23]—an essential distinction referring not only to a 'different degree' but also to a 'different kind'. Thus the occurrence of war has to be understood first of all as an order of preservation from God.

Within this order of preservation, war must be motivated by peace. Quoting Cicero, Calvin stresses that the 'seeking of peace' must become the objective of war.[24] It means that when declaring war, a government's attitude should, according to Calvin, be far from hatred: 'not be carried away with headlong anger, or be seized with hatred, or burn with implacable severity'.[25] Therefore when waging war, says Luther, one must distinguish between 'what you want to do' and 'what you ought to do', between 'desire' and 'necessity', between 'lust for war' and 'willingness to fight'.[26] In other words, war is only a means to peace and not an end in itself. For Augustine, if war is a means to peace, then when one engages in war 'the spirit of a peacemaker' has to be kindled so that those who lose the war or are captured could be persuaded to live in peace.[27]

It is interesting to note that for Calvin, without justice it is impossible to establish peace. Peace can be achieved only if justice is upheld. Based on Jeremiah 22:3 Calvin concludes, 'Justice, indeed, is to receive into safekeeping, to embrace, to protect, vindicate, and free the innocent. But judgment is to withstand the boldness of the impious, to repress their violence, to punish their misdeeds.'[28] This means that justice has two functions, namely, the protection of the innocent and retributive violence.[29] The first function of justice—the protection of the innocent—exercises distributive justice in the broader sense. As explained above, before the

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23 According to Kierkegaard, 'The fundamental error of modern times (which runs into logic, metaphysics, dogmatics, and the whole of modern life) lies in the fact that the yawning abyss of quality in the difference between God and man has been removed.' See Alexander Dru, ed., *The Journals of Søren Kierkegaard* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 222. See also Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 10.

24 Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xx.12.

25 Ibid.

26 Luther, 'Soldiers', p. 118.

27 Augustine, 'Letter to Boniface', § 6.

28 Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xx.9.

29 Paul mentions these two functions of justice in Romans 13:3-4, as Peter also states in 1 Peter 2:13-14, 'Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.'

Fall, the government holds the duty to exercise distributive justice. Protecting the innocent is the government's duty *before* the Fall, whereas the second function of justice—retributive violence—exercises retributive justice. This is the government's duty *after* the Fall. In exercising retributive justice, the government is responsible not only for punishing the guilty, but more than that, it has to renew and reconcile them to become good citizens. In other words, retributive justice is not an end in itself; it has to serve distributive justice. Therefore, only when both distributive justice and retributive justice are established, can peace be maintained.

Engaging in war for the sake of justice is in line with the principle of love. For Calvin, a war that brings affliction and hurting is basically not in line with the love principle. But if it is carried out in the context 'to avenge, at the Lord's command', then this war, according to Calvin, is 'not to hurt or to afflict'.[30] In this context, war is not motivated by hatred.[31] It contains no desire to avenge or passion to kill. Such a war, according to Augustine, is motivated by love.[32] Thus a war carried out for the sake of establishing justice is in line with the love principle.

This article has shown so far that justifiable war could be accounted for in accordance with the Scriptures. The next part of this article will survey the theological foundation and basis of just war in Christian tradition.

3. JUST WAR

3.1 The Theological Foundation of Just War in Christian Tradition

With the cessation of Roman persecution of Christianity in 312 A.D., when the Emperor Constantine claimed himself to be a Christian, and with his declaration in 416 A.D. that only Christians could enlist in the military,[33] the Christian view of war had radically changed. Since that time Christians, who previously opposed war for whatever reason, began to realize that in certain situations and conditions war could be justified. Ambrose was the first theologian to advocate a justification for war in particular conditions. He wrote, 'The courage which protects one's country in war against the incursions of barbarians or defends the weak at

30 Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xx.10.

31 Ibid., IV.xx.12.

32 Russell, *Just War in the Middle Ages*, p. 17; Bainton, *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace*, p. 98.

33 James F. Childress, 'Pacifism', in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, ed. by James F. Childress and John Macquarrie (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), p. 446.

home or one's friends from the attacks of robbers is absolutely just.'[34] Since then, through Ambrose's writings Christians had thought of the importance for a state to punish criminals who could internally damage it. They started to realize the significance of defending their country against the attacks of barbarians which could at any moment destroy their civilization. But Ambrose intended to apply his concept of just war only to ordinary Christians and not to the clergy (monks and priests). To the latter Ambrose asserted, 'The thought of warlike matters seems to be foreign to the duty of our office, for we have our thoughts fixed more on the duty of the soul than on that of the body, nor is it our business to look to arms but rather to the forces of peace.'[35] Thus the idea of a justifiable war and the absence of the clergy from war was Ambrose's contribution to just war.

History records that between the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth, under the leadership of Augustine, Christians had started to accept the concept of just war, namely, that in certain conditions war is justifiable. It is interesting to note that for Augustine, it is Christian love that becomes the starting point of his thoughts on justifiable war. He writes,

> If it is supposed that God could not enjoin warfare, because in after times it was said by the Lord Jesus Christ, 'I say unto you, That ye resist not evil....' the answer is, that what is here required is not a bodily action, but an inward disposition...by using the sword in the punishment of a few.... that Moses acted as he did, not in cruelty but in great love, may be seen from the words in which he prayed for the sins of the people: 'If Thou wilt forgive their sin, forgive it; and if not, blot me out of Thy book.'....We see the same in the apostle [Paul], who, not in cruelty, but in love, delivered a man up to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.[36]

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[34] David F. Wright, 'War in a Church-historical Perspective,' *Evangelical Quarterly* 57 (April 1985), 149-50. Wright quotes from Ambrose's work, *De Officiis*, 1:27:129.

[35] Bainton, *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace*, p. 90. Bainton quotes from Ambrose, *De Officiis*, 1:37:186.

[36] Augustine, 'Reply to Faustus the Manichæan,' pp. 301, 304. In this context, Frederick Russell writes, 'By this distinction between the inward disposition of the heart and outward acts, to be accepted by without serious question in the Middle Ages, Augustine claimed to reconcile war and the New Testament. Since according to the "inwardness" of his ethics the intention rather than the hostile act was normative, any hostile act was justified provided it was motivated by charity.' Russell, *Just War in the Middle Ages*, p. 17.

This is important for those who question the 'what is' (descriptive) and 'what ought to be' (prescriptive) elements in the thought of Augustine, as Lisa Sowle Cahill maintains,

> It is difficult to resolve the question of whether Augustine really begins with the perceived necessity of waging war to preserve the civil order and so tries to square it with the New Testament, or whether he begins with the Christian ideal of love of neighbor and enemy and inquires how best to put it into practice in a fallen world.[37]

Because his starting point is Christian love, Augustine puts to the fore the 'normative perspective' instead of the 'situational perspective'.[38]

There are two reasons why Christian love becomes the foundation of Augustine's thought on justifiable war. First, Augustine thinks that Christian love will distance us from egotism and selfish desire. So strongly did Augustine want to distance himself from selfish desire that he even renounces war or violence carried out in self-defence. He asserts,

> As to killing others in order to defend one's own life, I do not approve of this, unless one happens to be a soldier or public functionary acting, not for himself, but in defence of others or of the city in which he resides, if he acts according to the commission lawfully given him, and in the manner becoming of his office.[39]

Secondly, the presence of Christian love would require the duty to help one's fellow man. On seeing an Israelite being beaten by an Egyptian, Moses helped and defended the Israelite by killing the Egyptian (Exod. 2:12). For Augustine, Moses' action was justified because he did it not in

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37 Lisa Sowle Cahill, 'Nonresistance, Defense, Violence, and the Kingdom in Christian Tradition', *Interpretation* 38 (1984), 382.

38 I borrow the terms 'normative perspective' and 'situational perspective' from John Frame. Here Frame proposes two kinds of approach. The first focuses on 'Scripture' and then seeks its application in 'problem areas.' This approach is often used by 'evangelicals.' The second approach, conversely, focuses on the 'problem areas' and then on 'Scripture'. This is the approach frequently used by 'liberals' and 'secularists'. John Frame, *Medical Ethics: Principles, Persons, and Problems* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1988), pp. 3-4. Thus Augustine's thought about war uses the evangelical approach because it emphasizes 'Scripture' more than 'problem areas'.

39 Augustine, 'Letter XLVII, to Publicola', in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 1st Series, Vol. I, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), § 5, p. 293.

self-defence but in order to help a fellow human being.[40] In like manner a government's stringent actions by using arms in upholding justice, preserving peace, and maintaining order in society could also be justified. Thus war is justifiable as long as its execution is motivated by Christian love that spurs self-denial and the desire to help others.

The problem is, how could a war that involves violence—though with the purpose of fighting evil—correlate with Christian love and brings peace? Augustine gives three reasons for this. First, Augustine views war as chastisement. As chastisement, punishment may encourage reform, and even if death results, punishment cannot harm its object in any essential (spiritual) way.[41] Russell summarizes this thought of Augustine in this sentence, 'The just warriors restrained sinners from evil, thus acting against their will but in their own best interest.'[42] Here Augustine distinguishes 'the inward disposition' from 'the hostile act', and sees that the former is more important than the latter.[43] Therefore, in order to correlate war with Christian love, there should be a clear reason for it—a just cause.

Secondly, in order to prevent war from becoming an arena for revenge, Augustine insists that war and violence could not be waged by individuals or private citizens. A war would be legitimate and just if it obeys the command of God or the command of the state,[44] and executed only by soldiers 'in behalf of the peace and safety of the community'.[45] In this way both clergy and individuals are prohibited from engaging in war. So in order that war reflects Christian love, the element of legitimate authority has to be taken into consideration. The third reason, aside from a just cause and legitimate authority, is the right intention, which is essential in assessing the morality of war. According to Augustine, violence that manifests Christian love and brings peace will ultimately depend on the intention of those who wage war. In order for war to be justifiable, those engaging in war 'should punish with the same goodwill which a father has towards his little son'.[46] It has been mentioned above that for Augustine the evil of war is not the injury and death that it causes but rather the 'love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, and the

40 Augustine, 'Reply to Faustus the Manichaean', § 90, p. 309.

41 Ibid., §§ 74, 78.

42 Russell, *Just War in the Middle Ages*, p. 17.

43 Ibid.

44 Augustine, 'Reply to Faustus the Manichæan', § xxii.74-75.

45 Ibid., § xxii.75.

46 Augustine, 'Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount,' in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 1st Series, Vol. VI, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), § i.xx.63, p. 27.

lust of power, and such like'.[47] Thus, the three reasons for going to war (*jus ad bellum*)—just cause, legitimate authority, and right intention—must be present in order that war may reflect Christian love and be justifiable.[48]

By embracing the concept of just war, Augustine renounces crusades and the various manifestations of holy war. According to Bainton, the crusading idea 'requires that the cause shall be holy (and no cause is more holy than religion), that the war shall be fought under God and with his help, that the crusaders shall be godly and their enemies ungodly, and that the war shall be prosecuted unsparingly'.[49] But war with a 'holy cause,' waged in the belief in a 'divine guidance and aid,' while viewing its executors as 'godly crusaders' and their enemies as 'ungodly enemies,' and requiring an 'unsparingly prosecution,' could become a brutal and sadistic war. From the perspective of just war, the right intention factor presents the greatest problem in crusades and holy war to make them justifiable.

The only legitimate holy war, according to Augustine, is the holy war waged by Israel in the Old Testament, when it fought the seven Canaanite tribes in the context of God's salvation history. For Augustine, the wars led by Moses, for example, are just wars because they originate in divine commands. When God gave his command, He did that not in cruelty but in righteous retribution. And when Moses obeyed God's command, he did it in obedience to God but not in ferocity.[50] Augustine discerns some exceptions in the sixth commandment, 'You shall not murder.' One of them is that God gave 'a special commission granted for a time to some individuals'. When those who went to war in obedience to God committed murder, they did not trespass the sixth commandment.[51] Hence the wars waged by Moses and Joshua were just wars. Outside the Old Testament context, holy wars are no longer normative.

That means we renounce Roland Bainton's view that holy war is still normative for Christians because the New Testament teaches it. For Bainton, the New Testament even teaches crusades which are a major manifestation of holy war.[52] The clearest example of a crusade in the New Tes-

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47 Augustine, 'Reply to Faustus the Manichæan', § xxii.74.

48 Bainton, *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace*, p. 98.

49 Ibid., p. 148.

50 Augustine, 'Reply to Faustus the Manichæan', § xxii.74.

51 Augustine, 'The City of God,' in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 1st Series, Vol. II, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), § i.21, p. 15.

52 For Roland Bainton, crusades are the main interpretation of holy war. 'The crusade', he says, 'stemmed out of the holy war... [and]... went beyond the holy war in the respect that it was fought not so much with God's help as on God's

tament, according to Bainton, is when Jesus cleanses the temple using a whip of cords to drive out the merchants and money changers who were doing their business there.

> Support for the crusade has found its most congenial passage to be Jesus' cleansing of the temple with a whip of cords, a detail mentioned only in John's gospel [Jn. 2:15]. Here was undeniably an instance of fiery indignation against the profanation of the sacred, but the whip of cords, if genuine, was no hand grenade, and the success of Jesus in routing the hucksters was scarcely due to physical prowess. For what was one man, even with strands of rope, against such a company? They must have dispersed because they cowed by a wrath which they recognized as right.[53]

Bainton is correct that the cleansing of the temple is a manifestation of holy war in the New Testament. But different from the holy war in the Old Testament, the New Testament holy war takes a spiritual and not a physical form. Vern Poythress emphasizes that '[w]hereas Old Testament holy war was waged primarily against human opponents, on the level of symbol, New Testament holy war is waged against the ultimate opponents, Satan and his demonic assistants'.[54] Here Poythress sees a continuation of the Old Testament holy war in the New Testament, in which the former becomes a symbol for the latter. Thus holy war still applies to Christians, but it is holy war of a different nature. As Poythress maintains, 'We are to wage holy war. But the nature of that holy war is redefined because of Christ. Holy war takes the form of evangelism rather than physical conflict.'[55] As such holy war in terms of physical conflict is no longer normative for Christians.

In later centuries Augustine's doctrine of just war was further developed by the church at times when it faced warring situations. The thirteenth century was marked by wars between Christian kings and nobilities. Their concept of war, aside from abiding by the thoughts of Augustine and the Bible, was also influenced by the thought of Gratian expressed in his book, *Decretum*.[56] Based on the concepts of war prevalent in the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas developed Augustine's concept of

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behalf, not for a human goal which God might bless but for a divine cause which God might command.' Bainton, *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace*, pp. 44-5.

53 Ibid., 56.

54 Vern Sheridan Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses* (Brentwood: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., 1991), p. 147.

55 Ibid., p. 148.

56 See Russell, *Just War in the Middle Ages*, pp. 55-85.

war in a more systematic fashion. Aquinas basically emphasizes the three reasons for going to war (*jus ad bellum*) defined by Augustine: just cause, legitimate authority, and right intention. These three reasons must be present before one decides on waging war.[57] However, in order that war could be justified, only *jus ad bellum* is insufficient. Another reason is needed, says Aquinas, which is called *jus in bello*, the morality of means in war.[58]

According to Russell, when speaking about *jus in bello* Aquinas focuses on '[war's] legitimate conduct and consequences'.[59] He justifies ambushes as a means of war. He allows the use of deceiving the enemy as a strategy in war. For Aquinas there are two kinds of deception. The first is in the form of lying and not doing as promised. Such a deception is unlawful, whatever the reason. Quoting Ambrose, Aquinas writes, 'No one ought to deceive the enemy in this way, for there are certain *rights of war and covenants, which ought to be observed even among enemies*.'[60] But there is a second kind of deception in which 'a man may be deceived by what we say or do, because we do not declare our purpose or meaning to him.'[61] A deception that hides part of the truth, says Aquinas, is justified in war. The Bible itself, he claims, does this to unbelievers, as stated in Matthew 7:6, 'Do not give what is holy to dogs.'[62] Thus waging war by deception in ambushes could be justified.

With regard to the morality of means in war, Aquinas abides by the principle of discrimination. To him, for the sake of the common good war has to be waged against sinners. War must be able to distinguish sinners from the innocent. Those who are innocent cannot become the target of war because they 'preserve and forward the common good'.[63] For Aquinas, fighting the innocent means making four mistakes:

> first, because he injures one whom he should love more, and so acts more in opposition to charity; secondly, because he inflicts an injury on a man who is less deserving of one, and so acts more in opposition to justice; thirdly, because he deprives the community of a greater good; fourthly, because he

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57 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1916), § ii-ii.40.1.

58 Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), p. 85.

59 Russell, *Just War in the Middle Ages*, p. 271.

60 Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, ii-ii.40.3. Aquinas quotes from Ambrose, *De Officiis* i (italics as in edition cited).

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., ii-ii.64.6.

> despises God more, according to Luke x.16, *He that despiseth you despiseth Me*.[64]

In sum, the discrimination principle requires that war distinguishes combatants from non-combatants.

Aside from the discrimination factor, Aquinas sees the principle of proportionality as extremely important in the criteria of *jus in bello*. This principle appears in the discussion on self-defence. Aquinas rejects Augustine's view that disagrees with self-defence as a reason for waging war. For Aquinas, self-defence in itself is not wrong. But the problem lies in the fact that self-defence could cause two effects. The first is one's intention to save one's own life. For Aquinas, saving one's own life is lawful because 'it is natural to everything to keep itself in *being*, as far as possible'.[65] However, the first effect will result in a second effect, which is the slaying of the aggressor. If the second effect is unproportional and contains 'more than necessary violence,' then self-defence could not be justified. In order to be justifiable, self-defence must be done in moderation.[66] Therefore, a plan to commit murder based on the reason of self-defence can never be tolerated. '[I]t is not lawful,' writes Aquinas, 'for a man to intend killing a man in self-defence.'[67] Thus, aside from discrimination, proportionality becomes a determining factor in the morality of war.

Augustine's thoughts that Aquinas developed in the middle of the thirteenth century becomes more crystallized during the Reformation era in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which were coloured by religious wars among Christians. As a *reformator* adhering to *Sola Scriptura*, Martin Luther uncompromisingly asserts that the validity of all doctrine, including the doctrine of war, must be tested against the Bible. Based on Old and New Testament texts, Luther takes the position of just war, and essentially agrees with Augustine about the importance of just cause, legitimate authority, and right intention in declaring war.[68] Luther's concept of just war is strongly influenced by his theology of the Two Kingdoms: the Kingdom of God or Christ and the kingdom of the world. The church, Christians, and spiritual matters all belong to the Kingdom of

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64 Ibid., ii-ii.64.6. r. obj.2.

65 Ibid., ii-ii.64.7.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Martin Luther, 'The Sermon on the Mount', in *Luther's Works* 21, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1956), pp. 39-40; Martin Luther, 'Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed', in *Luther's Works* 46, ed. Walther I. Brandt (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), p. 99; Luther, 'Soldiers', p. 96.

God, while governments, war, and secular matters belong to the kingdom of the world. Both kingdoms are established by God. Whereas the Kingdom of God deals with sin, the kingdom of the world deals with evil. Luther separates these two kingdoms strictly and does not associate them.[69] Therefore Luther renounces the involvement of the church in war due to matters of religion. For example, he rejects the support of the church in the war against the Ottoman Turks that threatens Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[70] And because he does not associate the legal with the spiritual, Luther rejects crusades and all forms of holy war.

For Luther, one example of Christians participating in the kingdom of the world is through jobs that would open up opportunities for Christians to serve their fellow man. With regard to matters of war in the kingdom of the world, Christians should, says Luther, as much as possible distance themselves from it. For Luther, war is not something people want or desire, although it is basically right and 'a divine and useful ordinance'.[71] Quoting Psalm 60:8, Luther reminds that 'He [God] scatters the peoples who delight in war'. So Luther condemns those who lust for war. For Luther, war is a necessity, not desire. War should be waged only if necessary.[72] In response to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:9, 'Blessed are the peacemakers,' Luther writes,

> Therefore anyone who claims to be a Christian and a child of God, not only does he not start war or unrest, but he also gives help and counsel on the side of peace wherever he can, even though there may have been a just and adequate cause for going to war.[73]

Luther understands war as a last resort—it would be waged only after all efforts for peace have come to a dead end.

Yet it is necessary to understand that Luther's concept of the 'last resort' is based on his pessimism towards government in waging war. By separating strictly the kingdom of the world (i.e., government) from the Kingdom of God (i.e., Christ, the church, and believers), Luther implies that he prohibits the substantial involvement of the church and Christians in transforming government, because Luther has a pessimistic and negative attitude toward government, especially in regard of its retribu-

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69 Luther, 'Temporal Authority', pp. 88, 91-92; Luther, 'Soldiers', p. 99; Luther, 'The Sermon on the Mount', p. 105.

70 See Martin Luther, 'On War Against the Turk,' in *Luther's Works* 46, ed. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 155-205.

71 Luther, 'Soldiers', p. 99.

72 Ibid., p. 118.

73 Luther, 'The Sermon on the Mount', p. 40.

tive duty, namely, war, after the Fall of humanity into sin. By drawing an analogy between the Kingdom of God with Christ, and the kingdom of the world with culture, Richard Niebuhr in his book, *Christ and Culture*, labels Luther's position as 'Christ and Culture in Paradox,' and not as 'Christ the Transformer of Culture'.[74]

In other words, although for Luther war in itself is not sinful, but due to his low view of government, he reminds that soldiers who engage in war are sinful people. Therefore Luther sees war as the lesser of two evils. He writes,

> such a war is only a very brief lack of peace that prevents an everlasting and immeasurable lack of peace, a small misfortune that prevents a great misfortune. What men write about war, saying that it is a great plague, is all true. But they should also consider how great the plague is that war prevents.[75]

Thus what Luther means by the 'wars of necessity' refers more to war in the sense of 'it is evil but necessary'.

Different from Luther, Calvin sees the presence of government in a more positive and more hopeful light. But similar to Luther, Calvin also distinguishes a twofold government, the spiritual and the political:

> there is a twofold government in man: one aspect is spiritual, whereby the conscience is instructed in piety and in reverencing God; the second is political, whereby man is educated for the duties of humanity and citizenship that must be maintained among men....The one we may call the spiritual kingdom, the other, the political kingdom.[76]

How these two governments are related—this is what distinguishes Calvin from Luther. Whereas Luther sees the two kingdoms as being absolutely separated, Calvin, on the other hand, while regarding civil government as 'distinct' from the spiritual and inward Kingdom of Christ, considers both as 'not at variance' because 'we go as pilgrims upon the earth while we aspire to the true fatherland'.[77] Alister McGrath describes Calvin's concept of the spiritual and political aspects as *distincto sed non separatio:* they may be distinguished, yet not separated.[78] Although Calvin does not

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74 See Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (San Fransisco: Harper and Row, 2001).

75 Luther, 'Soldiers', p. 96.

76 Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xix.15.

77 Ibid., IV.xx.2.

78 Alister E. McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 173.

separate the two aspects he notes that neither could they be unwisely mingled, because each one has 'a completely different nature'.[79] W. Stanford Reid summarizes Calvin's spiritual-political thought as 'that of mutual independence, but also of mutual helpfulness and support'.[80] In other words, even though Calvin separates church and state, he does not separate them absolutely as Luther does. For Calvin, the state is responsible to the church and the church is responsible to the state. Michael Welker employs the term 'differentiation' to describe the relation between church and state in Calvin's thought.[81]

Thus according to Calvin, government's duties in this context are:

> to cherish and protect the outward worship of God, to defend sound doctrine of piety and the position of the church, to adjust our life to the society of men, to form our social behavior to civil righteousness, to reconcile us with one another, and to promote general peace and tranquillity.[82]

In brief, Calvin has a high view of government. Similar to Augustine but different from Luther, Calvin sees government's retributive duty in war as a remedy for sin. Ralph Hancock thinks that Calvin's view regarding government is even more positive and hopeful than Augustine because for Calvin, the existence of government is not only 'necessary' but also 'noble'.[83]

Therefore, in Calvin's view, government should be very careful in declaring war. In order that war could be justified, as explained above, it is important for government to seek restoration of peace as its objective and to develop a far-from-hatred attitude. Government should also see war as a matter of 'extreme necessity' and declared war only if all attempts to avoid it have been made and failed.[84] In other words, for Calvin war must be a last resort.[85] Thus the criteria of *jus ad bellum* includes not only

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79 Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xx.1.

80 W. Stanford Reid, 'Calvin and the Political Order', in *John Calvin: Contemporary Prophet*, ed., Jacob. T. Hoogstra (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1959), p. 252.

81 Michael Welker, 'Calvin's Doctrine of the "Civil Government": Its Orienting Power in Pluralism and Globalizaton', in *Calvin Today: Reformed Theology and the Future of the Church*, ed. by Michael Welker, Michael Weinrich, and Ulrich Möller (London: T & T Clark International, 2011), p. 211.

82 Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xx.2.

83 Ralph C. Hancock, *Calvin and the Foundations of Modern Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 29.

84 Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xx.12.

85 See Cahill, *Love Your Enemies*, p. 115.

just cause, legitimate authority, and right intention, as stated by Augustine, but also the last resort element.

Due to his high view of government, Calvin consequently has a high appreciation of government officials—the magistrates. He respects them so highly that he writes, 'No one ought to doubt that civil authority is a calling, not only holy and lawful before God, but also the most sacred and by far the most honourable of all callings in the whole life of mortal men.'[86] So honourable are magistrates that for Calvin resisting them is similar to resisting God.[87] Basically Calvin does not allow resistance against government. Christians must be obedient even to a bad government. He writes, 'We are not only subject to the authority of princes who perform their office toward us uprightly and faithfully as they ought, but also to the authority of all who, by whatever means, have got control of affairs, even though they perform not a whit of the princes' office.'[88] Obedience to such authorities, says Calvin, has to be accompanied by prayer asking God to change their heart.[89]

However, if authorities act in resistance to God, then it is lawful to oppose them. While forbidding private individuals to carry out resistance against government, Calvin allows the lesser or inferior magistrates to do so. He writes,

> For if there are now any magistrates of the people, appointed to restrain the wilfulness of kings.... I am so far from forbidding them to withstand, in accordance with their duty, the fierce licentiousness of kings, that, if they wink at kings who violently fall upon and assault the lowly common folk, I declare that their dissimulation involves nefarious perfidy, because they dishonestly betray the freedom of the people, of which they know that they have been appointed protectors by God's ordinance.[90]

For Calvin, the resistance of the lesser magistrates is justifiable because it is done in conjunction with obedience to God, the superior power to whom all kings and authorities must obey. Calvin's principle is clear: 'Obedience [to a ruler] is never to lead us away from obedience to [God].' Here Calvin sees the conflict of power first and foremost as a religious matter and not a political one.[91] Calvin's principle on the lesser magistrates is, accord-

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86 Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xx.4.

87 Ibid., IV.xx.23.

88 Ibid., IV.xx.25.

89 Ibid., IV.xx.29.

90 Ibid., IV.xx.31.

91 Ralph Keen, 'The Limits of Power and Obedience in the Later Calvin', *Calvin Theological Journal* 27 (1992), 265.

ing to James Nichols, very unique and 'unknown in Roman Catholic and Lutheran societies'.[92]

By referring to God's authority, the resistance executed by the lesser magistrates not only receives legitimation and justification, but has also reasonable chance of success. By adhering to Romans 13, which states that all authority and power of government comes from God, Calvin sees that the success or failure of the lesser magistrates depends strongly on God. Here Calvin implicitly adds to the criteria of *jus ad bellum* a reasonable hope for success, namely, that before going to war one has to consider the possibility of success. War, as Ralph Potter suggests, should not be trapped in a suicidal action.[93] In sum, *jus ad bellum* includes not only just cause, legitimate authority, right intention, and last resort, but also a reasonable hope for success.

In other words, in order to be justifiable, war must first and foremost fulfil the criteria of *jus ad bellum*—the reasons for going to war which include just cause, legitimate authority, right intention, last resort, and reasonable hope for success. Yet only *jus ad bellum* is insufficient since it only answers the question of 'when' or 'whether' one should wage war and does not explain 'how' or what 'methods' should be used in fighting the right war.[94] Just war also needs *jus in bello*—the morality of means in war that includes discrimination and proportionality.

The criteria of just war could be applied before, during, or after the war in terms of assessment: *before* the war in order to see whether the reasons for going to war are justifiable; *during* the war in order to assess the methods used, whether they could be justified; and *after* the war in order to see which party is right and which one is wrong.[95]

We proceed in the next part to discuss the criticisms of just war.

3.2 Criticisms of Just War

The first criticism of just war questions the authorities' ability to easily manipulate the *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* criteria without considering

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92 James Hastings Nichols, *Democracy and the Churches* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1951), p. 26.

93 Ralph B. Potter, Jr., 'The Moral Logic of War', in *War in the Twentieth Century: Sources in Theological Ethics*, ed. by Richard B. Miller (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), p. 207.

94 Miller, 'Introduction', p. xiv.

95 On the application of the criteria of just war in contemporary wars see Paul Ramsey, 'Is Vietnam a Just War?', in *War in the Twentieth Century: Sources in Theological Ethics*, ed. by Richard B. Miller (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), pp. 185-97; and James Turner Johnson, 'Just-War Tradition and the War in the Gulf,' in *War in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 449-53.

their underlying moral principles in order to justify their own actions in war, which actually oppose these criteria. For example, President Bush claimed that the Gulf War is a just war. However, after applying the criteria of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* to the Gulf War, Jim Wallis came to the conclusion that 'the war with Iraq cannot be justified on moral grounds.'[96] Thus the fault lies on those who misuse or abuse just war theory and not on the intrinsic weakness of the theory itself.

The second criticism questions the relevance of just war in this modern era in which wars would become a total war. Is it possible to apply the principles of proportionality and discrimination that distinguish non-combatants from combatants, in view of the use of modern, sophisticated weaponry that are highly destructive? Such weaponry includes not only chemical and biological weapons and carpet bombs but also atomic bombs and nuclear weapons. In response to this criticism we should first note that with the sophistication of advanced technology, these weapons can be fired and reach its targets far more precisely than in previous wars. In the Gulf War against Iraq, for example, one could watch in amazement how bombs and missiles were fired using computers and instruments equipped with laser technology and how they hit their targets with great precision. This means that the advancement of high technology even guarantees the fulfilment of the proportionality and discrimination reasons. Thus whether the proportionality and discrimination reasons are fulfilled, as Joseph Allen asserts, depend very much on who is using the weapons, and not on the weapons itself.[97]

The problem is, is it possible to apply the concept of just war to wars that use atomic bombs and nuclear weapons? William O'Brien admits that war in this nuclear era is irrational. However, it does not mean that the concept of just war cannot be applied. O'Brien explains, 'Experience has taught us that, irrational or not, war is still a threat to be deterred and resisted as well, in some cases, as a needed instrument of justice.'[98] One example is Reinhold Niebuhr's theory on the 'balance of power' that influenced the United States during the Cold War with Soviet Union. By developing the concept of 'nuclear deterrence,' Niebuhr supports the development and increase of US nuclear weapons in order to balance Soviet Union's nuclear weaponry. For Niebuhr, the 'balance of power' would pre-

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[96] Jim Wallis, 'This War Cannot Be Justified', in *War in the Twentieth Century*, p. 466.

[97] Joseph L. Allen, *War: A Primer for Christians* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 2001), p. 50.

[98] William V. O'Brien, 'Just-War Doctrine in a Nuclear Context', in *War in the Twentieth Century*, p. 312.

vent both sides—the US and Soviet Union—from starting a nuclear war. Whoever starts a nuclear war would be trapped into a suicidal action and 'any distinction between victor and vanquished irrelevant'.[99] Through the concept of 'balance of power' and 'nuclear deterrence,' Niebuhr applies just war theory in the nuclear era. In the context of the Cold War with its competition in nuclear weaponry, the presence of just war is directed towards 'the presumption against war' as stated by the U.S. Catholic Bishops in their book, *The Challenge of Peace*.[100]

The third criticism questions the basic assumptions of just war, whether its purpose is to prevent war as expressed by the Bishops, or whether it begins with a presumption against injustice. The Bishops' statement is based on their conviction that war in itself is evil.[101] However, as explained above, for Augustine war in itself is not evil, but what is evil in war is not the injuries and deaths that it causes but instead the motivation that lies behind it. Relying on just war tradition, James Turner Johnson questions the position of the Bishops:

> What, then, of the claim made in *The Challenge of Peace* that just war doctrine begins with a 'presumption against war'? ...such a presumption is not to be found in just war tradition in its classic form, or even in the specifically churchly theorists Augustine and Aquinas to whom Catholic just war theorists generally refer for authority. The idea of such a 'presumption' seems to owe more to the influence of Catholic pacifists on the development of *The Challenge of Peace* and to a general uneasiness with the destructiveness of modern war and the venality of modern states than to the heritage of just war tradition. I would say it more emphatically: the concept of just war does not begin with a 'presumption against war' focused on the harm which war may do, but with a presumption against *injustice* focused on the need for respon-

[99] Reinhold Niebuhr, 'The Cold War and the Nuclear Dilemma', *Cross Currents* 9 (1959), 212. See also David S. Fischler, 'Nuclear Weapons in the Ethics of Reinhold Niebuhr', *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 12 (1985), 69-84.

[100] See U.S. Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1983).

[101] They write, 'The Church's teaching on war and peace establishes a strong presumption against war which is binding on all; it then examines when this presumption may be overriden, precisely in the name of preserving the kind of peace which protects human dignity and human rights....The moral theory of the "just-war" or "limited-war" doctrine begins with the presumption which binds all Christians: we should do no harm to our neighbor; how we treat our enemy is the key test of whether we love our neighbor; and the posibility of taking even one human life is a prospect we should consider in fear and trembling. How is it possible to move from these presumptions to the idea of a justifiable use of lethal force?' Ibid., pp. 22, 26.

> sible use of force in response to wrongdoing. Force, according to the core meaning of just war tradition, is an instrumentality that may be good or evil, depending on the use to which it is put.[102]

If the purpose of just war is to oppose war, then just war must act in self-defence and be limited to defensive warfare. But if its purpose is to oppose injustice, then the presence of just war would not be limited to 'defensive warfare' but would include 'offensive warfare.' Augustine's concept of just war, according to Frederick Russell, does not distinguish between 'defensive warfare' and 'offensive warfare,' as long as the reasons for going to war is justified.[103]

The fourth criticism questions the scope of the validity of the *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* criteria, since the reasons for these criteria have kept increasing. The reasons for *jus ad bellum*, for example, are now six, seven, or even more than that.[104] As explained above, just war theory has been developing over the years in accordance with the struggles of each particular era concerning war. With the addition of more reasons according to the needs of each particular era, just war theory has been refined since it is perfected by these additions. Nevertheless it is necessary to distinguish between the primary reasons and the secondary. For the criteria *jus ad bellum*, the three reasons proposed by Augustine—just cause, legitimate authority, and right intention—are the primary reasons, and a necessity, since without them it would be impossible to justify war.[105]

4. CONCLUSION

The presence of just war theory is crucial in the midst of a sin-ridden world. Due to the spread of the consequences of sin, human relationships have been characterized by injustice. Here we have to choose: to let injustice continue to predominate, or to stop it with the risk of going to war. The basic assumption of just war is to resist injustice by protecting the innocent from ruthless actions. The presence of just war would make evildoers think of restraining from their evil deeds. The existence of just war is not merely to remove evil, but also to prevent it. The criteria *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* with its strict moral principles would make those who want to oppress their fellow man think twice before doing it.

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[102] James Turner Johnson, *Morality and Contemporary Warfare* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 35.

[103] Russell, *Just War in the Middle Ages*, p. 21.

[104] See, for example, James F. Childress, 'Just-War Criteria', in *War in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 351-72.

[105] Johnson, *Morality and Contemporary Warfare*, pp. 41-70.

Just war attempts to establish justice in order to bring about peace. As Calvin says, without justice it is impossible to obtain peace. Just war assumes, as Paul Ramsey observes, that '"social charity" comes to the aid of the oppressed'.[106] This means that for just war, peace that does not walk in the corridor of justice is peace that has lost its legitimacy—a peace that is oppressive. Peace, therefore, is more than just an absence of conflict.[107] If necessary, one should engage in war for the sake of obtaining peace that includes justice. Here Augustine reminds us that war could become a tool for building peace: 'Peace is not sought in order to start the kindling of war, but war is waged in order that peace may be obtained.'[108]

After the Fall, it is indeed impossible to separate violence from human life. Even religion—whichever it is, including Christianity—is unable to free itself from violence. But Christian tradition testifies that upon coming in contact with violence, Christianity has produced the just war theory in its attempt to fight injustice. 'Christianity without violence'—that is unrealistic. But 'violence without Christianity' would only create injustice, brutality, sadism, cruelty, ruthlessness, ferocity ... which in the end would create chaos.

[106] Paul Ramsey, *Speak up for Just War or Pacifism: A Critique of the United Methodist Bishops' Pastoral Letter 'In Defense of Creation'* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), p. 109.

[107] J. Daryl Charles, *Between Pacifism and Jihad: Just War and Christian Tradition* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), p. 19.

[108] Augustine, 'Letter to Boniface', § 6.

Reviews

Edwards the Exegete: Biblical Interpretation and Anglo-Protestant Culture on the Edge of the Enlightenment. By Douglas A. Sweeney. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-19-979322-8. xii + 391 pp. £47.99.

Douglas Sweeney's *Edwards the Exegete* is a rich and illuminating study of Jonathan Edwards's biblical exegesis. Sweeney carefully untangles Edwards's exegesis by drawing on a plethora of printed and manuscript sources. The book is arranged into five parts, each consisting of two chapters. With the exception of Part One, which serves as an introduction, each part pairs a clear overview of an aspect of Edwards's exegetical method, with a detailed case study of the approach being considered. This combination enables the reader to understand how Edwards interpreted the Bible in broad terms, but also allows them to appreciate the implications of Edwards's exegetical method.

Part One sets the context for the book. Sweeney examines Edwards's biblical world, arguing that he spent the majority of his time studying the Bible. For Sweeney, Edwards must be thought of as an exegete and he contends that Edwards's exegesis has been largely overlooked. He notes, for example, that while we know quite a lot about Edwards's interaction with Locke, Berkley and Newton, 'we know little of his work with Matthew Poole, Philip Doddridge, Matthew Henry, Arthur Bedford, John Owen, or Humphrey Prideaux–biblical scholars all. Yet they were steady, staple sources of his study day to day' (p. 7). Sweeney also examines Edwards's view of the Bible itself, noting that while Edwards saw Scripture as self-authenticating, he also believed that it could only be properly understood by regenerate believers, through careful study.

In Part Two, Sweeney examines Edwards's canonical exegesis. He shows that Edwards viewed the Old and New Testaments as being in harmony with one another. This unity was perceived through prophecies and their fulfilments; types and their antitypes; and doctrinal harmonies. Sweeney illustrates this approach through an examination of Edwards's typological expositions of Melchizedek, showing how he 'did things with the Bible that can only be done by scholars with his theological interests... it helped him to exegete the priesthood of Melchizedek more spiritually and practically than those who would succeed him' (pp. 91-2).

Part Three focuses on Edwards's Christological exegesis and demonstrates that Edwards consistently sought to connect the entirety of the Bible to Christ. Sweeney draws attention to the different biblical genres

that Edwards expounded Christologically, noting that he fully embraced a Christocentric reading of the Psalms (in contrast to Calvin). However, Sweeney takes the Song of Songs, rather than the Psalms, as his case study for Edwards's Christological exegesis. He shows that, like the Puritans before him, Edwards interpreted the Song of Songs as 'a real, historical picture of the love of two people meant to symbolize the love between the Lord and His betrothed, the bride he came to rescue at the price of His own blood' (p. 120), rather than as erotic poetry.

Part Four examines Edwards's redemptive-historical readings of the Bible. Sweeney argues that Edwards saw the Bible as a map that marked out God's redemptive plan from the fall until Christ's second coming. For Edwards, history was driven by God's redemptive purposes and was guided by his providential hand. This approach is seen most clearly in Edwards's handling of Revelation. Edwards believed that Revelation outlined redemptive history from the early church to the near future. He allowed that it spoke of some future events (he thought that the Antichrist's fall would happen in 1866), but he believed that most of its prophecies had already been fulfilled. Consequently, Sweeney argues that most of Edwards's preaching on Revelation 'revolved around the gospel, encouraging the sheep to prepare for the Judgment by remaining near the Shepherd' (p. 167).

In Part Five, Sweeney considers how Edwards interpreted Scripture instructively. Edwards interpreted the Bible doctrinally, but sought to press home these doctrines in order to foster godly living. As Sweeney explains (p. 197): 'Edwards preached to change behavior. His favorite thing that happened when he taught Bible doctrine was that some loved the Word and tried to live its lessons joyfully.' Sweeney explores this aspect of Edwards's exegesis with reference to his doctrine of justification, which has sometimes been criticised for being Catholic in tone, due to Edwards's emphasis on the close relationship between faith and good works. Sweeney contends, however, that Edwards's teaching was consistent with Protestant doctrine and that the more Catholic sounding parts of his teaching resulted from his desire to expound all of Scripture faithfully (James, as well as Paul).

From start to finish, this is a masterful study of Jonathan Edwards's exegesis, but it is also far more than that. Throughout the book, Sweeney repeatedly situates Edwards's exegesis in the context of the history of Christian exegesis as a whole. Though these comments are often brief, they provide a useful framework for understanding how Edwards's exegesis related to, and drew on, that of earlier exegetes. Sweeney also does an admirable job of pushing against those who would distinguish between critical and pre-critical interpreters, categorising Edwards as the latter.

He argues that Edwards 'was a "both-and" exegete: traditional and avant-garde, edifying and critical, profoundly theological and thoroughly historical' (p. 219). *Edwards the Exegete* shows that these artificial categories do Edwards a disservice, and in so doing raises the question of their usefulness altogether.

In short, *Edwards the Exegete* is a delight to read. Sweeney's research is rigorous, nuanced and insightful, and his prose is crisp and readable. Sweeney has undertaken the difficult work of unpicking how Edwards interpreted the Bible from various annotations, notebooks, and published works. In so doing, he has delivered a rich account of Edwards's exegetical method, while also highlighting some of the key trends in early modern hermeneutics. *Edwards the Exegete* is an invaluable addition to the existing corpus of literature on Edwards, and for anyone with an interest in either Jonathan Edwards or the history of biblical exegesis, it should be essential reading.

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Settling the Peace of the Church: 1662 Revisited. Edited by N. H. Keeble. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-19-968853-1. xvii + 270 pp. £60.

In 2004 an agreement was formulated between the Dr Williams Library and Queen Mary University (both of London) to collaborate in a new Centre for Dissenting Studies. This venture had, by the year of the publication of *Settling the Peace of the Church*, already produced a promising stream of volumes, with others in view. We have seen studies on such themes as Joseph Priestly (2008) and Dissenting hymnody (2011); we can look forward to additional announced volumes on Dissenting spirituality and the Dissenting Academies.

Yet even considered as a stand-alone volume, *Settling the Peace of the Church: 1662 Revisited* can be seen as setting a new standard for writing about the Restoration-era exclusion of over 2,000 preachers and countless more parishioners from the national church of England. By popular reckoning, this 'Ejection' or 'Ejectment' (the terms are used interchangeably) is the turn of events which ensured the permanent continuance of expressions of dissent (Baptist, Independent, Presbyterian and Quaker) outside what *might* have been a more comprehensive national Protestantism.

From the standpoint of the emergent Dissenting tradition, St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662 (24 August) was the defining moment. Since the conformity in religion required by the Act of Uniformity, passed in May of that year, entailed unquestioning use of the liturgical forms of the *Book of Common Prayer* and readiness to submit to episcopal (re)-ordination,

there were inevitable lines in the sand drawn. In addition to the physical hardships of the expulsion of pastors with families from churches and homes, there came the emergence of cynicism. Months of prior conferencing which drew representatives of the likely-nonconforming into discussion with Establishment advocates—discussion ostensibly aimed at finding a means of comprehending all who were orthodox—came to nothing. Such conferences appeared, in hindsight, to have been mere window-dressing.

Settling the Peace of the Church demonstrates a real advance over past analyses, whether aimed at popular or academic audiences. *First*, because the volume is not intended simply to account for the emergence of Nonconformity (although it does this) it has the liberty to explore the Ejection event from a wider perspective. This wider-angle approach was anticipated at the 300th year mark of the Ejection by the publishing of *From Uniformity to Unity* (1962), a volume edited by Geoffrey Nuttal and Owen Chadwick. In it, both Nonconformist and Anglican perspectives were included. But *Settling the Peace of the Church* carries this multi-perspectival approach much further. An intriguing chapter (chap. 9) by Mark Burden relates how the sense of grievance among those ejected in 1662 was matched by that experienced by the many hundreds of Anglican ministers who had earlier been ejected from their livings by the regime of Oliver Cromwell. If the Dissenting community could gather stories of hardship experienced following Bartholomew's Day, there was an Anglican network which would circulate (and publish) stories of the earlier-dispossessed, many of which sought re-instatement to their pastoral charges in late 1662. If there were Nonconformist chroniclers like Edmund Calamy ready to document the stories of Nonconformist suffering, there was an opposite number, James Walker, ready to chronicle the earlier Anglican hardship.

Second, and still more importantly, this volume excels in its geographic expanse. Previously, (in SBET 33.1) this writer reviewed another work, *The Great Ejectment of 1662*. That commendable book at least demonstrated that effects of the Bartholomew's Day crackdown were felt in Wales as well as England. Another fine volume of recent years, Raymond Brown's excellent *Spirituality in Adversity* (2012) gives a more granular approach by explaining how this upheaval affected many devout individuals. Yet *Settling the Peace of the Church* has a longer reach. We are given chapters explaining the implications of the Restoration for religion in Ireland (Robert Armstrong, chap. 4): Irish Protestant bishops—aware of their need of manpower in contending against residual Catholicism—showed greater discretion than their English counterparts in comprehending ministers who might have turned Nonconformist. Consequently,

as in Elizabethan times, Ireland became a refuge for some of the hotter sort of Protestant. Alasdair Raffe (chap. 5) makes plain that the royal re-instatement of episcopacy in Scotland in 1660-62 ensured that there would be plentiful exclusions from the ministry of persons loyal to the existing Scottish national church, who were properly ordained by her existing presbyteries, and who would not stomach episcopal rule and mandatory liturgies. We are shown in chapters 6 and 7 (Cotter and Stanwood) that the Netherlands and colonial Massachusetts were the havens to which many harried ministers and their families resorted when ministry in England was no longer a possibility. So, the book succeeds in demonstrating that the Ejection was, in effect, a three-nation phenomenon as the outworking of an energetic policy of royal supremacy and uniformity in religion. It enables us to see as well the trans-oceanic repercussions of this royal policy.

Of course some loose ends still remain. The chief of these is the perennial question of who provided the driving force behind the abandonment of the idea of a comprehensive national church capable of enfolding a wider range of Protestants. King Charles had given assurances to the Scots in August, 1660 that the Presbyterian form of government was to be preserved. Earlier in the same year, in the Declaration of Breda, Charles had assured English MPs only that he trusted that a future parliament would enact provisions for differences of opinion. So, was it that the King—acting as a 'politique'—concealed his true intentions as to religious policy until an opportune time? Or was it that the new parliament, so heavily Cavalier in orientation, was determined to exact a uniformity beyond what the crown itself would have required? Yet Charles could have withheld his royal signature to the legislation and demanded that it be modified—which he did not do. So the confusion on this point is undiminished.

As well, *Settling the Peace* does not explore the implications of 1662 for the future course of Protestant theology. Did the various expressions of required uniformity have a clearly deleterious effect on theological studies in the three kingdoms? We certainly know that various Puritans were disadvantaged by ejection. Yet helpful light has recently been shed on this question by two volumes: Stephen Hampton's *Anti-Arminians: The Anglican Reformed Tradition from Charles II to George I* (OUP, 2008) and Dewey Wallace's *Shapers of English Calvinism 1660-1714* (OUP, 2011); in a word, there was no cause-and-effect relation between 1662 and the course taken by theology. Dislocation, yes. Disadvantage, yes. But ruin, no.

Here is the best book known to this reviewer on this emotive subject. Of course our empathy belongs with those who were afflicted; but the

situation was more complex than much popular writing surrounding the Ejection would lead us to believe.

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Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History and Strategies of World Missions. Edited by John Mark Terry. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Books, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-4336-8151-6. viii + 662 pp. £42.15.

Not quite the answer to all you ever wanted to ask about missiology, nevertheless this is a far reaching look at the subject with a range of contributors who handle their respective parts of the jigsaw of mission studies very well. This is a second edition of a book first published in 1997 and widely used as a textbook on mission studies since. The justification for a second edition is 'The canon of Scripture does not change, but missions changes every day' (p. vii). Largely North American in its contributors and focus, the book has wider appeal and relevance, though it is limited by the American emphases. Many of the contributors (there are around forty in total) served elsewhere in the world, but all bar two have been based in and for the most part, lecturers in USA.

Most of the book has stayed the same from the first edition. Around thirty percent of the chapters have the same title and author, while around half of the remaining chapters are similarly or identically titled, but have a new author. Some chapters from the first edition have been completely replaced with new chapters. These new chapters reflect some of the changes in missions in the time since the first edition, addressing issues such as women in missions, business and missions and missions in China.

The material is set out in five sections: introduction to mission studies, Biblical basis, theology of, history of, and a far longer final section 'applied missiology' which considers issues such as eastern religions, contemporary cults, the missionary family, urban missions and strategies for starting churches. The concluding chapter seems to be a conclusion for the whole volume, 'Finishing the Task: A Balanced Approach' by Jeffrey Brawner.

As we might expect, themes such as *mission dei*, evangelism and social action, the Kingdom of God, discipleship, debates over the meaning of mission/missions/missional occur throughout the volume. Inevitably there are instances of overlap, but on the whole a consistency of emphasis is maintained, providing a Bible-centred, Spirit-led, whole people of God serving, rounded mission strategies, approach. There is a lot that will be of great interest and helpfulness to students of mission and to practitioners in both global and home contexts.

It is a large volume, more likely to be consulted than read cover to cover. Some careless mistakes don't help (e.g. a wrong reference on p. 43, in Chris Wright's article, to a book by Chris Wright!). Inevitably the quality of articles varies and some of the key chapters in terms of the thrust of the book let it down: for example in setting out 'An Overview of Missiology', Justice Anderson tells us that the term 'includes the Latin *missio* referring to the *missio Dei*, the mission of God, and the Greek word *logos* (referring to the *logos anthropou*, the nature of mankind)' (p. 4). Is that really the only or main reason for the 'ology' part of the word? I doubted that what he then tried to build could be borne by the weight of his claim. Ed Stetzer finishes an otherwise useful chapter on 'The Missional Church' with reflection on beautiful missional feet, starting from Romans 10:15—why that passage and that theme is anyone's guess.

It is not a 'close the discussion, here is all there is to say' volume. Most of the articles are short—circa 12-15 pages—and work well as thought-provoking and discussion-starting essays, giving good information and guidelines for further thought. A forty-page bibliography helps with suggesting where next to go to follow up matters of interested raised in the book.

Gordon Palmer, Claremont Parish Church, East Kilbride

One Nation Under God: A Christian Hope for American Politics. By Bruce Ashford and Chris Pappalardo. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-4336-9069-3. 176 pp. £11.57.

One Nation Under God: A Christian Hope for American Politics by Bruce Ashford and Chris Pappalardo provides the modern Christian with an understanding of how their Christian faith relates to the world of politics. Ashford and Pappalardo aim to show how Christians should navigate their way, in a Christ-like way, through the extremes of imbuing politics with a salvific element or withdrawing completely from it.

As the subtitle suggests, the authors expressly state that they want to inspire hope within their readership. All is not lost as it may seem, in fact, as the book urges, the church is still called to have a powerful and unchanging mission to bring the message of hope—the good news in Jesus Christ—to the situations it finds itself in. In the post-Christian culture of the USA, and of the UK, the church needs to find how best to share that news within the world of politics, and that is what this book aims to help the reader with.

The book is split into two sections, with the first half dealing with the Christian view of politics. In summary, all politics is theological in that God has ordained it to regulate society and ensure the welfare of

the people. Politics, they argue, is not something that God's people have recently had to contend with, but something that from creation, God has been using to bring around change in society and to help it function more smoothly. They argue that Christianity is a public faith, and thus we need to ask how the church should relate to the state, and in what ways we can share the truth of our claims with a pluralistic society. The sixth chapter offers a six-part framework for how Christians must allow biblical wisdom to direct their engagement with politics. The opinions and reflections are of great value, and are worth being read again and again. As this section concludes, they share that Christians need both conviction and wisdom as we engage in a post-Christian public square.

The second half of the book considers seven big issues in American politics today, taking one a chapter at a time. Within each of these issues, Ashford and Pappalardo, show how Christians might use the insightful framework in chapter six to engage with each of these issues. The issues they hope might be addressed in a distinctly Christian way are life and death, marriage and sexuality, economics, environment, race, immigration, and war. They treat each of these with a great deal of biblical insight and balance. They then give an example of how a Christian has dealt with this issue in an exemplary way, before offering helpful challenging discussion questions and some resources that the reader may find helpful to look at.

One Nation Under God is a powerful and persuasive book. The argument for the Christian to engage in politics is seldom heard, perhaps as we are all too frequently drawn to the extremes of creating a theocracy or ignoring political life altogether. However, Ashford and Pappalardo warn against both and convincingly show how we not only can, but should, find avenues to be passionate about the gospel and apply it to the world of politics. The arguments throughout are logical and coherent, with the book being highly readable. The framework they present in chapter six is undoubtedly of particular value to clergy and layperson alike.

Frequently I found myself being in complete agreement with the way they handled each contemporary issue, in the way they presented a biblical understanding of them. While none of them were thorough theses on these topics—most being only four or five pages— there was often enough depth for readers to understand the issue enough before seeing a positive Christian real-life response to it. The resources the authors suggest at the end of each presenting issue are helpful in allowing the reader to engage further with the topic at hand, especially because they have rated the resources based on whether they are suitable for beginner, intermediate, or advanced readers.

While it is recognised that the book is a primer, there were a couple of occasions where the transitions between sections moved quickly, potentially causing offence to readers of certain political persuasions as not enough explanation was given. However, the book would still be a benefit to all readers nonetheless due to the numerous gems of thought and argument within it.

A final critique would be that the book explicitly states that it is from an American perspective and, on occasion, it was obvious that the book was intended for that audience. That being said, the overriding arguments and framework that the authors express ensure that there are more than enough parallels for those of other post-Christian societies to find this book to be a helpful, if not essential, read for those wanting to seek a way to engage positively, responsibly and confidently within the sphere of politics.

If we believe that God is in control of all things, and Lord over all aspects of human life, then we as Christians must engage with the political world around us in a way that reflects Christ. *One Nation Under God* provides this starting point for helping us to interact with the systems, and the policies, that drive our country and culture in a way that, does indeed, gives us hope.

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The Covenant of Redemption: Origins, Development, and Reception. By J. V. Fesko. (Reformed Historical Theology) Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016. ISBN: 978-3-525-55098-4. 256 pp. £69.49.

So many books on historical theology are barely more than summaries of older theologians' books. John Fesko's work on the covenant of redemption is a refreshing break with this mold. In this work, we have an excellent and clear account of the formation, transmission, and contexts of various constructions of the Reformed doctrine of the covenant of redemption. Fesko makes clear in the introduction that his historical work intends to aid the project of retrieving and restoring this historical position and his book is certainly a significant step along that path.

The first chapter deals with the historical origins. He discusses the Scottish General Assembly address by David Dickson in 1638. This is the first explicit defence of the doctrine, but interestingly, Dickson takes it as a generally held position. The chapter also gives a brief sketch of the earlier sources cited in the growth of the doctrine in its early stages. The most important point is that all the figures discussed ground their doctrine in rigorous exegesis. This point is important because many critiques of the doctrine claim it is the product of scholastic speculation.

Chapter two deals with the formation of the doctrine in seventeenth-century England and Scotland. This period and place were where the doctrine flourished into its own within the Reformed community. This chapter also highlights important features of exegesis that factor into the doctrine. Fesko helpfully explains how the covenant of redemption intersects within the historical sources with other doctrines and becomes a real part of the settling Reformed system.

Chapter three covers how the covenant of redemption is articulated on the Continent in the seventeenth-century. This is an interesting chapter because it covers specific debates that have started to crop up regarding how to formulate the doctrine. Some take a position that includes only the Father and Son in the covenant, but others include the Spirit as well. There are also debates, particularly revolving around Johannes Cocceius, about how the doctrine of justification relates to the history of salvation before and after Christ's coming, and the covenant of redemption is discussed as these debates affect it.

Chapter four covers the eighteenth-century formulations of the doctrine. John Gill and Jonathan Edwards are the eighteenth-century examples. The main feature here is the discussion of how both figures revise the covenant of redemption, particularly in relation to the traditional Reformed doctrine of justification. Neither Gill nor Edwards apparently hold to the traditional Reformed view of justification. Gill holds to justification from eternity, which produces a conflation of the eternal covenant of redemption and the historical covenant of grace. Edwards, on the other hand, holds to a 'dispositional soteriology', which denies faith as the instrumental causality for justification. This leads to a revision in the way that Christ functions as covenant surety in the covenant of redemption.

Chapter five deals with the nineteenth-century, taking Princeton theologian Charles Hodge as the representative for this period. Hodge, in contrast to the eighteenth-century figures, defends the traditional view, not only of the covenant of redemption, but also of justification and the instrumentality of faith. Fesko highlights many of the summary statements in Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, but also directs us to Hodge's biblical commentaries and other essays or sermons where he provides more extensive exegetical defence of the doctrine. Fesko's chapter here is a helpful guide to Hodge in collecting many of his writings, rather than summarising only his most popular work.

Chapters six and seven both deal with the twentieth-century, one chapter addressing critics of the covenant of redemption and the other highlighting its defenders. Karl Barth, Klaus Schilder, John Murray, and Herman Hoeksema are the figures who criticise the doctrine. Most criticisms connect to negative views of scholasticism and the desire to revise

Reformed covenant theology as a whole. There is also a tendency among them to highlight the theology of John Calvin above the rest of the subsequent Reformed tradition and, of course, Calvin did not hold to the more elaborate covenant theology of later thinkers. Herman Bavinck, Geerhardus Vos, Abraham Kuyper, G. C. Berkouwer, and Louis Berkhof are the twentieth-century proponents of the covenant of redemption. Even with the variations of expression in these writers, they maintain and defend positions on the doctrine in substantial continuity with earlier Reformed theologians.

The most impressive strength of Fesko's work is how he explains what theological debates are in the background of the changing expressions of the covenant of redemption. He does not treat the doctrine in isolation, but looks at how different topics were under debate in specific periods and how that brings about modification to the eternal covenant. He also gives helpful insight into the changing philosophies that are at work for the various theologians. Views on metaphysics and epistemology change greatly across the periods examined, but Fesko is a faithful guide in explaining what ways of expressing the doctrines remain traditional, even when framed in the terminology of the day, and which views adopt the contemporary philosophy enough to make substantial changes to traditional views.

It is difficult to criticise Fesko's work. At each turn, he provides a balanced approach to the exegetical, theological, and contextual factors behind the doctrine. There possibly could have been more detail in the contextual aspects behind the early formulations, but he makes clear the primary motivation is exegetical and theological refinement. We can be thankful for this work that truly gives much more than book reports, but actually is a significant contribution to contextually sensitive historical theology.

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Revelation: A Handbook on the Greek Text. By David L. Mathewson. (Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament). Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-60258-676-5. xxix + 337 pp. £24.57.

Many valuable resources for students of the Greek New Testament have appeared in the last decade or so. Not only have numerous introductory grammars been published, but also several intermediate grammars, readers and handbooks have been produced for students who wish to develop their Greek skills further (or for those who have studied Greek previously and now wish to revive their knowledge of the language). This spate of

publications has coincided with fresh thinking about Koine Greek in the light of linguistic research. The Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament is designed to provide comprehensive grammatical analysis of the Greek text of the New Testament, informed by recent scholarship in linguistics and Greek. Volumes in the series started to appear in 2003, but since 2009 there has been a steady stream of new titles. With a number of high-quality contributions, this series has become a valued resource for readers of the Greek New Testament, whether advanced theological students, preachers or academics.

David Mathewson, Associate Professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary, has contributed a worthy addition to this series. Mathewson has already written several books and articles on Revelation and/or Greek. This careful analysis of the Greek text of Revelation builds on these earlier works.

Following a short introduction to Revelation and some of the distinctive features of the Greek, Mathewson leads us through the text of Revelation, pericope by pericope. Each section begins with an English translation. Then the Greek text of each verse is analysed, word by word. As usual, in this series, many of the comments are very brief, with a focus of grammatical relationships (e.g., 'nominative absolute' or 'direct object'). Translation of Greek words is not normally provided in the comments, though some words receive a brief explanation. Greek constructions that might be more difficult are explained concisely, and references are often provided to longer discussions in reference works. Some discussions are relatively detailed.

An interesting feature of the Greek text of Revelation is the various 'solecisms' (grammatical irregularities, or grammatical 'blunders'). A notable example is found in Revelation 1:4, where a string of words following a preposition are not in the case expected with this preposition. Mathewson provides a helpful explanation of this phenomenon, pointing to treatments in the works of other grammarians. He also comments on issues such as verbal aspect and discourse analysis.

Mathewson's handbook (like the series in general) would be a very valuable aid to a student or preacher with a good foundation in Greek who wishes to work through the biblical text in Greek. This book is not a replacement for standard exegetical commentaries. The authors in this series pass over wider exegetical issues in order to focus primarily on grammatical and textual issues. This makes the volumes particularly helpful as readers engage with the Greek text for themselves. Less confident readers of Greek may find the minimalist notes a bit daunting, but it should not take long to become accustomed to them.

Readers may find it useful to compare the Baylor Handbooks with another series that has recently seen several new publications: the Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament, published by B&H Academic. Volumes in the latter series cover some similar ground, explaining Greek constructions in a way that helps readers to work with the Greek text. Some of the EGGNT volumes show significant awareness of recent discussion of Greek (for example, verbal aspect, deponency), while in others this is less evident. The volumes in the EGGNT are rather fuller in their comments and have a little more in common with a traditional commentary. There is currently no volume on Revelation available in the EGGNT series.

As an enthusiast and advocate for reading the New Testament in Greek, I am deeply thankful for the availability of resources such as these. I am grateful for reliable, well-informed, guides for readers of the Greek New Testament, and for the vision of Baylor University Press (and various other publishers) to publish these tools. I trust that Mathewson's book and others like it will be widely used to foster direct encounter with the Greek text of Scripture.

Alistair I. Wilson, Highland Theological College UHI

The Gospel of Thomas: Introduction and Commentary. By Simon J. Gathercole. (Texts and Editions for New Testament Study). Leiden: Brill, 2014. ISBN: 978-90-04-19041-2. xi + 723 pp. £158.00.

Simon Gathercole, Senior Lecturer in New Testament Studies at the University of Cambridge, has previously published academic studies of the Gospel of Judas (2007) and the Gospel of Thomas (2012), establishing himself as an important contributor to recent discussion of non-canonical 'gospels'. This massive introduction and commentary on the Gospel of Thomas (GTh) is a further significant contribution that will doubtless be an important resource for future scholarly work on this text.

The first part of the book is a substantial introduction, comprised of twelve chapters. These address the following issues: identification and description of the extant manuscripts; a comparison of the Greek and Coptic texts; specific references to GTh in later ancient documents; references to the content in ancient writings; the original language; the provenance of the work; date and authorship; the structure of GTh; genre; religious outlook; the relationship between GTh, the New Testament and the 'Historical Jesus'; and a brief plan of the commentary.

The issue of dating is one of the most controversial aspects of GTh scholarship, with some scholars arguing for a very early date. Gathercole

favours a date range from AD 135 to before AD 200. He provides a helpful chart identifying the range of recent proposals (pp. 125-7).

One of the reasons that the GTh has received considerable attention in recent years is the suggestion that it might provide some form of access to the 'historical Jesus'. Gathercole looks at various aspects of this question, including whether GTh preserves more original forms of sayings known from the canonical gospels. He concludes, 'Overall, the prospects for the use of *Thomas* in historical Jesus research are slim. As scholarship currently stands, and with the primary sources that are available to us at present, the *Gospel of Thomas* can hardly be regarded as useful in the reconstruction of a historical picture of Jesus' (p. 184).

The commentary itself is substantial (around 430 pages in length). The author follows a standard format for each saying. First, the text in Greek (when available) and in Coptic is provided, along with English translations. Then follows some comment on the text, a discussion of the interpretation of the text, and a concluding section of notes. The book is completed by a fifty-five-page bibliography and various indices.

Gathercole has produced a painstaking work of scholarship that should be consulted by anyone researching GTh. He writes clearly and his comments are well-considered. In his discussions of several issues, such as the question of the provenance of GTh, he evaluates the various arguments but acknowledges that a final conclusion cannot be reached with confidence. This book is not, however, the place to start for someone seeking a general discussion of the significance of GTh. As the author of a scholarly tome, Gathercole engages with the ancient texts and recent scholarship in various ancient and modern languages. Quotations from French- and German-language scholarship are left untranslated.

This is a typically well-produced volume from Brill. While most individual scholars and many libraries will, I imagine, find the hefty price daunting, there is no question about the quality of either the physical book or the scholarship that it contains.

Alistair I. Wilson, Highland Theological College UHI

Riots, Revolutions, and the Scottish Covenanters: The Work of Alexander Henderson. By L. Charles Jackson. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015. ISBN 978-1-60178-373-8. viii + 304 pp. £23.15.

This is the first, full-length, modern biography of Alexander Henderson (1583-1646). As the author indicates in his introduction, Henderson was probably the most significant figure in the Church of Scotland in the first half of the seventeenth century. More than that, he had a national stature

and engaged widely with the leaders of the nation of Scotland, during one of the most turbulent periods in Scottish history.

After describing Henderson's early history and background, his education and training, Jackson devotes four chapters to distinct (although related) aspects of his ministry. He deals with Henderson the Covenanter, the Preacher, the Presbyterian and the Pamphleteer. There then follows a final main chapter on the Westminster Assembly. Ultimately, Henderson did not achieve his object (and the stated aim of the Westminster Assembly) of the 'covenanted uniformity of religion' in Scotland, England and Ireland. Presbyterianism was adopted in Scotland but not elsewhere and the *Directory for the Public Worship of God*, one of the documents produced by the Westminster Assembly (and substantially written by Henderson) was not widely used or accepted beyond Scotland.

Henderson himself put this failure down to disunity. One striking aspect of this study is the description of Henderson's careful work (much of it in the background) building alliances and co-ordinating opposition to those who would seek to undermine a Presbyterian settlement. The way he fostered unity among those of reformed convictions and mobilised them for action, not least through the National Covenant, is a lesson to us in a day when reformed ministers and elders are divided and scattered, in numerous denominations and with numerous agendas and therefore achieving little.

One of the dangers of writing books about our heroes is the tendency towards hagiography, seeing no wrong in the great individual who is the object of the study. Sadly, Scottish church history has suffered a great deal from work of this calibre. This book, however, is not of that type. The author gives us a full and fair picture of Henderson, indicating strengths and weaknesses and also indicating when he considers that Henderson was right and also when he was wrong. It is refreshing to read such an honest and comprehensive portrait.

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

The Quest for the Historical Adam: Genesis, Hermeneutics, and Human Origins. By William VanDoodewaard. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015. ISBN: 978-1601783776. iv + 359 pp. £20.72.[1]

In modern Christian theology, many different views have been espoused in relation to creation and the origins of human beings. Much of the discussion leading to these different perspectives depends upon exegeti-

[1] The review copy of this book has an inscription which reads: 'This edition of *The Quest for the Historical Adam* was specially prepared for the Shepherds' Conference and is not for resale. A hardcover edition with an index will be

cal and other considerations, not least in the interpretation of the early chapters of the book of Genesis. Some have argued for six-day creation, as written in Genesis, saying that the teaching of Scripture trumps any scientific evidence to the contrary. Others have argued for an 'old earth', based on geological and other evidence and have sought to accommodate their reading of Genesis accordingly. Still others have argued that Genesis 1-3 has a literary structure which, when properly understood, allows for an old earth yet still permits special creation of human beings and a literal, historical Adam and Eve. Some have argued that Genesis 1-3 is mythological not historical, therefore we must not try to read it literally. Some Christians believe in evolution, others reject evolution as contrary to Scripture. Some opt for a half-way house known as theistic evolution.

The confusion is worsened when we note that every one of the positions noted above has been advocated by those who self-identify as evangelicals! These debates have gone on for more than two centuries but more recently, particularly in North America, the debate has been re-kindled with some ferocity, for two reasons. First, the work of Biologos, an organisation which advocates harmony between science and biblical faith and holds to an evolutionary understanding of God's creation. Second, by the publication of Peter Enns's book *The Evolution of Adam* (Brazos, 2012).

It is into this debate which VanDoodewaard is writing. In this book he argues strongly for a literal, historical Adam, based on a literal hermeneutic of Genesis, in opposition to any of the other views and theories. He rejects the consensus of modern scientific findings as contrary to Scripture and therefore invalid, either because the science is wrong or because the scientists have not taken account of cataclysmic events such as the flood. This book, however, is not a short popular paperback of an apologetic nature. Rather, it is a massive examination of the entire history of the interpretation of Genesis in relation to Adam's historicity. It is on the basis of this examination that he takes his stand firmly on the literal view.

The author, having set the context for the discussion, divides the analysis into a number of chapters, covering the entire period of Christian thought and reflection. There are chapters on the historicity of Adam in the patristic and medieval period, in the Reformation and post-Reformation periods, in the Enlightenment era, in the 19th and early 20th centuries and finally, from the 1950s to the present. This detailed work will be of use to those reflecting on the issues under consideration, whatever view they might take.

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available for sale later in 2015'. There is no ISBN on the review edition and without an index is 345 pp.

In his final chapter, the author highlights the significance of the debate concerning an historical Adam, not least for an interpretation of the Fall and of Paul's comparison between the headship of Adam and the headship of Christ. For this reviewer, these are the most significant points in relation to the importance of an historical Adam. To put it simply, if there was no historical Adam, why am I a sinner?

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

Theology and the Mirror of Scripture: A Mere Evangelical Account. By Kevin J. Vanhoozer and Daniel J. Treier. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8308-4076-2. 280 pp. £17.99.

Theological Interpretation of Scripture (hereafter TIS) is slowly making its way into evangelicalism. The present volume gives splendid access to this burgeoning movement. *Theology and the Mirror of Scripture* continues this movement by heartily recommending the method of TIS to evangelicals. In it, Vanhoozer and Treier advance a *thick* way of doing theology allocated to the interests of both the church and the academy. They do so, in part, with the use of a metaphor.

They do so with the metaphor of a mirror. As evangelicals reflect on their circumstances, they are to practice reflection with the 'forms' and 'content' of Scripture (p. 21). The metaphor of a mirror helps to understand evangelical theology. According to the authors, we are mirrors, reflections, and images of God that practice or participate in God's narrative by re-presenting it in our own contexts. Our action is one of response to what God is doing in and throughout God's redemptive story.

Before we address the highlights of the book, it is important to define TIS. Minimally, TIS is as simple as finding passages that yield or cohere with certain doctrines. This definition is rather thin, however. TIS might be defined as a conscious reading of biblical texts theologically. TIS is a process of constructing serious theology by reading Scripture in its contemporary contexts. It is important to note that this is not simply a matter of exposition or reading the Scriptures for the story of the Bible, but a rich integration of the textual meaning, the canonical context and the church's reception of it in the present context. As such, TIS is central as a way of evangelically thinking and living.

The authors address several definitions of evangelical, but ultimately come to show the ambiguity of it (pp. 45-9). Saying this, the author's realise the importance of some normative definition that is not historically or sociologically contingent (pp. 47-9). They discuss the possibility of doctrinal boundary markers or centred sets but these prove difficult. Further they discuss the possibility of conjoining a centred set and bounded set

where the centre yields a set of boundaries. They discuss various possibilities in more depth in chapter 4 where they consider evangelicalism as fundamentalism, confessionalism, pietism, or post-evangelical, which I lightly address below.

Unsatisfied with the options, Vanhoozer and Treier describe evangelicalism as an anchored set rather than a centred or bounded set. Their complaint is that bounded sets seem to make every commitment of equal value, and that centred sets seem to lack definition (p. 51). Central to an anchored set is the *object* that sustains our movement and limits our movement. Evangelicalism, as an anchored set, is described by its material and formal elements. It is orthodox in that it coheres with creedal teaching. It is catholic in that it universally exists across time continuous with other confessing churches. It is Protestant, or Reformed, in that it adheres to the famous *solas* of the Protestant-Reformation. Formally, it is *radical* in that its grounding is in the gospel that confronts the world. It is also *irenic* because the wealth of the gospel can only be fully appreciated in the context of multiple perspectives. Finally, it is *joyful* in that it promises God's life to humans (p. 52). While still skeletal in form, they expound on this definition throughout the remaining parts of their thick reflection on evangelical TIS.

First, the authors show for the reader how to do evangelical TIS, making it thick. The authors explicitly lay out the method of TIS in chapter 4, which grounds their application for the church and the academy in chapters 5 and 6. They give an extended treatment of history and mystery, based on 1 Corinthians 3, 4, and 10, so as to distinguish the practice from literalist or purely historical ways of reading Scripture. They suggest that Scripture's mysteries are historically located but extend across time. They suggest three essential contexts for Scriptural interpretation. First, TIS is canonical. Individual texts are tied to a larger collection where God has revealed himself, *primarily*, to his church, thus making it canonical. Second, TIS is creedal. As Scripture is a single-authored revelation to a particular people, its natural environment is the church. Third, TIS is cultural. Defenders of TIS often highlight the significance of historical location. Vanhoozer and Treier agree with the idea that Scripture has significance and meaning across time, and, in fact, contextual assumptions are necessary to the preservation of Scriptural meaning. The authors note different ways of tying together the various threads and contexts, but what is clear for them is that 'wisdom' or *phronēsis* is a *uniting* goal for both the church and the academy. Wisdom is not merely an intellectual property of the mind, but it is a way of feeling and acting that *mirrors* God's being and action in revelation.

Second, the treatment is thick because it offers us a proposal for evangelical churches. Vanhoozer and Treier explicitly touch upon this in chapter 5 where they expound on the practice of evangelical theology in the church setting. The primary objective is to identify the term, evangelical, as an identifier of a certain ecclesial movement. They note the various stances (e.g., fundamentalist, confessional, general, and post-evangelical), but most important is their admonition for ecumenical agreement through a 'multi-level framework', which include levels such as piety, social action, and doctrinal development (p. 219).

Third, the authors lay out a fairly thick proposal for academic evangelical theology in chapter 6, by noting several academic developments. While aware of the challenges intrinsic to each one of these developments, the authors highlight their benefits and how they can be integrally united within TIS. Whilst some readers may have affinities to natural theology and would like to see it woven into the frame, those readers will still find much to reflect upon and practice in their own theologizing. In the end, I was uncertain as to why 'rationalistic' approaches were in tension with evangelical TIS where the rational *imago* is ancillary to the whole process.

Concerns aside, the present work is worthy of much reflection. My use of the word, *thick*, throughout is by no means accidental. What you could have in your hands is a delightfully rich treatment of evangelical TIS. *Theology and the Mirror of Scripture* is not a desert after your meal, but a full course meal. And, it is good.

Joshua R. Farris, Houston Baptist University

Unchanging Witness: The Consistent Christian Teaching on Homosexuality in Scripture and Tradition. By S. Donald Fortson III and Rollin G. Grams. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-4336-8792-1. xii + 402 pp. £27.00.

The sexual revolution of the past half century has seen Christians responding to the particular issue of homosexuality on three levels—pastoral, doctrinal, and political, as issues of care, truth and LGBT rights have been debated.

Unchanging Witness is a timely *doctrinal* resource for those who hold the historic Christian position on this contentious subject currently disturbing the western church. This two-part well-researched survey aims to show the consistency in teaching about homosexual practice found in both Christian tradition (Part 1) and Scripture (Part 2), by letting 'voices from the Christian past be heard alongside the biblical witness' (p. xi). It is a joint work by S. Donald Fortson, who teaches Church History at

Reformed Theological Seminary, and Rollin G. Grams, who teaches New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

The importance of their thesis is highlighted by the scale of the schism occurring over revisionist claims that 'the church has been wrong all along in its belief that homosexual practice is a sin' (p. xi). Such a claim, in the authors' view, is not born out by the dual evidence of Scripture and Tradition. 'Many contemporary discussions of homosexuality are based on broad assertions lacking substantial grounding in the texts of the Christian tradition… We argue that revisionist interpretations are not only bad exegesis but also an abandonment of historic, orthodox Christianity' (pp. xi-xii).

So what do the writers of *Unchanging Witness* hope to achieve? From the back cover blurb we learn that 'This book addresses the arguments from the gay Christian movement and revisionist theologians and exegetes on a single point: Can they withstand the evidence of the primary sources [regarding the church's condemnation of homosexual behaviour]?' These authors think not; they point out that often theological discussion of homosexuality starts with a reading of the Bible, and study of what it says, without listening to nearly two millennia of church history. 'We intend to right this imbalance… beginning with church history' (p. 3).

The first part of the book quotes primary resources throughout to show how the Bible's teaching on homosexual practice has been consistently and universally understood as condemnatory, rather than condoning, by the early Church Fathers (Ch. 2), the Medieval Church (Ch. 3), the Reformers (Ch. 4), the Catholic and Orthodox Churches (Ch. 5) and mainstream Evangelicals (Ch. 6). In the process the authors show that, contrary to the claims of Yale professor John Boswell, sexual *orientation* was *not* unknown to the Church Fathers, and homosexual *practice* was *not* condoned by the Medieval Church, but overwhelmingly disapproved of, even though judgement should be tempered with mercy (Ch. 3). As Cardinal Ratzinger once wrote in a Letter to Catholic bishops on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons: '*Only what is true can ultimately be pastoral. The [revisionist] neglect of the Church's position prevents homosexual men and women from receiving the care they need and deserve*' (p. 95; italics in original). The final chapter of Part 1, on the 'Revisionist Christianity' of many mainline denominations, concludes with Wolfhart Pannenberg's damning verdict on those churches that, by affirming same-sex 'marriage', depart from the biblical norm: 'A church that took this step would cease to be the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.'

Part 2 examines various biblical texts in light of ancient Near Eastern, Jewish, Greek and Roman primary sources and sets out to answer in each

case the interpretations and arguments made by the revisionists. In Chapter 8 situational ethics and the claim that 'no sex ethics can be found in Scripture' is answered by Paul's take on the sinful passion that lies behind forbidden behaviour, and the clear OT sexual ethic that limits sex to a man and a woman in marriage (Ch .9). The case of Sodom is discussed in Chapter 10 as being about hospitality *and* homosexuality. Israel's *distinctiveness* from ancient near eastern cultures, continued in Judaism, is demonstrated in Chapters 11 and 12. Chapter 13 moves on to the New Testament where evidence for support for homosexual practice is found to be nonexistent; instead there is an emphasis on purity and exclusion (Ch. 14). In fact 'soft' men and their supposed orientation are a threat to such purity (Ch. 15).

Most of what is written in this second half adds little to what has already been compiled and argued in Robert Gagnon's magisterial work, *The Bible and Homosexuality: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Abingdon, 2001). An exception is Chapter 14 with its section on Paul's insistence in 1 Corinthians 5-7 on purity and holiness for the church, contradicting 'the erroneous notion that Paul's statements about the Mosaic Law involved a complete rejection of the Old Testament law for Christians' (p. 264). Thus, it is argued, 'As in Leviticus, Paul says a church should put the sinful person out of God's people' in the hope that 'the experience will drive that person to repentance' (p. 271). Not surprisingly, the authors record their dissent from Stanley Grenz's suggestion that homosexuals should be welcomed without affirming them, on the grounds that he thus fails to take seriously the OT horror of impurity. They also observe that Paul's concern about orientation related to *the heart's direction* (a rebellious passion), not *the psyche's condition*. They conclude (Ch. 18) that when the world challenges God's purposes for creation it subverts the gospel and for this reason alone Christianity and homosexuality are irreconcilable.

For those engaged in current church debate regarding gay ministers, *Unchanging Witness* provides solid evidence of the consistently negative view of homosexual practices by both Scripture and the tradition of the church. Those involved with ministering to homosexuals in their church will have to ponder the writers' ecclesiology of holiness which they see as 'inextricably related to the personal purity of the church's members. Moreover,' as they conclude, 'how the church includes and excludes persons is a matter of soul care, which is also a matter of eternal significance for individuals. Indeed, how a church handles wilful sin in its midst involves the outworking of the gospel in the midst of a community' (p.275).

Paul C. J. Burgess, Lugton, Kilmarnock

Confucius for Christians: What an Ancient Chinese Worldview Can Teach Us about Life in Christ. By Gregg A. Ten Elshof. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7248-7. 102 pp. £9.99.

Confucius for Christians is a helpful but often unsettling book for those shaped by historic western theologies and worldviews. By contrast, most of East Asia has been shaped by centuries of Confucianism, a far different context from, and into, which to engage in biblical reflection. Gregg Ten Elshof grapples with the dual questions: 'How much is our reading of Scripture formed by western presuppositions and worldview, which may not be biblical at all?' and, 'Are there things we can learn from the Confucian wisdom tradition?'

Ten Elshof is not at all putting biblical revelation and Confucian writing on an equal footing, but rather is concerned to study some of the teachings of Jesus as the lens through which to test both our western assumptions and practice of Christian living, and Confucian values. This is not a book about contextualization so much as exploring in what ways we can learn about wise, good living from sources beyond the Scriptures, specifically Confucian thought. As James M. Houston comments on the book, 'Looking again at Christianity from an Eastern perspective helps us in the West be aware of how our enculturation has distorted the Christian faith.'

Ten Elshof illustrates his subject by consideration of family, learning, ethics and ritual, along with case studies. So for instance, in the chapter concerning family, he shows how Confucius emphasized that a well-ordered life and human goodness cannot be separated from well-ordered relationships; and that healthy familial relationships between parent and child, between siblings, and between spouses, are the foundation and training ground for good relationships between 'ruler and subject' [*i.e. relating to authority structures in society*], and between friends. All these relationships are thus interdependent. This contrasts with the strongly individualistic and atomized approach to relationships in much contemporary western society, including often in our churches. The question is, which better reflects the Lord's teaching?

In relation to learning, Confucian wisdom teaches that there is a difference between a love of learning and a love of knowledge, and that the former better encourages humility and a willingness to examine fresh material that may require modification of previous understanding. Are there areas where as Christians we have closed our minds to unfamiliar ideas and practices without honest examination? Do we sometimes behave as if our understanding of Scripture rather than the Scripture itself is infallible?

'Ritual' is a tricky word for evangelicals—British ones, at least. But Ten Elshof uses the term primarily to mean the kind of repetition (e.g. of Creed or practice) which may begin as an outward observance only, but in time trains our inward hearts so that spontaneity and godly habit converge. Although he does not use the term, he is describing the need for the *spiritual disciplines*—a timely word in our twenty-first century Western over-emphasis on personal autonomy and dislike of discipline.

The author teaches at Biola University, but his style in this short book is very informal. Approximately a third of the book consists in quite lengthy case studies, parts of which I would gladly have skimmed. But perhaps that neatly illustrates one of the concerns of Ten Elshof. Many outside the Western world learn theology and discipleship most effectively through narrative and story-telling. For many Asians, the case studies would be the real meat of the book, while many Westerners are more accustomed to propositions and systematic teaching. Being accustomed is not however the same as what may be more effective and life-changing.

And so, as East meets West, and the Church becomes increasingly global and we learn to live together for the glory of God, *Confucius for Christians* offers some helpful signposts as to how we can understand one another—and how an ancient Eastern philosophy may help us understand how to live the Christian life more fully.

Rose Dowsett, Glasgow

Urban Legends of the New Testament: 40 Common Misconceptions. By David A. Croteau. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-4336-8012-0. xv + 255 pp. £11.60.

David Croteau is Professor of New Testament and Greek in the Seminary and School of Ministry at Columbia International University, where for a decade he has been teaching hermeneutics. In this book he demonstrates why it is so vital that we strive for the most accurate understanding of a text, even if that means letting go of some cherished hitherto held assumptions.

It isn't clear why Croteau affixes the term 'urban' to his examination of false interpretations, but he defines 'An urban legend [as] a commonly circulated myth, repeated throughout the culture as common knowledge, but which isn't true' (p. xiii).

The book comprises forty brief chapters, each structured in a similar way: a summary of the 'legend', a look at some of the problems raised by this reading, attention to historical and cultural context, examination of particular Greek words if need be, and then a suggested reinterpretation and its significance. Part I introduces sixteen passages/verses from the

Gospels, and Part II covers twenty-four from Acts, the Epistles, and Revelation.

The Gospel section is as diverse as 'Jesus was a carpenter', 'Do not judge others', or 'The Gospel of John never refers to repentance', and much more. Part II includes 'Just say you believe in Jesus and you will be saved', 'Hell is the absence of God', 'Money is evil', and 'Good works are optional for Christians'—and again, much more. Almost all chapters are based around a specific verse. In addition, ten 'urban legends' have QR codes through which the reader can watch brief videos on the internet of the author addressing each of these.

In each chapter, Croteau argues his case coherently and straightforwardly, in everyday language that shows how some of this material began in teaching in a local church context. The author wears his scholarship lightly, but it is clear that he has a thorough grasp of language, culture, context and the wider vista of the text and theology of the whole Scripture. His clear passion is to uphold the absolute integrity and authority of the Scriptures, which deserves our utmost attention to accuracy in rightly understanding it.

Whether or not the reader agrees with every case that Croteau makes, this volume takes us away from the examination of the theory of hermeneutics (which can be hugely important, but equally can be sterile and nit-picking) and into the realm of concrete application: what does this specific text truly mean, and how do we reach accurate understanding?

That is surely a quest we need all to pursue; and for those readers of *SBET* who are ministers or teachers, helping others grasp the true truth of Scripture accurately must be a central concern.

Rose Dowsett, Glasgow

The Professor's Puzzle: Teaching in Christian Academics. By Michael S. Lawson. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-4336-8410-4. xix + 296 pp. £30.

In this stimulating volume, Michael S. Lawson seeks to orient the novice educator to consider best practice in teaching from a Christian perspective. The work is motivated by two important considerations. First, content mastery demonstrated by the acquiring of a terminal degree is neither sufficient nor exhaustive of good preparation for teaching. Second, 'a truly Christian education' is 'not just teaching from a Christian perspective' (p. xii). '[T]he goal of all *Christian* education', Lawson writes, is 'to love God more' (p. xiv). Lawson therefore devotes the first chapter to 'A Philosophy for Christian Education', before looking at a holistic and integrative framework for the place of learning in chapter 2.

Following this initial material, the rest of the book looks at various aspects of the 'puzzle' of an educator's work. Lawson considers learning theories and practices that will enable good course planning. He looks at the admittedly important, though complex, question of content mastery, as well as the skills necessary to manage the classroom experience and to successfully evaluate different components of education. The chapter on 'Instructing Skills' looks at a variety of approaches and techniques for good classroom teaching, including, but not limited to, lecturing. Lawson further develops the idea of a Christian educator through the topic of 'Relating Skills', hoping that lecturers will not only enable students to acquire 'more information' but that their approach to teaching will inculcate a real love of learning.

In his final chapter on 'Institutional Realities', Lawson grapples at length with the practicalities and tensions that educators are likely to face. He provides a realistic and frank account of the common frustrations and sorrows involved in contemporary teaching in higher education settings including the issues of funding, accreditation, and tenure.

The valuable offerings made by Lawson's reflections on teaching are sometimes let down by the theological rational for his educational framework. Discussing planning skills, for example, Lawson writes that 'The God of the Bible plans everything, so if we are to be like him, we must also plan' (p. 94). Such theological univocity is concerning, though the weaknesses of such an argument should not, of course, obscure the genuine necessity and responsibility of careful planning, which might be commended theologically on other terms. Again, Lawson employs Christ's 'skills' at winemaking, cooking, and his awareness of regional news to argue for the importance of integrated knowledge for the Christian educator (p. 45). Certainly the unity of knowledge as well as the utility and virtue of integrated learning are defensible on theological grounds, but this does not seem the best way to make such a defence.

The Professor's Puzzle defies simple genre distinctions. Lawson writes with an engaging and enjoyable autobiographical style; reading his book feels like being invited into a warm conversation with an experienced educator. His deep care for students and appreciation for the opportunities presented by the educational experience are clear. Lawson, very naturally, writes from a particular denominational, cultural, and educational context. Much, however, can easily be translated into different ecclesial or institutional settings.

Often there is very little to guide early career scholars through the terrain of learning good pedagogical practice. Rarer still is deliberate attention to the telos of or motivation for learning. Yet this book provides much that will be of good, pragmatic interest to the new Christian educa-

tor. Its theological weaknesses ought not to distract the charitable reader from the genuine insight and expertise that Professor Lawson offers to the next generation of academics.

Alden McCray, University of St Andrews

Recapturing the Voice of God: Shaping Sermons Like Scripture. By Steven W. Smith. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015. ISBN: 978-4336-8250-6. x + 230 pp. £19.25.

In *Recapturing the Voice of God*, Steven W. Smith's main focus is the structure, or shape, of sermons. He contends that, 'much of what we call expository preaching simply isn't' (p. 1). In our current context, expository preaching has become less about explaining and applying a biblical text, and more about a 'tired, formulaic preaching template' (p. 1).

In response to this problem, Smith invites the reader to consider that, 'Expository, text-driven preaching, is not a style but a theologically driven philosophy of preaching whose purpose is to get as close to the text as possible' (p. 1). Smith develops this idea in the opening chapters, first by arguing that true expository preaching is an attempt to capture the voice of God, as it is present in the Word of God, and re-present that through the sermon. If this is the task of preaching then the structure or shape of this re-presentation should be modelled on the Scripture which is being preached.

Having made his case, Smith demonstrates how sermon structure can mirror the structure of Scripture. He begins by arguing that there are three macro structures within the Bible, into which the nine discernible genres fit, as follows:

1. Story: Old Testament Narrative, Law, Gospel/Acts, Parables.

2. Poem: Psalms, Prophecy, Wisdom Literature (which includes Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon)

3. Letter: Epistles, Revelation.

Smith's reasoning is that, by understanding the genres of Scripture, and seeing how they fit within the three larger structural forms, we have a better chance of ensuring our sermons are structured in a way which reflects the passage from which we are preaching.

Smith uses these genres as the basis for the rest of his book: each chapter is devoted to exploring how the genre 'works' within Scripture, and how the preacher can re-present this in a sermon. In an effort to show how each genre can be 're-presented' in a sermon, he concludes each chapter

with an exemplar: taking a biblical text and talking the reader through the process of crafting this into a sermon which, in Smith's opinion, appropriately presents the Word of God in its genre-specific way.

In writing this book, Smith has presented his arguments in a clear and persuasive way. His initial consideration of the need for sermon structure which is shaped by the biblical genre of the text is thorough and well thought through. I was especially taken by his use of the idea that preachers 're-present' the Word of God: we are not inventing something new, but taking what God has already spoken through the Bible and I appreciated the time he spent explaining his view that preaching is 're-presenting' the Word of God.

Smith's explanation as to how to structure a sermon based on a genre is clearly presented. It becomes clear as you read each chapter how Smith has arrived at his conclusions, as he closely examines each genre in detail, highlighting particular aspects and nuances.

Including exemplar sermons at the conclusion of each chapter is also helpful. While it is engaging to read Smith's theory as to how to structure a sermon based on the genre of the text, it is beneficial to actually read how he puts his own theories to work. This, I think, helps the reader to really grasp how specific genres dictate and change the way a preacher may approach the structure of the sermon.

I only have one major issue with this book, and it is Smith's claim that expository preaching has fallen into a rut: in other words, that it has become a predictable '3-point' sermon structure. I should say that I have no doubt that his observation is true in some instances, and that some preachers have indeed fallen back on this as being the only approach to sermon preparation. My issue, however, is that there is no indication as to how Smith arrived at this observation or how much of a problem this has become. There are a number of books and courses used to train preachers, and to my knowledge, these will often cover the importance of context and genre in sermon preparation. With this being the case, I would have appreciated if Smith explained why he felt expository preaching in particular had gained the reputation he claims.

In addition, I feel that Smith's work would have benefitted from a slightly deeper exploration of the historical development of expository preaching. He does, in the opening chapters, present a brief history and theology of preaching. I think it would have been helpful at this point if he had taken time to show how others have tackled the issue of sermon structure based on Scripture, and shown how his own work either challenged these previously held views, or built on and developed them. I appreciate that he presents his ideas in his own, unique way, but I feel this kind of exploration would have further strengthened his arguments.

My concluding thought for this review is a suggestion as to how best to use this book in the context of ministry. While this book is engaging, reading it from cover to cover can be challenging, as there is a lot on which to reflect. I would suggest that a better way is to wait until preaching on a particular genre of Scripture, and then read the relevant chapter of Smith's book. This will keep the specific details on a specific genre fresh throughout your sermon preparations.

Stuart Love, Glasgow

CORRECTION

The footnote on p. 81 of the previous edition (34.1) ought to have read:

> 'After reading Mr Baird's review, I suggested he ask Professor Gaffin for comment on this paragraph. He responded to the author that he agrees with his critique. Mr Baird raises an important issue that would have to be addressed in any future study of Vos's doctrine of union with Christ.'

Apologies to all concerned. *Review Ed.*