EDITORIAL

This year's first edition of the Bulletin includes several papers presented at the 2016 SETS conference. The title of the conference was 'A Gospel for Sale? Is God a Commodity?' Market forces have ancient origins, but they develop over time and take on new forms. These papers analyse current trends and observe how the gospel influences attitudes towards possessions.

In the opening conference paper David Reimer draws attention to recent consumer trends and attitudes towards consumerism. The arguments of a contemporary sociologist provide a suitable foil and entry point for sound biblical teaching on a variety of consumer-related themes.

Angus Morrison's paper expounds and applies the Parable of the Rich Fool in Luke's Gospel. The man in the parable enjoys a prosperous harvest but before the night is over his plans for a long and enjoyable retirement are brought to nothing. Morrison applies this to the modern day and exposes the cost of being money-centred rather than Christ-centred. Our relationship to God has highest significance.

The Finlayson Memorial Lecture was delivered by Antony Billington. This annual lecture is held during the evening of the conference and is also freely open for the public to attend. He observes methods employed in the marketplace to attract and influence consumers. When we are seduced by them there are regrettable outcomes. Yet the gospel provides a ready antidote. He identifies a number of Christian practices that nurture faith in daily life. These not only help to counter the influences of the age, but also assist us to grow in the Christian faith and in usefulness for Christ.

Randall Gruendyke provides an account of evangelical responses to consumerism in the 19th century. Charles Simeon is of chief interest in his paper, but he also records marvellous accomplishments of Simeon's contemporaries in the Clapham Sect. Here are inspirational examples of how Christians have influenced society for good by exercising faith and faithfully using resources available to them. Near the end of his paper Gruendyke gleans lessons from the Clapham Sect that may be learned and applied in our own time.

Jonathan Gemmell's paper studies the promises offered by consumerism. But satisfaction is only truly found in the gospel. After identifying some of the weaknesses of consumerism he draws from John's Gospel and finds a variety of applications in Christ that meet the deepest and perhaps most felt needs that many experience.

Together these papers identify shortcomings of a materialistic approach to the world. Longings of the heart do not find satisfaction in material possessions. Much is promised by materialism but not delivered. An emptiness within is exposed, and direction is needed to escape. Each writer provides the direction that is needed to Christ, who alone satisfies and who came that we 'may have life and have it abundantly' (John 10:10).

Supplementing the SETS conference papers is an important contribution by Stephen Holmes to a recent debate that has taken place regarding the Trinitarian relationships. The controversy concerns whether or not the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father. Holmes provides a convincing argument on the matter. I also think there are principles set out in his paper that have wider application for disputes regarding theological terms borne out of many years of theological debate.

I am grateful to my predecessor in the editor's chair, David Reimer, for his oversight and friendship while I was book review editor and more recently also in my transition to general editor. Thanks also to Alison Carter for assisting this edition by proofreading the book reviews.

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Biblical Perspectives on Consumerism

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CONSIDERING CONSUMERISM[1]

While this essay was in gestation, The Guardian ran a piece with the eye-catching headline: 'Goodbye to Curtains and Clutter: How We Learned to Buy Less Stuff'.[2] The article suggested that the consumer boom is—if not exactly over—then at least slowing down:

> [T]his week, the Office for National Statistics reported that the amount of material consumed in the UK has fallen from a peak of 889.9m tonnes in 2001 (15.1 tonnes per person) to 659.1m tonnes (10.3 tonnes per person) in 2013. Material consumption was lowest in 2011, at 642.0m tonnes (10.1 tonnes per person).

We are, it seems, spending less on 'stuff'. Yet, there is that line about 'lies and statistics'. What do these numbers really mean? At one level, they suggest we're spending more on 'non-physical' items: on downloads rather than DVDs, on 'experiences' rather than at Ikea. Tell your friends that your weekend project is to get down to some serious 'de-cluttering', and you'll get nods of approval for your wisdom.

According to this Guardian article, however, it's not as simple as that: it's not simply that we're purchasing less. It is more that our consumerist impulses are simply finding new modes of expression—not only eschewing commodity for culture, but buying quality (visit 'Buy Me Once.com', strap-line: 'love things that last'!) instead of quantity, and spending more for 'sustainable' products. The stories are told of the city of Hamburg's radical measures to reduce its environmental waste, and of then-Prime Minister Gordon Brown's targeting in 2008 of '"unnecessary" food purchases' to cut down on astonishing levels of food waste. Clearly, consumerism and how we think about it remains a prominent theme for contemporary society. And even if some forms of consumption are tailing off (though as the Guardian piece makes clear, even that is strongly contested), other forms are still flourishing.

[1] This paper was delivered on 4 April 2016 at the SETS Annual Conference. It retains the informal style of presentation, lightly revised for publication.

[2] Stuart Jeffries and Paula Cocozza, 'Goodbye to Curtains and Clutter: How We Learned to Buy Less Stuff', *The Guardian* (1 March 2016) <http://gu.com/p/4h7j2/sbl>, accessed 3 April 2016.

But what is this thing, 'consumerism', that we are devoting energy (and time, and money) to considering over these days? Is consumerism just another way of talking about greed or acquisitiveness? The story of origins is complex, with competing starting points from the eighteenth, to the seventeenth century, to the Middle Ages, and with differing dynamics identified as giving rise to the modern consumerist landscape.[3] Spatially, too, consumerism has been seen as European cascading from the elites to 'lower' social groups. But these behaviours can be observed, too, in non-Western cultures and at many times. As Peter Stearns notes:[4]

> Aristocracies quite commonly evolve from warrior qualities to what might be called consumerism; the process is familiar in Roman, Arab, and Chinese history, as well as in Western history by the later Middle Ages. We don't tend to call the result consumerist, but the label is not actually inappropriate.

And yet, there is something essentially 'Western' about consumerism. Kenneth Himes notes the hostility that non-Western cultures express against it—although this, too, might be more complex than it seems at first blush.[5]

Himes goes on to outline 'spheres of meaning' in which consumerism has been discussed, as 'social movement', 'ideology', and 'way of life' (p. 133). While these boundaries are a bit porous, they are still suggestive, although I have found it helpful to think in terms of 'behaviours' rather than simply abstract definitions. Consumerism involves participation in the 'market', implying a complex system of supply and demand, with focus of consumerism on the consumer(!) rather than the producer. A consumer acquires goods or services out of an exercise of choice (and an outlay of cash—or card) which enhances status and contributes, therefore, to identity. This is something different, then, from traditional village culture where some of these same dynamics are at work (though perhaps

[3] See in brief, Frank Trentmann, 'Introduction', in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, ed. by Frank Trentmann (Oxford: OUP, 2012), pp. 1–19 (pp. 4–5 in particular).

[4] Peter Stearns, 'Teaching Consumerism in World History', *World History Connected*, 1.2 <http://goo.gl/sPgoGv>, para. 5. More expansive treatment is found in his major work, *Consumerism in World History*, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[5] Kenneth R. Himes, 'Consumerism and Christian Ethics', *Theological Studies* 68 (2007), 132–53 (see p. 137).

in less significant ways that some accounts might suggest—Stearns, at least, is open to this kind of comparison).

CONSIDERING CAMPBELL'S 'COMMON CRITICISMS' CRITIQUE

As Stearns remarks: 'It's easy to be critical: consumerism is inherently selfish, hedonistic, and often trite.'[6] Consideration of a 'biblical perspective' on consumerism should not be satisfied with cheap critique. Thus, as a way into biblical engagement with consumerism, I will consider the sustained critique that Colin Campbell offered of its most common criticisms.[7] The criticisms are inter-related; strikingly, all of Campbell's major themes appear in the Guardian article which introduced this essay. They are five in number: (1) Need; (2) Materialism; (3) Addiction; (4) Selfishness; and (5) Happiness. Others might be added, especially more recently the linkage forged between consumerism and the exploitation and destruction of the environment—that is, the 'environmental' critique,[8] following Campbell's pattern.

(1) Need

Campbell begins by challenging the notion that consumerism fuels gratuitous acquisitiveness, impelling us to possess things that we 'don't really need' (p. 281). Well-stocked charity shops serve as evidence of consumer realization of precisely this kind of excess. From burgers to BMWs, consumers go well beyond what is needed for some purpose, whether that is eating to live or meeting transport and commuting needs.

Such reasoning is difficult to sustain, argues Campbell. Since this sort of focus implies an 'end' which the 'need' is intended to meet, the intended critique simply becomes a battle of prejudices:

> For the truth is that for anyone to attempt to specify what another person does or does not 'need', without a comprehensive knowledge of their background, personality, tastes, goals and ambitions, is simply to express a prejudice in favour of one specific conception of the good life. (p. 283)

6 Stearns, 'Teaching Consumerism', para. 10.

7 Colin Campbell, 'What Is Wrong with Consumerism? An Assessment of Some Common Criticisms', *Anuario Filosófico* 43 (2010), 279–97. Page citations in the main text refer to this article unless otherwise noted.

8 On this theme, cf. Pope Francis's second encyclical, *Laudato si'*, concerning the environment ('On Care for Our Common Home'), in which consumerism features heavily; <http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html>.

Fundamentally, attempts to assess 'need' are expressions of what the analyst regards as legitimate satisfaction of desire—distinguishing 'wants', as opposed to 'needs'—although Campbell argues that this assessment lacks any 'clear basis'. Inevitably, he believes, this inclines the critic towards traditional or 'neo-Puritan' values.

The issue, then, revolves around conceptions of legitimate or appropriate satisfaction of need-based desire, rather than simply assuaging gratuitous wants. Campbell argues this critique is deeply flawed, and thus should be set aside. But a 'biblical perspective' encourages just this sort of problematizing. That is, a life shaped in accordance with the Christian scriptures will develop an inherent suspicion of needless acquisition. This stops short of dictating what is a permissible purchase, and what is not. But it does develop a healthy disposition to assess any acquisition in light of kingdom values.

Attacking the 'excessive acquisition' critique is a natural starting point for Campbell, and some of our biblical considerations here will apply equally to the other (related) criticisms of consumerism which he goes on to consider. I begin here, then, by noting the petition embedded in Lord's Prayer for 'our daily bread' [*ton arton hēmōn ton epiousion*].[9] No matter which of the contested meanings we adopt for this hapax, the prayer at least presumes that a fairly hand-to-mouth existence—much like Jesus' own, one imagines—is the framework in which Jesus' disciples are taught to pray for provision. There is also the striking preface to the prayer: 'your Father knows what you need before you ask him' (Matt. 6:8), which finds a further echo in Jesus' counsel in Luke against material anxiety (Luke 12:22–34). What we are taught to pray for is precisely what is 'needful', no more, no less.

Such an attitude is further reflected in the NT's consistent teaching on 'contentment', in relation to the *ark-* word group ('to suffice', 'be sufficient'). So when soldiers asked John the Baptist for advice on how they might demonstrate the 'fruits of repentance', he replied: 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and **be content** with your wages' (Luke 3:14, *arkeō*; also v. 8). Or Paul in Philippians 4:11, 'Not

9 On the uncertainty over the *hapax legomenon 'epiousion'*, and whether it means 'daily bread' or 'bread for tomorrow': B.M. Metzger, "How Many Times Does ΕΠΙΟΥΣΙΟΣ Occur outside The Lord's Prayer?", in *Historical and Literary Studies: Pagan, Jewish, and Christian* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), pp. 64–6 = *ExpTimes* 69 (1957–58), 52–54; M. Nijman and K.A. Worp, '"ΕΠΙΟΥΣΙΟΣ" in a Documentary Papyrus?', *Novum Testamentum* 41 (1999), 231–34. On the translation problem, see also Bruce M. Metzger, 'Persistent Problems Confronting Bible Translators', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 (1993), 273–84 (see pp. 277–8).

that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to **be content**' (*autarkēs*; also 1 Tim. 6:6–11a, for 'godliness with contentment' using *autarkeia*, with a warning against pursuit of wealth). Or perhaps most sharply for our concerns, in Hebrews 13:5, 'Keep your life free from love of money, and **be content** with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you"' (*arkeō*), combining just the set of considerations found in and around the Lord's Prayer.

We do not arrive at these themes in the NT unprepared from the OT, of course. Proverbs has much to say concerning wealth and poverty, their causes and outcomes (often stated in provocative pairs: cf. e.g. Prov. 21:17, 20). One especially poignant statement which captures well both the desire for a secure life and a resistance to a wealthy one comes in Prov. 30:7–9, worth quoting in full:[10]

> 7 Two things I ask of you;
> deny them not to me before I die:
> 8 Remove far from me falsehood and lying;
> give me neither poverty nor riches;
> feed me with the food that is needful for me,
> 9 lest I be full and deny you
> and say, "Who is the Lord?"
> or lest I be poor and steal
> and profane the name of my God.

This list and reflection could be readily extended, but even these brief comments suggest that pausing to query the nature of acquisition—what I actually 'need' in the set of my 'wants'—is biblically healthy. God did indeed create his human creatures to consume, but he did not create his human creatures to consume in an undisciplined, let alone rampant or thoughtless way, satisfying any desire that grew within them. Life in the Garden was no different.

(2) Materialism

If we were to play the word-association game, it's quite possible that the prompt 'consumerism', would elicit the reply, 'commodity'. Consumerism and 'stuff' are deeply interconnected in the Western perspective, perhaps best summed up in the slogan, 'the one who dies with the most toys wins'.[11] The materialistic displacement of lively blessings inhering

10 Biblical quotations are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted.

11 Often associated with the multi-millionaire Malcolm Forbes (1919–1990); see, e.g., Charles E. Cohen, 'A Paladin of Publicity Bows Out in Grand Style', *People* 33.11 (1990), 28–33; online at <http://goo.gl/MSbDDZ>; the first

in faith, hope, and love by mere things, commodities—or, simply put, of loving things more than people—makes an easy target in the critique of consumerism, and Campbell acknowledges its plausibility. But he pushes back effectively, noting to begin with the way in which services and the arts rank high in consumer spending, and that these could hardly be called 'materialist'. He extends the argument by blurring the distinction between objets d'art and other work of 'aesthetic significance' (p. 287) on the one hand, and designer products on the other. While the latter might typify consumerist excess (a £100 'Porsche' toaster?), objects in the former category fulfil a more noble role, adding meaning to life—and do not fall prey to the materialist critique.

This line of reasoning arrives at a similar conclusion as in the case of the 'need' criticism. That is, the grounds for distinguishing 'aesthetic' and 'materialist' impulses and activities are sufficiently obscure to be susceptible to mere prejudice, without firm criteria for arbitration. Who is to say that some museum piece possesses more aesthetic value than a finely crafted … toaster? Cannot this kind of 'purchase by consumers', Campbell asks (p. 288), 'be seen as evidence of aesthetic discernment, rather than as an indication of materialism'?

As is well known, it is not that the Bible is anti-materialist. God creates a good world for his human creatures to enjoy and in which they can flourish. Resurrection is for *bodies*! And, as Hugh Williamson's article on the 'material world' describes, these material goods are intended for the whole community, even if there are poor and rich in this fallen world.[12]

In any case, Campbell's blurring of aesthetic/materialistic lines doesn't really grapple with the sharp edges of the 'materialism' criticism. Skye Jethani reports the case of the Steve Terrett, a 17-year-old Chicago youth who in March 2005 was shot in the back and his Nike Air Jordan 'Solidify' trainers stolen—a gift from his mother a month earlier. He died later that night in hospital.[13] For Jethani this is a telling example of the destructive side of branding, of the consumer market fostering the desire

occurrence of the saying cited by C.C. Doyle, W. Mieder, and F.R. Shapiro (eds), *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 262, comes from the *New York Times*, 9 May 1983.

12 H.G.M. Williamson, 'The Old Testament and the Material World', *Evangelical Quarterly* 47 (1985), 5–22.

13 Skye Jethani, *The Divine Commodity: Discovering a Faith beyond Consumer Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), pp. 47–8. Details in the *Chicago Sun-Times* report, 'Police: Teen admits boy was killed for new Air Jordans', 4 April 2005 (<https://goo.gl/BZT9Er>, last accessed 03 April 2016). Two teens were charged with the murder, a 19-year-old and a 15-year-old, with the younger boy identified as the one who pulled the trigger.

for style over substance. While his appeal to some biblical examples of 'branding' strike me as misplaced, the discussion helpfully suggests that this destructive distortion participates in the materialist dynamic that Campbell associates positively with aestheticism.

One of the striking places in the OT where these factors come together is in the aesthetics of tabernacle and temple construction. Reading the double account (itself a curious textual fact) of the instructions for the construction of the tabernacle in Exodus, or of the temple in 1 Kings 5–7, one is struck by the richness of fabric, the detailed and even extravagant fittings, and the nature of the skill required for their manufacture. Notably, in the Exodus account, we read for the first time of being 'filled with the Spirit of God' in Exodus 31:3, as Bezalel is gifted for this work, along with Oholiab (Exod. 31:1–11; cf. 35:30–36:5, where the Spirit's 'filling' is not only for design and manufacture, but for 'teaching' others to perform these tasks as well, 35:34). Some observations here: the first is way in which 'materiality' is affirmed, the repeated catalogues of precious metals, fabrics, skins, and other elements required for construction contributing an almost tactile sense to the account. Second, the fine crafting and skill required are depicted as enabled by divine endowment, and passed on to others by the same means. Third, one notes the way in which magnificence of manufacture calls forth a responsive munificence on the part of the people in Exodus, and later David (1 Chronicles 22) and the people (1 Chr. 29:6–9) gifting the materials required. On the one hand, this project materially impoverishes the community, while on the other it transposes these goods into a new key and for a higher purpose, thus re-enriching the giving community. This leads finally, and most clearly, to the consequent observation: these projects have a divine origin and goal, and provide a new meeting place between God and community.[14]

Such concerns lurk behind the construction of many places of worship in times since, the medieval cathedrals being obvious examples. It comes in a transferred sense into the rationale for state-of-the-art sound and projection systems that are required kit in modern Western places of Christian worship. Before we leave this topic, then, it is well to note briefly cautionary tales that seem to arise from this same impulse. (1) Embedded into the account of the temple construction is Solomon's

[14] There is the matter, noted by Williamson in dialogue with Norman Gottwald, that the temple economy and the priests who operated it, could amass considerable wealth and occupy positions of privilege and power (the stories of Eli's and Samuel's sons giving evidence for the latter without the narrative setting of the former). My observations here have to do with craft and manufacture rather than the subsequent temple economy.

palatial building activities (1 Kgs. 7:1–11), in which the narrator quietly but acutely observes that its time to completion almost doubled that of the temple (cf. 1 Kgs. 6:38 and 7:1, these being contiguous verses), equalled its quality of manufacture (7:11), and further that Solomon provided likewise for an Egyptian princess, now his wife (7:8). It is possible to discern in these observations an implicit critique of the slippage between the work devoted to God, and that devoted to Solomon's own aggrandizement (cf. also Haggai 1:7–11). (2) The account of Ahaz's reign in 2 Kings 16 (// 2 Chr. 28:22–27) portrays a man of religious zeal, but one whose zeal is distinctly distorted. In his practice and in his provision for the temple, his inclinations were perverted by attention to the manner and manufacture of the surrounding nations. Again, the narrator refrains from explicit comment, but these actions and provisions mark another point in the decline which Hezekiah's reforms later addressed. (3) Much of a piece with this, but leading to deeper fall and ultimately the demise of the Southern kingdom (according to the narrator), is Manasseh's hyper-religiosity in 2 Kings 21, in which altars to Baal and the erection of an Asherah in the temple itself featured as elements of his religious innovation. (In 2 Chronicles 33 this activity is extended to include elements of Assyrian cult, and proscribed, occultish personnel.) This now does elicit cries of denunciation, and drives away the LORD for whom that temple had originally been built for the comfort of his people.

Again, there is a sense in Scripture of needing to be alert to how the orientations of our affections and material commitments coincide with what honours the true God, grows out of his desires, and deepens our communion, aesthetic considerations notwithstanding.

(3) Addiction

A third critique considered by Campbell is that consumerism fuels addictive behaviours. Consumers acquire an insatiable appetite for more stuff, needed (see #1, above!), or not. Here the telling cliché is to 'shop till you drop', or 'I shop therefore I am' in the words of one recent title.[15] This might be considered an especially telling and trenchant criticism, since compulsive buying is a recognized pathological disorder. It can still be problematized, and Campbell does so. He observes that only a 'small minority' of consumers exhibit this kind of pathological addiction, the

[15] Cited by Campbell: see April Lane Benson (ed.), *I Shop, Therefore I Am: Compulsive Buying and the Search for Self* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 2000); more recently, *To Buy or Not to Buy: Why We Overshop and How to Stop* (Boston: Trumpeter Books, 2008), and her website 'Stopping Overshopping' <http://www.shopaholicnomore.com> which offers help to 'shopaholics'.

implication (not stated) being that consumerism does not inevitably give rise to shopaholism (or 'oniomania').

Again, however, Campbell shifts our perceptions in consideration of this critique. What lies at the root of the criticism is the focus on the act of consuming itself, rather than the thing consumed: the compulsion to buy, rather than considering the thing bought. This process involves a certain novelty factor. As the novelty wears off, the urge to shop builds, and another purchase is (or further purchases are!) made. Campbell likens this to the consumption of 'mediated experiences': 'music, books, plays and films' (p. 289). You read a book, listen to an album, watch a film … and then go and get more to read, hear, or see. This is not seen as distorted: it is the nature of 'consumption' to want *more*, and to want *new* (the 'novelty' factor noted by Campbell). He asks: on what basis is this behaviour, seen as normal and acceptable, different from seeking novelty in commodities purchased (as opposed to 'mediated experiences')?

Once again we run into the problem of objective criteria by which to assess associated but differentiated behaviours. Is it actually the case that appetite for 'mediated experiences' (much like appetite for food) is of the same order as that for 'clothes, … furnishings, or interior décor generally', as Campbell seems to argue (p. 290)? And the perception remains that there is, in fact, a recognized disorder associated with shopping. Addiction to gambling or alcohol, or distortions in sexual matters may affect a relatively small proportion of the population, but awareness of such aberration serves as an alert to potential dangers. And the dangers, having been spotted, deserve warning signs to prevent disasters. It might be odd to think of biblical law in these terms, but it offers one context for considering appropriate warnings. Biblical law describes a rightly ordered community, and sets boundaries for its members within which they can flourish. This would be true of all biblical law (and is reflected in the affirmations of the activities of the 'righteous' in Psalm 1), but it can be seen clearly *in nuce* in the Decalogue: from the prohibition against exalting the material and creaturely above the Creator (Exod. 20:4), to the Sabbath provision (Exod. 20:8–10), to the prohibition on theft (Exod. 20:15), and finally to the unusual prohibition on coveting (Exod. 20:17; how can legislation like this be enforced?), the Decalogue describes a progression from divine to human, orienting human life toward the Creator, and away from unhealthy or destructive behaviours, in reality or in potential.

One brief scenario in the gospels may bring us face to face with something like 'addiction' to created goods, however. The story of the 'Rich Young Ruler' recounts the meeting between Jesus and the wealthy man

who asks Jesus, 'What must I do to inherit eternal life?'[16] The well-known exchange follows, in which Jesus provides a summary of laws from the Decalogue, and the man asserts his observance of them. Jesus replies, 'You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' The reaction: 'Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions' (Mark 10:21–22). Preachers on this passage are wont to point out that it is only this man to whom Jesus gives this instruction. Jesus' other interlocutors likewise receive individuated instructions ('let the dead bury the dead', etc.). There is an unwillingness in contemporary interpretation to generalize from this exchange. However, it is striking that the evangelists present Jesus himself as doing precisely this, extrapolating from the specific encounter in his teaching on the difficulty of the rich entering the kingdom, accompanied by the eye-of-needle-camel figure of speech. The disciples feel its claim and its pinch: they apply the challenge to the 'man' also to themselves, or to any who belong to the wealthy pious. There are further details in the synoptic accounts which repay further investigation:[17] Mark's inclusion in Jesus' list of commandments of the 'non-commandment', 'do not defraud' (Mark 10:19, and oppression of workers?), or Luke's close joining of this episode with that of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10) who exhibits precisely the opposite response from that of the nameless 'ruler'.

While set in a very different cultural environment from that of modern, Western shopaholics-in-the-making, such considerations nonetheless challenge the notion that 'addiction' (the compulsion to purchase) can be simply set aside.

(4) Selfishness

Each of the critiques assessed by Campbell so far could be said to involve 'selfishness' in some implicit sense, but this is now considered explicitly in the fourth 'common criticism' levelled against consumerism. Campbell could reference the words of 'the former pope' (citing *The Guard-*

16 Matt. 19:16–29 // Mark 10:17–22 // Luke 18:18–30. Matthew 19:20 calls him a *neaniskos*, while Luke 18:18 designates him an *archōn*.

17 See *inter alia*, Richard Hicks, 'Markan Discipleship according to Malachi: The Significance of μὴ ἀποστερήσῃς in the Story of the Rich Man (Mark 10:17–22)', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132 (2013), 179–99; Michael Peppard, 'Torah for the Man Who Has Everything: "Do Not Defraud" in Mark 10:19', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 134 (2015), 595–604. Both articles grapple in different ways with the nature of Jesus' use of the Decalogue in the encounter.

ian, 16 December 1998) John Paul II, from a text which merits fuller quotation:[18]

> The history of our time has shown in a tragic way the danger which results from forgetting the truth about the human person. Before our eyes we have the results of ideologies such as Marxism, Nazism and Fascism, and also of myths like racial superiority, nationalism and ethnic exclusivism. No less pernicious, though not always as obvious, are the effects of materialistic consumerism, in which the exaltation of the individual and the **selfish satisfaction of personal aspirations** become the ultimate goal of life. In this outlook, the negative effects on others are considered completely irrelevant.

To this could now be added the message of Pope Francis in his message of Sunday, 4 August 2013, at St Peter's Square, in the context of reflecting his recent experience of 'World Youth Day':[19]

> Young people are particularly sensitive to the empty, meaningless values that often surround them. Unfortunately, moreover, it is they who pay the consequences. Instead the encounter with the living Christ in his great family which is the Church fills hearts with joy, for it fills them with true life, with a profound goodness that endures, that does not tarnish. ... But this experience must **confront the daily vanity, that poison of emptiness which creeps into our society based on profit and possession and on consumerism** which deceives young people. This Sunday's Gospel reminds us, precisely, of the absurdity of basing our own happiness on having. ... (cf. Lk. 12:19–20).

Campbell pushes back at this connection, arguing that 'it is not the case that most, let alone all, of modern consumer activity is undertaken in the interests of the self' (p. 290). Citing sociological studies, he points to the economy of the home, which expresses domestic concern rather that selfishness. Beyond this, he claims, neither can the 'vast orgy of spending' (p. 291) around Christmas each year be thought of as 'selfish', since 'virtually all of this' will be given away as gifts.

Even Campbell recognizes the limitations of this line of reasoning, however. Gift-giving is a complex matter, and can as easily be self-interested as other-directed. Moreover, this critique has something of the character of accusing the Pope of being Catholic: by definition, Campbell notes, consumption is self-directed. What else could it be? He considers,

18 <http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_14121998_xxxii-world-day-for-peace.html>, accessed 2 April 2016; words in bold (added) are those quoted by Campbell.

19 <http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2013/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20130804.html>; emphasis added.

then, that the deeper concern must be that 'modern consumer behaviour' has 'come to displace other forms of personal conduct and social interaction' (pp. 291–2). Here, however, a slightly unexpected shift takes place from the domestic context to the political, apparently shifting 'responsibility for this development' from consumers to politicians.

One 'response' to this line of reasoning is to consider passages which speak to rightly ordered desires, whether in the Old Testament or the New. For example, Psalm 73:25–26 comes at the culmination of a reflection on material prosperity and places the benefit of divine presence before any material or temporal good, so v. 25: 'Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.' This finds counterparts in the NT, e.g., Paul's declaration in Philippians 3:7–11 (v. 8a: 'Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord'). Christian self-awareness does not lead to self-centredness, nor directly to self-satisfaction. Rather, as in the papal pronouncements quoted above (or even the Piperian dictum, 'God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him'), in a rightly ordered life (that is, in the Christian life), the primary desire born of love is directed not to self, but to God. This does not imply or require ascetic self-abnegation for, as Oliver O'Donovan observes:[20]

> Loving God 'above all things' … leads back to loving created goods, but it does so in a specific way and in a specific order and under specific controls. … Love of God is affirmed in and through our other loves, structuring them and ordering them, so that with each new discovery of good that world and time lay open to us, the question of the love of God is put again, its sovereignty over other loves reasserted or forgotten.

(5) Happiness

Campbell's final 'critique' does not sound like one at first blush: it is 'happiness'. What is in mind here is something like a reprise of the 'most toys wins' scenario, *viz.*, that accumulation of goods is the 'path to true happiness' (p. 292). Campbell considers the literature exploring the correlation between wealth, acquisition, and happiness. It is a complex picture. On the one hand, it challenges the notion that continuing to increase one's goods brings increasing happiness, once a certain basic threshold is crossed. But, on the other, there is evidence to demonstrate that 'within any one society … the rich are happier than the poor' (p. 293). 'Happiness' itself is a problematic concept here, which has only vague reference

20 Oliver O'Donovan, *Self, World, and Time. Ethics as Theology 1: An Induction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), p. 119.

to general well-being. One might better speak in some settings of 'pleasure' or 'excitement' and these take their place, in Campbell's discussion, among legitimate or 'significant life-goals' which, he claims, 'can indeed be bought'. Well—perhaps some can!

We have noted above the way that biblical law comes to bear on these dynamics. Another obvious way in which this is case and which speaks to this 'critique' in particular is the nature of ownership of land, and thus of the means to live for a community of subsistence farmers. Williamson's article on the 'material world' (see n. 12, above) sets out the structural elements regulating the ordered life of ancient Israel to ensure that wealth was not simply isolated in the hands of few, but that it would be used to ensure viability for the poor. There is no doubt that the Bible sees—in some cases, under certain conditions—the presence of wealth as 'blessing'. That is not the end of it, however: there is also 'ill-gotten' gain. Biblical law again makes a contribution to our reflections: there is for example the famous 'jubilee year' of Leviticus 25:8–22, in which land redistribution prevents both unbridled accumulation, and perpetual displacement from ancestral lands. The rationale offered in Leviticus 25:23—at the 'seam' between the law of jubilee and property redemption—is significant: 'The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, *for the land is mine*, for you are strangers and sojourners with me' (emphasis added). This relativizes ownership in a quite dramatic way. A similar notion is found also in Psalm 50:10–12, where the value God places on sacrifice is qualified: 'If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine' (v. 12).

These are not isolated examples. This sense is reflected, too, in the exodus provision of manna, in which consumption was always sufficient, and accumulation and stock-piling impossible (Exod. 16:18). Or, in the NT, one thinks of the futility of building 'bigger barns' in Jesus' teaching on the 'rich fool' in Luke 12:13–21. Not only does Jesus' assert that the attempt to find happiness in the accumulation of wealth is futile (much, perhaps, as Qoheleth might have done), but it comes at a prompt from brothers quarrelling over the division of their inheritance. The teaching, with a warning, followed. Here the 'happiness' of the wealthy is an elusive and even chimerical goal—accumulation is not being recommended as a route to achieving it.

A much larger consideration is that, as I heard in a sermon recently, the Christian's primary goal is not happiness, but holiness. Campbell's argument inclines towards seeing life as a 'bucket list':[21] I can buy things off my ultimate wish list. Even if this isn't precisely 'happiness', the claim is that it's the next best thing. If this is consumerism, it's a long way—diametrically opposed—to a biblical vision of a fulfilled life.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

It has not been my purpose in the preceding discussion to test the strength of Campbell's arguments, or to adjudicate their soundness or success. Rather, I see Campbell addressing consumerism's vulnerable points, making the case that there is a baby in the bathwater, and that it shouldn't disappear down the drain through mere carelessness or cheap critique. None of these, however, was found to tally with a 'biblical perspective'. In each case, the Bible and consumerism point in different directions.

Admittedly, my taking Campbell's five common critiques as a starting point for this engagement has limitations, and so this essay should be seen simply as a first step: I have not found room above to consider, e.g., the assumption of Christian suffering which sits at best uneasily in a consumerist setting.[22] More likely, it should rather be seen as something wholly alien to it.

Still, Campbell's counter to common critiques of consumerism highlights deep-seated problems with consumerism inviting an engagement with 'biblical perspectives'. Taken more broadly, two fundamental concerns issue from my preliminary biblical grappling with Campbell's article: consumerism relativizes authority; and consumerism wrongly centres the meaning of life.

In the first case, Campbell's arguments locate the common critiques in basic prejudice: competing values have no external point of arbitration or reference, but reside in the preferences of the individual—thus the claims for the possibility of 'neo-Puritanism'. Such does not reflect a gospel-shaped life. It is not simply a matter of eliciting prescriptions (though prescriptions there are). Scripture (the whole of it) informs our thinking about how we respond to the world of goods: 'Obedience is a matter of

21 According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the first occurrence of this phrase came with the announcement of the 2007 Rob Reiner film, 'The Bucket List', citing the UPI Newswire for 29 June 2006. It seems to have entered circulation very quickly: even if the film was critically panned, the title caught the public's imagination.

22 Cf. e.g. Mark 8:34–37; John 15:18–20; James 1:2–4; 1 Peter 4:12–13; and Carl Trueman's brief but pointed remarks on this theme: '*Simul peccator et justus:* Martin Luther and Justification', in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. by Bruce L. McCormack (Edinburgh/Grand Rapids: Rutherford House/Baker Academic, 2006), pp. 73–97 (see esp. pp. 96–7).

how our own confession is to harmonize with the testimony of Scripture', and this as 'an exercise of faith'.[23]

In the second case, consumerist inclinations are situated within and/or aligned with otherwise laudable (or at any rate acceptable) appetites and desires. Reading Campbell's article might elicit the response: 'Nothing to see here, keep moving!'. But that is not the whole story. Campbell's arguments rest on the assumption that self-realization and self-satisfaction represent default and even worthy aspirations. This is alien to a Christian perspective. While the attitude espoused by Paul in Philippians 3:7–11 may be only latent in the OT, the trajectory is already set there, not least in the words of the psalmists as, e.g., in Psalm 73:25 (both noted above), or the attitude which pervades Psalm 19, which in turn finds a distinct counterpoint in Psalm 119:36–37 (cf. v. 127):

> 36 Incline my heart to your testimonies,
> and not to selfish gain!
> 37 Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things;
> and give me life in your ways.

[23] O'Donovan, *Self, World, and Time*, pp. 79–80. Compare also, O'Donovan, *Finding and Seeking. Ethics as Theology 2* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), pp. 132–6 on 'receiving the testimony'.

‘More than the sum of our possessions’: Reflections on the parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21)

Angus Morrison

It is quite certain that there is no good without the knowledge of God; that the closer one comes, the happier one is, and the further away one goes, the more unhappy one is.

Blaise Pascal

To a large extent, Western societies have adopted the ideology of consumerism, with its premise that human flourishing and happiness are necessarily bound up with the acquisition of wealth and the material possessions which it is able to deliver. Mammon, in a myriad forms, has become one of the reigning idolatries of our time. His shrines are thronged with devotees. Has all the eager devotion produced the happiness promised? The evidence suggests otherwise. Unhappiness and discontent have probably never been as pervasive in our Western world as now. At the same time, we are witnessing an ever-widening divide between rich and poor, both in our own society and around the globe.

Scripture, in general, and Jesus, in particular, have much to say about the relationship between money, Christian discipleship and human flourishing, in the perspectives of God’s kingdom. The aim of this paper is to explore some of these connections, in large part through the lens of a sometimes neglected parable of Jesus.

I. THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL: CONTEXT AND EXPLANATION

Of the four evangelists, Luke appears to be the one with the greatest interest in possessions or wealth and their implications for discipleship. This theme is prominent throughout both his Gospel and Acts, with some reference to money and material goods in almost every chapter of both. For Luke, as Snodgrass points out,

> …the first question regarding discipleship is what one does with money… His concerns for the poor, denunciations of the rich, and discussions of attitudes toward wealth and its use repeatedly emphasize that discipleship in the

kingdom of God requires a major redirection of how one thinks about and uses material possessions.[1]

Luke T. Johnson comments that 'Luke sees possessions as a primary symbol of human existence, an immediate exteriorisation of and manifestation of the self'.[2]

In this context, the parable of the Rich Fool is the first of three parables — the other two in chapter 16 are those of the Dishonest Manager (16:1-13) and the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31) — with a particular bearing on this theme. Each of the three begins, interestingly, with exactly the same words: *Anthrōpos tis plousios* ('a certain rich man'), except that for mere grammatical reasons our man is in the genitive. In the parable, remarkable for its brevity, restraint and terseness, Luke is clearly concerned to advance the theme in which he is so interested: 'How do possessions relate to discipleship?'

The context in which the parable is situated is striking. Let me for now just highlight the fact that it is one in which Jesus is instructing his disciples to remove fear or anxiety from their lives. In the preceding context (vv. 4-12), he assures them of the great value they have to God, of God's care for them, extending to the numbering of the hairs on their head, and tells them that even if they find themselves as his followers brought on trial before the authorities, there was no need to fear because the Holy Spirit would come to their help, supplying the necessary words. With the living God at the centre of their lives, anxiety lacked any substantive basis.

Then, in the verses immediately following the parable (vv. 22-34), Jesus returns to the same subject of worry/anxiety and repeats to the disciples what he earlier had said about the value God attaches to them and his care for them, concluding that since God supplies all their needs, the only treasure appropriate for them to amass is the heavenly kind, and anxiety should have no place in their lives. In the context, then, the emphasis falls on the reality of God, his valuation of and his loving care for human beings, and the implication of this for the attitudes and behaviour of the disciples. The relevance of these perspectives to our theme will emerge.

In the middle of all that God-centred material is situated our parable, with its story about a very different set of concerns. Someone in the large crowd gathered around Jesus and the disciples suddenly raises an anxious, and probably angry, voice: 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me' (v. 13). We need to attempt to situate

1 Klyne R. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), p. 389.

2 Quoted in op. cit., p. 714.

the man's request in the first century social world of Palestine. Stephen Wright points out that,

> …along with other ancient agrarian societies, the Near East of the first century was marked by stark disparity between a small wealthy ruling class and a large number of peasants who barely eked out a living from their plot of land. The rich maintained and enhanced their status and wealth by exacting tribute from the poor.[3]

It was largely a two-tier society, lacking a prosperous middle class, although a layer of bureaucracy had developed as necessary for the purposes of collecting tribute.

The person in the crowd who requested Jesus to arbitrate in the family dispute, in all probability belonged to the lower tier of society. 'Wealthy families,' as Wright says, 'would have had their own means to get what they wanted and probably would not have resorted to seeking advice from a wandering teacher'.[4]

He points out that 'the poor in Israelite agrarian culture had precious little patrimony. Inheritance laws were designed so that each in a large family would receive a share with, of course, the largest reserved for the eldest'.[5]

The anxious demand of the anonymous man might therefore refer to a situation in which (as could happen) the plot of land simply became too small to divide further. In these circumstances, family members might be driven off the land to fend for themselves in whatever way they could — and sadly not many options were available.

Jesus' reply, leading in to the parable, is striking. 'Friend (NRSV) — *Anthrōpe* — who set me to be a judge or arbitrator (*kritēn e meristēn*) over you?' (v. 14) He immediately steps back from taking the role of judge (the one Moses had been accused of taking on himself [Exod. 2:14]); or of arbitrator (*meristēn* — literally 'divider') — the role given by God to Joshua in order to divide the land (cf. Josh. 13-22). Kenneth Bailey makes the characteristically thoughtful comment: 'Jesus whose mission is about reconciling, demurs from the role of divider.'[6]

3 Stephen I. Wright, 'Parables on Poverty and Riches (Luke 12:13-21; 16:1-13; 16:19-31),' in Richard N. Longenecker, *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), p. 218.

4 Op. cit., p. 221.

5 Ibid.

6 Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (London: SPCK, 2008), p. 137.

What Jesus does rather, in typical fashion, is to call attention to the nub of the problem. He refuses to judge but invites the man to ask whether the dispute is not in fact fuelled by greed. 'Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed (*pleonexia*); for one's life (*zōe* as distinct from *bios*) does not consist in the abundance of possessions.' (v. 15) The implication is that if both parties in the dispute were to abjure greed, the main hurdle would be overcome, and a way forward could be found.

The term *pleonexia* ('greed', 'covetousness'), takes us straight to the central issue. Plutarch (*On Love of Wealth I*) makes the point that *pleonexia* never rests from acquiring more (*to pleon*). In that spirit, the writer of Ecclesiastes speaks of his giving free rein, because he was in a position so to do, to *pleonexia*: 'Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them' (2:10). In the event, the outcome for Qoheleth was deeply disappointing: it turned out to be so much *hebhel ureuth ruach* ('vanity [emptiness] and a striving after wind') (2:11).

The resonance of this in the first century world of Jesus' day, with its perception of limited good, is noted by Barbara Reid. By 'limited good' is understood 'that there is only a limited amount of any good thing, both tangible and intangible.' It follows therefore that 'anything that one acquires is someone else's loss. Contrary to modern capitalistic notions that all can increase in wealth, in first century Palestine the operating assumption is that everything is finite and cannot be expanded. If someone's share gets larger, someone else's decreases.' It follows, therefore, that 'desiring more for oneself is the most insidious of vices, and was utterly destructive of village solidarity'.[7]

Warnings against greed are of course found throughout the Bible. In light of the context of the parable (to which I referred earlier), what is especially interesting is the Scriptural identification of greed with idolatry. There is an interesting passage in Job 31 (vv. 24-28). Job states that to put trust in gold, confidence in silver, is nothing less than a crime to be punished by the judges. The reason, he adds significantly, is: 'For I should have been false to God above' (v. 28).

Falsity to God is the essence of idolatry. Greed is therefore tantamount to idolatry. Both Chrysostom and Gregory of Nazianzus labelled greed the 'second idolatry'. Paul makes that specific identification in Ephesians 5:5 and Colossians 3:5.

The dispute in the parable was over the family inheritance. The division of such inheritances among siblings inevitably bore potential for endless squabbling and bitterness. *Klēronomia* (with *meris*), of course, a

7 Barbara E. Reid, *Parables for Preachers: The Gospel of Luke, Year C* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), p. 137.

term of rich connotations in Scripture. The reader is doubtless intended to hear echoes of the biblical texts in which it is used to speak about the relationship between God and the people. On the one hand, his people are God's *klēronomia*. In Deuteronomy 9:26, for example, Moses speaks of the forty days and nights he spent prostrate before the Lord, praying for the people: 'And I prayed to the Lord, "O Lord God, destroy not your people and your heritage [Heb. *nachalatekha*; LXX *merida*], whom you have redeemed through your greatness…"'; or in Psalm 28:9: 'Oh, save your people, and bless your heritage!' Conversely, God is the inheritance of his people, as in Psalm 16:5-6, and so on. And then we have all these great New Testament passages in which the theme is richly developed: 1 Peter 1:4; Acts 20:32; Ephesians 1:14, 18; Colossians 3:24; Hebrews 9:15, etc. The point is that to grasp the significance of this foundational spiritual reality is to relativize the importance of any and every merely earthly inheritance, and to provide the essential brake on yielding to powerful temptation and sliding into the sin of idolizing the creation in place of the Creator of all.

Two quite exceptional works on this subject are those of Greg Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry*[8] and, more particularly in this connection, Brian Rosner's *Greed as Idolatry: The Origin and Meaning of a Pauline Metaphor*.[9] Rosner asks: 'In what sense are the greedy guilty of idolatry?' He points out that there have been many different answers to this question and he provides a thorough study of the history of the interpretation of the phrase, as well as of the origin of the concept of idolatrous greed in biblical and Jewish sources. Rosner concludes that 'a comparison of greed with idolatry teaches that to desire to acquire and to keep for oneself more money and material things is an attack on God's exclusive right to human love, trust and obedience.'[10] As Rosner rightly indicates (we'll return to the point), this striking biblical identification of greed and idolatry issues to our contemporary world a massive challenge, for its implications for a materialistic age are far-reaching.

In the passage, Jesus' warning against greed has a specific reason appended to it and this reason leads directly into to the parable. Greed is bad 'because one's life does not consist in the abundance (*en tō perisseuein*) of possessions' (v. 15b).

8 G.K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2008).

9 Brian S. Rosner, *Greed as Idolatry: The Origin and Meaning of a Pauline Metaphor* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007).

10 Ibid., p. 173.

To perisseuein ('abundance') suggests 'the surpluses that sustained the wealth and status of the elite members of society'.[11] It is possible that the contrast Jesus is positing here is between *material* life and *spiritual* life. More likely (and let's remember he is almost certainly addressing in the first instance a person from the poorer half of society), the contrast is between life's luxuries and necessities. Palestinian peasants (the *ptōchoi*) should 'not be deluded by the harshness of their poverty into thinking that life (*zōe*) means having more than one needs.' In other words they are 'not to be deceived into thinking that the solution to poverty is to be found in imitating the delight of the elite in their excesses'.[12]

And so we reach the parable itself – the story of a rich farmer who enjoyed a bumper harvest which gave him an ample surplus (v. 6). The story, told in such a restrained and economical manner, is crafted so as to give us access into the farmer's inner thought processes (vv. 17-19). Two things need to be said about them. First, as more than one commentator points out, these are not the thought processes of a monster of evil but ones which are 'typical of a class of people and typical of a whole social system.' The farmer's thought processes are simply normal. As Stephen Wright says, 'They encapture the whole basis of an exploitative, agrarian society that seeks control over land and wants to use surpluses to finance luxury.'[13]

Secondly, the rich farmer's thought processes are profoundly self-centred. They are so entirely focussed on *numero uno*, and plans of further stockpiling of money and of what it can achieve as means to the supply of luxury, that he has no space left in his thinking for either God or others. God and neighbour apparently do not exist for him. As Anna Wierzbicka spells out, in the brief inner dialogue, known only to God and to us the readers, the rich man (in English translation) uses the word 'I' six times; 'my', four times; and the five sentences with a second-person subject ('you have', 'take your ease', 'eat', 'drink', and 'be merry') in fact refer to the same person as the six with an overt first-person subject. In fact all eleven of the man's sentences name himself as the subject; it is not just a question of 'me first' but of 'me and only me'.[14]

Barbara Reid makes the interesting point that the description of the man as speaking only to himself is startling in view of what she calls the,

[11] Wright, op. cit., p. 221.
[12] Wright, op. cit., p. 222.
[13] Wright, op. cit., p. 223.
[14] Anna Wierzbicka, *What Did Jesus Mean? Explaining the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables in Simple and Universal Human Concepts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 389.

> …dyadic personality out of which Palestinians of the first century operated… One's self-identity is embedded in that of one's family, clan, village, occupation and religious group. A modern day western person's notion of individuality would be foreign to the people of Jesus' world.[15]

As Reid indicates, in that kind of society, 'every important decision was made in community, in endless dialogue with others. Every angle was examined, possibility weighted, scenario painted. In such a world, the isolation of the rich man is alarming'.[16] There is something strangely modern (or postmodern) about the lonely isolation of this sad figure.

And yet, on the surface, there was much sense in the plan he proposed to himself. There is no evidence that he is a brutal monster or, as has been suggested, that his purpose in building larger barns was deliberately 'to withhold his agricultural goods and thereby raise prices and exploit the poor of the land'.[17] Rather, he is seeking to protect his belongings, he aims to make his future as secure as possible and he aims to enjoy what he has acquired as the fruit of his labours. It looks a sensible and prudent course of action to pull down his existing barns and build larger ones to store up his grain and goods (v. 18).

The fatal flaw in his position, however, becomes clear. He has become an idolater in the proper sense of the term, who is consumed by his possessions and for whom the meaning and value of life had come to depend entirely on them. His own identity had become so tied up in his wealth that he and his possessions could not be separated. He had become so self-absorbed in his greed-fuelled acquisition of goods that neither God nor neighbour figured in his reckoning. He and he alone must be in complete and utter control of his current situation and future prospects.

In his soliloquy he addresses himself: *Psuche* (like *nephesh* in Hebrew, a word connoting not merely the 'soul' as a separate entity but the whole person as a vital, conscious, intelligent, volitional being), *anapauou* ('relax', 'take your ease'). The attractive prospect, secured by his relentless acquisition of goods, is essentially hedonistic: 'eat, drink and be merry', words which echo an epicurean slogan attested in various classical authors such as Euripides, Menander and Plutarch, as well as in Tobit 7:9. The same basic slogan appears in Isaiah 22:13 where it is held up to ridicule.[18] Significantly, the rich man omits the slogan's usual conclud-

[15] Reid, *Parables*, pp. 137-8.
[16] Ibid., p. 138.
[17] Mary Ann Beavis, *Jesus and Utopia: Looking for the Kingdom of God in the Roman World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), p. 108.
[18] Isaiah 22:12-14 is a passage reflecting God's anger with the people of Judah for refusing to return to him and for 'the cynical fatalism with which they

ing words (found, for example, in Isa. 22:13): 'for tomorrow we die'. His anticipation is of long, relaxing years of luxurious living with thought neither of gratitude to God or of care for neighbour.

And then, of course, the moment of shock strikes, with the appearance of the 'unexpected intruder' – a dramatic reminder to the man that God in fact had not ceased to exist. Rather, he has something to say to him and about him, and in one word – the very first – he gives the divine assessment of the man's life to date: *Aphrōn*! (v. 20). 'Fool!' We are clearly intended to hear loudly the echo of the opening line of Psalm 14 (13 in the LXX): 'The *aphrōn* says in his heart "There is no God".' The Hebrew is *nabhāl*, also the name of a figure in Scripture who invites close comparison with the Rich Fool of our parable (see 1 Samuel 25). Psalm 14:1 expresses a form of theoretical atheism. It is not clear whether the parable's rich man engaged in such abstract reflections but because he has placed all his trust, and has found all his security, in possessions, to all intents and purposes his way of life is that of a practical atheist, associated with an essentially idolatrous worldview.[19]

Wierzbicka comments:

> The thought of God doesn't enter his mind at all; but this non-existent God bursts into the parable, into the dialogue the *aphrōn* is having with his soul, and says something that is utterly unexpected – both to the protagonist and to the hearer. What the protagonist didn't expect in the least is the announcement of his impending death, and what the hearer didn't expect is God's perspective on the *aphrōn's* life.[20]

The hearer, she points out, might have expected something like:

> "You wicked man – don't you realise that your life is immoral – that this is a bad way to live one's life?"… But in fact, God doesn't take a moral and religious stand at all, and he doesn't condemn the man's life as immoral. Rather, he points out its foolishness, that is, its counter productiveness from the point of view of the man's own objectives.[21]

Kenneth Bailey comments:

faced imminent disaster'. See *The Harper Collins Study Bible including Apocryphal Deuterocanonical Books* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006), p. 940.

19 Note Testament of Judah (T. Jud., c. 2nd century B.C.), in which the patriarch speaks to his child, saying that 'Love of money leads to idolatry', 19.1.

20 Wierzbicka, op. cit., p. 390.

21 Ibid.

> There is no accusing question, such as "What have you done for others?" or "Why have you failed to help those in need" Rather, God thunders, "Look at what you have done to yourself! You plan alone, build alone, indulge alone, and now you will die alone."[22]

God's final words to the rich man were in the form of a question: 'And the things you have prepared, whose shall they be?' Who is going to get all this stuff? As David Buttrick says, 'A Jewish audience hearing the parable will know the answer. Ultimately, the goods will be distributed to the hungry according to God's purposes.'[23] And this, we might add, is the God to whom they belong from first to last. 'The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,' affirmed the Psalmist (Psalm 24:1). All that any human being has by way of material possessions, they have entirely on loan from the One to whom they truly belong.

II. THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL: MESSAGE AND CHALLENGE

In the remaining time I would like to make some attempt at addressing the question of the parable's ongoing message and challenge for a 21st century consumerist society like ours. There are, of course, major differences between the social, political and economic situation of modern western capitalist societies and those of the first century Middle East. Some scholars have argued that it is impossible to cut Jesus' teaching loose from its original Jewish context. It is increasingly recognized, however, that this is a hopelessly narrow position and that the Gospel message can be transported into other languages and cultures without the slightest betrayal of its essential truth. As Luke Timothy Johnson says: 'The majority of Christians still expect a proclamation of the word of God that somehow is grounded in the gospel and pertains to the ultimate realities of their own lives.'[24]

22 Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 67. As Wright says, Jesus has a more radical aim than simply to propose a redistribution of wealth. 'Jesus' refusal to adjudicate in an inheritance dispute entailed neither a dismissal of the rich as irretrievably wicked nor a detachment from the problems of the poor. On the contrary, his words called for a response that was immediately possible for both rich and poor. They must awaken to the illusory nature of ownership. Even the poor will find their security only in God, not in clothing, food, or drink (cf. 12:27-31).' Wright, op. cit., pp. 223-4.

23 David Buttrick, *Speaking Parables: A Homiletical Guide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), p. 190.

24 Luke T. Johnson, *The Real Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996), p. 66. Quoted in Wierzbicka, *What Did Jesus Mean?,* p. 16. The work of Anna Wierzbicka,

I think the best place to start is Jesus' brief but pregnant comment at the close of the passage: 'So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God (*eis theon plouton*)' (v. 21). In light of the parable as a whole, these words suggest a number of reflections.[25]

Firstly, a careful reading of Jesus' nine words shows that the desire for, and the acquiring of, money and possessions, and their enjoyment, is not *per se* being censured. This should not be surprising for within the wider context of Scripture we meet a wide variety of men and women of faith who enjoyed the favour of God and who were rich – sometimes very rich – in material goods. Luke himself records various examples of men and women who followed Jesus and who were materially well-to-do. The desire for money may be an indication of greed but is not necessarily so.[26]

In Jesus' words, however, there *is* censure – two-fold censure – and to unpack this ever so briefly should help lead us down paths of contemporary application.

The first censure falls on a life of total self-absorption and self-interest. It is a life devoted entirely to fulfilling a deep desire for one's own good, expressed in 'storing up treasure *for himself*'. Now the parable has no quarrel with the rich farmer's desire for his own good, implicitly endorsing it indeed as natural and proper. The route taken to its fulfilment, however, is presented as profoundly wrong, and inherently incapable of leading him to the destination sought.

Vincent Miller points out the way in which 'advanced capitalist societies are marked by some of the most sophisticated systems for forming and inciting desire that the world has ever seen.' He quotes Tim Edwards to the effect that 'Consumer society "is simply desiring society".'[27] At the same time, as Miller recognizes, 'this concern about the cultivation of desire is something that capitalism shares with Christianity,' and 'this juxtaposition troubles easy distinctions between Christian and consumer desire. Both know endless, insatiable longing.'[28]

The cultivation, control and fulfilment of desire are at heart of both capitalist society and Christian community. The link between the two forms of desire is identified by Augustine in terms of the misdirection or redirection of a natural desire for God toward mere things, with desire itself at times preferred to the One who is able to fulfil humanity's deepest desires. Such misdirected desire reveals our 'deepest longings for transcendence, justice, and self-transformation'.[29] One part of the purpose of this conference, I take it, is to explore the similarities and differences in formation and focus between Christian and consumer desires and the real danger to authentic Christian desire of being distorted and exploited by a consumer culture.

As already noted, and as often observed, the forms of desire cultivated in both have a certain similarity of shape and texture and, as Vincent Miller says, this means that the 'conflict between Christianity and consumer culture lacks the definiteness of a head-on collision'.[30] 'Rather,' says Miller, 'it has about it as much drama as a train switching tracks and going in a slightly different direction.'[31] The two halves of Jesus' statement in v. 21, divided by the two words *kai mē*, represent Miller's two sets of railway tracks.

Track One

In a consumer culture, money holds a central place. Its grip on the modern imagination ('cash is the real thing') is pervasive. A work by Georg Simmel (1858-1918), one of Germany's first sociologists, *The Philosophy of Money*,[32] published as long ago as 1907, and described by

of Polish origin and a distinguished linguist and practising Roman Catholic, deserves to be noted. She has written widely on the universals of language and thought and injected some much needed common sense into the discussion. Drawing on modern linguistic semantics, she challenges the notion that it is impossible to know what Jesus meant in his key sayings and parables. She aims to demonstrate the universal scope and abiding relevance of Jesus' teaching. Members of the 'Jesus Seminar' are among those who would profit from giving her work close attention.

25 Omitted by Codex Bezae and a few Old Latin translations, considerations of both external and internal evidence argue overwhelmingly for their authenticity. Interestingly, the 'Jesus Seminar' who use red, pink, grey and black beads, in descending order, to decide their collective view of the authenticity of the sayings attributed to Jesus, make this a 'red' parable.

26 Repeatedly, in Scripture, it is not the accumulation of wealth, but what one does with it, that is regarded as decisive.

27 Vincent J. Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture* (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 107.

28 Ibid.

29 Jason Clark, 'Consumer Liturgies and their Corrosive Effects on Christian Identity,' in Scott McKnight, Peter Rollins, Kevin Corcoran, Jason Clark, *Church in the Present Tense: A Candid Look at What's Emerging* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), p. 46.

30 Miller, *Consuming Religion*, p. 107.

31 Ibid., pp. 107-8.

32 Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978; originally published 1907). See Craig M. Gay, *Cash Values. Money and the Erosion of Meaning in Today's*

Craig Gay as 'a neglected masterwork', argues that the key to money's distinctive 'alchemy' is 'its objective worthlessness combined with simple arithmetic'.[33] Money's value derives from its (mere) function as a means but as, significantly, Simmel points out,

> Never has an object that owes its value exclusively to its quality as means … so thoroughly and unreservedly developed into a psychological value absolute, into a completely engrossing final purpose governing our practical consciousness.[34]

Craving for money, however, is not simply due to greed. With the increasing disappearance of traditions and traditional social distinctions, it both fills the void left by the passing of traditional society and itself 'actively creates this void by actively liberating people *from* traditional bonds.'[35] Money catalyses fundamentally new kinds of social relationships, enabling us to '"contract" our relations to others and to be related to others only insofar as we *choose* to be related'.[36]

There is a dark side, however, to this apparent liberation – namely that it has the effect of depersonalising social relations. As Simmel says,

> The more the unifying bond of social life takes on the character of an association for specific purposes [in which case people's achievements rather than their personalities become all-important], the more soulless it becomes. The complete heartlessness of money is reflected in our social culture, which is itself determined by money.[37]

Peter Berger helpfully expresses the point:

> The world created by capitalism is indeed a "cold" one. Liberating though it may be, it also involves the individual in countless relations with other people that are based on calculating rationality, "What is this person worth to me?", superficial … and inevitably transient.[38]

Simmel observes that while 'the money economy is remarkably productive and inventive', it seems to lack the ability 'to foster the development

Society (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 63-72. For the purposes of this paper, I follow closely Gay's exposition of Simmel.

33 Gay, *Cash Values*, pp. 63-4.
34 Op. cit., p. 64.
35 Op. cit., p. 65.
36 Op. cit., p. 65.
37 Op. cit., p. 65.
38 Op. cit., p. 66.

of character, or at least not beyond fairly narrow limits. Writing in 2003, Gay comments:

> Just imagine what Simmel would have to say about this discrepancy today – when we have completed mapping the millions of lines of code that make up the human genome, while at the same time we are aware that the average individual does not read even one book a year, and even then not much above the reading age of a 10-year-old.[39]

Simmel concluded that 'the restless pursuits' that mark our modern age 'follow logically upon our intemperate reliance upon money today.' Modernity (and post-modernity)'s craving for excitement [Christopher Dawson in the 30s described the new age of culture – arguably still with us – as 'The Age of the Cinema'] can be explained in part by 'the flat and grey quality of our experience of the world crated by money'.[40] Simmel, with great clarity, perceived the link between the 'dawning of this new age' and 'the peculiar operations of the money economy'. If 'life itself has come to be experienced as a kind of malleable melange of commodified meanings, values and significations,' and culture, in postmodern understanding, 'a kind of game in which we simply rearrange meanings and values into new configurations, "trying them on for size", as it were,' then, as Gay notes,

> …we also find that we are increasingly at a loss as to what to do with our newfound freedom. For as money levels experience by making everything conveniently comparable in terms of simple arithmetical calculations, we begin to experience the world as a place devoid of *all* qualities and *all* purposes, as a place in which, as Simmel put it, "all things lie on the same level and differ from one another only in the area which they cover".

Money, 'which is supposed to be simply a means to an end, simply a tool to be put to use in the services of our purposes', in these circumstances 'eclipses whatever purposes we may once have had and eventually displaces them in a kind of "teleological dislocation". Money becomes *the only purpose*.'[41]

With characteristic insight, Kierkegaard, in the mid-19th century, had already recognised 'money's teleological dislocation of human purposes within bourgeois culture' and writes about it with sharp irony, concluding that 'in the end, therefore, money will be the one thing people

39 Op. cit., pp. 65-6.
40 Op. cit., p. 68.
41 Op. cit., pp. 69-70.

will desire…'[42] Glenn Tinder's comment is apposite: 'The amount that a person owns (his worth!) can be precisely calculated, thus giving to the independence and security wealth supposedly provides an appearance of unassailable objectivity. Holdings in money can be indefinitely increased; one's barns become infinitely capacious. And since money is readily convertible into a variety of physical possessions and personal services, it adds to the charm of ownership the allure of power. 'It is not surprising,' concludes Tinder, 'that "the love of money" is characterized in the New Testament as "the root of all evils".'[43]

The parable of the Rich Fool speaks very directly to this situation of the 'dislocation of human purposes' which characterises a money economy and which was so strikingly anticipated by Kierkegaard and Simmel. Interestingly, Simmel makes reference to the 'intriguing similarities between money as "absolute means" and the traditionally religious conception of God as "absolute agent". There is little doubt, Simmel thought, that the feelings aroused in us by money are psychologically similar to those aroused in us by the notion of God.' Like God, money 'rises … above the whole broad diversity of objects; it becomes the centre in which the most opposed, the most estranged and the most distant things find their common denominator and come into contract with one another.' Simmel expressed the view that 'it is no wonder … that traditionally religious folk were so frequently suspicious of money. And,' he thought, 'it is no wonder today that in the absence of this traditional religious suspicion, money has so thoroughly captured the modern imagination.'[44]

David Wells speaks trenchantly of the modern enterprise of moneyed economies in terms of 'an ironic recapitulation of the first dislocation in which God's creatures replaced their Creator and exiled him from his own world. As it turns out,' says Wells,

> …we too have lost our centre through this transition…We may now have everything, but none of it means anything any more … Not only are we betrayed; we betray *ourselves*. Meanwhile, we also pay the price of destroying all interest in the Transcendent, the sole source of genuine meaning in life… We are like Yeats's falcon, increasingly oblivious to the voice of the falconer. The centre no longer holds. All is flung to the periphery, where its meaning is lost. We have become T.S. Eliot's "hollow men," without weight, for whom appearance an image must suffice. This is what accounts for the anxious search for self that is now afoot …[45]

[42] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Present Age & Of the Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle*, trans. Alexander Dru (New York: Harper, 1962), p. 184. See Gay, op. cit., p. 70.

[43] Ibid., quoting Glenn Tinder, *The Political Meaning of Christianity: The Prophetic Stance* (San Francisco: Harper, 1989), p. 184.

[44] Op. cit., p. 71.

Attention to the witness of Scripture in general, and that of the parable of the Rich Fool in particular, would lead to an anticipation of this outcome. *Houtos ho thēsaurizōn heautō*, said Jesus (v. 21). In this light the pressing need for individuals, for the church, for society today, is the kind of deep *metanoia* of, for example, Romans 12:2, that will bring us off these tracks to nowhere, and onto those that represent the true meaning and purpose of human life. According to Jesus here, this is nothing other than to be *eis theon plouton* – 'rich toward God' (v. 21). Only with such a recovery will the purely instrumental use of money and possessions find their true place in the life of individuals and of society.

Track Two

'Rich toward God' (Lk. 12:21). It is an expression that suggests at least two thoughts. Firstly, is a reminder of where authentic human wealth really lies – in that relationship with God our Creator, Redeemer and Judge for which we were made. Down the ages it has been an observed characteristic of human beings that they are marked by a restlessness of desire. Augustine of Hippo famously expressed his own inner restlessness in the prayer: 'You stir man [*sic*] to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.'[46] In Book 10 of his Confessions, Augustine searches and interrogates all created things in a search for satisfaction, only to be told by them: 'We are not God' and 'He made us.'[47] As he ponders memory – or the unconscious mind – as a vast, boundless sphere of desires and hopes for happiness, as well as of fears and sorrows, Augustine recognizes that desire for God is part of the way humans have been made. It is an explicit signal of eternity – the eternity which the Rich Fool entirely omitted from his reckoning. The same basic thought is found in the Book of Ecclesiastes, and in such Christian thinkers and writers as Pascal, C.S. Lewis (explored for example in his *The Pilgrim's Regress*) and James Houston who expresses the thought beautifully: 'There is an empty throne within the throne room

[45] David Wells, *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), p. 14.

[46] Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, translated by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 3.

[47] Op. cit., p. 184.

of our hearts that only God can fill.'[48] Houston makes this relevant comment:

> Many people trivialize their desire for God, and settle for something that is inferior. When this happens, we exchange God for cheap idolatry, whether we worship work, money, sex or status. But they can never satisfy desire. It would be like trying to fill the Pacific Ocean with pebbles thrown into the waves. As Augustine said, the response of the ocean itself would be, "But I too am a creature, that God made me".[49]

The truth is, in Houston's words, that 'without God as the supreme expression of goodness, love and personhood, human beings can have no true exaltation or dignity, uniquely loved for our own sake… The uniqueness of the Christian faith is that it orients man [*sic*] to hope in God, to respond to his love and to rest in God alone as the only source of ultimate happiness'[50] – and, we might add, of ultimate security, as the One in whom the fear and anxiety (of which the context of the parable speaks) which drive our relentless acquisitiveness, find their deep healing. As Stanley Hauerwas expresses it:

> If one characteristic is to be associated with greed, it is the presumption that no matter how much we may have, we need "more". We need more because we cannot be sure that what we have is secure. So the more we have the more we must have in order to secure what we have.[51]

I am reminded of the words of the much-loved (fictional) skipper of a west coast puffer, Para Handy, to his mate, Dougie: 'You know, Dougie,' he said, 'if I had all the money I needed, I would never ask for a penny more.'

Greed in the Bible is based on the illusion that human beings can secure their own lives through material possessions. To the contrary, as Augustine saw, the only lasting treasure comes from God and neighbour. Obsession with money reflects humanity's attempt to discover human freedom, security and fulfilment without reference to God. Material goods, because created by God, are good in themselves, but they are not ultimate goods. Rather, in Augustine's terms, they are to be used on the

48 James Houston, *In Search of Happiness. The Quest for Personal Fulfilment* (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1990), p. 244.

49 Ibid., p. 243.

50 Ibid., p. 245.

51 Stanley Hauerwas, 'Can greed be a good?' First posted 9 June 2010. http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2010/06/09/2922773.htm. Accessed 29 April 2016.

path of return to God; God alone is to be enjoyed for his own sake.[52] As Augustine never tired of pointing out, the only lasting good that will never disappoint us is the everlasting love of God.[53]

Being 'rich toward God', then, is about a relationship of love with the God who has revealed himself in Jesus – the God who gives us and sustains us in life and who gives to human life its meaning and purpose. That relationship of love with God, however, necessarily entails another – a relationship of love with neighbour. For Augustine, again, the dual love of God and neighbour is the sum total of the message of Scripture: 'So if it seems to you that you have understood the divine scriptures, or any part of them, in such a way that by this understanding you do not build up this love of God and neighbour, then you have not yet understood them.'[54]

The call to 'be rich toward God' might suggest a mere private spirituality, as self-focused in its way as the life-style of the Rich Fool. There is some evidence that the phrase was used as a metaphor for almsgiving. In any case, in light of the dual love command of Jesus and Scripture, private spirituality without charity, kindness and generosity is little worth. The question, 'What is our real good?' can be answered in light of Scripture as being 'to live in love *with* God' *and* 'to live in love *with* other people.'

For Calvin, at the very core of the will of God with which we are asked to align ourselves lies 'human solidarity'. Believing the creation to be infused with the Creator's generosity, and rejecting the idolatry of wealth in modern consumerist societies, Christians are bound to seek for ways in which that generosity can be made to work for all, especially those most economically disadvantaged. If everything created is – ultimately – God's alone, a right approach to money and goods must entail a commitment to social justice and active engagement in endeavours that aim at their equitable distribution. That this is not happening as it should is, as Hauerwas points out, a spiritual problem. Habits formed by modern societies shape us, he says, in such a way that 'acquisitiveness is assumed to be a character trait that is indispensable for continuous and limitless economic growth.' From that standpoint, he says, with the assumption that a capitalist system is divinely mandated along with democracy, 'the idea that a lower standard of living could be considered a viable alternative to economically driven policies of liberal democratic societies, is almost

52 For the important Augustinian distinction between 'use' and 'enjoyment' (*uti/frui*), see Saint Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, translated with an Introduction and Notes by R.P.H. Green (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 8-10 (I.3.3 – I.5.5).

53 Op. cit., p. 25 (I.33.37).

54 Op. cit., p. 27 (I.36.40).

unfathomable.' 'What do you do with a bumper crop,' asks Hauerwas. 'Why, you give it away with a fine, free, gleeful carelessness!...You make sure the hungry are fed, the poor have funding, the aged are cared for, the sick are healed.'[55]

Brueggemann argues that the defining problem confronting us now is 'the conflict between the (capitalist) myth of scarcity and the (biblical) narrative of abundance. 'Jesus,' he says, 'demonstrated that the world is filled with abundance and freighted with generosity.' In his ministry, says Brueggemann, we see a 'subversive reordering of public reality.'[56]

There are times, I confess, when I moan, to myself at least, about the level of a minister's stipend. I look at some of those who were my peers at school and University who have already retired most comfortably. How desirable to have the means to retire comfortably whenever one chooses to do so! It's an exceedingly wicked thought, I know, and in indulging it I am revealed to be in person the Rich Fool of the parable. The truth is that in terms of the situation of the vast majority of people who have ever lived on the planet – as well as in the world today – I am incredibly wealthy. What I need to be doing, more than I am, is seeking more effective ways of sharing what I have with those who have not.

With reference to the transformative experience of Moses at the Burning Bush and its social, economic and political implications, Richard Rohr says:

> There is no authentic God experience that does not situate you in the world in a very different way. After an encounter with True Presence you see things quite differently, and it gives you freedom from your usual loyalties and low-level pay-offs – the system that gave you your security, your status, your economics, and your very identity.

He believes that Christians have tended to locate sin merely in the realm of the life of the individual while,

> Structural sin is accepted as good and necessary on the corporate or national level … Jesus spends little time trying to ferret out sinners [some of his latter-day followers appear to spend much time on that] or impose purity codes in any form. He just goes where the pain is. I dare you to try to disprove that![57]

55 Hauerwas, op. cit.

56 Walter Brueggemann, 'The Liturgy of Abundance, The Myth of Scarcity,' in the *Christian Century*, March 24-31, 1999.

57 Richard Rohr, 'Bias from the Bottom: Week 1. Liberation Theology. Sunday, March 20, 2016.' http://cac.org/liberation-theology-2016-03-20/ Accessed 29 April 2016.

Ilia Delio, a Franciscan scientist and theologian, writing about the subversive meaning of the incarnation, challenges the contemporary church to take the scandal and downward movement of the incarnation seriously and to let it re-arrange our priorities. Delio sees the 'problem' of immigrants, welfare recipients, the incarcerated, the mentally ill and the disabled, and all who are marginalised by main stream society, as a problem of the incarnation. In very challenging words, she writes,

> When we reject our relatedness to the poor, the weak, the simple and the unlovable…in the place of God we decide who is worthy of our attention and who can be rejected. Because of our deep fears, we spend time attention and money on preserving our boundaries of privacy and increasing our knowledge and power. We hermetically seal ourselves off from the undesired "other", the stranger, and in doing so, we seal ourselves off from God. By rejecting God in the neighbour, we reject the love that can heal us.[58]

Rohr says,

> We live in a cold time… The rejection of refugee women and children … fleeing for their very lives into the richest (per capita) continent of Europe, has suddenly brought our lack of basic compassion and mercy into sharp and urgent focus. The unloving, glaringly self-centred, and even cruel behaviour of so many Christians, Muslims and Jews, has exposed religious hypocrisy for all the world to see. We live in a cold time, and we must pray for the warming of hearts and opening of minds.'[59]

As Craig Blomberg suggests, one of the great needs of the contemporary church is to,

> …recover a biblical perspective on stewardship of material possessions. "Give me neither poverty nor riches," prayed the writer of the proverb; but, since most of us already have riches, we need to be praying more often "and help me to be generous and wise in giving more of those riches away".[60]

One simple observation in this light is that we need to look closely at the choices we make with our resources, not least in connection with the fre-

58 Ilia Delio, *Compassion: Living in the Spirit of St Francis* (Cincinatti: Franciscan Media, 2011), p. 6.

59 Rohr, 'Bias from the Bottom: Week 2. Awakening to Mercy. Friday, April 1, 2016.' http://cac.org/awakening-to-mercy-2016-04-01/ Accessed 29 April 2016.

60 Craig L. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), p. 253.

quently inordinate expenditure on weddings and funerals. As Snodgrass says, 'Christians should rethink what it means to be rich toward God in our public displays'[61]

Lest I leave the impression of a picture of unrelieved gloom, let me close with one or two examples of the way in which the church – the Church of Scotland to which I belong, in collaboration with others – is seeking to take seriously the challenge to be rich toward God in love for neighbour.

The Church helped establish globally the Fair Trade movement which now feels almost mainstream. This is an economics with people at the heart. My colleague Martin Johnstone, Secretary of the Church & Society Council points out that (I quote) 'twenty five years ago some of us were seen as weird (and were weird) drinking campaign coffee. Now it is unusual to be at many gatherings where there isn't a commitment to fair trade.'

Secondly, work is ongoing – through the Church and others – around affordable credit. This includes the work of the Carnegie UK Trust; the Churches Mutual Credit Union and Scotcash.[62] Other promising initiatives include participatory budgeting which are necessarily about economics in hard terms but are also about how people decide money should be spent. There are also interesting models like Social Investment Bonds.

Thirdly, the Church of Scotland has been heavily involved in the establishment of WEvolution[63] a superb little movement learning from women's self-help groups across the world and implementing this learning in Scotland. This is one of John Swinney's favourite organisations – it recently received a £225,000 grant from the Scottish Government – and it started when one individual (Noel Mathias) took 13 women from some of Scotland's poorest communities to India.

I should also mention the ground-breaking work of the Special Commission on the Purpose of Economic Activity whose 2012 report is well worth reading and available online.[64]

An interesting new development, reflecting this time constructive inter-faith cooperation, is a partnership between the Church of Scotland

61 Snodgrass, op. cit., p. 401.

62 Relevant webpages are:
http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/changing-minds/enterprise-and-society/affordable-credit
http://cmcu.org.uk/
http://www.scotcash.net/

63 www.wevolution.org.uk

64 http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/9592/23_SPECIAL_2012_P3.pdf

and the Islamic Finance Council on ethical finance. This modest project reflects principles common to both faiths and aims to help the poorest in society. Islam, of course, forbids the charging of interest on loans and Islamic-compliant finance products eschew investments in alcohol, tobacco and gambling: a position shared by the Kirk. This initiative has been widely reported. This initiative has been widely reported, from the Financial Times at home to the Pakistan Observer abroad. Interestingly, our press-conference to announce the partnership occurred on the very morning of the Brussels terrorist atrocity. Some have commented that this modest initiative represented a little candle of hope in a very dark scene. For your interest, the Islamic Finance Council has been strongly influenced in its work by the Rev Henry Duncan, a 19th century Church of Scotland minister, and friend of Rev Robert Murray McCheyne, who established the first Trustee Savings Bank in Ruthwell. He is widely admired for having established ethical banking as a means of helping the poorest in society rise above the constraints of their circumstances.

These are all, I believe, laudable endeavours to make concrete the belief that economics should be at core about relationships, not money. Much more requires to be done. As Richard Hays writes,

> No matter how much hermeneutical squirming we may do, it is impossible to escape the implications of the New Testament's address to us: imaginative obedience to God will require of us a sharing of possessions far more radical than the church has ordinarily supposed.[65]

As Hays points out,

> …while the particular mandates and forms of expression may vary, the New Testament witnesses speak loudly in chorus: the accumulation of wealth is antithetical to serving God's kingdom, and Jesus' disciples are called at least to share their good generously with those in need, and perhaps even to give everything away in order to follow him more freely.[66]

Or in the words of Miroslav Volf,

> We embrace the conviction that God is an infinitely generous source of all good, but conveniently forget that we were created in God's image to be in some significant sense like God – not like God in God's divinity, for we are human and not divine, but like God "in true righteousness and holiness"

65 Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (London: T & T Clark, 1996), p. 468.

66 Op. cit., p. 466.

> (Ephesians 4:24), like God in loving enemies (Matthew 5:44). To live well as a human being is to live in sync with who God is and how God acts.[67]

We are, truly, more – far more – than our possessions, and the challenge is real and urgent to demonstrate meaningfully our belief that that is so. In so learning to live generous, anxiety-free lives of trust in a Heavenly Father in whom our ultimate security is found, we do well to have the summons and promise of Jesus ringing in our ears: 'But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well' (Matt. 6:33).[68]

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67 Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), p. 226.

68 The Archbishop of Canterbury has written an excellent book, for Lent 2017, on the theme of this paper. See Justin Welby, *Dethroning Mammon: Making Money Serve Grace* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017). Archbishop Welby's urgent call to enthrone Christ in our hearts and in our civilisation, and thus to dethrone Mammon, as the path to joy and freedom, is both timely and important.

The Gospel and the Marketplace
Finlayson Memorial Lecture, 2016[1]

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Thank you to the Society for the invitation to deliver the 2016 Finlayson Memorial Lecture. It is a great honour to do so, though I have to confess to accepting the invitation less in my own capacity and more on behalf of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.

LICC was founded in 1982 by John Stott, who had for many years been Rector at All Souls Langham Place in London. Stott was well known for his call to 'double listening' – to the *word* and to the *world*, in order to relate the one to the other.[2] He founded LICC as an organisation to help Christians engage biblically with the issues they faced in their everyday life. In the ongoing work of LICC, that concern has been folded into a fuller vision of being disciples of Jesus in the everyday arenas in which we find ourselves, on our 'frontlines' – the places where we spend most of our time, whether at work or in the home, or out and about in the local community. What does it mean to be equipped as missionary followers of Jesus in those ordinary, everyday places?

It is with those concerns in mind that we approach the topic before us. Not merely in a way that will engage our minds, but in a way that will inspire the hearts of all who own the name of Christ and who, in line with the concern of the Scottish Evangelical Theological Society, want to see God's mission expand in Scotland and beyond.

We here explore the topic of 'the gospel and the marketplace' in three movements. First, by considering what is understood by the 'Marketplace', looking particularly at some of the many facets of consumerist culture in society at large and in the church. Then, secondly, we reflect briefly on the 'Gospel', the good news that God has acted in Jesus to bring salvation to us and to the world. Then, thirdly, we highlight some implications of

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1 Delivered on 4 April 2016 at St Silas Church, Glasgow, as part of the annual conference of the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society, the topic for which was: 'A Gospel for Sale? Is God a Commodity?' This version has been lightly revised for publication, but still largely retains the informal nature of its original presentation.

2 This is laid out in John Stott, *The Contemporary Christian: An Urgent Plea for Double Listening* (Leicester: IVP, 1992).

the gospel for our reflections on, and our engagement with, the culture of the marketplace.

THE MARKETPLACE

In some contexts, 'marketplace' is used as a more-or-less equivalent term for 'workplace'.[3] More strictly, 'marketplace' has to do with the arena of commercial dealings, the world of trade. What follows, however, is not a treatment of economics or the virtues of different economic systems – socialism, capitalism, or something else – although there are debates to be had here. Instead, in view is how the 'marketplace' functions as a cultural driver in society today. This is to recognise that there are various drivers at work in contemporary culture, forces which shape the waves we encounter in our daily lives, and which shape us in the process. The 'marketplace' is just one of those drivers, albeit a significant one.

Susan White wrote some years ago:

> If there is any overarching metanarrative that purports to explain reality in the late 20th century, it is surely the narrative of the free-market economy. In the beginning of this narrative is the self-made, self-sufficient human being. At the end of this narrative is the big house, the big car, and the expensive clothes. In the middle is the struggle for success, the greed, the getting-and-spending in a world where there is no such thing as a free lunch. Most of us have made this so thoroughly "our story" that we are hardly aware of its influence.[4]

The marketplace is a way of explaining life. In order to approach the topic of 'The Gospel and the Marketplace' we must observe outcomes of commodification and consumerism, first upon the general public and second with respect to Christian faith and practice. We will then be in a position to consider the implications of the gospel upon a market culture.

1. Commodification and consumerism in general

Sophie Kinsella's *Confessions of a Shopaholic* (London: Black Swan, 2000) was the first in a series of novels, following Rebecca Bloomwood through her adventures in shopping and life.[5] The movie of the book was released

[3] For example: Pete Hammond, R. Paul Stevens, and Todd Svanoe, *The Marketplace Annotated Bibliography: A Christian Guide to Books on Work, Business and Vocation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002).

[4] Susan J. White, 'A New Story to Live By?', *Transmission* (Spring 1998), pp. 3-4.

[5] 'Confessions of a Shopaholic'. Directed by P. J. Hogan. Touchstone Pictures, 2009.

in 2009. It begins with Becky out on a shopping spree, who sums up her life in these words: 'Rebecca Bloomwood. Occupation: journalist. Jacket: Visa. Dress: AmEx. Belt: Mastercard. It's minted, and I get 1 percent cash back. Bag: Gucci – and it's worth every penny.'

As it happens, we don't need to do much serious research to see evidence of consumerism all around us in everyday life. Imagine we visit a typical High Street in a typical town. The first thing we want to do is get something to eat, so we head to Burger King, and come across this:

> Have it your way. You have the right to have what you want, exactly when you want it. Because on the menu of life, you are 'Today's Special'. And tomorrow's. And the day after that. And... well, you get the drift. Yes, that's right. We may be the King, but you my friend, are the almighty ruler.

Then we pop into Uniqlo, and are greeted with this:

> Uniqlo. Made for all. It doesn't matter who you are or where you live, Uniqlo makes clothes that transcend all categories and social groups. Our clothes are made for all, going beyond age, gender, occupation, ethnicity and all the other ways that define people. Our clothes are simple and essential yet universal, so people can freely combine them with their own unique styles, in any way they choose, every day of the year.

Then, after we've done all we came to do and probably much more, we head home on the train, worn out, and we look up and see an advert for easyJet:

> The I can't wait to go generation.
> The early risers for the airport cab, last minute packing, full of excitement generation.
> The head first into water, wine or work generation.
> The nip over, seal the deal, back for story time generation.
> The walk until you're lost, find a quaint spot, strangers become friends generation.
> The we've been coming here for years, but still fall in love generation.
> The I don't want to go home, let's stay longer generation.
> The back at the office, staring out the window, let's do it again generation.
> The everyone doing it their way generation.
> The more places, more choices, more often generation.
> This is generation easyJet.

Examples could be multiplied many times over. We are living in a culture where we are increasingly defined by what we consume – whether shopping, eating, watching sport, receiving healthcare, or where we send our children to school.

As Lily Allen sings:

> And I am a weapon of mass consumption
> And it's not my fault, it's how I'm programmed to function.[6]

Nor does it take too much to see in such examples a certain view of human beings – an *anthropology*; a certain view of salvation – a *soteriology*; a certain view of community – an *ecclesiology*; a certain view of hope – an *eschatology*. It doesn't take much, in other words, to see consumerism as an overarching view of the world and of life which affects the thinking and values in society more broadly – and which goes far beyond the goods we buy. As Dave Landrum of the Evangelical Alliance UK says:

> There's marriage. Once seen as the building block of society, but now effectively privatised, consigned to be redefined evermore by the free-market of relationships. There's sexuality. Despite biological identity being fixed in nature, it's now being subjected to consumer choice by 'gender fluidity'. And then there's life itself. With abortion, the consumer fixation with 'pro-choice' has created an entire industry, and alongside sex-selective abortions, another bio-engineering industry is developing to supply 'designer babies' to suit our lifestyle choices.[7]

Consumerism thus affects more than shopping habits. It is a deeply ingrained way of seeing the world, where everything can be commodified.

What we see in everyday life is borne out – beyond novels by Sophie Kinsella and songs by Lily Allen! – in research on consumerism. Space permits us to highlight only a few points about the nature of consumerism that flow out of those who have worked in this area.[8]

6 Lily Allen, 'The Fear' (2009).

7 David Landrum, 'Consuming Passions', *Idea* (March/April 2016), p. 12.

8 For fuller treatments, see: *Christ and Consumerism: A Critical Analysis of the Spirit of the Age*, ed. by Craig Bartholomew and Thorsten Moritz (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000); William T. Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Mark Clavier, *Rescuing the Church from Consumerism* (London: SPCK, 2013); Laura M. Hartman, *The Christian Consumer: Living Faithfully in a Fragile World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); John F. Kavanaugh, *Following Christ in a Consumer Society: The Spirituality of Cultural Resistance* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2006. 2nd edn.); Vincent J. Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003); Bruce P. Rittenhouse, *Shopping for Meaningful Lives: The Religious Motive of Consumerism* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2013).

Firstly, *consumerism exalts choice*. We benefit from the variety and freedom of choice in today's western culture. Nor is it necessarily wrong to own things. Unless, of course, they start to own us! Then, with the logic of 'I shop, therefore I am', we buy things we don't really need with money we don't really have. As William Cavanaugh notes, 'consumerism is not so much about having more as it is about having something else; that's why it is not simply *buying* but *shopping* that is the heart of consumerism'.[9]

Secondly, *consumerism entails detachment*. Consumerism detaches us from people and from the natural world. In the west, we have moved from a place where the average family has changed from one of production to one of consumption. We no longer chop wood. We turn up the thermostat. With some exceptions, we no longer grow our own vegetables and fruit, or keep and kill our own chickens and pigs. We have become separated from the realities of production. There are children in some urban settings who don't know where milk comes from. We have very little consciousness of how long it takes for things to grow. We take it for granted that flowers and bananas are available all year round. All this shapes how we think about ourselves and the world.

In that sense, we are detached from *production* and the *producers*. We are detached in another sense from the *products* themselves. We sometimes think consumerism is about greed and holding on to things. In reality, it's more about *detachment* from things, moving on to the next new thing.

Cavanaugh helpfully points out some affinities with the Christian faith at this point. Christians also believe that created things, though good, are never ends in themselves, and so they will always fail fully to satisfy. The difference, according to Cavanaugh, is that in consumerism, detachment continually moves us from one product to another, whereas in Christianity it leads – or ought to do so – to a greater attachment to God and to others.[10]

Thirdly, *consumerism promises freedom*. Free market freedom is defined as the absence of limitations on the individual pursuit of desires. But the freedom promised by consumerism doesn't deliver. It's a flawed view, because it defines freedom negatively, as an absolute freedom from any external constraints. For Christians, true freedom does not involve living for ourselves, but living under the lordship of Jesus. Paradoxically, belonging to Christ marks not the end of slavery but the beginning of a

9 Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed*, p. 35, his italics.

10 Ibid., pp. 33-58.

new type of slavery. We're set free from one master into the service of another, to be 'slaves to righteousness' and 'slaves of God' (Romans 6:18-19, 22).

Related to this, fourthly, *consumerism generates dissatisfaction*. The tendency with consumerism is to create dissatisfaction with what we have, where wanting takes precedence over having, creating a 'consumer cycle'. There is a *desire*, which leads to the *acquisition* of a good, then *use* of that good, which, however, leads to *disillusionment*, because it doesn't measure up to its promise, or an upgraded model comes out, or something else takes its place, which then leads to a *renewed desire*, and the process repeats. Small wonder a marketing manager of General Motors referred to his task as the 'organised creation of dissatisfaction'.

In 2005, the street artist Banksy produced a stencil work depicting Jesus Christ crucified, with outstretched arms holding shopping bags. In the shopping bags one can see wrapped presents, a candy cane, and part of a Mickey Mouse doll, emphasising how the Christmas season, which is supposed to celebrate the birth of Jesus, has come to represent consumerism. The crucifixion may stand for how people sacrifice themselves for material things. But the objects themselves are melting, showing that they do not bring satisfaction.

Fifthly, *consumerism shapes desires*. James K.A. Smith invites us to be cultural anthropologists from Mars who are studying the religious behaviour of human beings, taking in a number of sites of religious practice. One particular temple we visit, surrounded by a moat of coloured asphalt, is attended by thousands of pilgrims every day. Making our way through it is akin to wandering through an ancient labyrinth. Various chapels of devotion lined up on each side, their windows displaying 3D icons of what the 'good life' looks like, invite us to explore further. Others, too, are looking, on a quest to find something. Finally, when we do find what we think will bring us happiness, we take it up to the priest at the altar to perform an act of transaction. The priest consummates the action, sending us out with a benediction – 'have a great day, see you again'.[11]

Smith is not the only one to use this illustration, but the shopping centre, or mall (in case it was not obvious in the above description!), is a particularly potent representative of the marketplace – an intensification

[11] James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Cultural Liturgies; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), pp. 89-103, and *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016), pp. 38-53.

of a wider set of practices associated with consumerism.[12] The rhythms, rituals, and spaces of the shopping centre add up to what Smith calls a 'cultural liturgy', which is loaded with a particular vision of what constitutes the 'good life'. What vision does it embody? What kind of people does it want us to become? Visit it regularly enough, says Smith, and we will be shaped. We might not notice the shaping, but we are being trained, 'discipled' no less, to view life in a certain way. We are absorbing powerful 'sermons' about the way our life *could be* if we'd only adopt this lifestyle, or give this product a try.

Crucially, in Smith's account, the shopping centre does not engage our *minds* first and foremost. Smith suggests that behind much of our pedagogy as Christians and in our churches is a view of human beings as primarily 'thinking things'. Discipleship gets reduced to the issue of right *thinking*. If we could only instil the right sort of *knowledge* and get people to *understand*, we think, everything would be okay. But this is where the marketplace culture perhaps understands human beings better than churches do – because it understands that we're fundamentally oriented by desire. It forms our identity by shaping what we *love*, what we *desire*. It's after our *hearts*. What we have done, according to Smith, is concede the formation of desire to the marketplace – in a way that subtly but powerfully shapes our view of the gospel, its purpose, and our role in God's mission.

Of course, we are all consumers. We purchase products or services to use in order to meet our needs and fulfil our desires – every time we buy groceries, fill our car with petrol, or go to the cinema to watch a film. From a Christian perspective, God has created us with the capacity to enjoy consumption. At a most basic level, we *have* to consume things in order to live, and there is nothing wrong with tangible goods per se. Christians are not anti-materialists, nor do we want to retreat into pietism or dualism.[13] But when our decisions about consuming move to a search

[12] See also Jon Pahl, *Shopping Malls and Other Sacred Spaces: Putting God in Place* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2003), and Ira G. Zepp, Jr, *The New Religious Image of Urban America: The Shopping Mall as Ceremonial Center* (Mesoamerican Worlds; Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1997. 2nd edn).

[13] See Joe Rigney, *The Things of Earth: Treasuring God by Enjoying His Gifts* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015) for an argument that we don't have to choose between our love for God and our enjoyment of his gifts. Ruth Valerio, *Just Living: Faith and Community in an Age of Consumerism* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2016) also seeks to navigate between therapeutic narcissism and world-denying asceticism to a way of life which appreciates what it means to use pleasurable things rightly and for good ends, bound up with justice and the welfare of others.

for identity, meaning, purpose and belonging, then a 'good' thing has become an 'ultimate' thing. It's the perpetual cycle of desire and dissatisfaction along with the quest to turn everything and everyone – including God and his word and the church and the gospel – into a commodity that is the problem.

2. Commodification and consumerism in Christianity

It is perhaps no surprise, then, that several commentators see the cultural driver of the marketplace at work in Christianity.[14] Like it or not, the Christian faith is frequently understood and practised through the lens of consumer culture, rather than the reverse. Virtually everything has become, or can become, a commodity to be consumed according to how useful it is in my journey of self-fulfilment. As Skye Jethani points out, 'more than merely an economic system', consumerism is 'the framework through which we understand everything including the gospel, the church, and God himself'.[15]

How far do we 'buy into' God to the extent that it suits us to do so, take what we want from him, and shop elsewhere for the rest? How far do we approach our faith in terms of what we get out of it? How far do we think of Jesus as virtually indistinguishable from any other brand or consumer choice? How far do we shop around the Bible itself for what we'd like to hear? How far are our church services about creating products that will appeal to consumers? How far do we use the church rather than belong to it, picking and choosing our levels and limits of involvement? How far in church leadership have we adopted business principles and practices virtually wholesale, without pause, from the secular world?

Jethani pointedly asks: 'Has the contemporary church been so captivated by the images and methods of the consumer culture that it has forfeited its sacred vocation to be a countercultural agent of God's kingdom in the world? And if it has, what are we to do about it?' But, as he goes on to note, 'there is a difference between living in a consumer society and adopting a consumer worldview'.[16] The question is not whether we will consume, but *how* we consume rightly, how God – through the gospel – forms us to consume faithfully.

But what is this gospel?

14 For example: Skye Jethani, *The Divine Commodity: Discovering a Faith Beyond Consumer Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009); Paul Louis Metzger, *Consuming Jesus: Beyond Race and Class Divisions in a Consumer Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Tyler Wigg Stevenson, *Brand Jesus: Christianity in a Consumerist Age* (New York: Seabury Books, 2007).

15 Jethani, *Divine Commodity*, p. 12.

16 Ibid., pp. 11-12.

THE GOSPEL

Many religions begin by telling men and women what *they* should do; Christianity begins with what *God* has done. That, right there, is shorthand for the 'gospel', referring not to a set of good instructions or a piece of good advice, but to the *good news* of what God himself has achieved – for us and for the world – in Christ.[17]

In the Roman Empire of the first century, heralds would spread the 'good news' of military victories or an emperor's coming to the throne. But for Christians, the word 'gospel' also came loaded with Old Testament promises of salvation. Isaiah, in particular, declares the 'good tidings' of God coming in power, exercising his reign, saving his people, and establishing peace (e.g. Isaiah 40:9-11; 52:7; 61:1-2). Indeed, the closing chapters of his prophecy describe how God's reign will be universal in its scope, embracing all nations, even renewing the whole cosmos.

It is in this light that Mark 1:14-15 describes Jesus preaching the 'good news' of the arrival of God's reign – as the culmination of a story which reaches back into God's dealings with his people. But as the account moves on, as Jesus walks the path to death and resurrection, it becomes clear that the promised salvation will come about through the servant promised by Isaiah who would suffer and die on behalf of others. Kingdom and cross are bound together in the gospel.[18]

It is often tempting to reduce the gospel to a personal transaction (shades of consumerism again?) between me and God in which Jesus dies for me, I repent, and God forgives my sin. Certainly, the gospel is not less than that. But it is much more, involving not only the *rescue* of men and women from judgment, but the *renewal* of God's relationship with his people, and the *restoration* of creation itself. The good news of what God has done in Jesus carries *zoom-lens* implications for the redemption of individual sinners and *wide-angle* implications for the reconciliation of all things.[19]

17 There has been an encouraging renaissance of interest in theological reflection on the gospel; for some representative treatments, see: Michael Horton, *The Gospel-Driven Life: Being Good News People in a Bad News World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009); Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011); Tom Wright, *Simply Good News: Why the Gospel is News and What Makes it Good* (London: SPCK, 2015).

18 So, helpfully, Tim Chester, *Crown of Thorns: Connecting Kingdom and Cross* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2015).

19 This 'zoom' and 'wide-angle' lens analogy is borrowed from Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of*

The gospel announces that, supremely through the death and resurrection of Christ, God is restoring men and women to himself, forgiving their sin, reconciling the alienated, redeeming the enslaved. The gospel says that God is restoring humans, giving them new life and beginning the work of recreating them in the image of Christ, remaking a new humanity in the body of Christ. The gospel declares that God has set in motion the restoration of the world itself, the reconciliation of all things in heaven and on earth, so that nothing will be left untouched by its expansive scope. On this understanding, a commitment to the gospel is significant for the whole of life. At home and at work, in the art gallery and the sports arena, in business and in politics, walking the dog and washing the dishes, there is no place the gospel does not touch with its implications because of the comprehensive nature of God's saving work in Christ, his rule over *every* aspect of life.

With this in mind, we come to our third and final section, looking at some of the implications of the gospel for a marketplace culture.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GOSPEL IN A MARKETPLACE CULTURE

As Christians, we are not left waiting for heaven 'there and then' with no implications for life 'here and now'. There is a new way to be human, a new way to live in community, a new way to relate to the world around us, and we are called, as disciples of Jesus, to live as part of this new order. The gospel brings an alternative vision of life which engages the cultural narratives on offer in the world today, including the marketplace narrative, sometimes affirming it, sometimes critiquing it, sometimes subverting it. Of all that could be said here, we highlight five implications.

1. Gospel salvation in an age of consumerism

First of all, it's *salvation which is freely available*. It cannot be bought. We cannot buy it because our sin renders us spiritually bankrupt before God. Yet it's available to us at no charge. That might be foolishness to consumers, to those who have imbibed the philosophy of the marketplace, in the same way that the cross was foolishness to the Greeks and Jews of Paul's day for various reasons.

The cross subverts human expectations about the way power operates, about the way things get done, about the nature of true wisdom. As the apostle Paul wrote, 'the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God' (1 Corinthians 1:18). Yet the cross also brings what we truly long for. According to Paul, that which is most desired by Greeks and Jews – wisdom and power – is delivered in that which is most despised, in 'Christ crucified... the power of God and the wisdom of God' (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).

Likewise for the consumer, there may be some 'subversive fulfilment' going on here: the freedom that you're really looking for, which is being expressed in your consumer habits and lifestyle, is available through something you can't actually buy![20]

Secondly, it's *salvation that brings freedom*. As noted above in our reflections on consumerism, at large is a notion of freedom as freedom from all limits, from all constraints – which we see in our individualism, our suspicion of authority, and our consumerism. Freedom has become a supreme value in today's culture. But, as Tim Keller points out, freedom 'is not the absence of limitations and constraints but it is finding the right ones, those that fit our nature and liberate us'.[21]

Our society tends to see freedom as freedom *from* certain obligations. The biblical view is far richer. It's a freedom *of* – the freedom of realising what we were designed to be, the freedom of loving and being loved, the freedom of experiencing joy and peace. And it comes about through the work of Christ, who sets us free to be free indeed (John 8:36). It's also a freedom *for*. Understood in a Christian framework, freedom requires a *telos*, a goal. True freedom is *for* something – to become who we were created and then redeemed to be. Genuine freedom is *for* a life focused on love for God, for others, and for the world.

Many works on consumerism – by non-Christians as well as Christians – call us to counter-cultural practices: to live a simpler lifestyle; to be content with what we have; to practise Sabbath; to support smaller, local operations; to take back some parts of production; to buy local and organic; to scale down rather than scale up; to show hospitality to others, particularly the marginalised. All of which is significant. Still, we do these things as an *outflow* of the gospel, not in any way to earn salvation, but as a sign that we have been set free, as a mark that in Christ we are recovering our freedom to live in a way that pleases God and serves others.

Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), pp. 91-113.

20 For a full treatment of the concept of 'subversive fulfilment', see Daniel Strange, *'For Their Rock Is Not As Our Rock': An Evangelical Theology of Religions* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2014), pp. 237-302.

21 Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2008), p. 49.

2. Gospel community in an age of isolationism

David Fitch writes that 'it is our own modernism that has allowed us to individualize, commodify, and package Christianity so much that the evangelical church is often barely distinguishable from other goods and service providers, self-help groups, and social organizations'.[22] For Fitch and others, whatever helpful insights might emerge from such models, the church is not ultimately entertainment-driven, or management-driven, or therapy-driven, or culture-driven, or consumer-driven, but *God*-driven, *Christ*-driven, *Spirit*-driven, *word-of-God*-driven, *bread-and-wine*-driven – *gospel*-driven.

Being a *Christian* is bound up with belonging to the *church*. The church is not *incidental* to the gospel, but *integral* to the gospel. The gospel which saves us as *believers* in Christ is also the gospel which incorporates us into the *body* of Christ. We are individual *followers* of Jesus who enjoy a personal relationship with Jesus, but we belong to the corporate *fellowship* of others with whom we are also, necessarily, in relationship.

Once again, there is a form of 'subversive fulfilment' here. The ultimate longings of the marketplace culture are subversively fulfilled with the coming of God's new order. We want to belong, we want community. But that's often understood in a consumerist way – in a way that serves me, in a desire to belong with people like me, from whom I can benefit. But the gospel brings us into a community of different types of people, which is based on faith in Christ, and which calls us to love and serve one another. As a church leader friend once said, 'meaningful membership and participation in a local congregation is where we defy the consumer message that we are the centre'.

The church is what it is because of what God himself in Christ has done for it. And it is the gospel that defines the church's vocation, mission, and activities. It is the gospel that shapes the church when we are *gathered* together for set times of worship and sacrament and teaching, and it is the gospel that fashions the nature of our life and witness when we are *scattered* throughout the week. This leads to our third implication.

3. Gospel mission in an age of need

If we need a bigger view of the scope of the gospel, we might also need a bigger view of the church's mission than we have been used to. We need a bigger vision than simply 'how we run our church' – important though

22 David E. Fitch, *The Great Giveaway: Reclaiming the Mission of the Church from Big Business, Parachurch Organizations, Psychotherapy, Consumer Capitalism, and Other Modern Maladies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), pp. 13-14.

that is; we need to understand how the life and ministry of the local church fit into God's mission for the *whole world* to which he calls *all* his people.

There is now a huge volume of work here from a wide range of thinkers and practitioners – but it essentially involves moving mission to the very *centre* and *being* of the church rather than treating it as an add-on to the church's ministry. This being the case, mission is not something the church does; it is something that *God* does through the church, called, equipped and sent by God as a witness in his ongoing plan to restore the world. So, the church is not primarily 'a place where certain things happen', somewhere we go to. Nor is it, to use George Hunsberger's often-cited phrase, 'a vendor of religious services and goods'.[23] It is a body of people gathered in worship and then sent out on mission. We're not looking for religious 'customers'; we're looking to proclaim the gospel to the spiritually needy, the hungry and the thirsty, the lost.

Of course, we rightly gather as local churches on Sundays and at other times, for worship and teaching, to meet with others, to learn from God's word, to celebrate communion, in large and small groups. But the reality is, most of the week we aren't gathered *inside* a building. We're scattered *outside* the building, in different places – in our families, our homes, our streets, our neighbourhoods, at school or college, in jobs, in various activities in the local community, whether we're 6 or 96. In *all* of those places, we are witnesses to Jesus in a world that needs to hear the good news of God. And it's in those places that we might be able to model a different way of living, one that's not so beholden to the cultural mores of the marketplace.

Those of us in church leadership might want to reflect on how we nurture congregations of people who will live faithfully in the world, through preaching that equips, through the worship of the gathered church, in cultivating virtue, in summoning all of God's people to see the whole of their lives as a place for discipleship and service, and the whole of God's world as a mission field.[24]

23 See now George R. Hunsberger, *The Story That Chooses Us: A Tapestry of Missional Vision* (The Gospel and Our Culture Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), p. 34.

24 On which, see Neil Hudson, *Imagine Church: Releasing Whole-Life Disciples* (Nottingham: IVP, 2012).

4. Gospel vocation in an age of narcissism

It is increasingly recognised that consumerist culture makes the issue of vocation more problematic, particularly for young adults, those in transition from university to work, in their early 20s and then into their 30s.[25]

It is especially difficult in a culture that deifies choice. As parents, we arguably play into this if and when we tell our children that they can be anything they want to be when they grow up, that self-definition and self-expression is theirs for the choosing. Understandably, this can lead to a great deal of searching: could I? should I? what if I did? what if I didn't? what options would it open up? what options would it close down? In some cases, it's not enough to have a job, even a well-paid one. Work needs to fit well with my interests and abilities, be satisfying and enjoyable, be an expression of me, seeing God, as Os Guinness says, as the 'grand employment agency, a celestial executive searcher to find perfect fits for our perfect gifts'.[26]

Never mind that most people throughout history simply haven't had those options; never mind that many people throughout the world even *today* simply don't have the luxury of choice, for whom 'doing what you love' while 'helping to make the world a better place' just isn't a possibility.

Of course, there is much to say about the goodness of work, the significance of serving others, and of finding joy in what we do. But there is also an increasing worry that we have trained our young adults to be narcissistic and elitist. Instead, a view rooted in the gospel focuses on vocation as the *primary call* to follow Jesus and to live that out in the whole range of our secondary callings – including, but not limited to, work. Work is just one of the ways I respond, as a disciple of Christ, to his calling on me to follow *him*, to love God and love my neighbour, to bear fruit to the glory of God.

Vocation, then, goes hand in hand with stewardship, as we move beyond a consumer identity and see ourselves as stewards, where everything we have and everything we are ultimately belongs to God not to us. This brings us to our final implication.

25 I have been helped here by David P. Setran, '"Getting a Life:" Vocational Discernment in the Post-Christian World', *Christian Education Journal* 8, 2 (2011), pp. 345-63, and Scott Waalkes, 'Rethinking Work as Vocation: From Protestant Advice to Gospel Corrective', *Christian Scholar's Review* 44, 2 (2015), pp. 135-53.

26 Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville: Word, 1998), p. 47.

5. Gospel worship in an age of idolatry

As already noted, our faith and discipleship involve more than just the transmission of knowledge, important though that is. Following Jesus involves the formation of our *desires*. It's what we *love* that truly shapes who we are.

The early church theologian Augustine recognised this. In his classic work, *Confessions*, Augustine explains that sin is 'disordered love' – love out of order.[27] Where we might think of sin primarily in terms of bad deeds, Augustine helps us see it from another perspective – of what we love. The problem comes when we love something we *should* love but which we should *not* love supremely. We love the *right* things in the *wrong* way. We make *good* things into *god* things – which is idolatry.

Related to this, Tim Keller helpfully reminds us of the distinction between *surface* idols and *deep* idols.[28] *Surface* idols are the car we have, or the spouse we'd like, or the hobby we spend a lot of time on, or the extra money we think will make all the difference. It could be keeping the lawn trimmed, or making sure the house is always clean, or getting promoted at work, or being complimented on having such well-behaved children. Many of these are good things, even right things. The problem is that we want them too much, or for the wrong reasons – because behind each *surface* idol is a *deep* idol, the *real* need we're trying to meet – security, significance, approval, comfort, control. And that's what we *really* worship, that's what we really love.

How do we enjoy a created thing without making it an idol? In a line from C.S. Lewis, we chase the sunbeam back up to the sun. We trace the good things we enjoy back to their source in God and his goodness. As James writes, 'Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows' (James 1:17).

Above all, then, we love God himself. The Bible talks about our love for God mostly in the sense of our obeying him, serving him, and honouring him – with our total being. When Jesus is asked about the greatest commandment, we read in Matthew 22:37-40: 'Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."'

27 See David K. Naugle, *Reordered Love, Reordered Lives: Learning the Deep Meaning of Happiness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), pp. 31-57.

28 Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: When the Empty Promises of Love, Money and Power Let You Down* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2009), pp. 64-66.

If we are what we love, then how does our love get shaped and formed for different ends? It takes *practice*, as James K.A. Smith points out.[29] What vision of the good life is implicit in the secular liturgies of the shopping centre, the sports stadium, and the university? How does Christian worship provide a *counter*-formation to those liturgies? A Christianised version of the shopping centre won't provide a powerful-enough countermeasure. We need worship practices that form us to be a people who love and serve God. Such formation comes about through confession of sin and seeking assurance of forgiveness whereby we acknowledge our brokenness and are set free. Baptism constitutes us as part of the people of God, reminding us that we are not on our own, but incorporated into a larger community. Bringing an offering of money tells a different story about the way money works. The preached word brings us face to face with Jesus and his saving power, and shapes us for life in the world. Eating bread and drinking wine, an act of consumption, is turned inside out as we are caught up in a story larger than our own. We are blessed and then sent out as a missional people to embody God's purposes in the world. All these formational practices, seen in many Christian traditions, are founded in God's word.

In all these different ways, then, what we have in the gospel and its implications responds to the cultural driver of the marketplace. Our longing for liberation, community, transcendence, belonging, and a story that's bigger than ourselves is found in the cross of Christ on our hearts and in our lives.

[29] Smith, *You Are What You Love*.

Charles Simeon: A 19th Century Evangelical Response to Consumerism

Randall J. Gruendyke

It has been said that, 'England and America are two countries divided by a common language' and I assume the same is true of Scotland and America. Take for example the term, lunch. Here it usually begins at one o'clock. In the United States it commonly starts at noon. Or, consider that the usual description for beige coloured trousers in America is the same phrase used for soiled nappies in the UK! So, given our occasional differences in definitions, it would be wise to make sure that we share a common understanding of the term 'consumerism' in order that we know what it was to which nineteenth century Evangelicals in general and Charles Simeon in particular were responding. To do this, a definition of consumerism will be proposed. Then, historical consideration will be given to consumerism as a trend, with special attention being paid to it in the British book industry. Once this groundwork has been laid, an overview concerning the response of Charles Simeon and other notable nineteenth century Evangelicals to consumerism will be presented. The paper will conclude with three lessons for twenty-first century Evangelicals based on Simeon's nineteenth century example.

CONSUMERISM

What is Consumerism?

There was a time when one's social status was commonly assumed at birth. So, on the one hand, if a person was born into a high-ranking family, then he assumed and retained a high ranking status throughout his life. And, on the other hand, if a person was born into a low-ranking family, then he assumed and retained a low ranking status throughout his life. To change one's status was a societal exception. But in the years leading up to the Industrial Revolution that rule began to relax. Instead of one's status being assumed it could now be attained. And the attainment of a different social status, especially a higher one, was realized by the increased accumulation and consumption of personal possessions or, 'stuff.' Simply put, social status was now determined by stuff. A higher social status could be attained by accumulating and consuming either nicer stuff (e.g. nicer clothes) or more stuff (e.g. more land). Either way, stuff equalled status. And that is the basis for consumerism. Status, and all that comes with it, whether real (e.g. wealth) or imagined (e.g. well-being), was now based on one's possessions rather than his person.[1]

Where did Consumerism come from?

The Georgian Era (1714-1837) in England was a time of profound change. This change was especially marked by the politicization,[2] militarization,[3] industrialization,[4] and commercialization[5] of the Empire. Industrialization and commercialization helped to foster the emergence of consumerization. Consider the history behind the department store. In the eighteenth century, heightened industrialization brought about the increasing availability and decreasing cost of basic materials, such as paper and fabric. Commercialization was enhanced and expanded when many craftsmen moved their retail space from the shop, where a consumer could see a product being made, to a dedicated showroom.[6] The showroom was designed to attract and retain consumers. The space was tastefully designed with products presented in glass cases and mirrors employed to enhance one's shopping experience.[7] Soon display windows were added which promoted a new and popular pastime known as 'window shopping.' By the early nineteenth century, shopping was a common, middle class, social activity for women.[8] In 1786 a Sophie Von La Roche described these early 'cathedrals of consumption' as containing 'such abundance of choice, as almost to make one greedy,' while in 1803 a Joanna Schopenhauer wondered over the 'brilliant displays of precious silverware, the beautiful draperies of muslin… behind large plate-glass windows, the fairy tale glitter of the

1. The difference between an assumed status and an attained status is that the former is retained even if one's accumulations are lost. It has to do with one's person and not his possessions; who one is and not what he has.
2. E.g. The prominence of political parties such as the Whigs and Tories.
3. E.g. The merger of the English and Scottish armed forces to form the armed forces of the Kingdom of Great Britain.
4. E.g. The growth and development of steam powered engines.
5. E.g. The rise of the middle class, discretionary income and the creation of new commercial markets.
6. These showrooms were situated in retail spaces with premium addresses. In the late eighteenth century China merchant Wedgwood began renting an expensive Portland Family house. Drapers, Harding and Howell, moved into Schomberg House, 'the most distinguished private residence on Pall Mall,' while bookseller, James Lackington, secured a Finsbury Street mansion. Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (eds), *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store, 1850-1939*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999, p. 64.
7. Ibid., pp. 47-8.
8. Ibid., pp. 51-2, 58.

crystal shops, all this,' she said, 'bewitches the visitor.'[9] By 1830 the London-style department store was popping up throughout provincial England thereby making more stuff accessible to consumers and especially those of the middle class 'for whom goods increasingly played a role in self-definition.'[10]

If a middle class and especially lower class consumer could not accumulate more stuff he could at least acquire some nicer stuff. Consider the bourgeoning market of second hand clothes. While the financially well-endowed emptied their closets of old garments to make room for more and more new garments, those who made fifty pounds or less per year (i.e. most families in Britain), 'were not barred from participating in the round of consumerism that occupied the wealthier classes.'[11] They did this as they purchased the cast-off clothes of the upper classes and thereby afforded themselves the chance to 'wear clothes above their rank and beyond their means had the garments been new.'[12] The eighteenth century philosopher and satirist, Bernard Mandeville, responded to the superficial blessing of this consumerist trend by writing of places, 'especially in large and populous cities, where obscure men may hourly meet with fifty strangers to one acquaintance, and consequently have the Pleasure of being esteem'd by a vast Majority, not as what they are, but what they appear to be.'[13] Over time, consumerism in the British clothing trade was dictated by the experts of fashion thereby opening new consumer markets in other countries. For example, second hand liveries that were impossible to sell in London were in high demand in the Netherlands where their colours and crests had no meaning.[14] British-made leather breeches, which were eclipsed in the early nineteenth century by those made of corduroy and velvet, found a ready market in Ireland.[15] Not only did second hand clothes feed the consumer fashion frenzy but a greater

9. Ibid., p. 55.
10. Ibid., p. 65.
11. B. Lemire, 'Consumerism in Preindustrial and Early Industrial England: The Trade in Secondhand Clothes,' *Journal of British Studies* 27 (1988), p. 2.
12. Ibid., p. 4.
13. Lemire observed that the second hand consumer mentality was not limited to lower ranks. In 1830, even Lord Chesterfield bought a cloak from the closet of the late King George IV while 'many hundreds of buyers had the opportunity to pick up a pair of their sovereign's shoes for little more than five shillings a pair.' Ibid., p. 4.
14. Ibid., p. 17.
15. Ibid.

efficiency in manufacturing made more new products available to a wider number of consumers at a lower cost.[16]

How did Consumerism affect the book industry?

For many centuries throughout the Middle Ages there was neither time for book learning nor, as a result, a market for book selling.[17] That said, there were many monks who devoted their days to the service of book transcription and illustration. When institutions of higher learning were established,[18] a copyist class was created to provide for the needs of professors and scholars. This task was advanced by the invention of paper and led to the establishment of booksellers known as *stationarii*.[19] The first *stationarii* in England sold primers that taught such things as Paternosters, Graces and Amens, Aves and Creeds. In time, the primers led to the naming of the streets on which they were published such as Paternoster Row, Amen Corner and Ave Maria Lane, each of which remains extant today nearby and to the northwest of St. Paul's Cathedral in the City of London. These booksellers were an all-in-one operation. Not only did they trade in books but they printed and bound them, as well. It was not until the invention of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century and the inauguration of the Reformation in the early-sixteenth century that the book industry began to flourish. When the Printing Act,[20] put into law by Charles II in 1662, was allowed to lapse in 1695, the printing industry moved from its limited places of production in London, Cambridge, Oxford and York to provincial and consumer filled locations throughout England. By the middle of the eighteenth century, 'a typical provincial town of any importance enjoyed the services of at least one printer, one newspaper and several booksellers.'[21] At that time booksellers, along with

16 Ibid., pp. 21-22. Here Lemire explains how muslin caps that were popular in the eighteenth century were no longer sold in retail shops or market stalls by 1850. This was the result of cheaper British muslin which lowered manufacturing costs and heightened availability throughout the country.

17 H. Curwen, *A History of Booksellers: The Old and the New* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1873), p. 13.

18 E.g. some of the first being the University of Bologna (1088), the University of Paris (c.1150) and the University of Oxford (1167).

19 Curwen, *History of Booksellers*, pp. 13-14. The word *stationarii* could have meant ones who stationed themselves in the street at booths or stalls. It could have also come from the Latin, *statio*, meaning a depository, such as a place where private parties could sell their books.

20 Also known as the Licensing Act.

21 J. Hinks, 'Spreading the Word: Bookselling and Printing Before 1800,' www.historywm.com, p. 13. Accessed 1 February 2016.

assembly rooms[22] and theatres, as well as a police force and a department of public works, were numbered among the marks of a modern community.[23] Booksellers traded in a variety of reading materials. Edward Cave (1691-1754) published the first periodical in 1731[24] and Ralph Griffiths (c.1720-1803) pioneered the literary review in 1749.[25] A rising literacy rate among the common man, allowed even the lower classes to enjoy what were known as 'penny books' or 'cheap books.'[26] A consumer appetite for reading material was whetted by an increased amount of available information, as well as a wider variety of literature.

While the popularity of booksellers throughout the country spread, the power of booksellers in London increased. Benchmark names and accomplishments during this century include Jacob Tonson (1656-1736), the first well-known bookseller. Tonson was famous for peddling the works of Dryden, for popularizing *Paradise Lost*, and for being the first one to offer Shakespeare 'to the reading public.'[27] In time, Tonson was displaced by Robert Dodsley (1703-1764) who proposed that Samuel Johnson write what would become one of the most influential English language dictionaries. Thomas Cadell (1742-1802), was the protégé of Andrew Millar, a joint proprietor with Dodsley of Johnson's dictionary. In time, Cadell went into business with Scotsman, William Strahan (1715-1785) a fellow employee at Millar's. Together, Cadell and Strahan secured copyrights to the works of many well-known, late eighteenth century writers including the Englishman Edward Gibbon[28] and the Scotsman Adam Smith.[29] Cadell retired with 'an enormous fortune'[30] and left the business to his son, Thomas, Jr., who, in time, would secure the rights to all twenty-one volumes of Charles Simeon's magnum opus, *Horae Homileticae*.[31]

22 Meeting places for men and women of the higher classes.

23 Hinks, 'Spreading the Word,' p. 13.

24 *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

25 *The Monthly Review*. 'A recent writer has said that its criticisms have been for the most part neither too brief nor too elaborate, giving a fair abstract of an author's productions, accompanied by a discriminating commentary on their excellencies and defects.' The Monthly Review: From January to May Inclusive. 1844. Vol. 1. London. G. Henderson, 2, Old Bailey. Web. Accessed 23 February 2016.

26 Hinks, 'Spreading the Word,' pp. 13-14.

27 Curwen, *A History of Booksellers*, p. 25.

28 Gibbon's most famous work is, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

29 Smith's most famous work is, *The Wealth of Nations*.

30 Curwen, *A History of Booksellers*, p. 62.

31 C. H. Timperley, *A Dictionary of Printers and Printing* (London: H. Johnson, 1839), pp. 945-6. Web. Accessed 23 February 2016.

Eighteenth century booksellers largely sold the works of authors whom they corporately represented. One group of booksellers gathered in a London coffee house where together they determined the latest good books. 'When they say a good book, they do not mean to praise the style or sentiment, but the quick and extensive sale of it.'[32] Books that came out of the *Coffee House* sessions were called 'chapter books,' the most important being Johnson's, *Lives of the English Poets*.[33] By the end of the eighteenth century, other groups of booksellers were formed[34] thereby heightening the level of competition throughout the industry.

If the *Coffee House* and other such groups increased the commercial profile of the bookseller, then James Lackington (1746-1815) intensified the consumer climate. Lackington opened a store on Chiswell Street where his low priced, cash only approach to book sales afforded him the ability to maintain a high inventory. In time, Lackington moved his operation to a massive structure at the corner of Finsbury Square known as, 'The Temple of Muses.'[35] A sign hung outside the shop announced consumers were entering the 'Cheapest bookshop in the world' and once inside were met with another notice that declared, 'the lowest price is marked on every Book.'[36] Lackington was a savvy marketer, who enticed consumers in-store with promotional items[37] and attracted them by mail with a bulging catalogue of titles.[38] Lackington made a fortune. His motto, emblazoned on the side of his chariot, was, 'Small Profits do Great Things.'[39] Lackington recognized that the consumer book market was growing and that continuing to offer the highest quality at the lowest price was the best way to insure continued growth and profits. Lackington's consumer-focused strategy inspired John Bell (1745-1831), who sold modestly priced

32 Curwen, *History of Booksellers*, p. 67.

33 Ibid., p. 68. Over time, sermons were added to the inventory of *Coffee House* books. Many sermons were kept in stock while others could be custom written.

34 One such group was *Associated Booksellers*, best known for their symbol, the beehive, and thus their nickname, *Associated Busy Bees*. History of Booksellers, pp. 68-9.

35 The Temple boasted 140 feet of frontage space and 'was one of the sights of London.' http://www.georgianindex.net/books/Hatchard.html. Accessed 24 February 2016.

36 Curwen, *History of Booksellers*, p. 74.

37 E.g. a promotional coin redeemable at the store http://www.georgianindex.net/books/Hatchard.html.

38 The catalogue boasted, 'Half-a-million volumes to be continually on sale.' Curwen, *A History of Booksellers*, p. 74.

39 Curwen, *History of Booksellers*, p. 73.

pocket volumes of the English classics. These tomes undercut the more expensive editions marketed by the *Coffee House* and 'brought consternation into the trade.'[40] The Scotsman, Alexander Donaldson (1733-1794) was another consumer minded bookseller. At a time when copyrights expired only fourteen years after a book's initial publication, Donaldson produced cheap reprints of popular works that were sold at his shop in the Strand.[41]

The swell of consumer-driven sales continued rising at the turn of the nineteenth century. As the book industry modernized and literacy improved,[42] reading became a competitor in the new commercial leisure market.[43] As the demand for books increased, so did the demand for authors, thereby 'displacing the gentleman poet with the professional writer.'[44] Publishing and marketing were now being done on a world-wide scale.[45]

How did nineteenth century Evangelicals respond to Consumerism?

The Clapham Sect

The seat of Evangelical influence in nineteenth century England was located five miles southwest of St. Paul's Cathedral in a house on Clapham Common. The residence, known as Battersea Rise, belonged to the well-heeled Henry Thornton (1760-1815) who, in 1792, began sharing the address with his cousin and MP, William Wilberforce (1759-1833). Both men were committed to a Christianity that was theologically orthodox and liberally applied. Over the next forty years,[46] their conversations on everything from the abolition of slavery to the publication of books were enriched by the company of many other talented, influential and wealthy Evangelicals including their own next door neighbours. On one side of Battersea Rise lived the eminently-connected Edward Eliot (1758-1797),

40 Ibid. pp. 75-6.

41 Ibid. pp. 76-7.

42 Ibid. pp. 124, 130-2. Printers, publishers and booksellers became separate industries while improvements in paper production, namely by the invention of a 'commercially viable' machine (powered first by water and later by steam) turned the paper industry from a decentralized network of many mills into a centralized one comprised of a few.

43 John Feather, *A History of British Publishing* (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 93.

44 Ibid., p. 102.

45 http://eduscapes.com/bookhistory/commodity/5.htm. Accessed 22 March 2016.

46 "Clapham Sect". Encyclopedia Britannica. Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 2016. Web. Accessed 25 February 2016.

the brother-in-law of Prime Minister William Pitt. On the other side of the house lived 'the most influential of the directors of the East India Company,' [47] Charles Grant (1746-1823). In time, this frequent gathering at Clapham, later known as the 'Clapham Sect,' included their parish minister, John Venn (1759-1813); the Governor of Sierra Leon, Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838) and the Governor-General of India, Lord Teignmouth (1751-1834). These and other local members of the group were regularly joined in conversation by those who periodically travelled some distance including Hannah More (1745-1833) from Cheddar and Charles Simeon (1759-1836) from Cambridge. As historian Paul Johnson observed, 'The original members of the Clapham Sect were of the generation which reached maturity during the American War of Independence and were imbued with a strong sense that many things were fundamentally wrong with Britain and required reform.'[48] While the kings of consumerism were accumulating wealth and all its worldly trappings, the members of the Clapham Sect disbursed their fortunes for the sake of the Gospel. As Johnson put it concerning Wilberforce, 'He argued that anyone in a position of wealth, leisure or expertise owes the divine favour to all that he has and therefore lives with the burden of obligation placed upon him.'[49] It is no wonder then that, before their marriages, Wilberforce donated a quarter of his income to charity while his cousin, Thornton, gave away six-sevenths of his own![50] While the bold and creative benevolences of the Clapham Sect were deep-seated and wide-ranging at home as well as abroad, three members of the group became well-known authors. It is interesting to notice that the rising tide of consumerism helped each one to accrue a wide audience. It is also significant to see that the aim of each author ran contrary to the current of consumerism. That is, their common goal was to increase the influence of the gospel and not the size of his or her bank account. Each one was motivated by mission and not by money.

47 "Clapham Sect". http://churchsociety.org/issues_new/history/wilberforce/iss_history_wilberforce_hennell-claphamsect.asp. Accessed 25 February 2016.

48 P. Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern: World Society* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), p. 323.

49 Ibid., pp. 54-5.

50 Ibid., pp. 57-8. The Clapham Sect's generosity was wide-ranging. Inglis regularly left his house with a bag of coins to be distributed throughout the day. Babbington ran a soup kitchen. Clarkson, who considered himself a 'slave to the slave,' assisted the family of the late King Henri Christophe of Haiti upon their arrival in London. Sharp and Macaulay were point men on the project to resettle free though impoverished blacks in London to Sierra Leon.

William Wilberforce

In the spring of 1797 two noteworthy events occurred in the life of William Wilberforce. First, the MP for Yorkshire married Barbara Spooner, the daughter of a Birmingham banker. Second, he published his one and only book, the success of which was epic. The title, *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country, Contrasted with Real Christianity*, was as provocative as its sales were surprising. Since religious books were not big sellers at the time, publishing magnate Thomas Cadell, suggested that Wilberforce issue only 500 copies[51] but within a few days of its release the book was sold out. In six months, 7,500 copies had been purchased. Over the next quarter century[52] fifteen editions of *A Practical View* were printed in Britain and twenty-five in the United States. It was translated into five languages. Months after its publication, English statesman Edmund Burke sought comfort in it during the last two days of his life. Thirteen years later, the Scottish scholar and churchman Thomas Chalmers was converted under its influence. Wilberforce straightforwardly stated that 'religion is the business of everyone' and that its 'advancement or decline' was integral to the wellbeing of a society, especially since, 'this present scene with all its gaieties, will soon be rolled away, and "we must stand before the judgement seat of Christ."'[53] Wilberforce appealed to his readers in this way according to the Bible and not some self-styled brand of high-minded moralism.[54] Wilberforce put pen to paper for neither fame nor fortune and his political incorrectness testified in part to his altruistic motives. Even Wilberforce's publisher was surprised that the MP attached his name to it![55] William Wilberforce is one example of an Evangelical who rode the rising tide of the consumer book market in an effort to make Christian converts and not money.

Hannah More

Another Claphamite whose gospel labours benefited from the burgeoning retail book market was Hannah More. While More's legacy currently languishes in a relative state of anonymity, she was even more popular in the early nineteenth century than her younger contemporary, Jane Austen.

51 Johnson, *Birth of the Modern*, p. 53.

52 I.e. by 1826.

53 William Wilberforce, *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country, Contrasted with Real Christianity* (London: T. Cadell, Jun. and W. Davies, 1798), pp. 3-4. Web. Accessed 26 February 2016.

54 Ibid., p. 5.

55 Johnson, *Birth of the Modern*, p. 53.

In fact, Hannah More was the world's first million selling author.[56] In 1787 More was blessed with a vital faith in Christ through the ministry of erstwhile slave ship captain turned Evangelical minister, John Newton. In that same year, Hannah More met William Wilberforce and the pair became fast friends. In the summer of 1789, Wilberforce and one of his sisters was hosted by More and her sister, Martha, at their home, Cowslip Green, in Cheddar. At the end of his visit, Wilberforce challenged More to address Cheddar's impoverished population and underdeveloped economy. He concluded his charge with this promise, 'If you will be at the trouble, I will be at the expense.'[57] Hannah More spent the rest of her life answering her friend's call. For the higher classes More produced her only full-length novel, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1808).[58] Among the many Evangelical ideals expressed in *Coelebs*,[59] the main character's mother understands that 'the "care of the poor" is the "profession" of a lady.'[60] That view inspired and empowered a generation of women to become anti-consumers – ones who donated rather than accumulated wealth. For the middle and lower classes, More wrote modestly priced tracts and pamphlets. These titles were reprinted by the wealthy and given away in the millions to servants, labourers and employees. As the sun was rising on the nineteenth century, More wrote fifty leaflets that were intended, among other things, to increase the morals of the middle class and decrease the power of Thomas Paine's revolutionary writing among the poor.[61] In Paul Johnson's estimation, 'the Hannah More phenomenon… indicates that Anglican Evangelicalism, intelligently presented and well backed by social leaders, could and did make more effective use of

56 Ibid., p. 382.

57 Herbert Schlossberg, *The Silent Revolution and the Making of Victorian England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2000), p. 66.

58 John Wolffe observes that *Coelebs* had, 'an initial popularity greatly exceeding that of Jane Austen's most commercially successful novel, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813).' John Wolffe, *Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney*, Vol. 2, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 2007), p. 137. Web (https://books.google.com/books). Accessed 16 March 2016.

59 More's theory of fiction and her commitment to Evangelical Christianity rigidly controlled the strategies she employed as a novelist. "Jane Austen, Hannah More, and the Novel of Education" by Jane Nardin. *In Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal*. No. 20. 1988. p. 14. http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/printed/number20/nardin.pdf. Accessed 16 March 2016.

60 Wolffe, *Evangelicalism*, p. 137.

61 Nardin, "Austen," p. 15.

the cheap printing process now available than the secular radicals.'[62] By the end of her life, Hannah More had earned £30,000 by way of her pen, causing some to wonder how much more the author would have acquired if she had not given so much away. Hannah More is another example of an Evangelical who, first and foremost, leveraged the consumer book market to promote Christian truth and virtues for the good the society.

Charles Simeon

A third member of the Clapham Sect who capitalized on the growing consumer book market was Charles Simeon. Simeon was born west of London at Reading in 1759. When he was eight years old Simeon's father sent him to Eton and in 1779 on to King's College, Cambridge. During Simeon's first term at King's he came to faith in God through Christ and for a number of years thereafter was ostracized by the members of the University for his pronounced Evangelical Beliefs. In 1783, Simeon was named a fellow of King's College where he took up residence for the next fifty-four years in the Gibbs' Building. In that same year, the Bishop of Ely appointed Simeon to be the Perpetual Curate of Holy Trinity Church. Following twelve years of opposition to his appointment by a contingent of his congregation, Simeon settled into a tenure marked by ongoing ministerial innovation, denominational influence and societal sway.[63] Simeon remained at Holy Trinity until his death in 1836. Eight years after Simeon's funeral, fellow 'Claphamite,' Lord Macaulay, famously wrote to his sister, 'As to Simeon, if you knew what his authority and influence were, and how they extended from Cambridge to the most remote corners of England, you would allow that his real sway in the Church was far greater than that of any Primate.'[64]

When it came to publishing books, Simeon, like Wilberforce and More, was highly motivated by a sense of mission over money. This drive was especially seen in three ways. First, Simeon was deeply committed to Bible distribution. In the opening sentence of a sermon on 2 Chronicles 34:27, Simeon stated,

62 Johnson, *Birth of the Modern*, p. 383.

63 Simeon's ministerial innovations include developing the forerunner to congregational small groups; his denominational influence involved introducing the Evangelical Revival to the Church of England; his societal sway was felt through his membership in the broadly influential Eclectic Society for ministers and Clapham Sect for social reformers.

64 Arthur Bennett, "Charles Simeon: Prince of Evangelicals." Churchman 102/2 1988, p. 1. http://www.churchsociety.org/churchman/documents/Cman_102_2_Bennett.pdf. Accessed 1 July 2013.

> It is scarcely to be conceived how great a benefit has arisen to the Christian cause from the invention of printing. The word of God is that whereby the work of salvation is principally carried on in the souls of men: and the multiplying of the copies of the Holy Scriptures, in such a form as to be conveniently portable, and at such a price as to be within reach of the poor, has tended more than any other thing to keep alive the interests of religion, both in the hearts of individuals, and the community at large.[65]

This level of conviction and commitment reveals why Simeon was an early and active supporter of the Bible Society.

Founded in 1804,[66] The Bible Society was initially viewed by the establishment with suspicion because of its interdenominational leadership.[67] That said, historian David McKitterick, asserts that the founding of the Bible Society marked 'the saving of (Cambridge University) Press.'[68] As McKitterick points out, the Bible Society brought much needed business to the Press at a time when all of Britain was in financial crisis.[69] But the Society also introduced a variety of dynamics that forced the Press to grow and develop in ways it might not have otherwise.

First, as a charitable rather than consumer-driven organization, the Society could provide Bibles at a reduced cost and even no cost. This created an 'annihilating threat'[70] of competition to the privileged presses (i.e. at Cambridge, Oxford and The King's Press). This looming risk compelled the big three publishers to develop among themselves a '*modus vivendi*.'[71] From this position of strength, the Bible Society regularly negotiated for lower prices, finer paper and better work among the three.

65 Charles Simeon, "Outline No. 431: Josiah's Penitence" in *First of Chronicles to Job,* vol. IV of *Expository Outlines On the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 222.

66 M. H. Black, *Cambridge University Press 1584-1884* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 126. The Society was founded in response to a need for Bibles in the Welsh language. The Evangelical revival further heightened that need but the privation among the people required that the books be distributed without charge.

67 Ibid., pp. 125-6. The leadership was comprised of thirty-six members: fifteen members from Dissenting Churches, six from European Churches and the balance left to the Church of England.

68 David McKitterick, *A History of Cambridge University Press: Volume 2, Scholarship and Commerce 1698-1872* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 32.

69 Ibid., p. 245.

70 Black, *Cambridge University Press*, p. 126.

71 Ibid.

Second, the production demands of the Bible Society tested the latest breakthroughs in the printing industry. Beginning in the 1790s and on into the early nineteenth century, the production of Bibles at Cambridge University Press 'lagged behind demand and technical limitations prevented growth.'[72] But in 1803 Earl Stanhope addressed those problems on two counts. To begin, he alleviated the need to reset type for every new impression by developing a process called stereotyping. Stereotyping – which lessened lag time in production – made it possible for a cast to be taken from a typeset page. The cast was used to make a mould and the mould used to produce a plate from which an unlimited number of prints could be produced. The Bible Society immediately purchased the first stereotyped copy of Scripture produced by The Press. In time, Oxford as well as The King's Printer began using the stereotype method for printing and The Bible Society placed orders with them as well. Finally, Stanhope invented an iron printing press. Until the late eighteenth century, the printing press remained largely unchanged from the time of its invention.[73] Wooden, hand-operated presses required costly manpower and regular maintenance. Stanhope's iron press provided greater pressure and precision in the printing process.[74] This technical leap forward, along with the invention of the Fourdrinier machine that centralized the paper industry and boosted its production, allowed the Bible Society to order press runs that far exceeded the mechanical limitations of the wooden press. Now, orders of 5,000 to 10,000 to even 20,000[75] volumes were regularly placed as John Owen, secretary of the Bible Society, worked hard to keep the organization's demands ahead of the profit-driven publishers in London. From 1802 to 1806, Cambridge Press was 'transformed'[76] and in many ways, the Bible Society was responsible for it. So great was the Society's influence that by 1811, and thanks in part to Charles Simeon whose sermons the Press had published since the 1790s,[77] an auxiliary branch of the Bible Society was established in Cambridge. Concerning

72 McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, p. 255.

73 Curwen, *History of Booksellers*, pp. 130-1.

74 Black, *Cambridge University Press*, p. 128.

75 'By 1808 the Society was taking annually over 20,000 copies of the duodecimo brevier NT alone…' McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, p. 274.

76 McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, pp. 280-1.

77 Simeon's ally, Isaac Milner, President of Queens' College Cambridge, was also involved in establishing the Bible Society outpost in Cambridge. Black, *Cambridge University Press*, pp. 125-6.

the unlikely constitution of such an organization just a few years before, Charles Simeon declared, 'Truly God shows that He reigns in the Earth.'[78]

The second way in which Simeon's sense of mission versus money was seen is in the kind of books he published. Simeon published two kinds of books – his own and those which he especially liked written by others. Concerning those written by others, Simeon published two books. One was a devotional by British clergyman, Benjamin Jenks (1646-1724) that the Cambridge divine 'altered and improved.'[79] The second was a guide to sermon preparation by the French Protestant, Jean Claude (1619-1687) for which Simeon composed notes to replace the ponderous ones written by the translator, Robert Robinson (1735-1790). In both cases Simeon could have introduced new books to the market that bore his name alone. Instead, he shared the title page with the original authors, taking something good and making it better, without adding another title to the growing consumer landscape. As for his own books, Simeon published them without ever really writing one. That is to say, Simeon capitalized on his regular discipline of sermon composition by publishing his messages in multiple forms. Single sermons were sometimes printed as pamphlets while his series preached before the University, *The Excellency of the Liturgy*, was released as a single volume.[80] For Simeon, publishing was an extension of his pulpit ministry and especially a means of instructing younger ministers how to preach. This emphasis marks the third way in which Simeon's sense of mission especially dominated the kind of books he published.

Charles Simeon was well known for the Sunday sermon classes for undergraduates held in his rooms on the third floor of the Gibbs' Building. During these sessions, Simeon specifically instructed aspiring ministers in the task of Bible exposition. In 1796, and as a way to expand the scope of his tutelage, Simeon published Jean Claude's, *An Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*, to which he attached one hundred of his own sermon outlines for the purpose of further illustration and instruction.[81]

78 Ibid., pp. 125-6.

79 Benjamin Jenks, *Offices of Devotion: For Families, And for Particular Persons, Upon Most Occasions*. A New Edition Altered and Improved by the Rev. Charles Simeon. (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1861).

80 Published by Cambridge Press in 1812 and again in 1816. Other sermon series were published posthumously. For a list see, *A Critical Dictionary of England Literature and British and American Authors, Living and Deceased*, Vol II, 1882, p. 2103.

81 McKitterick, p. 247. In that same year, bookseller John Botwell opened a shop directly across the street from Simeon's church on Trinity St. Could that daily reminder have motivated Simeon to employ the press in promoting his mission?

Five years and 7000 hours of work[82] later, Simeon republished Claude's *Essays* in five volumes but this time under the title, *Helps to Composition, or 600 Skeletons of Sermons*. Over the years, Simeon continued adding to his series, so that by the year 1819 there were eleven volumes of sermons in what was now entitled, *Horae Homileticae*.[83] During this point in its development, availability of *Horae* became limited. To one inquirer in search of a set, Simeon replied, 'An entire set of my *Horae* is not to be gotten for love or money – I have two or three incomplete sets, of about 9 volumes out of the 11 – And one of them shall be at your service…'[84] In 1827, Simeon wrote to his publisher, Thomas Cadell, that a delay in releasing the latest edition of *Horae* '…determined me to publish Claude by itself – it is so much in demand, that it will be wrong to keep it back.'[85] Cadell agreed. By 1828 *Horae* had grown to seventeen volumes and four years later, with the help of Thomas Hartwell Horne (1780-1862)[86] as well as a staff of thirty-two full-time men working for sixteen months, *Horae* reached its final form of twenty-one volumes. In 1834 *Horae* was being marketed, not only as help for 'younger clergy in their preparations for the pulpit,' but also as a sound 'body of divinity' and suitable for 'family instruction.'[87] The demand for *Horae* was in no doubt due in part to the excellent reviews it received, at first, from Evangelicals and later from the Established Church.[88]

82 Hugh Evan Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), p. 60.

83 Ibid., p. 60. A 'grand title' that was 'after the fashion of the time'.

84 Unpublished correspondence by Charles Simeon located in the author's private library.

85 Unpublished correspondence by Charles Simeon located in the author's private library. Charles Simeon to Thomas Cadell, June 30, 1827. The letter goes on to show Simeon's hard work and focused intent for the set as he writes, '(Claude) will also prove a good avant courier to the large work, to which I am adding daily with great labor and success. Every months delay enables me to add to it what will greatly increase its value –'.

86 Horne was an Anglican minister who, for a time, was a librarian and later on a staff member in the printed books department at the British Museum. Forty books on bibliography were authored by Horne.

87 Promotional publication by Holdsworth and Ball, Amen Corner, Paternoster Row, London. January 1834. pp. 1-4.

88 Hopkins, *Charles Simeon*, p. 62. The 1819 edition of the *Eclectic Review* gave *Horae* a good mark two years before Simeon's death (the high church publication, *The Christian Remembrancer*).

How can one be sure that Simeon's relentless effort to grow *Horae Homileticae* in size and scope was not the result of a self-serving consumeristic plan fuelled by his growing popularity and the expanding market of Evangelical ministers? For one, consider Simeon's hope for the work,

> If it leads the ignorant to preach the truth, and the indolent to exert themselves, and the weak to attain a facility for writing their own, and the busy and laborious to do more and with better effect than they otherwise could have done, I shall be richly repaid for my labour. My prayers for God's blessing on it will, I hope, ascend as long as I am able to pray at all.[89]

Furthermore, take into account Simeon's use of the money he made after selling *Horae's* copyright to his publisher, Thomas Cadell, for £5000. Instead of keeping all the proceeds for himself, Simeon gave £1000 to the Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews. Another £1000 was gifted to the London Clerical Education Society and yet another £1000 was contributed to the Church Missionary Society. Simeon then took £250 pounds to bind twenty large paper copies of *Horae* that he then gave away to selected dignitaries and libraries throughout England and the Western World.[90] In a letter to his publisher, Simeon wrote how his royalties had become, 'the actual property of three societies. If God be honoured and my fellow-creatures benefited, it is all I want.'[91]

Over the years, Simeon's ability to remain mission-minded allowed him to thrive, even in the midst of the world's first modern financial crisis[92] which temporarily devastated the consumer driven publishing industry. On June 9, 1826, lawyer and well-known diarist, Henry Crabb Robinson (1775-1867) wrote, 'The booksellers are in a deplorable condition. [Alaric] Watts [a young editor and publisher] says that, with the possible exception of Colburn and Longman, he doubts whether any of them are solvent.'[93] That same year, three giant publishers plummeted into bankruptcy while the world's wealthiest and most widely read author, Sir Walter Scott, was financially shattered, as well. Scott's lofty statue above Glasgow's George's Square, betrays the £100,000 in financial liabilities he assumed, the balance of which were not entirely paid until being posthumously assumed by Thomas Cadell,[94] the publisher of Simeon's, *Horae Homileticae*.

89 Ibid., pp. 60-1.
90 *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature*, Volume II. p. 2103.
91 Hopkins, *Charles Simeon*, p. 60.
92 Johnson, *Birth of the Modern*, p. 891.
93 Ibid. Insertions are Johnson's.
94 Ibid., pp. 897-8.

While Evangelicals Charles Simeon, Hannah More and William Wilberforce certainly rode the rising tide of the consumer book market, they did so motivated by a mission to advance the gospel rather than their individual fame and fortune. Wilberforce did this with an eye to the last day, More to the present day and Simeon to the effective communication of both. What can be learned from their nineteenth century examples, and especially that of Charles Simeon, which would benefit Evangelicals today?

What can be learned from a nineteenth century Evangelical response to Consumerism?

What to write?

First, assume a mission-minded rather than market-driven approach to writing. When Simeon picked up his pen, it was always with the intention that his subject matter, whether commentary on world events or dedicatory remarks for a new building, point people to the gospel. As the wife of a preeminent New Testament scholar once told me, 'If my husband cannot preach on it, then he does not write on it.' For Simeon, as well as this professor, a mission-minded approach to writing assumes the gospel-centred agenda of Scripture[95] rather than the consumer-driven agenda of the Academy or the pew.[96]

What to publish?

Second, adopt a sustainable approach to publishing. Since 'of making many books there is no end' (Eccles. 12:12) Simeon's example of 'polishing-up' and republishing classic works is worthy of emulation. I'm grateful The Banner of Truth does this by publishing great books of the past and especially those of the Puritans. Christian Focus provides updated editions of Jonathan Edwards and John Owen along with attractive reprints by persons such as J.C. Ryle and C.H. Spurgeon. Crossway offers its Classic Commentary Series which includes reissued volumes by John Calvin, Charles Hodge and Thomas Manton. To be sure, there are always

95 Jer. 6:16 c.f. Rom. 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 1:18; 15:3-4; Gal. 1:6.
96 Allan Fisher. "Christian Publishing." Table Talk. November 1, 2009. http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/christian-publishing/. Accessed 30 March 2016. 'Scripture makes clear than an appeal to the market can easily lead to the publication of half-truths, if not outright heresy. The apostle Paul warns Timothy that "the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths" (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Books by such teachers are eminently marketable today.'

topics that demand contemporary treatment from the Scripture. A current example is sexual orientation. But work on other up-to-date issues such as submission to authority, persecution of Christians and the reality of hell could each be expertly treated if a new edition of an old classic was circulated. This, of course, would require the efforts of someone like Simeon who was secure enough in his own skin to share cover space with another name!

What to finance?

Third, use profits to finance gospel projects. As already noted, Simeon used his *Horae* revenue to benefit a variety of such endeavours. John Stott, a twentieth century Simeon,[97] invested a substantial portion of his publishing royalties to further the gospel efforts of his Langham Partnership. Ken Taylor, author of the Living Bible, took no remuneration for his work on what became a best-selling volume.[98] Instead, Living Bible proceeds are used to finance The Tyndale House Foundation which is exclusively used for charity. Author, Francis Chan, has agreed that a portion of the proceeds from his best-selling book, *Crazy Love*, will go to support clubs that Chan created to help children in need.[99] Crossway Books, one of the best known Christian publishers in the United States, is not a for-profit corporation but a 'not-for-profit ministry' with clearly stated, gospel-centred goals.[100] To make sure Crossway remains true to its mission, the board has determined that, 'Any surplus that may arise shall be used solely to further the ministry and shall not inure to the benefit of any individual.'[101] Dedicating book profits to serve gospel causes is a way to encourage authors and publishers to remain mission-minded in their task.

CONCLUSION

In a world where status and worth are determined by how much stuff one has, it is refreshing to know that in God's economy, status and worth are determined by what one gives.

97 http://markmeynell.net/blog/2016/02/simeon-and-stott-parallel-lives/. Accessed 1 February 2016.

98 The Living Bible was the best-selling book in America in 1972 and 1973. By the time it was given second billing to The New Living Bible in 1997, it had sold 40 million copies.

99 http://www.christiantoday.com/article/every.purchase.of.francis.chans.crazy.love.book.helps.support.kids.in.need/49703.htm

100 https://www.crossway.org/about/. Accessed 15 March 2016.

101 Ibid. Accessed 15 March 2016.

Because Jesus, 'gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age,'[102] the one who gives himself to Jesus can freely live in mission-minded, gospel service to others. In this way a Christian becomes 'rich toward God' (Luke 12:21) and reveals the reality of the well-travelled truth, 'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.'[103]

102 Gal. 1:4 c.f. 2:20; Eph. 5:2; 1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14.

103 Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty: The Life and Testament of Jim Elliot* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), p. 144. Web. Accessed 30 March 2016.

Recapturing Satisfaction in a Consumer Society

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The day I sat down to start writing this talk, I was in Starbucks with my grande, skinny, extra-hot wet latte in hand, playlist selected from my Apple music account on my iPhone 6 Plus, listening via my Shure noise cancelling headphones. I was just the right temperature in my GAP hoodie as I sat down at my brushed aluminium MacBook. I checked the time on my Pebble smart watch, turned on my Kindle Voyage E-Reader, and began to consider the question: what exactly is consumerism?

BECOMING CONSPICUOUS CONSUMERS

Our word 'consumer' comes from the Latin word *consūmere* which has a broad definition, roughly meaning, 'annul, burn up, destroy, extinguish, put an end to, reduce, wear away'.[1] Jesus' final words on the cross had they been recorded in Latin would have been *consummatum est*, 'It is finished'. *Consumere* first found its way into the French language around the twelfth century, and from there was transferred into English and other European languages. In the twelfth century, it was a verb used to describe a candle or firewood being used up. It was in this sense that the bush at Mount Horeb burned but was not 'consumed' (Exodus 3).

In this original sense consumption has always been a part of life; there has always been the using up of different things in the course of normal life. However, beginning around the fifteenth century, the definition of 'consume' broadened. It not only describes something being destroyed and used up, but now also has a meaning, 'relating to the use or exploitation of resources.'[2] It can refer to a pattern of behaviour. So Laura Hartman defines the related term, 'consumerism' as 'an ethos—a collection of attitudes, values, and cultural constructs—that places great value on shopping and consumption, such that consumption defines the parameters of the good life and the ultimate goals of the human'.[3]

1 'Consume, v. 1', Oxford English Dictionary, Online (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/39973>, and for the following historical information.

2 Ibid.

3 Laura M. Hartman, The Christian Consumer: Living Faithfully in a Fragile World (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 6; interacting with Alan Aldridge, Consumption (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003).

We now have in view what Thorstein Veblen called in his seminal work, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 'conspicuous consumption'.[4] According to Veblen, no longer was consumption about meeting basic needs, it was all about assuaging unnecessary wants. No longer was it about survival, it was now about exhibitionism and the flaunting of material goods to elevate standing and respect, and elicit praise from peasants and peers alike. But conspicuous consumption—this focusing in on high-status, opulent, and rare items—is very old. The opening of the silk road in 200 BC brought new desirable items into Europe, expanding 1,000 years later by voyages across the Indian Ocean, from 800 AD, meaning that there was a stable supply of luxury items: dates, cloths, sugar, and hardwood timber amongst other commodities making their way into Europe. Conspicuous consumption was prepared to trickle into everyday life, but early on it was the prerogative of the upper classes, and was as much a secure investment of money as an exhibition of wealth.

By the late fifteenth century, particularly amongst mercantile families in cities like Florence and Venice, a new craze was sweeping the upper classes. An appetite developed for sophisticated tableware, elaborate crockery, and artisan silver cutlery along with a desire for ornate decorations in the form of silks, rugs, cushions and furniture. These were mostly acquired with an aspiration to impress guests and exhibit wealth—it was a way to display and take pride in possessions, thus further stratifying established social class.

Western society was emerging from the grip of its Platonic roots, but those ideas found new purchase in the later period. Plato had written famously in his Republic about the decline of a virtuous, frugal city as it was corrupted by the lust for luxurious living. Frank Trentmann recounts how Plato's ideas resonated in the new Latin translation made in in Renaissance Florence:

> When citizens kept to the basic needs set by nature, the city was in 'sound health'. Once people started to follow the desire of their flesh, however, they set in motion an insatiable drive for more that ended in war and corruption. First, they wanted to 'lie on couches and dine from tables, and have relishes and desserts', but rather than being satisfied with that, this only whetted their appetite for 'painting, embroidery, gold and ivory'.[5]

4 T. Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (New York: Macmillan, 1899). Chapter IV, pp. 68–101, is devoted to an analysis of 'Conspicuous Consumption'; the phrase makes its first appearance on p. 62.

5 F. Trentmann, *Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (London: Allen Lane, 2016),

This departure from 'sound health' went up a gear with the craving for more exotic tastes and beverages among the aristocracy in Europe in the sixteenth century, as tea from China, coffee and cane sugar from Arabia, and tobacco and cocoa from the New World flooded into the continent. Consumerism was transforming life, though still principally among the wealthy, generally preserving societal order and within clearly defined niche items.

This proto-conspicuous consumerism though is paltry compared to the place we find ourselves in today. Consumerism is now the unquestioned world view that has become the dominant Zeitgeist for our society. What started as a whisper of bragging in the home of wealthy merchants in fifteenth century Italy has become the ravenous roar of the general populace on the streets of twenty-first century Britain. How did this come about? The tidal wave of conspicuous consumerism engulfing us was generated by the perfect storm of circumstances that fell perfectly into place during the latter half of the twentieth century. As people emerged from the nightmare of World War II, they began to dream of what the future might hold. The American Dream was voraciously pursued as everyone's right, everyone's dream.

The structures of the past had been obliterated in the global conflict, and everything was up for grabs. By the end of the twentieth century, people were no longer moored in traditional roles. Opportunity for upward mobility through self-betterment and acquisition was now a tangible and realistic goal. With the mass production of factories swamping the market with consumer goods, there was now opportunity to consume like never before, especially set against the backdrop of rationing and austerity that was necessary during and following the war years. To cope with production now far exceeding demand; advertising, branding, marketing, and sponsorship ramped up to sow the seeds of dissatisfaction into people's lives which would in due course bear the fruit of new and larger purchases. The dawn of the disposable culture was now here with durability and stagnation the twin enemies of consumerism.

This coincided with the dawning of the television age. The television proved almost irresistible to those with even a small amount of disposable income. In 1957, less than '5 per cent of the French and British population owned a fridge', but 'every second low-income household in Britain

p. 35; citing Plato, *The Republic*, Book II, 'The Luxurious State' (372–37CE), trans. R. E. Allen (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 55–6. The account here draws broadly on Trentmann's work.

owned a TV set'.[6] Now advertisers could infiltrate the home like never before and nag, cajole, and entice everyone with relentless intensity. With the advent of the credit card in the 60s overcoming the consumer time-sensitive inertia of saving money, you really could not only want it all, you could have it now and pay for it later. With the collapse of communism in the late 80s, the capitalist free market economy was free to roam the savannah of the globe unchallenged as the alpha male world view and its consumerist roots could go deeper into the very fabric of society. In no time at all, MTV and others would be broadcasting documentaries about the lives, homes, and habits of the rich and famous into the living rooms and lives of impressionable children, turning their covetousness and consumer appetite up to '11'.

As Ayatollah Khomeini observed in his final testament in 1989: 'The radio, the television, the print media, the theatres and the cinemas have been successfully used to intellectually anesthetize nations, and especially the youth.'[7] It should be noted, however, that conspicuous consumerism is even traceable in Khomeini's Iran. Following the Iranian Revolution of 1979, women were required to cover up and don headscarves and the *hijab*. With scant opportunity to conspicuously consume in such an imposed monoculture, two consumer markets exploded overnight: cosmetics, and designer sunglasses—two permissible outlets for these Iranian women to broadcast their social status and affluence, even amidst this enforced conservatism.

BEING CONSPICUOUS CONSUMERS

The last situational concrete that would cement consumerism unshakably as the societal norm was delivered in the form of the internet and the digital age. This interconnected web of personalised information took advertising to a bespoke and micro-targeted level. At the same time, it not only opened up '24/7' shopping possibilities, it also provided a forum for exhibiting, manicuring, and promoting one's identity forged through

6 Trentmann, *Empire of Things*, p. 247. According to the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board, about one third of Britain's 15 million domestic households had a television in 1956; by 1977 it was almost at saturation point (19.0 of 19.5 million households having a television); statistics at <http://www.barb.co.uk/resources/tv-ownership/>.

7 Trentmann, *Empire of Things*, pp. 616–7; also for the account which follows. Cf. *Imam Khomeini's Last Will and Testament*, available as a PDF from the Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project <https://www.al-islam.org/imam-khomeini-s-last-will-and-testament>. The passage used by Trentmann is found in §M.

conspicuous consumption in the form of social media. Now in this virtual world inhabited by the ultimate moulded self identity—the 'avatar'—individuals are free to invent, enhance, and sculpt their 'self-brand', in order to penetrate their spheres of influence unhindered.

It seems we really are what we eat, what we wear, what we make our calls on, and what we drive. So aesthetics become paramount and substance takes a back seat with the result of wafer thin superficiality. Our appetites grow exponentially and always at a faster rate than the products we crave can satisfy our cavernous souls. Shopping is the social obsession, the mall is the twenty-first century cathedral, and Zuckerberg, Bezos, Cook, and Gates amongst the plethora of High Priests ready to initiate us into deeper levels of consumerist indoctrination.

Conspicuous consumerism conveys our limitless ability to form and broadcast our identity in relation to our stuff. Things have finally become our ends. As Malcolm Muggeridge so beautifully writes:[8]

> So the final conclusion would surely be that whereas other civilizations have been brought down by attacks of barbarians from without, ours had the unique distinction of training its own destroyers at its own educational institutions, and then providing them with facilities for propagating their destructive ideology far and wide, all at the public expense. Thus did Western Man decide to abolish himself, creating his own boredom out of his own affluence, his own vulnerability out of his own strength, his own impotence out of his own erotomania, himself blowing the trumpet that brought the walls of his own city tumbling down…. Until at last, having educated himself into imbecility, and polluted and drugged himself into stupefaction, he heeled over—a weary, battered old brontosaurus—and became extinct.

Why is conspicuous consumerism so compelling? Why have we swallowed such an idolatrous, dangerous and expensive mantra for our lives unthinkingly? What is it about consumerism, that despite our growing sense of dissatisfaction, we keep journeying down the same *cul-de-sac* of stupidity and heaping more stuff on top of our excess hoping that just a few more things will bring us to contented complete nirvana? Well it

8 In this form, from the essay 'True Crisis of Our Time', in *Vintage Muggeridge: Religion and Society*, ed. by G. Barlow (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985); the ideas and some of the words were first used in Muggeridge's address to the Lausanne Congress, 'Living Through an Apocalypse', in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: The Complete Papers from the International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, 1974*, ed. by J. D. Douglas (London: World Wide Publications, 1975), pp. 449–56 (see p. 451).

surely has to be the promises made by consumerism makes that tap into our deepest spiritual needs.

We have a longing for joy, and consumerism says, 'Joy can be found here, in this, by wearing that!'. Search YouTube for 'unboxing' to find people offering videos of themselves experiencing the suspense and awe of unboxing a new product for the first time. We have a longing for acceptance, for people to like us and befriend us, and consumerism says the gateway to acceptance is by being seen in these shoes, driving this car or listening to these tunes. If you watch the classic marketing campaign of Apple — 'I am a Mac' vs. 'I am a PC'—then it is clear that no one will find acceptance if they are a PC. We have a longing for wholeness, and the promises made by advertisers about their products are legion in this direction. Whether it be the sexualised undertones of a majority of adverts, or the fact that every face connected to the product in question smiles on us, or the use of blatant slogans like 'Because you're worth it'—commodities promise to bear the weight of our longing, and meet our craving for that thing we are missing.

Consumerism is a promise-saturated worldview, including the promise of joy, acceptance, wholeness, and hope, all hanging on the acquisition, accumulation, and exhibition of countless products for any and every situation.

The great flaw in consumerism, though, is that it is a flawed philosophy from the beginning. The oil that lubricates this insatiable amassing of stuff is dissatisfaction. Contentment is always one step further away than the consumer finds themselves. The goal posts are constantly moving and keeping up with the Joneses is an exponentially exhausting endeavour which, if achieved, only serves to introduce us to the Joneses' more affluent associates. Consumerism is the quintessential snake-eating snake, ravenously transitory, and accelerating to the point of social schismogenesis. Far from fulfilling the promise of joy, acceptance, wholeness and hope, consumerism simply demonstrates how elusive these emotions are when pursued through the stockpiling of stuff.

OVERCOMING CONSUMERISM

Simply highlighting the holes in consumerism, though, is ultimately an unsatisfactory solution. Pointing out that the emperor is naked may pedestal one's own insight but does nothing to comfort the startled onlooker on the street or cover the shame of the now exposed emperor.

So against this vacuous, superficial, and insatiable conspicuous consumerism, I want to show you how Jesus Christ is the only one who meets our deep seated longings. It is only the gospel that quenches our potentially fatal soul thirst as Jesus frees us from our emptiness, selfishness, and futile endeavour to write our own impressive story, by graciously including us in the most enormous and complete story conceivable—the story of God and his eternal rescue mission to redeem a people for His very own possession.

Perhaps oddly, I begin with Johan Cruyff. He passed away on 24 March 2016, at the age of 68—just a fortnight before the SETS conference where this paper was delivered. From an early age, Cruyff was a heavy smoker. Even during his glorious playing days at Barcelona, lighting up was his perpetual habit. After his playing days, he graduated to management and was a very successful manager at both Ajax and Barcelona. His puffing away on the touchline was a familiar sight for players and spectators alike. In 1991, as stress and the cumulative effects of decades of tobacco intake took their toll, Cruyff underwent heart bypass surgery and was commanded by doctors to stop smoking. At this point, Cruyff famously replaced his smoking addiction for the voracious consumption of lollipops. Cruyff couldn't simply give up his cigarette addiction without something to take its place.[9]

It is human nature to lack the capability to give up consuming without a more compelling, more fulfilling, and more satisfying alternative. To overcome our consumerist hard-wiring, we need a radical reprogramming, one only possible by the grace of God through the gospel of the Lord Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. As Thomas Chalmers wrote in his famous discourse, 'The Expulsive Power of a New Affection':[10]

> It is not enough, then, that we dissipate the charm, by a moral, and eloquent, and affecting exposure of its illusiveness. … It must be by substituting another desire, and another line or habit of exertion in its place—and the most effectual way of withdrawing the mind from one object, is not by turning it away upon desolate and unpeopled vacancy—but by presenting to its regards another object still more alluring. …
>
> In a word, if the way to disengage the heart from the positive love of one great and ascendant object, is to fasten it in positive love to another, then it is not by exposing the worthlessness of the former, but by addressing to the mental eye the worth and excellence of the latter, that all old things are to be done away and all things are to become new.

To this end, turning away from the illusory enticements of conspicuous consumption, we turn toward the satisfaction of the gospel. I simply want to take the four deep seated longings of joy, acceptance, wholeness, and hope and show the sufficiency of Christ to eternally satisfy those longings using the imagery of water in the gospel of John.

LIVING WATER FROM JOHN'S GOSPEL

Water is a pervasive theme in the Bible. Water is first mentioned in Genesis 1:2 as the spirit hovers over the waters. Water is last mentioned in Revelation 22:17, the last verse before John's postscript with the invitation to the thirsty to come and freely drink of the water of life. Water also forms a key image in many of the pivotal events of Israel's history, whether creation, or Noah's flood, the crossing of the Red Sea, the provision of water in the wilderness, or the numerous references picked up in both the Wisdom and Prophetic literature. Chad Bird begins his commentary on water in the Bible by observing that, 'Almost every page of the Old Testament is wet'.[11] This may be hyperbole, but there is no escaping that water plays an important role in Israel's formative events.

In keeping with this saturated Old Testament backdrop, the New Testament is also an aquatic array and no writings are more 'moist' than those of John. Of the 118 instances of water in its various forms contained within the New Testament, 70 occurrences flow from John's pen and are found in his gospel (28×), his first letter (4×) and Revelation (38×). Some of the most memorable stories in the gospel are sprinkled with water: the changing of water into wine (2:1–11), the conversation with Nicodemus (3:3–5), the conversion of the Samaritan woman (4:7–15), the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda (5:2–9), Jesus walking on the sea of Galilee (6:16–21), Jesus' proclamation at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:37–39), the healing of the man born blind (9:1–12), the washing of the disciples feet (13:3–11), the thirst of Jesus on the cross (19:28), the mingling of water with blood flowing from Jesus' side (19:34), the reinstatement of Peter beside the Sea of Galilee (21:1–19).

With Chalmers' words in mind, these texts help us see Jesus as more alluring than the disposable, transitory and unfulfilled and endless striving held out by conspicuous consumerism.

9 Johan Cruyff, *My Turn: A Life of Total Football* (New York: Macmillan, 2016), pp. 135–7.

10 Thomas Chalmers, *Discourses on the Application of Christianity to the Commercial and Ordinary Affairs of Life* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1836), pp. 212–13, 220. The title of the collection makes a more striking connection with the theme of 'consumerism' than the more famous title of the discourse itself would suggest.

11 Chad Bird, *Water: A Theme Throughout Scripture* (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), p. 5.

1. Joy

We arrive at a wedding in full flow in Cana in Galilee, at the beginning of John 2. It is a scene of communal joy as the bridegroom has returned to the marital home to finally marry his betrothed. The wine is flowing, the food is sumptuous, the community is celebrating and the feasting is set to continue for many more hours. All of a sudden there is a serious situation: the wine has run out. Joy turns to potential shame, and the party stands every chance of being curtailed by the *vino* drought. The exuberant shouts and hearty congratulations are replaced by whispers behind hands as the problem is relayed to those responsible for hosting. Once Mary, Jesus' mother, gets word of this, she immediately presents to Jesus the predicament.

Now Jesus' comments to his mother have been the source of much debate in scholarship over the years. What exactly does 'My hour has not yet come' (2:4)[12] mean in this situation? In context, it surely must mean that the hour for Jesus' glorious identity to be revealed openly and fully hasn't yet arrived.[13] That hour is still a few years down the line when it will be exhibited on the cross at Golgotha, and by his resurrection from the dead at the empty tomb. What Jesus does in the following episode is a discrete miracle to keep the reception going and prolong the joyous occasion.

Now the symbolism here is multifaceted. Firstly, ceremonial Jewish washing jars are filled; these are vessels for facilitating ritual purity. This water is then miraculously transformed into wine, a central symbol of the new covenant signifying Jesus' blood making efficacious the cleansing of the conscience and bringing eternal forgiveness from all sin.[14] Secondly, there is this creationesque miracle, as Jesus with the creative power of God—simply speaking the word—transforms simple water into the produce of plant life in a matter of moments, a micro-version of the third day of creation. Thirdly, there is the converse of the Jewish understanding of older being better. Just as the new wine was better than the old wine, so the words of the master of the banquet, '… you have saved the best until now' (2:10), suggest that what is now available in Jesus is far better than what was available to the Israel of old.

What is so significant though in our quest, over and above all these and the many other seismic symbols thrown up in this account, is the identity of Jesus as the eternal messianic bridegroom. The symbol of wine in the Old Testament is synonymous with joy.

> Wine gladdens the heart of man. (Psalm 104:5)

> Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. (Isaiah 55:1)

> Shall I leave my wine that cheers God and men and go hold sway over the trees? (Judges 9:13)

So in a very real sense, with the wine consumed, so joy is also run out. However, through this miraculous intervention by Jesus, better wine flows and greater joy is now amplified.

Yet the end of the account invites a clearer vision. 'What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him' (2:11). There is a symbolism attached to the miracle. He granted his select few disciples a vision of his true identity, a vision that garnered their belief and promised to complete their joy. It is a vision that flows, too, out of Isaiah 25:6–9:

> On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare
> a feast of rich food for all people,
> a banquet of aged wine—
> the best of meats and the finest of wines.
> … He will destroy the gloom that enfolds all people…
> He will swallow up death forever.
> The sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces;
> he will remove people's disgrace from all the earth.
> In that day they will say,
> 'Surely this is our God;
> we trusted him and he saved us!
> This is the Lord we trusted in him;
> let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.'

It seems what Jesus does here at Cana in Galilee is but a dress rehearsal of the final feast to which he will welcome his bride the church at the end of this age: 'Let us rejoice and be glad and give him the glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready' (Revelation 19:7).

[12] Scripture citations throughout are taken from the NIV Anglicized edition.

[13] So, e.g., C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, 2nd edn (London: SPCK, 1978), p. 191.

[14] This connection is not as prominent in John's gospel as elsewhere in the New Testament, but remains resonant (cf. John 6:55–56). The book of Revelation tends to associate 'wine' with the cup of wrath motif.

If consumerism in the twenty-first century offers us fleeting joy at ever increasing prices with diminishing returns, Jesus holds out to us eternal, infinite, and satisfying joy, a foretaste of which is seen through his intervention at a wedding feast in Cana in Galilee.

2. Acceptance

We stumble across a potentially scandalous scene as a Samaritan woman with a dubious reputation is drawn into a conversation instigated by a lone Jewish man in John 4. They are at Jacob's Well outside the town of Sychar and so naturally the conversation flows sparked initially by the topic of water and the request for a drink. As the conversation continues it appears that the physical is superseded by the spiritual and the water available from the deep and ancient well is displaced by an altogether different liquid available from a new and alien source.

What takes place besides this well is breaking every social and ethnic barrier imaginable. A man conversing with a woman. A Jew conversing with a Samaritan. An ill-reputed adulterer conversing with a devoutly religious individual. None of these represents the biggest barrier being overcome in this interaction, however. What we have here is God himself in the second person of the Trinity speaking face-to-face with someone who is in everyone's eyes an infamous sinner. It is holiness personified encountering sinfulness exhibited.

As the conversation continues, this woman who knows ostracism and shunning both on account of her ethnicity and actions finds someone willing to overlook it all, accept her despite it all, and offer transformation in place of guilt and shame. Jesus reveals biographical details about her sequence of husbands and her current partner to whom she is not married. Her behaviour has been consumer-like. She describes Jesus as a prophet, and goes on to seek clarification as to acceptable worship, whether Samaritan style on Mount Gerizim or the traditional Jewish way in Jerusalem. Jesus resists her invitation to debate, and introduces her instead to the radical newness of the kingdom he is ushering in, that acceptable worship will not be geographically defined but spiritually determined. Acceptable worship—the worship that the Father seeks—will not be a matter of temples or shrines, but a spiritual reality.

So in this scandalous scene, we find one who holds out true acceptance. One who knows everything, the sordid details and the categorical failings, and despite it all he welcomes us to come and drink from him eternally soul quenching water, that will become in them a spring of living water welling up to eternal life.

Consumerism offers an ever increasing number of hoops to jump through in order to be greeted with the acceptance that we all crave. Jesus

though, says you can be accepted forever by the God of the universe, not through self-improvement or wearing the right brands, but by accepting humbly the transformative grace he offers meaning you will be forever welcome and accepted by God in him.

3. Wholeness

The third glimpse of Jesus and 'water' in John that helps us to recalibrate our affections is the pair of healing miracles recorded in John 5 and John 9. In John 5 Jesus enters a scene of despair near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem at the pool of Bethesda. This is the gathering place of a large number of the infirm and disabled. It is a hopeless scene, as people pin their hopes on the healing properties of this mysterious pool (5:7). The tragedy is that the sighted but disabled invalids can see the water stir, but cannot get into the pool; on the other hand, the blind but able-bodied people are left guessing when the pool might stir, but can get themselves into the water.

Within this desperate assembly we focus in on an invalid who had been afflicted for 38 years. Jesus asks him, 'Do you want to get well?' (5:6). This question the man totally misunderstands, thinking that Jesus is offering to be a means to his ends by helping him take the plunge before his peers when the waters are stirred. Then, displaying his healing power, Jesus with a sentence invites the man: 'Get up and … walk!' (5:8), bringing instantaneous healing to his atrophied legs.

Three chapters later we see a similar scene, this time of a lone, blind beggar on the streets of Jerusalem (9:1). The disciples question Jesus as to the cause of this man's apparently cursed state. Jesus dismisses their causal interpretation and says, 'This has happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him' (9:2–3). Then, in a slightly grotesque act as seen through our modern eyes, Jesus makes saliva-saturated mud and applies it as salve on the man's eyes, before inviting him—in scenes reminiscent of Elisha and Naaman (2 Kings 5)—to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. Again, healing is instant, as sight is restored.

Both these men are restored by Jesus. Both these men are healed with reference to water, Jesus doing himself for the invalid what the water was thought to do, and the blind man healed having trustingly obeyed Jesus' instructions. Both miracles are framed in relation to sin. The invalid is told to stop sinning having been healed (5:14), the blind man is thought to have been afflicted on account of his or his parents' sin (9:2). Yet the commonality between them is the restoration, healing, and wholeness Jesus brings to both. Again, using water, Jesus' identity is portrayed.

Yet again this is a compellingly complete vision when placed alongside the fractured promise of consumerism. Wholeness is forever held out as being attained through the acquisition of stuff, completeness found in relation to possessions. Jesus stands in these two miracles as the one who offers wholeness, fulfilling a deep desire that is far greater than the superficial diagnosis consumerism delivers and tries to solve. Jesus is able to heal us of the destructive disease of sin and restore us to a relationship with God—something we are inhibited by, but ignorant of, due to the masking symptoms of our multifaceted covetous desires.

4. Hope

Finally, we gaze at a grotesque scene from John 19—a picture of anguished death on an infamous and exposed hill overlooking Jerusalem. Here amidst a hostile crowd of ridicule and mockery, one man is lifted up, and nailed in agony to a wooden instrument of torture. A small group, mostly made up of women, stands distraught at the foot of this cross, bewildered at what has transpired, and how Jesus has come to suffer this fate at the hands of the religious leaders.

A few hours into this pain-filled scene, Jesus pushes against his pierced hands and feet, rubbing more skin off his lacerated back to draw just enough precious air into his burning and bursting lungs to say, 'I am thirsty!', literally 'I thirst' (Greek: *dipsō*, 19:28). A very real response from one who is fully human, made like us in every way (Hebrews 2:17).

It is a declaration which casts shadows of familiarity across this event. Centuries earlier, one of David's psalms, Psalm 22, anticipated the suffering of a coming saviour king. Verses 14–15 of this Psalm provide the 'text' that Jesus is obviously meditating on despite his tortured state. David writes, 'I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death' (Psalm 22:14–15). By declaring his thirst, Jesus was declaring that the sufferings he was going through measured up to the suffering that the Saviour of the world would undergo to rescue his people.

And in a very real sense Jesus takes on our thirst, the one who was eternally satisfied in himself as a member of the Trinity becomes thirsty, is parched, in order that our soul thirst might eternally be quenched in Him. Jesus Christ became thirsty for us so we wouldn't have to go on being thirsty for him. No one has captured this more beautifully than Horatius Bonar:[15]

> I heard the voice of Jesus say,
> "Behold, I freely give

[15] Horatius Bonar, 'The Voice from Galilee', in *Hymns of Faith and Hope*, 5th edn (London: James Nisbet, 1860), p. 159.

> The living water; thirsty one,
> Stoop down, and drink, and live."
> I came to Jesus, and I drank
> Of that life-giving stream;
> My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
> And now I live in Him.

Jesus' thirst resulted in our eternal hope. The one who thirsts at Golgotha previously made a remarkable declaration at the Feast of Tabernacles. That feast itself has watery connotations, and featured libations involving water and wine (Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:9), and a ritual to secure rain for the rainy season shortly to follow (Mishnah *Ta'anith* 1:1).[16] On the greatest day of that festival, Jesus said: 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow…' (John 7:37–38).

So, to complete the symbolism, the Golgotha account ends with soldiers piercing Jesus' side, inducing a deluge of blood mixed with water. Now with sin atoned for, paid for in full, with eternal work finished and the hope of eternal life secured—now the insatiable soul-thirst that is endemic in each of us can finally be satisfied by this One who is our eternal hope.

Consumerism dashes hope almost as soon as it has delivered. Jesus delivers sure and certain hope through his taking up our thirst in order that we can be eternally satisfied in him.

CHRIST—THE ONE WHO SATISFIES COMPLETELY

Perhaps it is a clichéd place to finish, but a fitting conclusion to this reflection comes from an introduction to a much, much older one. Against the backdrop of restless, ravenous, and relentless consumerism, Augustine famously penned these words: 'You move us to delight in praising You; for You have formed us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in You.'[17] It is only in this Jesus Christ that the anguished pantings of our desiccated souls are fully and finally satisfied. Seeing him, coming to him and trusting him will immunize us from the foolish and futile life that defines meaning from the accumulation and abundance of possessions.

[16] Cf. Barrett, *Gospel According to St John*, pp. 310, 327.

[17] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. by J. G. Pilkington, rev. by Kevin Knight <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1101.htm>, Bk. I, Ch. 1.1.

Classical Trinitarianism and Eternal Functional Subordination: Some Historical and Dogmatic Reflections

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ABSTRACT

Within Anglophone evangelical theology and church life there has been much debate in recent months over the idea of 'eternal functional subordination' (EFS) or 'eternal relationships of authority and submission' (ERAS). To ask whether EFS/ERAS are adequately trinitarian we must first define 'trinitarian'. Following Barnes, I argue that the only possible definition is historical. To be 'trinitarian' is to hold to the doctrine developed in the fourth-century debates. By insisting on a strong distinction between the divine life *in se* and the economic acts of God, I rule out any appeal to, for instance, the *pactum salutis* in an attempt to defend EFS/ERAS. A consideration of the Father-Son relationship suggests two possible defences of such positions, one relying on finding an eternal analogue to the economic ordering of the divine acts, and the other pressing 'Father-Son' language to suggest that the relationship of eternal generation might entail something like EFS/ERAS. An examination of what must be said concerning the simple divine essence, however, excludes both these possibilities. I argue, therefore, that EFS, ERAS, or any similar doctrines are incompatible with classical trinitarianism.

INTRODUCTION

There has been considerable energy in Anglophone evangelical theology in recent years devoted to the ideas of 'eternal functional subordination' (EFS) or 'eternal relationships of authority and submission' (ERAS). Alongside a number of book-length engagements,[1] there have been many

[1] To sample, merely: Kevin Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002); Giles, *Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006); Millard J. Erickson, *Who's Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009); Dennis Jowers and H. Wayne House (eds), *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? God the Father and God the Son* (Eugene:

conference papers and, in the summer of 2016, a whirlwind of blog posts. The debate has been highly charged, with accusations of heresy being freely thrown on every side; it has its origins in an attempt to link a particular account of gender roles with the doctrine of the Trinity, through a leveraging of 1 Corinthians 11:3.

Whatever the merits of the appeal to that particular pauline text, and so of the argument about gender roles,[2] the claims about trinitarian doctrine are interesting. Both sides of the (regularly acrimonious) debate are apparently convinced that there is a relatively monolithic tradition of trinitarian orthodoxy that supports their position. I have argued before that, historically, the church's teaching on the trinity has been remarkably unified;[3] assuming that argument was right, which side (if either) of this contemporary evangelical debate can claim fidelity to that heritage? I argue in what follows that there is no possible space for EFS/ERAS in classical trinitarianism; any such doctrine will necessarily be a departure from that tradition.

DEFINING 'TRINITARIAN'

The confessional basis of the American Evangelical Theological Society,[4] like many other symbolic documents, includes a clause about the doctrine of the Trinity: 'God is a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each an uncreated person, one in essence, equal in power and glory.' I reflect that this is not particularly well drafted: in particular, the natural grammatical reading of 'one in essence' is that it refers to the immediately prior subject, and so insists that each person is one in essence, which is rather unfortunate. Grammar aside, though, we can ask about theology: how adequate a definition of the doctrine of the Trinity is this? There are two parts to this (my qualms about drafting aside): there is clearly nothing here that is repugnant to trinitarian orthodoxy; but is believing this

Pickwick, 2012); Bruce A. Ware and John Starke (eds), *One God in Three Persons: Unity of Essence, Distinction of Persons, Implications for Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016)

[2] I hold fairly strongly to the view that there are no good arguments from the doctrine of the Trinity to any human sociality, including gender roles in marriage or church, but that is not the theme of this essay.

[3] See Stephen R. Holmes, *The Holy Trinity: Understanding God's Life* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012).

[4] This paper was originally written for the 2016 ETS Conference, at the invitation of the Theology and Gender group. I am grateful for the invitation, and for helpful discussion at the conference.

clause sufficient to trinitarian orthodoxy? Or does one need to believe not only this but something more to be adequately trinitarian?

Asking such questions highlights that the word 'trinitarian' demands definition, and the first point I want to make is that the only possible definition it may gain is historical. Scripture teaches us much about the nature of deity, and about the relationships of the Son to the Father, and so on, and of course we should believe all these things. But Scripture does not define for us the word 'trinitarian'—the word is not a biblical one.

Now, of course, we could define the word by asserting that 'trinitarian' means 'believing that which the Bible teaches about Father, Son, and Spirit,' but such a procedure would be unhelpful. Consider the ETS's confession: it is a matter of record that the requirement to be Trinitarian was inserted to prevent those who claimed to believe the Bible, but who denied the Trinity, from seeking membership. This highlights the fact that the word 'Trinitarian' has typically been used to judge the adequacy of various proposed readings of Scripture. Arians, Socinians, Unitarians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Oneness Pentecostals, and various others all read Scripture wrongly because they fail to read it in a trinitarian way. That sentence only makes sense if we accept that 'trinitarian' means something more definite than merely 'whatever I think the Bible teaches'. The claim 'Scripture teaches a trinitarian doctrine of God', that is, is substantive, and not merely a tautology.

Perhaps a parallel example will help here: consider the word 'Calvinist'; it is similarly undefined biblically, and similarly proposes a body of teaching that claims to be biblical, but that others regard as a poor reading of Scripture (in this case, of course, the dividing-lines are between evangelical believers). Calvinists hold a particular set of ideas about fallenness, grace, faith, and election; they hold to these ideas because they believe that they are in fact taught in Scripture, but the word 'Calvinist' refers to that definite and limited set of ideas, not to whatever doctrine someone claims to find in Scripture. The Arminian may argue 'The biblical doctrine of grace is not Calvinist' and have something meaningful to say.

In both cases, then, there is no possible biblical challenge over the definition of the term, only over the correctness of the doctrine so denoted. Of course, I might challenge the definition—the claim that it is not authentically Calvinist to hold to a limited atonement is an example that has been essayed more than once. The only meaningful court of appeal here will be to history: 'Calvinist' describes a historical tradition that has its origins in the Genevan reformer, and is generally considered to find a key point of development in the Synod of Dort; the idea of limited atonement develops during that history (the first explicit articulation, I believe, was in Beza's

responses to Andreae at the Montbéliard Colloquy in 1586[5]); any argument that the idea is, or is not, authentically 'Calvinist' will turn on a telling of this history.

Mention of Dort takes me to a second point, slightly more controversial: not only must we define 'trinitarian' historically, we cannot do it by simple appeal to this or that historical document. This is the thesis of Barnes's decisive essay, 'The Fourth Century as Trinitarian Canon'.[6] It is at least arguable that the Canons of Dort provide a definitive account of what it is to be 'Calvinist'—that argument must be historical in form, of course, but once made and accepted permits a certain abstraction from history. I do not need to know the details of the arguments surrounding Jacobus Arminius and Johannes Wtenbogaert (the author of the *Five Articles of Remonstrance*) to be able to determine whether a position is authentically Calvinist or not; I have a canon, or rather a set of Canons, to measure it by. My claim here is that there is no similar canon, no similar defining symbolic document, for trinitarianism.

This is not an obvious position, in that there are at least three apparent candidates, the decrees of the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople, and the document we know as the Nicene Creed. It is not hard, however, to show that these are inadequate. The simplest summary of orthodox trinitarianism, the one routinely taught to first year undergraduates, goes '*mia ousia, treis hypostases*'. But none of our three documents teach this formula. Famously, Nicaea actually anathematises all who teach more than one hypostasis in the Godhead;[7] Constantinople, or at least that summary of it that has reached us, makes no mention of *ousia* or *hypostasis* at all;[8] the Creed will insist the Son is *homoousios ton Patri*, but says nothing similar of the Holy Spirit, and, again, does not use the word *hypostasis* at

5 On the various arguments adduced concerning predestination there see Jill Raitt, *The Colloquy of Montbéliard: Religion and Politics in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) pp. 147-55 and Gottfried Adam, *Der Streit um die Prädestination im ausgehenden 16. Jahrhundert: Eine Untersuchung zu den Entwurfen von Samuel Huber und Aegidius Hunnius* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970), pp. 29-49.

6 Michel Rene Barnes, 'The Fourth Century as Trinitarian Canon' in Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones (eds), *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric, and Community* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 47-67.

7 Τοὺς δὲ λέγοντας … Ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως ἢ οὐσιάς φάσκοντας εἶναι … τούτους ἀναθεματίζει ἡ ἁγία καθολικὴ καὶ ἀποστολικὴ ἐκκλησία. (From the Creed of Nicea)

8 The closest to a trinitarian formula comes in the fifth canon, which merely affirms the single deity of Father, Son, and Spirit.

all. These documents, vital though they are, simply do not codify what we now call trinitarianism.

So how do we define 'trinitarian'? Barnes's argument in the paper cited above is that this core Christian doctrine is determined by the debate that, roughly put, occurs between Nicaea and Constantinople—I would want to add Augustine's interpretation of the Nicene heritage also (which I do not think Barnes would deny, but it was not the focus of his argument then). If we are to understand what the demand to be trinitarian means, we need to be attentive to the fourth century debates, and to understand the doctrine that underlay the affirmations—and particularly the condemnations—made at Constantinople.

The first canon that has come down to us from that Council (one of the undisputed ones) affirms the faith of Nicaea and then condemns a series of positions by name alone. We are told that Eunomians, Arians, Semi-Arians, Sabellians, Marcellians, Photinians, and Apollinarians are all wrong. The orthodox doctrine of the Trinity is that teaching which falls into none of these errors, but it is not spelled out. This is not a surprise: patristic theology tended to make progress by denying the possibility of various positions. We might on this basis assert that orthodox trinitarianism is more of a space than a doctrine, and suggest that any account that does not fall foul of these various strictures can stand. There are two problems with this, however. The first is that it does not overcome the basic point that I am arguing here: even if we accept that claim completely, to determine the limits of orthodoxy we will need to discover what Eunomius, Sabellius, Marcellus, Photinus, and the rest taught. This will, inevitably, be historical work.

Second, the history is not generally read as leaving a blank space between these various heresies. What is left when they are all excluded is something quite specific and defined, which we might term Cappadocian trinitarianism (locating Augustine as the most capable interpreter of that tradition). Now, Barnes certainly suggests in the paper I have cited that there were two strands of presentation here: one, represented by Rome, Alexandria and, later, Augustine, locating Arius as the heresiarch of the century and interpreting later errors as different modes of repeating his core errors, and the other represented supremely by the Cappadocians seeing Arius as a fairly minor aberration, and seeing the great elenctic task as opposing Eunomius. There is not here, however, a difference of doctrine, so much as a difference over who the doctrine was to be defined against. Further, it is fair to say that in the two decades since Barnes wrote that paper there has been a massive and compelling body of patristic scholarship on the fourth century that has at least softened the edges of

this picture, and that has found the presentation of later non-nicene theologies as dependent on Arius to be a move more political than theological.[9]

The presenting problem for fourth-century theology was two equally biblical, but apparently contradictory, modes of discourse concerning the divine life. On the one hand, Christians, like the people of Israel, are called to an uncompromising loyalty to one God alone; on the other Christians speak of Father, Son, and Spirit as each being divine. The Constantinopolitan list of heresies bears witness to this: Arians, Semi-Arians, and Eunomians err in so stressing the diversity of Father and Son (or, in the case of the semi-Arians, Father and Spirit) that they deny the divine unity; Sabellians, Marcellians, and Photinians err in so stressing the divine unity that they deny any real distinct existence of the three divine persons.

I have written at some length elsewhere[10] on how these debates played out, and tried to delineate the careful theological moves that enable the Cappadocian statement of a convincing doctrine that falls into neither error. I do not intend to repeat that material here; but I re-iterate that this history, famously complex as it is, is the only available definition we have of what it is to be trinitarian. This does not mean, of course, that everyone who wishes to claim to be trinitarian must become an expert in fourth-century doctrinal history; it does mean that when a question arises about what is acceptably trinitarian, then the only proper court of appeal is to a careful statement and consideration of this history. And so I turn to the novel—they are novel, as will become clear—ideas clustered around the slogans 'eternal functional subordination' (hereafter 'EFS') and 'eternal relations of authority and submission' (hereafter 'ERAS'). How do these sorts of ideas relate to this complex and historically-defined term, 'trinitarian'?

The first thing we must insist is that biblical exegesis has no purchase on this question. This is not a surrender of biblical authority, but a consequence of what I have so far argued about the term 'trinitarian' being only definable historically. Suppose I came to be convinced both that the Scriptures teach EFS (or ERAS), and that the position was nonetheless incompatible with those positions developed in the fourth century: the proper claim then would not be that EFS was compatible with trinitarian orthodoxy, but that (so-called) trinitarian orthodoxy was unbiblical. I would have arrived in the position of the Jehovah's Witnesses, or the Oneness Pentecostals, of rejecting trinitarianism out of faithfulness to (what I perceived to be) the Biblical revelation. To return to my former analogy, I

9 Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) remains the key text here.

10 Holmes, *The Holy Trinity*, pp. 82-120.

might attempt to prove that the doctrine of unconditional election is false from the Scriptures, but I cannot prove that it is not a proper tenet of Calvinism by exegesis. In exactly the same way, I can try to prove that a position, be it EFS, or confession of the *filioque*, or inseparable operations, or divine simplicity, is right by appeal to Scripture, but I cannot, necessarily, prove that a position is trinitarian by the same procedure. That judgement can only ever be arrived at historically.[11]

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN GOD'S ETERNAL LIFE AND GOD'S ACTIONS IN THE WORLD

Proposals such as EFS or ERAS, as their names suggest, are claims about the eternal life of God—about who God is *in se*. Just as the saying of the incarnate Son that 'the Father is greater than I' does not lead to Arianism because it reflects the state of humiliation occasioned by the incarnation, not the eternal equality of Father and Son, so demonstrations of an obedience or submission of the Son to the Father that refer to the Son's state of humiliation are not adequate to prove an eternal subordination or submission. At one level, of course, this is uncontentious, but there is a point where we need to be careful: the proper distinction here is one that concerns the divine life, and is between theology and economy, not one that concerns the Son's state, and so is between pre-incarnate and incarnate, or humiliation and glorification.

This plays into the question at two points, corresponding to the beginning and the end of God's redemptive purposes. In seeking to order the divine works in the world using the concept of covenant, seventeenth-century Reformed authors proposed a 'covenant of redemption', a pre-temporal agreement between Father and Son (and, presumably, Spirit, although the point was generally left implicit) that the Son would assume a human nature, suffer crucifixion, and so bring salvation to the elect. Some have suggested that this covenant of redemption offers an example of an eternal, because pre-temporal, ordering in the divine life that shows authority and submission.[12]

11 For this reason I have not even attempted to engage with the many exegetical defences of EFS/ERAS; if adequate, they establish it as *true*, but not as *trinitarian*, and so they are not relevant to my modest argument here.

12 John Starke makes this error in arguing that John Owen taught an eternal authority of the Father over the Son; Owen is clear that this inequality stems from the *pactum salutis*, and so is not a reality of the divine life. Starke, 'Augustine and his interpreters' in Ware and Starke, *One God* …, pp. 155-172, especially pp. 159-165. Tyler Wittman's review of this volume in *Themelios* 40

The point appears powerful if we accept the reality of the *pactum salutis*: here is an event in eternity in which the Son submits to the Father's purposes. We might of course offer a rebuttal, which might take a strong form, that the *pactum* has in fact no basis in authority and submission, but instead results in the Father-Son relationship assuming that shape in the work of redemption.[13] A weaker form of the same point might instead insist that we know nothing of the character of the covenant, and so can claim nothing about the divine life from it. This seems to me to be properly modest, but I think we should go further.

The *pactum salutis* is eternal in that it is pre-temporal, but it is not eternal in the sense that it belongs to the perfect life of God. It is very clearly the beginning of the works of God—the beginning of the great work of redemption. If God had chosen to remain alone in perfect eternal bliss and not to create, there would never have been a *pactum salutis*.[14] So the *pactum* tells us nothing about the eternal life of God (or at least nothing direct—I will come back to this). Similarly, the teaching of Paul in Corinthians that the last act of God's saving work will be the Son's handing over the Kingdom to the Father might appear to speak of an act of submission or subordination in eternity, but again it is, if the language may be allowed, the wrong eternity: it is the consummation of the divine work, not an aspect of the divine life.

The defender of EFS/ERAS could respond to this in two obvious ways. One would be to embrace a broadly Barthian account of the divine life, in which God's eternal decision to be *pro nobis* is a determination of the divine life. (Famously, Barth includes the doctrine of election as the last

(2015), pp. 350-2, demonstrates the point about Owen and the *pactum* effectively.

13 This is in fact precisely what Owen teaches according to Wittman.

14 In the various blog posts that flowed on this issue in the summer of 2016, Jonathan Edwards was quoted more than once as an apparent defender of EFS/ERAS, but the defence relies on a failure to understand this point. The relevant text is *Miscellanies* 1062, which begins with an assertion that there is an economic order in the divine acts, 'a subordination of the persons of the Trinity, in their actings with respect to the creature.' Edwards immediately insists, however, that there can be no eternal subordination with respect to the divine will (*i.e.,* no 'authority' or 'submission') and so faces a conundrum, which he solves by appealing to the *pactum salutis*: the economic subordination 'must be conceived of as in some respect established by mutual free agreement…' Edwards has more to say about the fittingness of this order, which I will consider below. (Quotations from the online Yale *Works of Jonathan Edwards* vol. 20 (ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw).)

word of the doctrine of God, not the first word of the works of God.[15]) Is such a move compatible with fourth-century trinitarianism? There are obvious problems: an apparent suggestion of change in the perfect divine life being chief among them, but there is also a modification, at least, of divine aseity. That said, some of the most interesting theological work being done in the USA today is pushing in this sort of direction—I am thinking of projects like Jenson's and, particularly, McCormack's.[16] Suppose one of these projects worked, and it was in fact possible to show that there was a way of holding on to a recognisably-orthodox account of immutability and aseity whilst accepting the act of election, or the *pactum salutis*, as a determination of God's life, not just ours; would the resulting doctrine be adequately trinitarian?

The answer, unfortunately, must be 'no', for all the reasons explored above. Satisfying abstract doctrinal conditions is not enough to make a position 'trinitarian'; rather we must be confessing the same sort of perfect divine life as the fourth-century fathers confessed. A Barthian account, although it might be attractive and even correct, is not this. If Barth is right about this particular aspect of the divine life, then Basil, Gregory and Augustine were wrong—and an account that suggests that Basil, Gregory, and Augustine were wrong about the divine life is, for that reason alone, already not adequately trinitarian on the only meaningful definition of 'trinitarian' we have.

The second obvious response would be to accept the argument above, that the *pactum salutis* belongs to the works of God, not to the perfect life of God, but to insist that the ordering of the works of God reflects the ordering of the divine life. This is much stronger. Basil of Caesarea insisted on this point, that because of the eternal order—*taxis*—of the divine life, all divine works are initiated by the Father, carried forward by the Son, and perfected by the Spirit. This suggests that orthodox trinitarianism recognised, indeed insisted upon, an order in the life of God that is reflected in a created analogue of the Father sovereignly proposing, and the Son apparently obediently acting in response.[17] To answer this

[15] Barth, *CD* II/2, pp. 76-93.

[16] Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology vol. 1: The Triune God* (Oxford: OUP, 1997) and Bruce L. McCormack, 'Election and the Trinity: Theses in Response to George Hunsinger' *SJT* 63 (2010), pp. 203-224.

[17] This is Edwards' continuation in *Miscellanies* 1062: there his, he suggests, 'a natural decency and fitness' to the economic ordering. This is emphatically not any account of 'eternal functional subordination': he is clear that the only order in the eternal life of God is the relations of origin, but because the Son is from the Father in all eternity, there is a fittingness in the Son freely choosing to accept the authority of the Father in the economy.

point, we need to reflect on the teaching encompassed in the slogan *opera externa trinitatis indivisa sunt*. I will take up this reflection later.

THE SON, ETERNAL AND INCARNATE

Much of the worthwhile work in the fourth-century debates depended on clarifying the different ways in which Scripture refers to the Father-Son relation. The basic clarification, achieved most clearly by Hilary of Poitiers,[18] is the one I have already made, between the eternal relation and the relation of the Father to the incarnate Son. 'I and the Father are one' refers to the eternal relation; 'the Father is greater than I' to the incarnated relation. (Some statements—'I have come from the Father'—are ambiguous, and Augustine introduced a third category of distinction: statements of relationship that apply equally to the eternal life and the incarnate life of the Son.)

This distinction is basic to the development of fourth-century trinitarianism, and stands as a way of continuing to affirm the co-equal glory of the Father and the Son without ignoring or explaining away Biblical texts that speak of an unequal relationship. It becomes effectively an exegetical rule: whenever a text speaks of any sort of subordination of the Son to the Father, the text is to be read as speaking of the economy, of the relation of the Father to the incarnate Son. Thus the basic doctrinal requirement of absolute equality and simplicity is maintained.

This raises a significant problem for the defender of EFS/ERAS: there is a programmatic basis to orthodox trinitarianism which insists that any Scriptural statement of authority, submission, or subordination in the Father-Son relationship is understood as referring to the economy of salvation, not to the eternal divine life. It is hard to see on this basis how any exegetical argument for EFS/ERAS can proceed without first rejecting a basic claim of the fourth-century trinitarian consensus. Nonetheless, let us press on: what can we say about the eternal Father-Son relationship under the strictures of classical trinitarianism?

The answer is fairly precise. All that is said of the eternal life of God is said of the single *ousia* save only that which refers to the relations of origin.[19] Thomas Aquinas, who understood this well, suggests that there are therefore five things only we can know about the persons of the Trinity: that the Father is unbegotten, that the Father begets the Son, that the Son is begotten of the Father, that the Father and the Son together spirate

[18] *De Trin.* IX.14.

[19] This is the way I summarised the point in *The Holy Trinity*, see p. 146.

the Spirit, and that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.[20] This point is crucial to fourth-century trinitarian theology because it defends the core doctrine of divine simplicity.[21] To surrender this point, on orthodox trinitarian logic, is to deny the unity of Father, Son, and Spirit; it is to embrace polytheism.[22]

What are we going to do with EFS/ERAS under this stricture? Only one line is possible for the defender of these positions: to insist that in the relationship of begetting and being begotten there is either a functional subordination, or a relationship of authority and submission. This point has been recognised and accepted by defenders of these positions.[23] Let me specify the issue here more carefully:

Origen offered the standard defence of eternal generation,[24] a doctrine that of course is enshrined in the Creed. God does not change, and so the Son is co-eternal with the Father, and yet the Son has His origin in being begotten from the Father; how do we square these three necessary biblical truths? By, Origen suggests, asserting that the generation of the Son is not the beginning of a new relationship, but the eternal way of being of the Father and the Son. The Father is eternally begetting the Son; the Son is eternally being begotten of the Father (and, to complete the list, the Father and the Son are eternally spirating the Spirit, and the Spirit is eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son). To press forward a bit from Origen, this is the best description—the only description—of the pure act that the life of God is, a single, simple event of ecstatic, perfect, and loving self-donation.

I am aware that some involved in defending EFS have also denied eternal generation;[25] I do not have much to say about that except that to deny eternal generation is certainly to deny the doctrine of the Trinity, and,

20 *ST* Ia q. 32 art. 3.

21 On this, see (e.g.) Ayres, *Nicaea*, pp. 280-1 & 286-8.

22 Gregory of Nyssa argues this point explicitly in his classic work *Ad Ablab*., often entitled in English 'That we should not think of saying there are three gods'.

23 See, e.g., Wayne Grudem, 'Doctrinal Deviations in Evangelical-Feminist Arguments about the Trinity' in Ware & Starke, *One God*…, pp. 17-46, especially, pp. 18-32.

24 He addresses it at various points in the extant works, but see for example *De Prin*. 1.2.2. The best interpretation is probably still Peter Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).

25 I should note that there have been several verbal reports that two leading figures who have advanced this position in print, Bruce Ware and Wayne Grudem, indicated in public at the 2016 ETS conference that they now accepted the doctrine of eternal generation. I cannot yet find any published statement to this effect, although I sincerely hope it is true, as all heaven rejoices when a sinner repents.

given that 'eternally begotten of the Father' is a confession of the Nicene Creed, is in grave danger of departing from what can meaningfully be called Christianity—it is, once again, to side with Unitarians and Jehovah's Witnesses in claiming that the Christian doctrine of God is unbiblical. Assuming then that the doctrine of eternal generation is accepted, if we are going to find an account of EFS/ERAS that is adequately Trinitarian, we are going to have to find it within our confession of eternal generation, as there is nothing else we can say about the Father-Son relationship.

This 'nothing else' imposes a strict condition on our derivation: it is not just that our putative account of EFS or ERAS has to be coherent with eternal generation; it has to be shown to derive from that doctrine, because there is nothing other than eternal generation that we can say of the Father-Son relation. Now, this is not immediately hopeless: two lines suggest themselves. The first is to note that this relationship is asymmetric. There is, as we have noted, a proper *taxis*, an order, to the triune life. Durst's recent book is valuable both in reminding us that the Biblical writers feel free to order the persons in every possible way, and that these different orderings invite us to reflect on different aspects of God's work in the world,[26] but *in se*, in the eternal divine life, it is clearly, on the Biblical witness, proper to speak of the Father first, the Son second, and the Spirit third.

This asymmetry and order does not yet give us an account of authority or submission; it does give us an account of subordination, if that word is etymologically understood: the Son is second to the Father in order, and so is sub-ordered. This point has been routinely made by trinitarian theologians down the ages using language of order and suborder, a fact that a number of recent defenders of EFS have attempted to leverage. They are, unfortunately, mistaking the use of an unexceptional term for the embracing of a novel idea. Nothing may be derived from such usage save that the Son is most properly named after the Father and before the Spirit when we name God.[27] Nonetheless, reflection on this asymmetry might

26 Rodrick K. Durst, *Reordering the Trinity: Six movements of God in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015).

27 To take another text that was cited more than once in blog discussions in 2016, Charles Hodge speaks of 'a subordination' in the Trinity (e.g. *ST* I.445) several times, but clearly means no more than this. It is 'a subordination of the persons as to modes of subsistence and operation' that is summed up merely in the assertion that 'the Father is first, the Son second, and the Spirit third.' (again, p. 445.)

yet lead us to an account of authority and submission, unless there is some other reason to exclude such an account.

The second line we might push from the doctrine of eternal generation is to note that the relation between a human father and son, particularly in Biblical context, certainly includes authority, submission, and subordination.[28] This has some *prima facie* plausibility: God chose to reveal the first and second modes of the divine being as 'Father ' and 'Son', and so we are certainly invited to reflect on what we know of human paternal-filial relationships and to enquire whether we may predicate this of the eternal divine relationship also.

At the end of our investigation of what classical trinitarianism has to say about the Father-Son relationship, then, we are left with two possible lines for the defender of some form of EFS/ERAS, one based around the ordering of the indivisible divine acts, which might be held to reflect an order in the eternal divine life, and the other inviting a reflection on Father-Son language, which might be held to suggest that eternal generation is a relationship of authority and submission. To test these further, we turn to what we must say of the *ousia*, the single, simple, divine life, in order to be faithful to fourth-century trinitarianism.

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE DIVINE LIFE

Let me return first to the doctrine of the indivisibility of divine acts, which I discussed a little above. I have argued elsewhere[29] that this is in fact a crucial doctrine for the development of Cappadocian trinitarianism, particularly in Gregory of Nyssa's much-anthologised *ad Ablabium*. Why should we not say Father, Son, and Spirit are three gods, asks Gregory? His answer turns on the inseparability of divine operations: Father, Son, and Spirit do one thing, and so are one being. Now, this argument is complex in its construction, and relies on a whole set of assumptions which Gregory does not stop to spell out. In the essay just referenced, I try to do some of this work, and suggest that the inseparability of divine saving acts is a corollary, and so a revelation, of the simplicity of the eternal divine life.

The arguments we have already seen point to a proper ordering in that simplicity, and here we get into the places where our language strains to speak well of God's life. God is pure act, the single, simple eternal act of the begetting of the Son by the Father and the proceeding of the Spirit

28 A point Wayne Grudem has pressed several times in this discussion.

29 Stephen R. Holmes, 'Trinitarian Action and Inseparable Operations' in F. Sanders & O. Crisp (eds) *Advancing Trinitarian Theology: Proceedings of the Los Angeles Theology Conference* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015).

from the Father and the Son. That is certainly to say that the relational distinctions that define the divine simplicity have a proper order to them—we most properly name God as the dominical baptismal formula does, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is unbegotten, the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and so there is a *taxis*, an order, in the eternal divine life. This, I take it, is the eternal analogue to the order we found in the inseparable divine acts, but there is no hint here yet of subordination, authority, or submission. This is the point made by Edwards:[30] the shape of triune acts in the economy reflects the order of being in all eternity, but does not imply anything more than an order, that the Father is most properly named first, the Son second, and the Spirit third.

Further, this order is never division. The pure act that God is is single and simple. As we have seen, the confession of divine simplicity is crucial to fourth-century trinitarianism, and so is a confession that is necessary for a theology to be adequately trinitarian.[31] Now, divine simplicity demands the singularity of divine will, divine energy, divine action, and every other aspect of the divine life save only the eternal relations of origin.[32] There is one volitional inclination in the divine life, one intention, one activity, and so on. So, any proposal suggesting some form of EFS or ERAS must be consistent with there being a single divine act and a single divine will.

However, diversity of function requires diversity of act: this seems clear enough. Therefore, to hold to any form of functional differentiation, whether subordinationist or some other kind, within a single divine act is surely impossible; it would require an account of how two (or, in fact, three) different functions can exist within the same single and simple act.[33] There is an eternal analogue of the order of divine acts in the world,

30 See nn. 13 and 16 above.

31 See again Ayres, *Nicaea*, pp. 286-8.

32 I take it that this is obvious, but it is spelt out by John of Damascus *De fid. orth*. 8, and see now the exposition in Charles C. Twombly, *Perichoresis and Personhood: God, Christ, and Salvation in John of Damascus* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2015), pp. 29-32.

33 Grudem appears to realise and accept this impossibility, and so devotes space to insisting the doctrine of inseparable operations is unbiblical; unfortunately, this defence falls foul of my basic argument in this paper: rejecting the ecumenical doctrine of the Trinity on the basis of a proposed private interpretation of Scripture is, once again, to side with Jehovah's Witnesses and others who have left the church on the grounds that the received doctrine of the Trinity is unbiblical. See Wayne Grudem, 'Doctrinal Deviations…' pp. 18-27; Grudem focuses upon problems he perceives in the constructions of Erick-

but it is in the order of relations of origin, and not otherwise. There is no space here for an account of EFS/ERAS, or for anything similar.

To assert relations of authority and submission within a single divine will is similarly impossible: authority and submission require a diversity of volitional faculties. Where there is one simple single will, there can necessarily be no authority or submission. This would appear to close off the second option outlined above for defending EFS/ERAS, that of an appeal to the language of 'Father' and 'Son'. When we consider what we know of the divine life we are required to insist that the authority and submission we find in human paternal-filial relationships is not an analogue of anything real in the divine life; the language of Father and Son points to an asymmetrical relationship of origin and nothing more; it cannot be grounds for asserting EFS/ERAS, because to do so would be to offend against other necessary trinitarian claims, particularly divine simplicity.

CONCLUSION

I have argued that the central Trinitarian doctrine of divine simplicity necessarily excludes any meaningful account of subordination, or of authority and submission, and so there is no space for an account of EFS, ERAS, or anything similar, within any recognisably orthodox trinitarianism. I have accepted repeatedly that the defender of EFS/ERAS might choose, perhaps out of a desire to be faithful to his/her particular interpretation of Scripture, to hold to these doctrines by rejecting orthodox trinitarianism, but such a rejection entails locating oneself outside of what is commonly understood to be the Christian church—hence my running comparison with Unitarianism and the Jehovah's Witnesses. It may be that EFS/ERAS is biblical and correct, but if it is, the classical Christians tradition of 'orthodox trinitarianism' must inevitably be unbiblical and wrong.

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son, Sumner, and Belleville, which in some cases do appear to be genuine problems, but the logic of his argument seems to require him to reject the doctrine of inseparable operations entirely, not merely to reject certain forms of it. There is an attempted retrieval on p. 24, where Grudem accepts that 'in some sense we only understand very faintly' the whole Godhead is involved in every divine act; he denies however that this means 'any action done by one person is also done by the other two persons', a line I find very difficult to make any sense of. The most natural reading would be that Grudem thinks the 'whole being of God' is something other than the three persons, but this would be merely bizarre.

Reviews

Evangelical versus Liturgical?: Defying a Dichotomy. By Melanie Ross. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6991-3. 149pp. £11.99.

In this book Melanie Ross introduces the historical dichotomy between evangelical and liturgical churches and worship through careful research, as well as field work in the form of two presented case studies. Ross provides a much-needed voice to a growing and vibrant discussion between evangelical and liturgical scholars. Attempting to provide some theological and ecclesiastical reconciliation between evangelical and liturgical churches, Ross challenges both to seek common ground and defy a dichotomy.

Ross in her brief work, reveals what she defines as a clash between two *ordos*, or two ways of thinking about and constructing a worship service (i.e. liturgical versus evangelical models). These models have historically and traditionally consisted of the core worship service elements: Word, table (communion), water (baptism), and worship/music, etc. Ross's analysis is historically rooted, introducing the author to some of the historical conversation and developments between evangelical and liturgical worship.

Challenging preconceived notions and premature judgments, Ross fairly treats the criticisms of both sides, and artfully argues for a reciprocal compromise and amalgamation of evangelical pragmatism and liturgical function. Ross highlights the criticism that some twentieth-century liturgical/ecumenical scholars have made in arguing that the historical departure of 'evangelical' churches from the traditional *ordo*, beginning in the eighteenth century, can be seen as a downgrade from the sacramental and embodied manner of liturgical worship. Contrastingly, Ross examines the evangelical approach to pragmatism and simplicity, with evangelical scholars arguing for its strength as well. However, she makes the case that there can be middle ground between the dichotomous liturgical and evangelical churches and worship models.

Ross argues that the term 'dichotomy', which has defined the difference between evangelical and liturgical, does not simply distinguish between two forms of worship, but extends this distinction into opposition. Dichotomies 'divide a spectrum into one term and its opposite, with no possibility of a term that is neither one nor the other, or that is both' (p. 125). Historically, the American religious experience has been one filled with dichotomies and opposition: Catholic and Protestant, liberal and conservative, and urban and rural; so it is with evangelical and liturgical worship.

Ross however, contends that common ground can be found by returning to the scriptural roots of *leitourgia* and *euangelion*, and claims that all churches in one sense are simultaneously both evangelical and liturgical. Ross gives the reader individual case studies of the worship life of two vibrant congregations, in order to prove that churches can be both distinctly evangelical and liturgical. These case studies display the hard work of research, personal interviews, and ethnographic analysis.

This book challenges the dichotomy between evangelical and liturgical worship in both a highly academic manner, and a very personal and applicable style. Well researched, the book is written quite conversationally, allowing the reader to be introduced to the work of many evangelical and liturgical scholars, both present and historical. Ross has written a highly readable, succinct and exceptionally pioneering book that offers much-needed examination and analysis of both the similarities and dissimilarities between evangelical and liturgical worship, offering the reader great anticipation and hope for the amalgamation of the two forms of worship by defying a dichotomy. Ross's contribution is an excellent addition to the library of any worship leader, pastor or theologian.

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The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek. Edited by Franco Montanari. Leiden: Brill, 2015. ISBN: 978-90-04-19318-5. lx + 2431pp. £73.00.

This volume is a translation and revision of the third edition (2013) of a work originally published in Italian in 1995.

Locating the book in the history of lexicography, the editor makes specific reference to the earlier huge dictionary of Liddell, Scott and Jones (commonly known as *LSJ*) in his preface. It would probably be fair to see this dictionary as standing in the tradition of *LSJ* and as an attempt to update its work, with respect to the manuscript evidence on which the dictionary is based and to the English glosses that are provided. While the value of this dictionary for students of ancient Greek literature in general is obvious, students of early Christianity might wonder whether it is of particular value to them. Montanari evidently intends it to be so, explicitly emphasising the attention paid to Christian literature (p. vi).

Perhaps the simplest way to review this new work is to draw some comparisons with the standard Greek-English lexicon for Koine Greek, known as *BDAG* (for Bauer-Danker-Arndt-Gingrich, the names of the editors of its various editions). *BDAG* was published in its most recent form in 2001. It is ironic that the abbreviation of the title of this new dictionary might have been *BDAG* (note that it is described as a 'dictionary' rather than a 'lexicon') but I will refer to it as *GE* (the abbreviation used by the editor in his preface).

In terms of physical size, the two books are very similar in dimensions. *GE* is marginally taller (by just a few millimetres) and a little thicker than *BDAG*. Yet *BDAG* has less than half the number of pages of dictionary proper (1108 pages) compared to *GE*. What is more, the entries in *GE* are presented in three columns on each page, whereas *BDAG* uses two, and the font size in *GE* is smaller than in *BDAG*, though it is of such clarity that it is still perfectly readable. All this illustrates the remarkable feat of compression achieved in the production of *GE*. The pages in *GE* are noticeably thinner than those in *BDAG*, yet not more so than those of a typical Study Bible.

To highlight some distinctive features, I will briefly consider two specific entries:

Agape: In *BDAG*, the entry for this noun extends over more than two columns. Following an initial paragraph that mentions usage in several inscriptions and non-canonical documents, the entry is divided into two unequal parts: a lengthy part dealing with 'love' as 'a quality of warm regard for and interest in another', and a short part on 'a common meal eaten by early Christians in connection with their worship, for the purpose of fostering and expressing mutual affection and concern'. All NT references are printed in bold. Other references to the LXX, Apostolic Fathers, etc., are in regular font. There are numerous references to secondary literature relating to the word. In *GE*, the corresponding entry is very short (seven lines in one of the narrow columns), but the two main meanings found in *BDAG* are also clearly identified. Although the entry is brief, it is clear, and supporting references are provided (although only one or two representative examples). Interestingly, a third use is offered on the basis of usage by Gregory of Nyssa: the honorific title, 'your Love'. There is no reference to secondary literature.

Doxa: In *BDAG*, the entry for this noun extends to almost three columns. The opening paragraph of the entry notes that the common Greek usage of this term to denote 'notion, opinion' is not found in the NT and then goes on to lay out several nuances of 'glory'. Although most references are to the NT, uses in the LXX and other Jewish writings are mentioned, as is use by Origen. In *GE*, the corresponding entry takes up most of one column, but most of the references support precisely the common Greek usage that *BDAG* identifies as absent from the NT. Only the third definition offered (some fourteen lines) relates to the usage in Jewish and Christian writings (and is clearly marked as such). This structure highlights a distinct difference in usage much more clearly than *BDAG*.

This latter section of the *GE* entry includes the common biblical sense of 'glory' (again, with just a few example texts mentioned), but also uses in later Christian literature for the 'Gloria' (prayer), a doxology, and celestial beings. Elsewhere, Eusebius's use of the term for a creed is also identified. Once again, there is no reference to secondary literature in *GE*, compared to numerous references in *BDAG*.

Inevitably, given the significant cost of both of these dictionaries, readers may wonder whether they should choose to purchase one volume rather than the other. (It is perhaps worth noting that *GE* can be purchased new for approximately two-thirds of the price of *BDAG*.) For those who intend to focus particularly on the NT, it seems to me that *BDAG* offers a greater level of detail and differentiation in its entries, and so remains the standard lexical resource for NT exegesis and interpretation. If, however, readers wish to read widely in the LXX, the Apostolic Fathers and other early Christian literature, *GE* offers a far greater range of head words and identifies examples of usage over a far greater span of time and range of literature. Readers of *GE* may be able to recognise changes of meaning at different times and in different bodies of literature more easily than those who rely solely on *BDAG*. Both works are exceptional contributions to scholarship and both provide readers of Koine Greek with a remarkable tool. Probably the ideal situation would be to have access to both works, though that privilege would come at a cost!

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Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic. Edited by Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-80104-894-4. vii + 408pp. £24.99.

If Allen and Swain's *Reformed Catholicity: The Promise of Retrieval for Theology and Biblical Interpretation* (Baker, 2015) was the authors' 'manifesto' for pursuing 'catholicity on Protestant principles' as a means towards 'theological and spiritual renewal' (*Reformed Catholicity*, pp. 12-13), then their *Christian Dogmatics* is a convincing set of worked examples demonstrating – at the very least – that their project has great potential.

Christian Dogmatics is a volume of collected essays on most of the major topics (*loci*) of dogmatic theology. There are some significant *lacunae*, including pneumatology and missiology, although these are discussed to a certain extent in other chapters.

The content is rich and – for a book that would well suit textbook or introductory use – remarkably comprehensive. Allen and Swain have assembled an impressive line-up of Reformed scholars with a range of

approaches, methodologies, and conclusions. This gives *Christian Dogmatics* the feel of possessing unity without uniformity.

Contributors are generally irenic in their presentation of alternative (including non-Reformed) views when these are relevant, but are not afraid to argue for a particular position, even when the debate is mostly *intra*-Reformed. For example, Todd Billings defends Calvin against Zwingli on the nature of the Lord's Supper, but follows Musculus in laying out 'the basic doctrinal logic of a Reformed case for welcoming children to the table' (p. 360) without embracing paedocommunion wholesale. Michael Horton handles the thorny issues of eschatology ('Kingdom of God'), cautioning that whichever millennial view we espouse, we must avoid the twin dangers of overrealised and underrealised eschatologies (pp. 375-381).

At times, there are areas of clear disagreement between contributors. For example, Richard Gaffin offers a defence of original guilt (p. 273) in his consideration of 'The Work of Christ Applied', whereas Oliver Crisp, in an essay 'quite distinct from the majority report' (p. 195) on 'Sin', seeks to defend a traditional account of original sin *without* original guilt, following Zwingli (pp. 194-215). Michael Allen defends divine impassibility in his discussion of the 'Divine Attributes' (pp. 72-73) while Donald Macleod is more cautious in his chapter on 'The Work of Christ Accomplished' (p. 248), strikingly suggesting that at that cross the Father and Son were 'walking together toward the pain' (p. 261). Such diversity, within (broadly confessional) bounds, fosters prayerful reflection and further study.

There is a warmly devotional aspect to many of the contributions, illustrating the principle that robust academic theology is far from being inimical to spiritual life. The two chapters by the late John Webster are a case in point, ending in one case with doxology ('Creation Out of Nothing', p. 147) and in the other with a section on the 'proper uses' of the doctrine under consideration ('Providence', p. 164) to give God's people true 'gospel consolation'.

In a review of this length, I can hardly summarise every chapter, but of those contributions not yet mentioned, other highlights were the essays on 'Holy Scripture' by Kevin Vanhoozer, 'Incarnation' by Daniel Treier, and 'The Law of God and Christian Ethics', by Paul Nimmo. Vanhoozer's chapter is a fine example of the breadth of approach taken by the book as a whole, seeking as it does to draw together the 'three-stranded cord' of the insights of Nicholas Wolterstorff on divine discourse, Karl Barth on the situation of the Word of God in the triune economy revolving around Jesus Christ, and the Reformed orthodox, with their typical emphasis on God as the *Author* of Scripture (p. 43). This is indeed Reformed theology in all its breadth: not all readers will be convinced at every step and turn, but the contributions here will certainly stimulate thought and response.

Christian Dogmatics is not without its weaknesses. The one I will focus on here (because it is the flip-side of the book's greatest strength) is methodological. As noted above, the reader benefits from a range of perspectives, but the different approaches to different topics can be confusing. So, Allen himself leads the way with a *thesis-analysis* approach (an initial doctrinal statement is 'unpacked' over the course of the essay) in his chapters on 'Knowledge of God' and 'Divine Attributes'. Swain does something similar in his chapters on 'Divine Trinity' (p. 81) and 'Covenant of Redemption' (p. 109). But the only other contributors to follow this methodology are Kelly Kapic, in his chapter on 'Anthropology' (p. 166) and Todd Billings, in his chapter on 'Sacraments' (p. 340). Other chapters reveal a wide variety of approaches, some beginning with the historical, others with an area of present-day debate. For the sake of clarity, one could have wished for a more standardised approach at this point.

The essays also vary in the relative weight given to confessional statements when marshalling arguments: Kapic's chapter, for example, cites a particularly wide variety of creeds. This is intended to 'show connections with Christian orthodoxy' (p. 166) but when citations include the little-known *Credo* of The Mass of the Marginalized People (p. 188), and the Confession of the Church of Toraja, Indonesia (p. 189), the reader can end up confused as to the place of creedal statement in Kapic's theological reasoning. Given the editors' initial restatement of Holy Scripture's call to embrace 'tradition', with the church's creeds and confessions a 'precious touchstone' to this faithful tradition (p. 5), one can certainly see why creeds would and should be useful for dogmatics: it would be good to hear more from both editors and some contributors alike as to exactly what it means to 'entrust ourselves to the guidance of the church' (p. 5) in this regard.

It would seem on the evidence of this volume that Reformed catholicity has a bright future, and *Christian Dogmatics* goes a long way to establishing its intellectual and spiritual potential as what might almost be described as a 'movement'. This book should have a wide readership among students, seminarians, and pastors.

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You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit. By James K. A. Smith. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-58743-380-1. 224pp. £12.99.

In *You Are What You Love*, James K.A. Smith prefaces, 'You need to curate your heart. You need to worship well. Because you are what you love. And you worship what you love. And you might not love what you think. Which raises an important question. Let's dare to ask it' (p. xii). Smith argues that traditional modes of education and formation in the church often assume that human beings are rational creatures rather than 'liturgical animals'. In other words, human beings are driven and formed less by what they *think* and more by what they *love*. In a follow-up to his acclaimed works *Desiring the Kingdom* and *Imagining the Kingdom*, Smith continues this track of argumentation in exploring implications for worship, discipleship, children's and youth ministry, Christian education (at all levels), and our vocations.

Augustine argued, according to Smith, that 'the heart is the existential chamber of our *loves*, and it is our loves that orient us toward some ultimate end or *telos*' (p. 9). We can mentally ascend to this *telos*, but we ultimately *long* for it. These longings shape how we think and what we do. The *telos* provides the ultimate story by which we choose to live our lives. Culture plays a vital role in shaping our understanding of 'the good life', consciously and subconsciously forming us to embrace certain ideas and longings that run contrary to the gospel. Liturgies, which Smith defines as 'those rituals that are loaded with an ultimate Story about who we are and what we're for', orient us to embrace certain conceptions of the good life (p. 46). While we can learn about the good life through cognitive means, it is ultimately our habits that lead us to embrace a vision of the good life. Thus, we are lovers and practitioners before we are experts and thinkers. Smith calls for us to undertake a 'liturgical audit' of our lives, examining how the structures and stories of culture subconsciously form our habits and shape our affections.

Smith critiques the modern evangelical fascination with providing worship spaces that maintain Christian theological emphases while crafting 'relevant' structures (the form/content distinction). The problem is, for Smith, that 'forms [of worship] are pedagogies of desire that teach us to construe and relate to the world in a loaded way' (p. 76). Therefore, forms, while claiming neutrality, offer a story within themselves that inevitably shape our affections. Smith does not advocate a return to medieval worship forms, but rather a renewed focus on the agency of God in worship, the Lord's Supper, and the proclamation of the Word. These practices, informed by the biblical narrative, serve as counter-formative measures against the secular liturgies of society. Smith advocates a similar renewal of focus in children's and youth ministry.

Handling the topic of vocation in depth, Smith contends that the biblical story, expressed through the Lord's Supper, catechesis, baptism, and confession, should place 'boundaries' around our vocational work. These 'boundaries' breed creativity, Smith asserts, by enabling the church to serve as an 'imagination station' that recalibrates our affections (p. 180).

You Are What You Love provides a helpful critique on modern evangelical thought. Evangelicalism has tended to rely on its inherent proclivity toward baptising modern forms in Christian language and seeking to further Christian truth through cognitive-based pedagogies that neglect the liturgical nature of human beings. While not a new idea *per se*, Smith's alternative theological anthropology that conceives of humans as primarily lovers rather than thinkers cuts into contemporary evangelical practices while offering constructive measures in their place.

One could argue that while humans are generally driven more by their affections than their sense of reason, as Smith argues, the impact of modernistic thought continues to linger in society at large. Rationality and intellectual conviction still drive the actions of many individuals in the church and in society, and many continue to make decisions based on logic and reason. Smith's hypothesis, while necessary for Christian formation and discipleship, inadequately accounts for those whose mind governs their behaviours. However, this critique may fall outside the bounds of Smith's argument, as one could argue that logic and reason do not govern human behaviours themselves, but rather the *love* of logic and reason.

Smith's work challenges evangelical conceptions of worship, education, discipleship, and vocation, providing ample argumentation and insight at every turn. No doubt Smith will heartily challenge scholars, pastors, and laypeople with his message. *You Are What You Love* provides a fresh vision for Christian discipleship and church life that counters the secular liturgies of society that steer us away from the gospel. While countering the empty narratives perpetuated by society is no easy task, Smith's vision will assist the church in rethinking its mission, purpose, and practice in light of cultural realities.

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Galatians. By A. Andrew Das. Concordia Commentary. Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-7586-1552-7. lxix + 738pp. £42.83.

Andrew Das, holder of the Donald W. and Betty J. Buik Chair at Elmhurst College, is a distinguished Pauline scholar in the Lutheran Church tradition. He begins the preface to his major commentary by noting, 'In modern Pauline scholarship these days, the ultimate invective is to label an approach "Lutheran"!' '[T]he time is ripe,' he continues, 'for a Lutheran commentary on Galatians that takes into account the full range of modern scholarship on the letter' (p. xiv). While the Concordia Commentary series may not be as widely used outside the Lutheran Church as some other series, we can expect that Das's important contribution on Galatians will help to change that.

The layout of the commentary is pleasing for the user. It is a large format book with clear text. A series of icons (explained on pp. xxxii and xxxiii) are used throughout the commentary to draw the reader's attention to significant theological themes.

The scale of this commentary is both its strength and its weakness. As a very long commentary on a relatively short letter, Das is able to address issues in considerable detail. The discussions in both the introduction and the commentary proper are generally very thorough, with frequent reference to primary texts and secondary literature. Yet Das writes with clarity. Evidence for various views is presented in a well-structured manner. This level of detail makes Das's commentary an ideal reference work. On the other hand, however, a busy preacher seeking help with sermon preparation might struggle with the length of the discussion if time is limited.

Unlike, for example, E. P. Sanders' negative assessment of the historical value of Acts for understanding Paul in his recent book, *Paul, the Apostle's Life, Letters and Thought*, Das accepts Acts as a credible source. He comments, 'Modern critical chronologies that depend on the Acts 15/Gal 2:1-10 equation should be abandoned, thus removing a major stumbling block to the historical value of Luke's narrative' (p. 43).

Das devotes a substantial section of his introduction (pp. 48-68) to the contested issue of Paul's use of rhetoric. The information is presented with an admirable combination of detail and clarity. There is considerable discussion of different perspectives found in scholarly literature. He claims that '[a] convincing case that Paul was formally trained in rhetoric has yet to be made' (p. 61). Rather, Das suggests, 'Paul's vocabulary patterns are typical of an intelligent individual of the day with perhaps an informal acquaintance with rhetorical terminology and practice' (p. 61).

The bibliography is substantial (some 36 pages), representative of scholarship (including works in English and German, plus one or two in French) and reasonably up-to-date (plenty of publications from the decade prior to the publication of Das's commentary, with the most recent date being 2012).

The main body of the commentary follows a clear, regular structure: the author's translation is followed by a section of linguistic and text-critical notes; then follows the commentary, which normally begins with some brief discussion of the context and structure of the passage in question before moving on to discussion of important words and phrases. Comments are based on the Greek text, and Greek script is used frequently, but those who do not know Greek should still be able to use the commentary without difficulty.

To illustrate the approach of the commentary, we can consider some of Das's comments on Galatians 2:15-21. The commentary on these seven verses runs from page 233 to page 275. Following the translation, Das provides just less than five pages of notes on the textual and linguistic issues arising from the passage. The commentary begins with some general orientation to the passage, including reference to distinctive vocabulary and structure. Then the verses are discussed in units. For example, the two verses in 2:15-16 are considered under the heading 'Shared Ground and Diverging Perspectives'. Within this section, there are focussed sections on 'works of the law', 'forensic justification' and 'faith in/of Christ' that make frequent reference to primary texts and also take full account of recent scholarly discussions. In each case, Das lays out the evidence and weighs it helpfully. Broadly speaking, Das comes down on a variety of issues against (so-called) 'New Perspective' interpretations, though his responses are carefully nuanced. This makes Das's commentary a useful conversation partner along with the commentaries by Longenecker or Dunn.

Interspersed throughout the comment sections are occasional brief comments of pastoral application. While these comments are not extensive, they are thoughtful and add a pastoral tone to the commentary.

In addition to the regular commentary, Das provides twelve excurses in which he addresses particular issues in more depth. These cover topics such as 'Paul's Apocalyptic Worldview', 'Call or Conversion?', and 'The Elements of the Cosmos'.

This is an excellent addition to the array of commentaries that have been written on Galatians in recent years. I recommend Das's work warmly to those who are looking for a detailed analysis of the Greek text of Galatians that takes account of recent scholarly discussions.

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The Death of the Messiah and the Birth of the Covenant: A (Not-So) New Model of the Atonement. By Michael J. Gorman. Cambridge: James Clarke, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-227-17491-3. xii + 277pp. £20.00.

Michael Gorman has put us in his debt with a trilogy which opened in 2001 with *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* and concluded in 2015 with *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation and Mission*. His sober scholarship and balanced approach, deployed in the service of fostering cruciform Christian theology, discipleship, community and mission, entitles him to a serious hearing when he proposes that we adopt a new and yet not-so-new model of atonement. This is precisely what he does in the present volume. He tells us that it is surprising that the model is a new one at all because it is quite simply a new-covenant model which emerges naturally when we limn the contours of biblical theology and not some new-fangled theory devised by the author in pursuit of a novel adventure in systematic theology.

Gorman contends that the New Testament is less interested in the mechanism of atonement – how it effects our salvation – than in the purpose of atonement. The purpose is far-reaching. It is the creation of a cruciform community of witness and mission. Atonement is not the isolated achievement of Calvary but the comprehensive achievement of a new ecclesial order, the creation of a new covenant community. After a relatively brief examination of cross and covenant in the New Testament, the author orders his exposition by discussing baptism into the Messiah's death, which engenders patterns of cruciform love, faith and hope, this last being particularly expressed in terms of peace. In a conclusion which starts out by recapitulating the argument of the book – thus tempting the troupe of frail, harried or indolent reviewers to take a short-cut – Gorman underlines the claim that a new covenant model of the atonement is not designed to displace others by expelling them from the biblical and theological scene. Rather, they will be useful only insomuch as their insights are integrated into a new covenant perspective. Those insights are typically insights into the mechanism of atonement and Gorman does not want to invalidate talk of mechanisms, only to make it subservient to new covenantal substance. New covenant is the biblical template within which diverse theological particulars find their proper home. Gorman makes much of the fact that it is a weakness of many theories of the atonement that they pick out certain metaphors or themes, majoring on them selectively and disregarding the range of perspectives, pictures and propositions which constitute the rich tapestry of biblical atonement.

Those features which characterize Gorman's wider authorship also indwell this volume. If we rush to identify Gorman's perspective as that of an Anabaptist Wesleyan, we may be guilty of doing so in the spirit of partisanship (whether for or against), intent on judging the volume according to its brand label. 'Anabaptist Wesleyan' is Gorman's preferred self-designation (p. 21) but the heavy hand of affinity has not squeezed the conscientious exegete *a priori* into its mould. Amongst the book's qualities is the absence of the appearance of anything that looks forced or implausible in its argument. On this score, it is surely to be commended. Community, cruciformity and peace, an exegetical account of which occupies the bulk of the book, are all important both for the reasons and, it seems to me, much in the way that Michael Gorman proposes. We must be grateful for his exposition.

Nevertheless, the overarching argument, as it stands, does not work. The principal reason is that it is not clearly adumbrated. 'Atonement' is not always an easy word to handle theologically because, in some form, it appears in English Bible translations as an alternative to such diverse terminological possibilities as 'reconciliation' or 'propitiation'. In these cases (Romans 5:11 and 1 John 2:2), atonement is something received or it is the act of the person of Christ, and this already flags up a soft warning about the potential risk of over-extending the use of the word. At all events, Gorman does not handle the concept of atonement consistently. 'Atonement' is apparently understood on page 39 along Lukan lines as 'something that effects the forgiveness of sins', but what is said about ethics (p. 55) and community (p. 212) conforms to the overall argument of the volume which is that such an understanding is unduly restrictive. One and the same phenomenon is described as something 'more than' atonement on page 39 and 'constitutive' of it on page 55.

Independently considered, this might amount to no more than infelicity or carelessness of expression. However, related terminological and conceptual problems set in early. Two distinct contrasts are collapsed into one: the contrast between regarding atonement (a) in terms of mechanism and in terms of purpose and (b) according to its penultimate and according to its ultimate purpose. Gorman treats these as identical contrasts, but they are not. Someone might claim that forgiveness is the central purpose of atonement, against Gorman, who regards it as a penultimate purpose, but also argue, as Gorman does, that we must not major on mechanism at the expense of purpose. When Gorman further identifies 'purpose' with 'results' (p. 210) and speaks of 'penultimate *models*' (p. 4, my italics), the waters of argument become muddied. Granted, we must ask to what extent the issues here are semantic, a question which may more generally arise with no reference at all to Gorman in the course of enquiring whether something constitutes atonement or its effects. Further, it remains possible that the difficulties which I have noted little trouble the

author's identification of the theological substance of Scripture and that his description of the Christian life survives. Nonetheless, given the task to which the author is formally committed in this volume, the conceptual problems in its execution adversely affect the case.

What shall we make of the putatively puzzling fact that a manifestly biblical (i.e., new covenant) model has been theologically neglected? News of its theological neglect has been greatly exaggerated. Gorman acknowledges the existence of a covenant theology in the Reformed tradition, but describes it as a 'fairly narrow' strand (p. 13). However, it is actually a conspicuous strand and worth a glance in connection with Gorman's averment. Almost as soon as he gets into his discussion of the mediatorial office of Christ, Turretin, in his *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, refers back to his earlier contextualizing treatment of the covenant of grace. Hodge, who states why the word 'atonement' is ambiguous, discusses it in his *Systematic Theology* on the basis of the stipulation that 'the plan of salvation is a covenant'. In his *Reformed Dogmatics*, Bavinck interprets the sacrifice of Christ as a covenant sacrifice, having already set forth the new covenant as an underlying principle of his discussion. Moreover, perhaps no conservative evangelical New Testament scholar of his generation was more persuasive in shaping the thought of his constituency on atonement than Leon Morris. The very first chapter of his work, *The Atonement: its Meaning and Significance* is on 'Covenant' and only after that does Morris pursue such notions as sacrifice and propitiation. Perhaps what has obscured the lively significance of the 'covenantal' tradition and led to Gorman's surprised supposition that a covenantal model of the atonement has been neglected, is that concepts of sacrifice, satisfaction, penalty or substitution inform theologies of the atonement that do not share the framework of covenant theology. Concepts have commanded theological attention independently of the different frameworks in which they are embedded. It should be said that Gorman is not saying the same things about covenant as do the Reformed.

For myself, I believe – and am foolhardy enough to say – that, today, Western systematic theologians have much more to learn from biblical scholars than the other way around. Bearing this in mind, it seems to be in order to say that biblical scholars must be careful not to skate too casually over the theological surface just as systematic theologians must not glide too casually over the biblical surface. Further, we should do well to integrate an exercise in historical retrieval into an enterprise which brings biblical scholars and systematic theologians together. Gorman endorses Kevin Vanhoozer's thesis that 'the saving significance of Jesus' death consists in making possible God's gift of the Holy Spirit… *Jesus gives his body and blood for us, and in return we receive the Spirit, the operative princi-*

ple of the new covenant and the new age' (p. 212). The relevant historical retrieval is this: if we follow Richard Weingart's instructive account of Abelard (*The Logic of Divine Love: A Critical Analysis of the Soteriology of Peter Abailard*), we shall find a new covenant and new age here too, giving the lie to the familiar 'exemplarist' reading of Abelard, while not assimilating him to everything in either Gorman or Vanhoozer.

Michael Gorman certainly encourages us to tread the path of a healthy, biblically-based theological ecumenism in relation to the atonement and this is welcome. And let no misgivings about the overarching argument of this volume distract us from the challenge to cruciform discipleship, which is the heartbeat of the book.

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Encountering Reality: T. F. Torrance on Truth and Human Understanding. By Travis M. Stevick. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-5064-1291-7. x + 225pp. £52.99.

In this volume, the mathematician, theologian and churchman, Travis Stevick has provided a fresh and stimulating analysis of the realist epistemology of Thomas F. Torrance. One of the major contributions of this volume is to bring Torrance into dialogue with leading works in the secular philosophy of science, through which Stevick is able to explore from a new perspective the central tenant of Torrance's mode of rationality, 'the conviction that we know something authentically only when we know it according to its own nature' (p. viii). From this basis, Stevick provides a compelling account of the ontological status of truth in Torrance's thought, and the derivative status of the truth of our statements. This book is a valuable resource in facilitating further understanding of the interface between theology and the natural sciences – a theme so resonant of Torrance's own work – which will prove of significant value in challenging erroneous convictions regarding their incompatibility.

The first chapter addresses the character of authentic knowledge in Torrance's thought. Stevick rightly isolates Torrance's basic premise as the view that to know is to submit to the truth of reality, such that we know something in accordance with its own truth. This is complemented by Stevick's insightful analysis of the conditions on which such a conviction can be established, in which he prioritises the categories of the actual existence of reality independent from correlation to the knowing subject, and the demonstration of our epistemic access to that reality. These broad conditions leave unsaid (although could arguably imply) important elements of nuance regarding the actual intelligible order of reality aside from the cognitive operations of the knowing subject, which is a shortcoming relevant to weaknesses that emerge later in Stevick's argumentation. This chapter includes a significant discussion, correlating Torrance to other realist thinkers, and differentiating Torrance from significant alternatives in the philosophy of science and in epistemology more generally. By so doing, Stevick situates Torrance within a far broader field than has so far been attempted in scholarship on Torrance, which has important results both for gaining a better understanding of Torrance through establishing his thought within a wider frame of reference, but will also prove a valuable resource for those striving to articulate a distinctively Christian epistemology against alternative worldviews.

This discussion raises a question: is it legitimate to establish an epistemological conviction regarding the nature of authentic knowledge upon certain conditions, or is such an epistemological conviction inherently subjective? This is the question pursued in the second chapter, in which Stevick demonstrates that for Torrance all knowledge is established on ultimate beliefs regarding reality, but that – far from invalidating knowledge – these ultimate beliefs are the very foundation of knowledge. Crucially, Stevick dispels a myth that Torrance's ultimate beliefs are arbitrary demonstrating that they are 'beliefs that are objectively forced upon us by the fact that reality is what it is and not something else' (p. 45). For example, the Christian doctrine of creation gives the ultimate belief in the created order of the universe, which undergirds the conviction that it is a distinct reality and is knowable, which are principles that are foundational to the natural sciences. Moreover, Stevick identifies some valuable parallels in the secular philosophy of science, particularly the critical realism of Roy Bhaskar. This goes a long way to substantiate a central contention of Torrance's that the natural sciences and theology are alike in that both must account for the powerful element of *belief*. Readers with a critical interest in Torrance will find much of value in Stevick's illuminating response to Ronald Thiemann's important critique of Torrance's supposed foundationalism. In my view, this discussion is the most profound contribution of this entire volume.

The third chapter explores the intersection between Torrance's idea of objectivity and the notions of objectivity that are said to have developed in the natural sciences from the middle of the twentieth century. Stevick helpfully differentiates between Torrance's version of objectivity and formulations of objectivity characteristic of a Cartesian and Kantian frame of mind that function via the exclusion of the subject from the knowing relationship by the application of an antecedent and inertial rational schema (for example, Euclidean geometry) through which transsubjective and uniform 'knowledge' is attained. In opposition to this, Torrance's objectivity is presented as a recovery of the personal element of knowledge, where the subject differentiates between herself and the object but is in personal commitment to the independent truth of the object, and by knowing within a community, individualistic subjectivities are kept in check. Stevick's analysis rightly points out the challenge of Torrance's objectivity to the misleading notion of the detached 'objective' observer. Moreover, Stevick's helpful discussion of the necessity of the community of knowledge as integral to the subjective element of knowledge has implications for the integral place of the church to true Christian knowledge, drawing out Torrance's emphasis that the community of the body of Christ is the context of our knowledge of God.

Chapters four and five address the relation of language to reality. Stevick demonstrates that Torrance gave priority to the truth of a thing, and that the truth of our statements is secondary to and derivative from the truth of reality. In this, Stevick differentiates Torrance from an ultra-realist correspondence theory of truth (i.e. exact isomorphic correspondence between individual statements and reality) and a coherence theory of truth (i.e. the truth of our statements is in the validity of the inferential relations between them). However, Stevick downplays the function of inferential reasoning in Torrance's thought, which is to expose the actual structure of reality. This oversight is related to earlier limitations within his discussion on Torrance's notion of reality. Despite this, Stevick places emphasis on the function of theories to disclose reality, which Stevick argues provides the orientation in which historic issues in the philosophy of science might be resolved by re-orientating the locus of our engagement with reality, placing the emphasis on contact with reality itself rather than on any particular conceptual formulation of reality.

This volume represents an eminently worthwhile inquiry into Torrance's epistemological foundations. This book is certain to be standard reading for subsequent studies on Torrance and the interface between theology and the philosophy of science more broadly, which will be of utility to pastors, teachers and students.

Alexander J. D. Irving, The University of Oxford

The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption. By J.V. Fesko. Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2016. ISBN: 9781781917657. 436pp. £19.99.

Covenant is an increasingly popular topic in theology and biblical studies. Yet Reformed theology has a long tradition of using covenant as a framework for organising other doctrines. The covenant of redemption teaches that there is a pact among the persons of the Godhead wherein they agreed in eternity past regarding their precise roles in the economy of salvation, and the accomplishment of those roles is now assured because

of this covenant. It is a doctrine that began to be used explicitly in the seventeenth century by Reformed thinkers, but it has fallen out of favour in the last century. J.V. Fesko has done extensive work to rehabilitate and revitalise the covenant of redemption, so that it can be restored to prominent use in theology.

Part one is a brief historical survey of the doctrine. The first explicit use was in David Dickson's 1638 speech to the Scottish General Assembly, but it was quickly an accepted view in Britain, Ireland, and Europe. There are several lines of historical exegesis that contributed to the mature doctrine, and Fesko surveys those lines, but also saves defence and establishment of that exegesis for part two. There are also many doctrinal issues that are connected by the covenant of redemption, such as our understanding of revelation, predestination, justification, the order of salvation, and love. Part one introduces these issues and the background is explained for how these doctrines were related in the covenant of redemption by past theologians.

Part two gives extensive exegesis of several key passages that have been historically significant to the doctrine of the covenant of redemption: Zechariah 6:13; Psalm 2:7; Psalm 110; Ephesians 1-2; and 2 Timothy 1:9-10. Modern biblical studies often rejects the idea that these passages teach an intra-trinitarian covenant. For Fesko, however, none of these passages were used to be anything like a proof text ripped from its surrounding context. Past theologians did not assume each of these passages taught the full doctrine of the covenant of redemption. Rather, each of these passages support a certain piece of the doctrine. Fesko's exegesis goes a long way to demonstrate the value of theologically oriented exegesis. His conclusions are sound and his sensitivity to contexts is incredibly helpful. He provides a mountain of evidence in favour of recognizing that multiple lines of exegesis can be helpfully gathered into doctrinal categories, and shows how there are several threads of separate exegetical themes tied most clearly together by the idea of the covenant of redemption. The central point is: exegesis of these passages supports the view that the appointment of the Son as Mediator has covenantal overtones.

Part three addresses dogmatic construction, and it is the most substantive part. Fesko draws on his exegetical foundations laid in part two to state the doctrine and connect the dots for us between the covenant of redemption and the doctrines of the Trinity, predestination, imputation, and the *ordo salutis*. Each topic receives its own chapter. The statement of the doctrine helpfully outlines the roles and requirements of each trinitarian person. It also draws the connections of the covenant of redemption to the covenant of works between God and Adam on the condition of perfect obedience, as well as the covenant of grace, which God established after the Fall to provide salvation for all the elect throughout history on the condition of faith.

The chapter on the Trinity engages a host of modern sources, and deals with the issues of the ontological and economic Trinity. Philosophical issues are addressed by treating the modern conceptions of the Trinity of Schleiermacher, Hegel, Kant, and Feuerbach. Karl Barth reinvigorated trinitarian thought, but rejected the covenant of redemption. Much of this deals with problems of epistemology and how the covenant of redemption connects to how God reveals himself. The covenant of redemption provides a framework for making a real distinction between the ontological and economic Trinity without leaving us with no true knowledge of the ontological. Possibly the most difficult issue regards the covenant of redemption made between three persons who share a unified divine will. Although the church has long struggled for clarity on this issue, the covenant of redemption 'offers a thicker explanation of the intra-trinitarian interactions' (p. 176). Fesko upholds the unified divine will, as well as inseparable operations of the persons. He also argues that the covenant secures the success of the persons in their various roles because, even though they share one will, they do not all possess that will in the same way, i.e. the Son has the will from the Father, and the Spirit has the will from the Father and Son. The covenantal missions, therefore, of each person are grounded in their ontological processions. This is an excellent and in-depth discussion. The only complaint I would register is that more discussion of the nature of 'agreement' and 'consent' between persons that share a single will would have been helpful (or at least further discussion of how to understand those terms analogously).

The remaining chapters all deal with some aspect of soteriology. Fesko steers a clear path among modern revisions of the Reformed doctrine of predestination, and explains how the covenant of redemption helps us understand 'the election of Christ as the covenant surety and His particular bride' (p. 243). The imputation of Christ's active obedience is the ground of justification, according the Reformed doctrine of justification. The covenant of redemption gives us a fuller explanation of the source and reason for Christ's active obedience, as well as the mechanism for imputing it. The *ordo salutis* (order of salvation) is the logical arrangement and interconnection of the various benefits of salvation. The covenant of redemption, Fesko argues, is also useful here in giving us a platform for understanding how to distinguish differing types of salvific aspect (forensic and renovative). These differing aspects of salvation can be sequenced in a particular order, as well, because the 'ordo derives its sequence from the trinitarian processions and missions' (p. 352). The covenant of redemption has explanatory power here because it is the meeting

place of these various doctrines. Overall, Fesko has done an extraordinary job at recovering a very important doctrine that sheds lights and brings clarity to a whole host of theological topics.

Harrison Perkins, Queen's University Belfast

A Commentary on the Manuscripts and Text of the New Testament. By Philip Wesley Comfort. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8254-4340-4. 416pp. £24.99.

Following the dimensions and cover format of Bruce Metzger's *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, this commentary appears to be implicitly marketed as a companion or replacement volume. However, the methodologies incorporated are largely incompatible with Metzger's work, and the textual commentary is too sparsely populated with variant readings to be considered of comparable scope.

The commentary begins in Chapter One with an introduction to Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, a brief explanation of the methodology employed to evaluate variant readings, and an overview of the feature of *nomina sacra*. Chapter Two 'provides an annotated list of all the most significant manuscripts', where significance appears to be attributed to the earliest (second to fourth century) witnesses (p. 43). The remaining chapters provide 287 pages of commentary on variant readings found in the New Testament. Finally, a 23-page appendix further discusses the theological significance of *nomina sacra*.

Unlike other commentaries, Comfort deems his unique because it follows early manuscripts (as opposed to an English text), necessitating his four-page list of 'the earliest manuscript(s) for each chapter of the New Testament' (p. 11); no comment is made on what base text should be followed between these variants. When Comfort asserts that the 'most significant' papyri of the second and third centuries 'provide the earliest direct witness to the autographs' (p. 20), note that he dates sixteen New Testament papyri to the second century (cf. four in NA^{27}) and fourteen more manuscripts to *circa* AD 200 (p. 43). Also unique to this commentary is preservation of the *nomina sacra* and the interpretive weight assigned to them; Comfort asserts, for example, that by using the *nomen sacrum* for *kyrios* (Lord) 'the New Testament *writers* and scribes were signalling that Jesus was the divine Lord' (p. 420; italics mine).

The annotated manuscript list is a nice concept, formatted in bullet lists containing: the manuscript identifier (e.g. 'P1 (P.Oxy 2)'); the bibliographic information of the *editio princeps* (erroneously *editio principes* throughout); the housing institution; the manuscript date (with 'the date for each manuscript prior to AD 300' discussed further); and any comments on the manuscript's textual character. Much of the textual commentary is somewhat less helpful. Typical comments range from a single sentence (e.g. '"Cross" is written as a *nomen sacrum* (sacred word) in one early MS (P^{66vid}), as well as L.' at John 19:17, 19) to a small paragraph, scaling up to longer discussions for more complex text-critical problems. Though his evaluation of readings incorporates 'knowledge of documents' and reader-reception tendencies of scribes, Comfort unsurprisingly affords external evidence (manuscript antiquity) priority of place. No rationale is provided why some variant readings were listed and not others, and many of the comments refer to the use or non-use of a *nomen sacrum*, which is of limited value. Very little Greek is used in this section and is referenced in transliteration.

Overall, the concept behind this volume is at times intriguing, but the execution is often lacking. The methodologies used throughout are briefly (or not) explained, without acknowledging to the reader awareness of possible weaknesses. And while every book will have typographical errors (more so in massively data-driven works), this volume desperately requires copyediting. The inconsistent formatting (e.g. missing full stops), careless disregard for diacritical marks or spelling of foreign words, and imprecision in summarising data (e.g. 'There are nearly 6,000 [Greek!] manuscripts of the New Testament' [p. 7]) give the impression of hastily assembled but unedited notes on manuscripts. Those accuracy-driven souls interested in textual criticism will find these frequent issues irritating. Unfortunately, a discerning and knowledgeable reader is required to navigate the book's missteps to mine the information of interest.

W. Andrew Smith, Shepherds Theological Seminary, USA

Union with Christ: Adolf Schlatter's Relational Christology. By Michael Bräutigam. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. Ltd, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-22717-573-6. xv + 239pp. £18.50.

Adolf Schlatter (1852-1938) was an important and influential twentieth-century Protestant theologian. However, his work has suffered neglect. His name has often gone barely mentioned and '[w]orse still, the 2003 edition of the *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* omits Schlatter altogether' (p. 2). Bräutigam seeks to illuminate Schlatter's relational Christology in this book.

The book is separated into two parts. Part one examines 'the Genesis and Context of Schlatter's Christology', and part two examines 'the Shape of Schlatter's Christology.' Although one may wonder why part one is included, it is in fact necessary for a correct understanding of Schlatter's theology. Schlatter 'clearly points out that his theological outlook and particular method were given to him through his history' (p. 15). Part one sets the scene for the description of Schlatter's theology in part two. Bräutigam first gives an outline of Schlatter's life. He then thoroughly examines where Schlatter stood in relation to those around him. This gives a comprehensive picture of the influences on and emphases of Schlatter. Schlatter is pictured as one that stood 'between idealism and the revival movement, between the Ritschl school and orthodox confessionalism' (p. 30). Thus Bräutigam highlights Schlatter's position as an irenic and christologically centred theologian.

Bräutigam then examines Schlatter's Christology. Part two is divided according to Schlatter's theological approach. It begins with the *Sehakt* (seeing-act), followed by the *Denkakt* (thinking-act), and finishes with the *Lebensakt* (life-act). Schlatter's *Sehakt* is concerned with theological method, the *Denkakt* with dogmatics, and the *Lebensakt* with ethics. Bräutigam examines these as they relate to Schlatter's relational Christology. Throughout these chapters, Bräutigam shows time and again how Schlatter emphasises unity in his theology. 'Schlatter's pursuit of a coherent theological framework with an impetus towards the whole might well be termed one of his major methodological priorities' (p. 107).

In his examination of Schlatter's *Sehakt*, Bräutigam shows that Schlatter's method is to take the text on its own terms, treating it as theologically unified. The *Sehakt* is best approached from a faith perspective as that brings the researcher's bias in line with the text. The goal of the *Sehakt* is to determine as best as possible what actually happened while rejecting any historicising of the text. Bräutigam shows that, for Schlatter, this must involve gaining a thorough knowledge of the socio-linguistic context of the text as well as 'evaluat[ing] carefully and faithfully the convictions of the New Testament people' (p. 122).

Bräutigam examines the *Denkakt* in two parts. The first addresses Jesus' relation to God, and the second, his relation to both God and humanity. Bräutigam shows how Schlatter steers a careful path around trinitarian fallacies to come to an internally consistent relational Christology. Schlatter is shown to emphasise the volitional union of Jesus with God. This does not mean a loss of personhood for Jesus as he actively unites his will with the Father's. The basis for the volitional union is love. Bräutigam quotes Schlatter '[t]o love's essence belongs that it knows and wants simultaneously both: differentiation and fellowship' (p. 142). In Schlatter, Jesus' service to God is shown to be the basis for Jesus' service to humanity. The key of Jesus' service to humanity is in the establishment of the new community. This is inaugurated at the cross.

Finally, Bräutigam examines Schlatter's *Lebensakt*. Bräutigam shows that this was exceptionally important to Schlatter.

> The christological task is thus not finished when one merely 'sees' Christ in history and 'thinks' him in dogmatic elaboration. Rather, the theologian's goal, as that of any individual, is to experience fundamental experiential and ethical change through the encounter with Jesus Christ (p. 176).

This change is through a volitional transformation. Bräutigam shows that Schlatter emphasised an inner enabling through which the person is changed to be able to unite their will with God's. Not only this, but '[t]he main thrust of Schlatter's argument, it seems, is that God's grace moves us into *action*' (p. 194). Schlatter is shown to call for Christians to live an active life, being united with God's will.

In his final chapter, Bräutigam argues for the importance of Schlatter's Christology to our theological conversations today. Schlatter, it appears, is faithful to the New Testament narrative while bringing in some novel ways to talk about God.

Bräutigam's work should be viewed as an important insight into Schlatter's theology. Schlatter's relational Christology may hold promise in current theological discourse and should be treated seriously. In particular, Schlatter's organic movement from seeing, to thinking, to doing is impressive. This threefold structure is conveyed well by Bräutigam and shows promise for maintaining the organic unity of these topics as conveyed by Scripture itself. This work may be of great worth for anyone considering what it means to be in union with Christ. It is well researched and carefully written. One criticism may be that it could have done more to relate Schlatter's theological history to his theological work, providing more links to demonstrate the close ties that become apparent when one pauses to consider the issue. However, this criticism is minor and the book should be regarded as an invaluable resource.

Philip D. Foster, University of Edinburgh

Scotland's Long Reformation: New Perspectives on Scottish Religion, c. 1500 – c. 1650. Edited by John McCallum. Leiden: Brill, 2016. xii + 230pp. ISBN: 978-90-04-32393-3. €110.

It is widely recognized that the milestone dates utilised to mark the embrace of the Protestant Reformation across Europe in the sixteenth century are but inception years rather than indicators of completeness. Protestantism may have been settled for Elizabethan England by the legislation of 1559 (now known as the Reformation Settlement), but the actual

displacing of the older expression of Christianity by the new would – to the chagrin of the Puritans of the time – be still incomplete as the Tudor era ended in 1603. And, truth be told, the Settlement of 1559 consolidated reforming initiatives operative in that nation as much as 40 years earlier.

The story of Scotland's embrace of the Protestant reform, though most closely associated with the Parliamentary legislation of summer 1560, was equally a story of only gradual penetration of the nation with a Reformation programme. The process was slowed both by a dire shortage of Protestant ministers and a crippling shortage of revenue. Yet the Reform in the north, like its southern counterpart, had a pre-history extending back decades.

It is the strength of *Scotland's Long Reformation* that it painstakingly investigates this very extended process. The extended duration of the process of grafting a Reformation movement on to a pre-existing church has never been denied in the past; yet we may say that such investigations have never been so effectively gathered between two covers as in the present volume.

The editor of the collection of essays, John McCallum, has already demonstrated that he is at home in this field with his earlier study of the extended percolation of the Reformation throughout Fife: *Reforming the Scottish Parish* (2010). He opens the present volume with an admirable overview of recent writing on Scotland's Reformation era. Referencing literature through 2010 (the year in which this volume's papers were presented in conference), he provides the most current such survey available. It is admirable for its compactness.

Not surprisingly, the volume highlights continuities which emerge between the life of Scotland's church pre- and post-1560. Among the themes explored are generosity (chap. I), pre-and post-1560, as exhibited within Holy Trinity Church at St Andrews. Elizabeth Rhodes demonstrates that numerous individuals were notable for their donations to both old and new church regimes. Here there is evidence of an almost seamless transition. The burgh government of Stirling is analyzed (II) in the period 1530-1565 by Timothy Slonosky; he found that the local Reformation, imposed initially by the army of the Congregation, took root and endured because burghers supportive of the religious change reinforced that religious revolution by commencing their involvement in the local council. Poor relief is explored by the editor, McCallum (III); the evidence he marshals suggests that the church post-1560 expanded and systematized an already-existing parish-based relief of the needy – yet with the administration now tended to by local elders of the Reformed church.

Two further essays explore liturgical questions against the backdrop of the long Reformation era. Chris Langley (IV) demonstrates that the

Reformed Scottish church dug in its heels – adhering to original 1560 Reformation practices – when confronted by Stuart intrusions into the northern church's liturgical affairs after 1637. Stephen Mark Holmes (V) shows just how conversant were the Reformed Fathers of 1560 and thereafter with Roman Catholic liturgical handbooks from the pre-1560 era. They used them not simply as exemplars to demonstrate misguided traditional liturgical practices, but could just as frequently rely on them as reliable sources of information about ancient liturgical history. One is entitled to ask, however, whether this double-usage validates these manuals as being of value beyond this critical transitional period.

Additional essays, not easily classified with those already named, take directions of their own. A sparkling essay by Daniel Macleod (VII) explores the motivations of the Catholic martyr of 1615, John Ogilvie (c.1579-1615). Though Ogilvie was condemned for treason against a Protestant monarch and state, MacLeod champions the view that the man's motivations were chiefly religious (though not without political implications) and contained recognizable elements of morbidity. This essay, from one deeply sympathetic to Ogilvie's memory, is refreshing in its candour. Steven Reid's analysis of the 'Aberdeen doctors' of the late Jacobean and early Caroline period (VIII) portrays the Aberdeen professors not as wistful men, longing for an era now past, but as forward-looking orthodox Protestant thinkers who were quite fully abreast of intellectual trends in the German Protestant universities. A lengthy chapter by Roger Mason (IX) completes the volume; he explores the extent to which the union of crowns at 1603 advanced and/or hindered the pursuit of the elusive dream of a common Protestantism for the neighbouring kingdoms.

The standard of scholarship in *Scotland's Long Reformation* is very high. The materials included are new and fresh. It will make a valuable addition to both theological and historical library collections. Happily, Brill is making the volume available in both cloth and paper covers so that those who will not wear the volume out may have it in the less expensive edition.

Kenneth J. Stewart, Covenant College, USA

The Emergence of Evangelical Spirituality: The Age of Edwards, Newton and Whitefield. Edited by Tom Schwanda. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-8091-0621-9. xxi + 306pp. £26.99.

The release of Tom Schwanda's *Emergence of Evangelical Spirituality* breaks new ground, for to say the least, the study of eighteenth century evangelical spirituality has hardly been a crowded field. To date, there have been treatments of the spirituality of the preceding century by writers such as Irvonwy Morgan (*Puritan Spirituality Illustrated from the Life and Times of John Preston*, Epworth, 1973), Stephen Yuille (*Puritan Spirituality: The Fear of God in the Affective Theology of George Swinnock*, Paternoster, 2007) and Tom Schwanda's own work (*Soul Recreation: the contemplative-mystical piety of Puritanism*, Wipf and Stock, 2012). But if one has wanted a guide to the spiritual ideals and practices of evangelicalism in the eighteenth century, there have been only single issue-focused treatments such as that of Bruce Hindmarsh (*The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, OUP 2005) or broad period studies covering evangelical developments of all kinds, such as the excellent, recently-released anthology of documents of Jonathan Yeager (*Early Evangelicalism: A Reader*, OUP 2013).

A question does arise, however, as to whether there is an intrinsic reason for subdividing the history of Christian spirituality by units of one hundred. Can it first be demonstrated that what might be called 'chapters' in the history of spirituality closely correspond to the end of one century and the commencement of another? This being difficult to establish, a legitimate question may be asked as to whether the 'age of Edwards, Newton, and Whitefield' – the subtitle of this work (a period extending from 1703 to 1807) *does* form a distinct epoch of Christian experience and piety.

On this question, editor Schwanda has been extensively influenced by the argumentation of the well-known David Bebbington, who in his seminal work of 1989, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: 1730s-1980s* proposed that the spiritual resurgence of the eighteenth century after 1730 was marked by four traits. These: conversionism, crucicentrism, biblicism, and activism, may well have existed independent of one another earlier, but coalesced in that period to form the hallmarks of a trans-denominational and trans-Atlantic movement we call evangelicalism. Evangelical *faith* and *experience* are things at least as old as Protestantism. What was new after 1730 was the promotion and advancement of these ideals *across* national boundaries and *across* the state church/free church divide. 'Evangelical*ism*' as a movement was indeed new, though evangelical faith and experience was not. All this to say that eighteenth century evangelical spirituality is not something self-evidently distinct from what preceded it.

Therefore, Schwanda's anthology – instead of beginning so often with the verses of Isaac Watts (1674-1748) [note pp. 32, 72, 241] – *might* have featured frequent excerpts from John Flavel (1627-1691), Richard Baxter (1615-1691) or Thomas Boston (1676-1732); all their writings continued to exert great influence through the century under consideration. Whitefield's favourite late Puritan guide was Matthew Henry (1672-1714), while his contemporary, Jonathan Edwards, read extensively from the Anglican Puritan, John Edwards (1637-1716).

Yet Schwanda has still shown considerable sensitivity in this matter. He acknowledges (pp. 20-22) that the devotional practices associated with Scottish outdoor communion seasons – as old as the Scottish Reformation – were by their long continuance a vital instrument of religious awakening in early eighteenth century Scotland and America. He acknowledges also that Continental Pietism had been a 'force' among European Lutheran and Reformed communities for at least a half-century before Britain and America experienced large-scale religious awakening after 1730. This is all for the good.

The author's *modus operandi* is to group excerpts of hymn texts, journals, sermon manuscripts and what might be called spiritual correspondence under six broad categories: New Life in Christ, The Holy Spirit, Holy Scripture, Spiritual Practices, Love for God and Love for Neighbour. His selections are most apt: under these categories we meet familiar voices (Watts, Cennick and Hart) and those not so familiar (John Fletcher of Madeley, Ann Dutton, Ann Griffiths). There are voices from both sides of the Atlantic. We hear European Pietists such as Spangenberg, as well as British voices from the period of the Evangelical Revival. From the North American side, we hear the voices of those from British Nova Scotia (Henry Alline), the Middle Colonies (John Witherspoon) and the South (Samuel Davies). Olaudah Equiano, the Nigerian-born liberated slave who eventually agitated for emancipation from within England is also featured.

The value of such an anthology must be obvious. Have we the desire to know the patterns of holy walking, conversation and praying of believers in this so formative period? We can do no better than turn to Schwanda's anthology.

Kenneth J. Stewart, Covenant College, USA

Using and Enjoying Biblical Greek. By Rodney A. Whitacre. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8010-4994-1. xiii + 258pp. £14.99.

Rodney Whitacre, Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at Trinity School for Ministry, has already produced an important book for students of Greek, namely *A Patristic Greek Reader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007). Now he has produced a kind of 'toolbox' for those who 'have taken Greek and fallen by the wayside, as well as those who have kept up their Greek and want to go deeper' (preface, p. vii).

Whitacre begins his first chapter with these words: 'A knowledge of the basics of Greek opens to you the greatest mental and spiritual adventure, the most edifying study' (p. 1). This is typical of the combination of challenge and encouragement that runs through the book.

There are six further chapters, mostly dealing with an aspect of learning Greek, followed by five appendices.

Chapter 2 deals with building vocabulary. Whitacre emphasises the value of building up knowledge of vocabulary to enable more fluent reading, pointing out a variety of standard suffixes that can help the student understand the particular form of a word. He also suggests several strategies for getting vocabulary embedded in one's memory.

Chapter 3, the longest chapter in the book, deals with parsing. Whitacre provides a number of helpful charts, but largely he offers helpful suggestions and points to useful literature. Much of the material in this chapter will be familiar to anyone who has used an elementary grammar. The main benefit is that the various items are gathered together in a single chapter.

In chapter 4, Whitacre addresses the structure of sentences. This type of approach to the biblical text can be rather puzzling at first, but I have found the principle to be very helpful. This chapter is quite complex because Whitacre introduces several different approaches. His intention is to allow as much flexibility to students as possible, and it is worth persevering with the material.

Chapter 5 offers guidance for gaining 'familiarity and fluency', including a simple reading process and some useful materials. There is nothing ground-breaking here (although the emphasis on 'rapid reading' as an aid to fluency is quite distinctive), but the advice is sound and the bibliographical information is useful.

In chapter 6, Whitacre discusses use of Greek in meditation, approaching the topic from several angles and drawing on texts from both the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers.

Chapter 7 is a selection of passages in Greek with accompanying analysis and notes.

The appendices largely relate to sentence mapping, though there is also one appendix on morphology and one on recent discussions in Greek.

Whitacre's book is a helpful and welcome addition to the range of resources that is available to students and others who wish to strengthen (or revive) their Greek skills. I would probably not identify it as a top priority resource, but for those that need, first of all, some motivation and encouragement to tackle Greek again, it may prove to be invaluable.

Alistair I. Wilson, Highland Theological College UHI

Finding the Will of God: A Pagan Notion? By Bruce K. Waltke. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. Second edition. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7267-8. 247pp. £14.99.

Sometimes there seems to be no end to decision-making. According to an American psychologist quoted in this book, all of us face making 317,000 choices every day! The aim of Bruce Waltke's book is to help us make these decisions God-honouring. Waltke writes with provocative passion because he believes that many of the current evangelical models of divine guidance are skewed. He contends that finding the will of God through seeking special revelation, or depending on dreams, vivid impressions, amazing circumstances, or an inner sense of peace, are hazardous when pursued outside the broad framework of God's way of guidance revealed in Scripture. Such methods become fatuous, pious nonsense, and sometimes differ little from pagan divination.

The author argues that the New Testament offers a programme of our Father's guidance that is based, first and foremost, on our having a close relationship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Waltke discerns in Scripture 'a six-point program whereby our Shepherd leads those who have heard him call "Follow me."' (p. 73) (As the book develops, the six points become seven!) The first point is to listen to the Scriptures (Psalm 119:35). 'You cannot divine God's personal plan for you,' says Waltke, 'but God has given you the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures to develop a heart of love that is able to discern what is best.' (p. 80) The importance of prayer, meditation and obedience is stressed as vital when engaging Scripture. The second point in the programme is to develop a heart for God (Philippians 1:9-10). Apart from what Scripture specifically forbids, God wills that we be free to make our own judicious choices on issues calling for prudence. The third programme point is: 'Protect your heart' (Proverbs 4:23). Our hearts will produce good desires only if our motives are 'correlated' with Scripture, with Christ's call to follow him, with presenting our body as a living sacrifice, with faith, prayer and wisdom, as well as with imitating Christ. The fourth point is to seek wise counsel (Proverbs 13:20). 'Listen to your church; God placed you there for a reason.' (p. 160) However, for Waltke this is a third place priority: 'If God clearly tells you something from his holy Scriptures or by a burden he puts on your heart, don't disobey God because someone tells you something different.' (p. 166)

The fifth point in Bruce Waltke's understanding of guidance is to recognise God's providence (Psalm 139:16). Providence, he says, is seen in retrospect, not prospect, and, therefore, ought not to be misunderstood as encouraging a fatalistic approach to the future. The author is emphatic

that prayer changes things: 'God ordained our eating as a means to satisfy our hunger, and he ordained prayer as a means to bring events to pass.' (pp. 193-4) The sixth point is to exercise sound judgment (Psalm 119:66), especially when, after praying, reading God's Word, and seeking counsel, we still do not feel led by God. 'God gave each of us a brain, and he expects us to put that brain to good use.' (p. 197) The seventh and final point in Waltke's prioritised sequence of guidance is to recognise that God may intervene directly to change our perspective on a heartfelt desire, as he did when Paul was redirected from Asia to Europe (Acts 16:7). Or again, the Lord may require us to do something that wise counsellors or sound judgment would warn against, as in Caesarea when Paul refused to heed the pleas the local Christians to abort his planned visit to Jerusalem (Acts 21:8-14). (Surprisingly Waltke ignores this incident, citing instead the less clear example of Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders in Miletus (Acts 20:16-38).)

In addition to an overview of guidance, Waltke offers readers some noteworthy asides, as when, for example, he tells us that not one of ten books on hermeneutics he read while preparing to teach a course on the subject, mention the importance of praying through Scripture. Again, on meditation: 'You don't simply remember the words of Scripture, you contemplate them; your soul becomes porous and you absorb them.' (p. 96) And on prayer: 'When you stop talking to God you stop understanding what God wants.' (p. 141) On the other hand, one is left wondering about commendation of a Tozer quotation which includes the words: 'The man or woman who is wholly and joyously surrendered to Christ cannot make a wrong choice.' (p. 109)

Each of the book's ten chapters ends with helpful questions for reflection. In summary: *Finding the Will of God* is thought-provoking, practical, and very useful.

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Homiletical Theology in Action: The Unfinished Theological Task of Preaching. Edited by David Schnasa Jacobsen. (The Promise of Homiletical Theology, Volume 2.) Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-4982-0783-6. 202pp. £18.

I'd love to say I know what 'homiletical theology' actually *is* by now, but I don't. Notably, neither do the authors. Throughout this book the phrase, 'homiletical theology is…' precedes a speckled array of suitors: 'a different way of doing theology' (p. 5); 'a descriptive process done in the between places' (p. 44); 'the task of locating the *public* presence of the Spirit' (p. 50); 'the discipline' to 'create redemptive and emancipatory moments in the world' (p. 57); 'a term that helps us name homiletics as theology' (p. 61); 'a constructive theological method for preaching' (p. 62); 'the more specific theology done during sermon preparation' (p. 81); 'an interested activity… at the intersection between gospel and culture' (p. 108). Indeed, as one contributor even notes, contemplating homiletical theology feels like 'sinking to the bottom of a vast semiotic sea' (p. 43). This was also the problem with volume 1, and I suspect will continue as long as the project persists with its curiously firm commitment to definitional pluralism.

If nothing else, then, this is another typical homiletics conversation straight off the American mainline, loosely descended from the lineage of Craddock, Buttrick, Farley, et al. As such, despite the usual prefatory tip-of-the-hat to God's role in preaching, the writers are evidently more excited about the dizzying convolutions of contextual hermeneutical and anthropological engagement. West's opening chapter sets the tone with an array of hermeneutical jargon, serving up a linguistic diet of 'theo-cultural contexts' (p. 20), 'underlying narrative dynamics' (p. 23), 'gendered horizons' (p. 25), and 'processes of semantic negotiation' (p. 24). True, homiletical interpretation is complex, but need preachers really be immersed in Heideggerian and Gadamerian technicalities to do it well?

West's chapter does also contain helpful insights on the preacher's weekly negotiation of divergent congregational interpretations. There are other positive moments in the volume too, such as Powery's engaging chapter on the spirituals' performative engagement with Scripture via slavery, Bos's perceptive chapter on the troubling airbrushing of 'judgement' texts from the contemporary pulpit in times of crisis, and Jacobsen's theologically robust reflection on eschatological 'promise' in a post-Christendom world. However, insightful moments throughout are piecemeal and never unproblematic. Overall, the overarching interpretative anxiety calls all to transcend what is 'fixed', traverse 'boundaries', and 'emancipate' structures (including, in one case, the canon). Indeed, Derridean deconstruction looms large, occasionally named as a spectrally distant influence but mostly subsumed as the silent orthodoxy. Here, the meanings of words are swamped by self-referentiality and contingency (except those ventured to describe this reality).

Notably, the Bible is not marginalised but appears at the forefront of the conversation. However, it cannot escape this ironically dominant postmodern hermeneutic, where context entirely determines meaning(s). There are laments about the Church's 'accommodation' to 'the present order' (p. 122) with little self-awareness of the presuppositions which may have become a more pernicious 'present order' precisely by refusing to claim any explicit foundation or determinative presence. At times such moves are billed as having Protestant provenance, but obviously exude

more *différance* than *semper Reformanda*. Subsequently, false binaries abound. We are told that homiletical theology 'begins with the human person, body, and voice, not a Bible passage' (p. 88). This belies the book's reactionary saturation in American Christendom, where high views of explicit Scriptural authority for preaching have sometimes gone hand-in-hand with particular political, socio-economic, and racial commitments. But this new theological 'school' offers little for such contexts where Evangelicals fight tooth-and-nail to recover a whole-hearted pulpit affirmation of Scripture and seek *thereby* to attend more rigorously to contextual homiletical complexity. The issues engaged in this book are real and important, but its methodological commitment to deconstructive categories and semantic games render the project far less helpful than it might have been. Far from providing a theological revolution for preaching, homiletical theology – if it even exists – appears to offer nothing more than a new swing-set for the homiletical playground.

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