



themelios

*An International Journal for Students of
Theological and Religious Studies*

Volume 34 Issue 2 July 2009

EDITORIAL <i>D. A. Carson</i>	155
MINORITY REPORT: A Question of Accountability <i>Carl Trueman</i>	158
The Relationship Between Justification and Spiritual Fruit in Romans 5–8 <i>Jonathan R. Pratt</i>	162
<i>Sola Fide</i> Compromised? Martin Luther and the Doctrine of Baptism <i>D. Patrick Ramsey</i>	179
The Inexhaustible Fountain of All Good Things: Union with Christ in Calvin on Ephesians <i>Lee Gatiss</i>	194
PASTORAL PENSÉES: Power in Preaching: Desire (1 Thessalonians 1:2–5), Part 2 of 3 <i>Raymond C. Ortlund Jr.</i>	207
Book Reviews	216

THE GOSPEL COALITION

themelios

DESCRIPTION

Themelios is an international evangelical theological journal that expounds and defends the historic Christian faith. Its primary audience is theological students and pastors, though scholars read it as well. It was formerly a print journal operated by RTSF/UCCF in the UK, and it became a digital journal operated by The Gospel Coalition in 2008. The new editorial team seeks to preserve representation, in both essayists and reviewers, from both sides of the Atlantic.

Themelios is published three times a year exclusively online at www.theGospelCoalition.org. It is presented in two formats: PDF (for citing pagination) and HTML (for greater accessibility, usability, and infiltration in search engines). *Themelios* is copyrighted by The Gospel Coalition. Readers are free to use it and circulate it in digital form without further permission (any print use requires further written permission), but they must acknowledge the source and, of course, not change the content.

EDITORS

General Editor: D. A. Carson
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
2065 Half Day Road
Deerfield, IL, 60015, USA
Themelios@theGospelCoalition.org

Consulting Editor: Carl R. Trueman
Westminster Theological Seminary
Chestnut Hill, P.O. Box 27009
Philadelphia, PA 19118, USA

Managing Editor: Charles Anderson
Oak Hill Theological College
Chase Side, Southgate, London
N14 4PS, UK
charlesa@oakhill.ac.uk

Administrator: Andrew David Naselli
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
2065 Half Day Road
Deerfield, IL, 60015, USA
Themelios@theGospelCoalition.org

BOOK REVIEW EDITORS

Old Testament
Rodrigo de Sousa
Mackenzie University
Rua da Consolação, 896 - Prédio 23
São Paulo, SP - Brazil
Rodrigo.deSousa@theGospelCoalition.org

New Testament
Alistair I. Wilson
Dumisani Theological Institute
PO Box 681
King William's Town 5600
South Africa
Alistair.Wilson@theGospelCoalition.org

History and Historical Theology
Shawn Wright
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
2825 Lexington Road
Louisville, KY 40299, USA
Shawn.Wright@theGospelCoalition.org

Systematic Theology and Bioethics
Hans Madueme
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
2065 Half Day Road; D-632
Deerfield, IL 60015, USA
Hans.Madueme@theGospelCoalition.org

Ethics (but not Bioethics) and Pastoralia
Dominic Smart
Gilcomston South Church
Union Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1TP, UK
Dominic.Smart@theGospelCoalition.org

Mission and Culture
Daniel Strange
Oak Hill College
Chase Side, Southgate
London N14 4PS
Daniel.Strange@theGospelCoalition.org

EDITORIAL BOARD

Gerald Bray, *Beeson Divinity School*; Beth Currier, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*; William Kynes, *Cornerstone Evangelical Free Church*; Ken Magnuson, *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*; Jonathan Pennington, *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*; Michael Thate, *Durham University*; Mark D. Thompson, *Moore Theological College*; Garry Williams, *The John Owen Centre, London Theological Seminary*; Paul Williamson, *Moore Theological College*; Stephen Witmer, *Pepperell Christian Fellowship*.

ARTICLES

Articles should generally be about 4,000 to 7,000 words (including footnotes) and should be submitted to the Managing Editor of *Themelios*, which is peer-reviewed. Articles should use clear, concise English, following *The SBL Handbook of Style* (esp. for abbreviations), supplemented by *The Chicago Manual of Style*. They should consistently use either UK or USA spelling and punctuation, and they should be submitted electronically as an email attachment using Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx extensions) or Rich Text Format (.rtf extension). Special characters should use a Unicode font.

REVIEWS

The book review editors generally select individuals for book reviews, but potential reviewers may contact them about reviewing specific books. As part of arranging book reviews, the book review editors will supply book review guidelines to reviewers.

EDITORIAL

— D. A. Carson —

*D. A. Carson is research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical
Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.*

During the last couple of decades, I have had occasion to reflect a little on the ambiguities and challenges surrounding what is sometimes called “polemical theology.” From time to time I shall use this editorial column to develop some of these reflections. Here I shall offer five initial observations:

(1) The category is slippery. Some think of “polemical theology” in terms of a glorious heritage of serious theological engagement and debate. Others are convinced “polemical theology” can have only negative connotations, so they speak and write against it—and thus indulge in polemical theology against polemical theology. Polemical theology is nothing other than contending for a particular theological understanding (usually one that the contender holds to be the truth) and disputing those that contradict it or minimize it. It is impossible to indulge in serious critical thought without becoming enmeshed, to some degree, in polemics. Every time you include a footnote that begins “*Contra*” you are engaged in polemical theology; every time you assemble six reasons as to why your interpretation of a biblical passage or your formulation of a theological issue is correct, and assert, or at least imply, that alternative interpretations or formulations are correspondingly incorrect, you dabble in polemical theology. The person who advances an exegetical or theological stance without reference to competing formulations may avoid polemics, but will usually not be taken seriously by those who have studied any issue, precisely because there is no serious engagement with those who disagree. It is not easy for Christians to be entirely free of polemics, and it is not wise to attempt such freedom. Their arguments will inevitably attract adjectives like ignorant, reductionistic, unengaged, naive—and rightly so.

(2) So it is not surprising that the Bible itself casts up countless examples of polemical theology. One thinks of Yahweh’s sneering refutation and condemnation of the idols in Isa 40–45; of the direct condemnation of alternative stances in, say, Galatians or Jude, or of Jesus’ condemnation of hypocrites *including what they teach* (e.g., Matt 23); of the symbol-laden destruction of imperial pretensions in the Apocalypse. One also thinks of many subtler forms of polemics. When Jesus tells parables to indicate that the kingdom dawns slowly, quietly, over time, and in function of how the Word is received (e.g., the soils, the yeast, the weeds and the wheat), he is implicitly challenging alternative conceptions of the kingdom, and thus he is engaged in polemical theology. When the Letter to the Ephesians devotes much of its space to working out the glories and characteristics of the one new humanity that God has brought about in Christ, joining together Jew and Gentile (and, in principle, people from every tribe and language and people), it is overturning alternative views of ethnicity, of self-identification, of how to find the true locus of the covenant people of God. In other words, any robust theology that wounds and heals, that bites and edifies and clarifies, is implicitly or explicitly engaging with alternative stances. In a world of finite human beings who are absorbed in themselves and characterized by rebellion against

God, polemical theology is an unavoidable component of any serious theological stance, as the Bible itself makes clear.

(3) Nevertheless there is something wrong-headed about making polemical theology the focus of one's theological identity. This can be done in many ways. There are well-known scholars whose every publication has an undertone of "everyone-has-got-this-wrong-before-me-but-here-is-the-true-synthesis." Some become far better known for what they are against than for the overflow of their worship or for their generosity to the needy or even for their affirmation of historically confessed truth. Still other Christians develop websites and ministries whose sole aim is to confute error. God knows there is plenty of error to confute. To make the refutation of error into a specialized "ministry," however, is likely to diminish the joyful affirmation of truth and make every affirmation of truth sound angry, supercilious, self-righteous—in a word, polemical. In short, while polemical theology is just about unavoidable in theory and should not, as a matter of faithfulness, be skirted, one worries about those who make it their specialism.

(4) In some ways it is convenient to distinguish polemical theology designed to challenge the stances of those who call themselves fellow Christians and polemical theology designed to challenge the stances of those who are not Christians and who may oppose Jesus. The latter goal makes polemical theology a subset of evangelism, certainly a subset of what is often called apologetics. Distinctions such as these could be teased out at considerable length, but perhaps it is enough here to make two further observations.

First, regardless of its audience and of the particular stance that is being challenged, polemical theology ought to develop a wide range of "tones." Re-read Galatians. Within the space of six short chapters, Paul can be indignant with his readers, but he can also plead with them. He openly admits he wishes he could be present with them so he could better judge how he should adjust his tone. He can be scathing with respect to his opponents, precisely because he wants to protect his readers; he can devote several paragraphs to clarifying and defending his own credibility, not least in demonstrating that his core gospel is shared by the other apostles, even though he insists he is not dependent on them for getting it right. He happily connects his theological understanding to ethical conduct. All of this suggests that a mature grasp of the potential of polemical theology wants to win and protect people, not merely win arguments.

Almost five decades ago a noted evangelical scholar engaged Thomas Altizer, chief voice of the "Death of God" movement, in a public debate. Most witnesses of that evening judged that at the intellectual level Altizer had been seriously trounced, but most also thought that Altizer had been the more winsome of the two.

Second, at the risk of a generalization, those who spend their lives refuting and correcting fellow believers but who rarely engage at a serious level with ideas and stances in the broader world almost always find themselves at increasing odds with more and more believers. That should be unsurprising. Those who engage in a broader polemical theology are, on the whole, more grateful to focus with gratitude on the common heritage of Christians.

(5) For my last reflection, I want to recall the words of Bryan Magee, whose book *Confessions of a Philosopher: A Personal Journey through Western Philosophy from Plato to Popper* (New York: Modern Library, 1999) describes his own experience in polemics and what he learned from Popper:

I had always loved argument, and over the years I had become quite good at identifying weak points in an opponent's defense and bringing concentrated fire to bear on them.

This is what virtually all polemicists have sought to do since ancient times, even the most famous of them. But Popper did the opposite. He sought out his opponents' case at its strongest and attacked that. Indeed, he would improve it, if he possibly could, before attacking it. . . . Over several pages of prior discussion he would remove avoidable contradictions or weaknesses, close loopholes, pass over minor deficiencies, let his opponents' case have the benefit of every possible doubt, and reformulate the most appealing parts of it in the most rigorous, powerful and effective arguments he could find—and then direct his onslaught against it. The outcome, when successful, was devastating. At the end there would be nothing left to say in favor of the opposing case except for tributes and concessions that Popper had himself already made. It was incredibly exciting intellectually. (152–53)

That may not always be the path of wise polemics, but few could doubt that this is the path of wisdom where the audience is already skeptical about your position. In the world of Christian apologetics, I know no one more gifted in this Popperian form of argumentation than Tim Keller. Witness his *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Dutton, 2008). Keller manages to construct his opponents' arguments in such a way that they are more powerful and devastating than when the opponents themselves construct them. And then he effectively takes them apart. No one feels abused, precisely because he has treated their stances more ably than they can themselves.

The church of Jesus Christ could use more polemical theology in which the polemicists have learned such skills as the fruit of grace.

MINORITY REPORT

A Question of Accountability

— Carl Trueman —

*Carl Trueman is Academic Dean, Vice President of Academic Affairs,
and Professor of Historical Theology and Church History at Westminster
Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

Every year a few students ask me my thoughts about whether they should pursue doctoral studies and I respond with what has come to be known as ‘The Speech.’ Essentially, ‘The Speech’ runs something like this: ‘Do not do it if you think you are going to find a job at the end of it; do it for the sake of doing it. There are almost no jobs going in academia these days, and humanly speaking, time and chance are what make the difference between the one who gets the big break and the one who never even makes a shortlist. For every student who finds an academic job, there are countless others who do not. I studied with people much more talented than I am who ended up selling insurance or working in a bank.’

The advice is, I believe, good. The chances of finding a job are slim; and with a PhD you actually make yourself less employable for other things. This is not to say you should not do a PhD; but you need to be realistic about what you can expect. Of course, all human beings are, to some extent, narcissists: I have never given ‘The Speech’ to anyone who did not believe that they were destined to be the one in a thousand who lands the plum job—after all, I ignored similar sage advice on similarly narcissistic grounds more than twenty years ago; but at least I try to bring a little reality to bear on the situation.

There are a couple of other things I usually say as well. If the student is a married male, I always advise him to find out what his wife thinks about the plan. If she is not fully on board, then to pursue such study is stupid: it will place strain on the marriage, breed resentment, and almost certainly end in tears. But there is one other question I usually pose, if not bluntly, then at least in some form: to whom do you intend to be accountable?

The question is crucial because any Christian studying theology, at whatever level, is not engaged in a simple mastery of technique or information. The study of theology engages heart and mind; to put it in the idiom of Calvin, true knowledge of God and true piety are inseparable. In addition, the temptations of theological study are huge.

Protestantism, by prioritizing a book, the Bible, and the written and spoken word, inevitably has an inbuilt gravitational pull towards intellectualism. Proper Protestantism is not about religious feeling or psychology; it is about truth—defined, proclaimed, believed. This is not a bad thing; indeed, I would argue that the theology of the Bible demands that it be so; and this is why the calling to scholarly study is so important for evangelicals. Indeed, when you look back at the history of orthodox Protestantism from the sixteenth century onwards, it is striking at how much premium was placed by so many on the need for a thoughtful and articulate clergy. I have on my desk at home a copy of Thomas J. Nettles’s new biography of James Petigru Boyce, founder of Southern Seminary, and a prophetic figure driven

by the conviction that preachers and church leaders needed to be properly educated in the theological disciplines. Boyce's vision lives on at Southern Seminary today, and its results can still be heard from many pulpits every Lord's Day. Yet Boyce was typical of Protestantism at its best, not unique: John Calvin, John Owen, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Hodge, Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, B. B. Warfield, J. Gresham Machen, Carl F. H. Henry—the list of Protestant educators who were committed to the ideal of thoughtful, educated pastors is seemingly endless; and the fruit of their vision and labour is evident for all to see. In our own day, we can think of John Piper, Mark Dever, Ligon Duncan, and others who have studied at the highest levels and have applied their learning to pulpit ministry rather than the classroom, and the church as a whole is the better for such; and there are countless others, anonymous in the annals of history, whose ministries were made possible through education made available thanks to the scholarly commitments and callings of others.

Yet Protestantism's theologically driven orientation to the Book, to books, and to words, does mean that it has a vulnerability which can be easy to exploit. Such an intellectual and literary orientation means that sometimes the mere ability to grasp concepts and to articulate them can easily provide a fast-track to having influence. Rare is the theological student who has not felt the temptation to sit in church on Sunday and to do little more than silently critique the exegesis and theology of the pastor. Even more so will the same student find it hard not to sit in condescending judgment at the often muddled attempts of the people at the church Bible study to make sense of some passage of Scripture or other. Yet the qualifications for leadership in the church as laid out in the New Testament include far more than the ability to grasp theology. Just because one has enrolled in a PhD course or read D. A. Carson or N. T. Wright does not mean that one has the right to speak in church, and certainly does not exempt you from sitting under, and respecting, the authority of the properly established eldership of the church. Nor, incidentally, does completion of a PhD or even being hired to teach Bible at a college. I am always saddened by those who rant on and on about the 'self-appointed people' saying this, that, or the other, when, in fact, the targets of their rage are often office-bearers in the church while the ranters themselves have nothing but a PhD, an annual contract from some outfit somewhere, and a website. From a biblical perspective, who, one wonders, is the truly self-appointed in such contexts?

Thus, the PhD student needs to realize at the outset a number of things: their training, in and of itself, does not give them any platform from which to pontificate to the church; and their knowledge will not make them immune to falling into error, moral or intellectual. Indeed, they will remain as vulnerable to the former as anybody else, and almost certainly more prone to the latter than the typical church member. The task, therefore, is to put in place precautions against such falls. Of course, only the grace of God can ultimately save us from our inherent tendency to believe our own propaganda, but there are things which we can—indeed, should—all do to place ourselves in as strong a position as possible.

The simple way for theological students to resist both the temptation to pontificate beyond their pay grade and the temptation to pride and the moral and intellectual problems that inevitably come in its wake-fall is to find the proper context for accountability, to find their true home; and the good news is that this true home is easy to find—simply join an orthodox, gospel-believing and proclaiming church as member, submit to the elders, attend the corporate worship services, fellowship with the saints on a regular basis, get involved in the day to day work of the local body, even if it is "only" the cleaning rota (and, hey, worshipping in a dirty church quickly reveals how important that is), and pursue a disciplined life of private devotion.

First, church involvement is absolutely critical for any healthy Christian life because it constitutes a basic reality check. Most Christians spend their weeks surrounded by people who are not Christians, being exposed to ideas, images, and values which are antithetical to Christianity which sell us myths as if they were reality, which teach us that madness is sanity and sanity is madness. Time spent with brothers and sisters in Christ on the Lord's Day is thus time spent resetting your moral, spiritual, and intellectual bearings. Whether you are a banker being tempted to greed by life during the week or a New Testament PhD student being bombarded with scholarship that mocks God's word in the classroom from Monday to Friday, meeting with the people of God, singing his word, hearing his word read and preached and, indeed, meeting with the Triune in the awesome context of a worship service, is vital to your well-being. You need to be there; and in nearly two decades of teaching, I have never yet met a student who messes up badly at an intellectual level who did not first mess up at an ecclesiastical level, whether through wrong choice of fellowship or no choice of fellowship at all. Put simply: if you are not involved in a church, then do not look for sympathy when your life leaves the rails and dives into a ditch.

Second, church involvement brings with it a natural accountability at a very practical level. Here I guess I show my strong preference for smaller churches. I cannot prove from Scripture that a church should never consist of more than three hundred or so people, but I would argue that a church which is so big that the pastor who preaches cannot know every member by name, and something about their daily lives, needs, and struggles, is a church where the pastor cannot easily fulfill the obligations of a biblical shepherd of God's flock. Put bluntly, I want to be in a church where my absence on Sunday will soon be noticed and where the pastor or elders can draw alongside me and ask the pertinent questions. I want to be in a church where the eldership takes note if my behavior towards my wife or children is sub-par on a Sunday (hinting at much worse in private). I want to be in a church where I pray for the leadership and where they pray for me—not just in a generic sense of being part of the membership, but informed prayer based on real relationships. In other words, I want to be in a church where my pastor is, well, my *pastor* and not just that guy who is preaching over there in the distance on a Sunday morning. Put yourself in a small, faithful church, and the pastor is more than likely to hold you accountable to the basics of Christian belief and practice.

Third, and building on the last point, if you join a small church, you will find the scope for real engagement with real people and real church work will be massively enhanced. One of the most important things I do each week is assist my wife in teaching the four-year-olds Sunday School Bible class at my church. It keeps me grounded in reality, as there are few things more humbling than teaching the basics to a reluctant child, few things more delightful than seeing their Bible knowledge grow over the year, and surely few things more important than laying the foundations of the next generation's Bible knowledge. Teaching such classes is also a pressing reminder that the vacuous pomposity that characterizes so much of the scholarly world is ultimately just a self-important smokescreen for asking and answering a myriad of frequently irrelevant questions. Your colleagues in the doctoral seminar might think you're a genius, but, believe me, the five-year-old Sunday School pupil does not. She cares not a whit to whom you have spoken this last week, or for whom you have published this last year, or what fine and dandy initials you have after your name. She is more likely to regard you as weird, and if you cannot express yourself clearly and relevantly, she will let you know in her own unique way. Teaching such a class is like being a stand-up comedian in a New York or Glasgow club on a Saturday night: you earn your audience's respect and attention; and they take no prisoners if you are less than you should be. Humbling indeed. But more than that, teaching such classes demands that you think through the faith not only as an intellectual exercise but also as something which needs to be practically communicated.

If you are boring, irrelevant, unclear—or if you do not seem to care about the children—they will pick it up immediately and punish you for it mercilessly. That’s a form of accountability too, and crucial for those who spend their weeks in ivory towers, designing castles in the air.

Too many theological students come unstuck not because they do not master the sophisticated intricacies of their chosen fields of specialization but rather because they failed their apprenticeships in the basics, the corporate disciplines of church attendance, submission to elders, hard work for the local body, and the individual disciplines which flow from these: private prayer and Bible reading, a crying out to God for his mercy, and a burning desire to be mastered by the Word of God. Successful theological students are never the subjects in theological study; rather they are always the objects of God’s grace. And the church is the place where they will be held accountable for these things. The church, not the seminar room, provides their only true home, their best classroom, and their best form of strenuous spiritual rest. Theological study at the highest level is a high calling indeed; but just for this very reason those who pursue it need to make especially sure that they truly are humble servants of the church.

The Relationship Between Justification and Spiritual Fruit in Romans 5–8¹

— Jonathan R. Pratt —

Jon Pratt is professor of New Testament at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Plymouth, Minnesota, and an elder at Eden Baptist Church in Savage, Minnesota.

Of the many questions currently surrounding the discussion about justification, the relationship between justification and spiritual fruit merits attention. In particular, once the declaration of righteousness has been pronounced upon the sinner when personal faith is exercised,² does this reality have any effect upon the lifestyle of the new believer? Dogmatists would tend to phrase this question in relation to the doctrine of perseverance and how progressive sanctification relates to justification.³ But in the present essay I would like to deal with this question exegetically by looking at Paul's treatment of justification and its fruit in Romans 5–8. Admittedly, the question raised has usually been addressed in a more systematic-theological fashion, but I hope the approach followed here will be a helpful addition to the typical systematic treatments of this issue.⁴

While all would acknowledge that justification should affect one's production of spiritual fruit, not all would agree that it *necessarily* will affect it.⁵ This revelation may come as a surprise to some, but

¹This article is an updated condensation of Jonathan R. Pratt, "The Relationship between Justification and Sanctification in Romans 5–8" (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1999).

²This is the traditional view of justification in contrast to that of the New Perspective on Paul which would argue that justification is "God's acknowledgement that someone is in the covenant" (James D. G. Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," *BJRL* 65 [1983]: 106). Also see Tom Wright, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (London: SPCK, 2009), 96. The traditional view on Pauline justification finds support in John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007); Simon Gathercole, "The Doctrine of Justification in Paul and Beyond," in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges* (ed. Bruce L. McCormack; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 219–41; and Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000).

³I do not intend here to discuss the intricacies of justification and sanctification in relation to systematic formulations except to say that justification speaks to the time believers receive the declaration of righteousness imputed to their account when they exercise faith in Christ (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* [ed. John T. McNeill; trans Ford Lewis Battles; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960], 3.11.2).

When systematicians speak about sanctification, they are usually referring to *progressive* sanctification because they recognize that the doctrine of sanctification can be used by NT writers to speak of any of the tenses (past, present, and future) of salvation. David Peterson (*Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness* [New Studies in Biblical Theology 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 13) suggests correctly that words like "renewal" and "transformation" are more accurate NT terms to describe Christian growth. At the same time he argues that the NT primarily uses "sanctification" in its definitive (past) sense. While he has offered a helpful corrective to the tendency to equate the majority of "sanctification" uses with Christian growth (when only a minority truly function in this way), still several passages appear to use "sanctification" to speak of growth in holiness (e.g., 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thess 4:3, 4, 7; 1 Tim 2:15; and 2 Tim 2:21).

⁴In the paragraph that follows I will be providing a listing of theological perspectives that pulls us back into the systematic-theological treatment of the question. This is necessary in order to give the reader a survey of the theological landscape with regard to the question of justification and its fruit. With this grid in place the reader ought to be prepared to see how the exegetical treatment of Rom 5–8 leads to the support of one of these theological groupings.

⁵The question being raised here, then, has to do with the existence or non-existence of righteous deeds or acts of

it is a reality nonetheless. On the one hand, some would argue that the justified sinner may possibly or potentially live righteously. Bible teachers supporting this perspective include those of Wesleyan,⁶ Keswick,⁷ Pentecostal,⁸ and Chaferian⁹ persuasion. On the other hand, several (typically from a Reformed viewpoint) suggest that the justified sinner will certainly or necessarily give evidence of an obedient lifestyle.¹⁰

obedience in the life of the justified sinner. Thus, this question is prior to another question also found in current discussions of Pauline justification that relates to the place of righteous deeds in final justification. For more on that discussion see Piper, *Future of Justification*, and Wright, *Justification*.

⁶ John Wesley separated justification from sanctification (obedience), suggesting that both are received in distinct acts of faith. Wesley described this sanctification as “entire sanctification” or “perfection” (John Wesley, “Scripture Way of Salvation,” in *Sermons on Several Occasions* [ed. T. Jackson; New York: G. Lane and C. B. Tippet, 1845], 1:386, 390). The experience of receiving “perfection” has five specific elements: (1) it is instantaneous; (2) it is distinctly subsequent to justification; (3) it is only received by those who seek for it; (4) it defines sin as “conscious, deliberate acts”; and (5) it may be lost (John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* [Chicago: The Christian Witness Co., n.d.], 25–28, 35, 46, 52, 104).

Other Wesleyan theologians supporting this idea include: Frank G. Carver, “Biblical Foundations for the ‘Secondness’ of Entire Sanctification,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22 (1987): 11; William M. Greathouse, “Sanctification and the Christus Victor Motif in Wesleyan Theology,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 17 (1982): 51; and W. T. Purkiser, *Conflicting Concepts of Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1953), 30–31.

⁷ Keswick views sanctification and justification as two distinct gifts from God to be received in separate acts of faith. Believers receive the gift of sanctification through a “crisis” decision (Steven Barabas, *So Great Salvation* [Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1952], 84–86, 115; J. Robertson McQuilkin, “The Keswick Perspective,” in *Five Views on Sanctification* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987], 178). Before this decision believers find themselves in the position of the “carnal Christian,” and after it they enjoy the privileges of the “victorious life.” This victorious life is considered “normal,” and Christians are encouraged to live accordingly. McQuilkin (“Keswick,” 159) writes with regard to this type of behavior, “Christians may not behave in this way, but such is their true condition and potential.” For a helpful survey of Keswick, see Andrew David Naselli, “Keswick Theology: A Historical and Theological Survey and Analysis of the Doctrine of Sanctification in the Early Keswick Movement, 1875–1920,” (Ph.D. diss., Bob Jones University, 2006).

⁸ Following the model begun by Wesley, Pentecostals have shifted the emphasis from entire sanctification to baptism in the Spirit (Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970], 38; Timothy L. Smith, “The Doctrine of the Sanctifying Spirit: Charles G. Finney’s Synthesis of Wesleyan and Covenant Theology,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 13 [1978]: 100–103). The result of this Spirit-baptism is empowerment for service rather than the Wesleyan concept of perfection in love (Stanley M. Horton, “The Pentecostal Perspective,” in *Five Views on Sanctification* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987], 130). Pentecostals understand the experience of baptism in the Spirit as an event subsequent to and distinct from justification and as something that should be sought by all believers (Howard Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Critique of James D. G. Dunn’s Baptism in the Holy Spirit* [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984], vii; Horton, “The Pentecostal Perspective,” 128–34).

⁹ “Chaferian” is Charles Ryrie’s suggested title for this model of sanctification (Charles C. Ryrie, “Contrasting Views on Sanctification,” in *Walvoord: A Tribute* [ed. Donald K. Campbell; Chicago: Moody, 1982], 191). Chaferians teach that victory over the sinful nature is accomplished by yieldedness to the Spirit in an act of dedication or surrender (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual* [rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967], 22; J. Dwight Pentecost, *Designed to Be Like Him: Fellowship, Conduct, Conflict, Maturity* [Chicago: Moody, 1966], 127–30; and Charles C. Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* [Chicago: Moody, 1969], 186–91). While seeking to distance themselves from Keswick’s teaching that justification and sanctification are two distinct gifts of God (Ryrie, “Contrasting Views,” 195–97), Chaferians still maintain the need for an initial decision of dedication or yieldedness that helps to begin the process of sanctification (Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual*, 68; Pentecost, *Designed to Be Like Him*, 130; Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life*, 186; John F. Walvoord, “The Augustinian-Dispensational Perspective,” in *Five Views on Sanctification* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987], 235). Cf. Jonathan R. Pratt, “Dispensational Sanctification: A Misnomer,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 7 (2002): 95–108; available online at <http://dbts.edu/journals/2002/Pratt.pdf>.

¹⁰ The inevitable connection between justification and fruit-bearing is affirmed by this sampling of Reformed writers: Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.1; A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (rev. ed.; n.p.: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1878; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1928), 522; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981–89), 3:215–16; and B. B. Warfield, *Perfectionism* (ed. Samuel G. Craig; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 356.

While a descriptive historical study of this issue might prove fruitful,¹¹ this essay seeks to be more prescriptive by providing an exegetical treatment of Romans 5–8.¹² Most recognize that in these four chapters Paul specifically addresses the issue of justification as it relates to the believer’s new life.¹³ Thus, an investigation of these four chapters should reveal many clues that will help point us toward a solution regarding the relationship between justification and spiritual fruit.

I believe the solution to this problem is that Romans 5–8 demonstrates that an obedient lifestyle inevitably and necessarily flows from justification. This essay will pursue this thesis in three steps. First, I will give criteria used to determine whether or not fruit-bearing is present in the life of believers. Second, I will delineate evidences of fruit-bearing found in Romans 5–8 by using these criteria; this step will also require an exegetical overview of Paul’s argument. Finally, I will investigate these acts of fruit-bearing in order to determine whether they are shown to be necessarily true in the life of the believer.

1. Criteria for Identifying Spiritual Fruit-bearing

1.1. Positive Criteria

Identifying the criteria used for determining evidences of fruit-bearing in Romans 5–8 is crucial for the defense of the stated thesis. Whenever Paul provides explanations of the believer’s new life in Christ in these chapters,¹⁴ he gives information that may pertain to fruit-bearing and so to the issue at hand. If his description of the Christian involves a righteous *response* such as an action, attitude, or thought as opposed to a *possession*, then Paul provides descriptions that can be considered as applying to the concept of spiritual fruit-bearing.

It may be helpful to define my terms and then illustrate them. First, I understand “fruit-bearing” to refer to believers’ righteous responses to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in their earthly lives. These responses are “righteous” as opposed to “sinful” in that they conform to God’s standard of holiness. But “fruit-bearing” may be preferred to “righteous response” in that it comes from Paul’s own terminology (καρπός in Rom 6:22). Throughout this essay I will use the following terms synonymously (and the first term most frequently): fruit-bearing, obedient actions, and righteous responses.

Second, what does it mean to distinguish between “righteous response” and “possession”? When Paul states that believers enjoy peace with God as a result of being justified in 5:1, he is speaking of a possession of believers. This peace with God is a blessing they enjoy, but it does not speak about their

¹¹Cf. William W. Combs, “The Disjunction between Justification and Sanctification in Contemporary Evangelical Theology,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 6 (2001): 17–44; available online at <http://dbts.edu/journals/2001/Combs.pdf>.

¹²The only significant structural debate that takes place in the study of Romans is in regard to the location of chapter 5 in Paul’s argument. Should it be included with 1:18–4:25 or with chapters 6–8? I have opted for the latter primarily because of the occurrence of the formulae “through our Lord Jesus Christ,” “through Jesus Christ our Lord,” and “in Christ Jesus our Lord” at the beginning, middle, and end of chapter 5 (5:1, 11, 21) and at the end of each of the three succeeding chapters (6:23; 7:25; 8:39). See C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:254.

¹³Cranfield (*Romans*, 1:102) suggests that Paul’s argument in chapters 1–8 builds on Paul’s thematic statement in 1:17 (“the just by faith shall live”). In 1:18–4:25 Paul expounds upon the phrase “the just by faith,” and in chapters 5–8 he delineates the meaning of “shall live.”

¹⁴Paul does so by using contrasts (5:12–21 [in Adam/in Christ]; 6:16–7:6 [enslaved to sin/enslaved to God]; 8:1–11 [in the flesh/in the Spirit]), direct statements (6:6, 7; 8:15, 28), and subordinate clauses of purpose and result (6:4; 7:4, 6; 8:4). This list is not meant to be exhaustive but merely representative of the ways in which Paul narrates the believer’s new existence in Christ.

righteous responses. Connected to this result of peace with God (a possession) is the result of boasting in hope and tribulations in 5:2–3 (a response). This result of justification is a description of an action (boasting) which believers perform. As such it provides an example of spiritual fruit-bearing, that is, a righteous response.

1.2. Negative Criteria

Three negative criteria can be used to limit the possibilities. First, any description of believers found in imperative¹⁵ or subjunctive¹⁶ statements will not be used since these do not express certainty with regard to the reality of a given action.¹⁷

Second, blessings provided for believers that speak of the believer's passive reception of them will not be used. Believers enjoy such blessings as peace with God (5:1), access into grace (5:2), and death to sin (6:2), but such gifts do not qualify as fruit-bearing because they do not indicate any type of moral activity on the part of the believer. These gifts may effect righteous responses, but in and of themselves they do not speak about acts or attitudes demonstrated by believers.

Third, any description of believers found in future tense statements must be considered as highly suspect. Unless there is evidence that Paul uses the future tense for rhetorical reasons or unless he shows that the blessing in question also has present ramifications, future tense verbs have application to blessings that believers will enjoy in the future. Such blessings as future salvation (5:9–10), eternal life (6:23), and resurrection (8:11) relate to gifts that will be enjoyed by believers in the future. The present expression of fruit-bearing is not in view in such statements.

Thus, any indicative, non-future verb that relates a righteous response by the Christian to the promptings of the Holy Spirit will be considered for inclusion. With these criteria in mind an admittedly succinct exegesis of Romans 5–8 follows in order to delineate the spiritual fruit-bearing Paul describes in the new life of the believer.

¹⁵Imperative ideas are not limited to the use of the imperative mood. Such instances as the hortatory subjunctive and future indicative can function as commands. See BDF §387.

¹⁶There are, of course, instances when the indicative does function in a conative or tendential sense in which case the action related by the verb is not realized but is only desired or attempted. Also, the indicative in conditional sentences (e.g., Rom 8:13) does not demonstrate the actual reality of the statement in the apodosis. Likewise, there are times when the conventions of the Greek language demand the subjunctive even though the logic of the sentence indicates the certainty of the action described. This is particularly true with regard to the ἵνα clause which must take a subjunctive verb but which might be expressing an action as certain, especially when God is the subject of the main clause to which the ἵνα is related. Regarding this function of the ἵνα clause, see BDAG, s.v. “ἵνα,” 477: “In many cases purpose and result cannot be clearly differentiated, and hence ἵνα is used for the result which follows according to the purpose of the subj. or God. As in Semitic and Greco-Roman thought, purpose and result are identical in declarations of the divine will.” See also Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 473–74.

¹⁷This is the nature of the imperative mood in Greek. Wallace (*Beyond the Basics*, 485) defines the imperative as the “mood of *intention*” in that it “moves in the realm of *volition* (involving the imposition of one’s will upon another) and *possibility*.” The same idea of uncertainty is also related by the subjunctive mood. See idem, 461: “The subjunctive can be said to represent the verbal action (or state) as uncertain but probable.”

2. *Spiritual Fruit-bearing in Romans 5–8*

2.1. Exegesis of Romans 5–8

Paul gives the purpose for writing the epistle to the Romans in his introduction (1:1–17).¹⁸ He intends to give an exposition of the gospel about Jesus Christ that reveals the righteousness of God. The first major section of the book (1:18–4:25) develops this thematic statement on the gospel by showing Jews' and Gentiles' need for God's righteousness that can be received only by faith alone. Chapters 5–8 provide an explanation of the certainty of the justified sinner's glorification.¹⁹

2.1.1. *Romans 5*

Chapter 5 divides into two paragraphs (5:1–11 and 5:12–21). The first describes three benefits that believers enjoy because of their justification: peace with God (v. 1), access into grace (v. 2), and boasting in hope and tribulations (vv. 2–3). The remainder of this paragraph (vv. 4–11) further explains the benefits of peace and boasting.²⁰ Paul expands upon this subject in the second paragraph (5:12–21) by providing a reason (διὰ τοῦτο in v. 12) for those who have been justified and reconciled to have confidence in the promise of their final salvation: Christ's act of obedience in contrast to Adam's act of disobedience ensures eternal life for those "in Christ."²¹ Using a typological connection between Adam and Christ, Paul compares and contrasts the effects of Adam's and Christ's activities upon the human race to make this point. Paul's mention of the law in contrast to grace in 5:20–21 serves to conclude his argument in the chapter while laying the foundation for the discussion of chapters 6 and 7. Paul will return to the benefits of justification in chapter 8 after answering the questions raised by this law-grace contrast at the end of chapter 5.

2.1.2. *Romans 6–7*

In 5:20–21 Paul implies that both law and sin belong to Adam's realm in contrast to God's superabundant grace that belongs to Christ's realm. Mention of these three important concepts (law, sin, and grace) prompts Paul to expound their ramifications in chapters 6 and 7. He does so with a series of four rhetorical questions (6:1, 15; 7:7, 13). The similarities in the form and function of these four

¹⁸This assertion is not denying that there are other purposes for Paul's writing to the Romans. For example, his intent to raise support for his planned mission trip to Spain and his desire to heal Jewish-Gentile divisions in the church are two additional purposes often mentioned. For a survey of the many aspects of this discussion, see Karl P. Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate* (rev. and expanded ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991) and A. Andrew Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

¹⁹The truth of the Christian's sharing in Christ's glory brackets this entire section as Paul develops the theme in 5:1–11 and 8:18–39. See Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 293, and N. T. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Louisville: Abingdon, 2002), 10:509–10.

²⁰Don Garlington, *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance: Aspects of Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1994), 75–76.

²¹Charles B. Cousar, "Continuity and Discontinuity: Reflections on Romans 5–8 (In Conversation with Frank Thielman)," in *Pauline Theology, Vol. III: Romans* (ed. David M. Hay and E. E. Johnson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 203; and Moo, *Romans*, 316.

questions are undeniable,²² and we can easily trace Paul's argument by following the points made in each of the "rounds" of debate they introduce.²³

In Round One (6:1–14), Paul responds to the first question ("Does reliance on grace result in a sinful lifestyle?") by showing how believers have died with Christ so that they are no longer enslaved to sin but instead are given the freedom and ability to demonstrate spiritual fruit. Believers now "walk in newness of life" (6:4), are "free from sin" (6:7, 11), and are "alive unto God" (6:11).

In Round Two (6:15–7:6), he answers the interlocutor's question ("Does the era of grace encourage the practice of sin?") with a description of life under grace and not under law. In the realm of grace Christians are enslaved to righteousness rather than to the power of sin (6:16–23), and, since they are no longer "under law," believers live in the age of the Spirit, who enables them to bear fruit unto God (7:1–6).

In Round Three (7:7–12), Paul responds to the question, "Is the Mosaic law to be equated with sin?" He shows that the law, though bringing the knowledge of sin, is not responsible for deception and sinful conduct bringing death—sin is.

Finally, in Round Four (7:13–25), the relationship between the law and death is broached ("Is the law the direct cause of spiritual death?"). Paul answers this question by showing that sin, the real culprit, exploits the law and brings death. Additionally, the law is unable to help the individual overcome sin.

2.1.3. Romans 8

After concluding his discussion of the ramifications of sin, law, and grace with respect to the believer, Paul moves on in his discussion to the results of justification begun in chapter 5.²⁴ In returning to this topic he introduces a key ingredient touched on only briefly in chapters 5–7 (5:5; 7:6): the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In chapter 8 he organizes his discussion into three major sections (8:1–17; 8:18–30; 8:31–39).

In 8:1–17, Paul shows that life in the Spirit is based upon the cross-work of Christ (v. 3), which results in freedom from the condemnation of the Mosaic law (vv. 1–2) and results in the satisfaction of the demands of the Mosaic law fulfilled by Christ and appropriated by believers through faith (v. 4). Those who have been freed from the law's condemnation walk according to the Spirit, which is diametrically opposed to the walk that is according to the flesh. Paul contrasts these two walks in verses 5–13. The reason that believers will walk according to the Spirit is provided in verses 14–17, where Paul shows that all believers are led by the indwelling Spirit. This leading indicates their sonship (vv. 14–16), and this sonship is certain to include suffering (v. 17).

²²Several similarities can be noted: (1) all four demonstrate a false conclusion to a Pauline statement; (2) each question is introduced with οὐ; (3) Paul responds to the false conclusions with μή γένοιτο in each instance (Abraham J. Malherbe, "MH GENOITO in the Diatribe and Paul," *HTR* 73 [1980]: 232); and (4) the supporting statement that follows μή γένοιτο introduces the theme that Paul develops in the following verses. For detailed discussion of the diatribe method used by Paul in chapters 6 and 7, see Stanley K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (SBLDS 57; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1981), 133–49.

²³D. B. Garlington, "Romans 7:14–25 and the Creation Theology of Paul," *TJ* 11 (1990): 206–7.

²⁴Many have written about the connections between chapters 5 and 8, making note of the chiasmic structure of Paul's argument. Some of these include N. A. Dahl, *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 82–91; James D. G. Dunn, "Paul's Epistle to the Romans: An Analysis of Structure and Argument," in *ANRW, Part II: Principat* (ed. Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini; New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1987), 25.4:2,865–66; Charles D. Myers Jr., "Chiastic Inversion in the Argument of Romans 3–8," *NovT* 35 (1993): 42; idem, "The Place of Romans 5:1–11 within the Argument of the Epistle" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1985), 122–26; and Moo, *Romans*, 469.

Paul takes up the subject of suffering and glory in 8:18–30. It is the reality of the present age that both creation and believers groan and eagerly anticipate the reception of future glory. The intercessory ministry of the Spirit (vv. 26–27) and the certainty of the fulfillment of God’s plan (vv. 28–30) substantiate this hope. The final paragraph (vv. 31–39) summarizes the magnitude of the blessings of justification. Here Paul explains that the elect are guaranteed future vindication in the final judgment (vv. 31–34) and present victory over evil based on the love of God (vv. 35–39).

2.2. Delineation of Righteous Responses in Romans 5–8

This condensed overview of Rom 5–8 provides the foundation for a delineation of the evidence of spiritual fruit-bearing found in these chapters.

1. Boasting in Hope, Tribulations, and God (5:2, 3, 11). One of the benefits that justification brings to the believer in 5:1–11 is boasting in hope and tribulations (vv. 2–3); this is clearly a righteous response.²⁵

2. Demonstrating Love for God (5:5). Verse 5 describes another: believers enjoy the outpouring of the love of God in their hearts. This phrase (ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ) appears to be a “plenary genitive,”²⁶ which carries both a subjective and objective thrust. Hence, believers receive the blessing of loving God as the result of God’s outpouring grace.²⁷

3. Reigning in Life (5:17b). A third response is located in the second paragraph of chapter 5 where Paul states that those who have been justified receive grace (v. 15b) and the promise of reigning in life (v. 17b). While this first blessing is clearly a possession, the second is likely a present action as well as a future reality (Paul uses a “logical future” here,²⁸ and the idea of reigning in life demands the exercise of ethical actions).²⁹ So believers presently enjoy reigning in life as a result of their connection to Christ

²⁵Paul mentions this boasting (καυχώμεθα) in hope and tribulations in v. 2 and v. 3. That he sees it as a significant blessing is clear as he concludes this paragraph with a reference to peace (reconciliation) and boasting in v. 11.

²⁶This category comes from Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 118–21. Wallace states that the NT writers were sometimes “intentionally ambiguous.” He also says, “The instances of double entendre, *sensus plenior* (conservatively defined), puns and word-plays in the NT all contribute to this view.” See Maximilian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek: Illustrated by Examples* (trans. Joseph Smith; Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici; Rome: Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1963), 114:13.

²⁷Arguments supporting a subjective genitive meaning are quite strong, the best being that God’s love for believers is spelled out in the next three verses (Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:262). However, the objective genitive also has several points in its favor: (1) the believers’ love for Christ provides a good explanation for the security of their hope (the causal ὅτι introducing the second phrase of v. 5 gives the reason that believers can be certain of blessing at the final judgment: their love for Christ is evident in their Spirit-motivated actions); (2) the perfect passive ἐκκέχυται indicates that ἡ ἀγάπη is the object that God (the assumed subject) has poured out through his agent, the Holy Spirit (Cranfield, 1:262, makes this point even though he does not support the objective genitive idea), and gifts received from the Spirit are generally accompanied with external acts in the NT; and (3) the fact that love for God has been poured out *within* (ἐν) our hearts (as opposed to “upon” or “toward” us) suggests that this love is the source of acts of love generated from within the life of the believer by the Spirit (Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 121).

²⁸Moo (*Romans*, 340) refers to the use of the future tense here as a “logical” future in which the reigning is future “from the standpoint of the reign of death in Adam”; also see John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 198.

²⁹Paul uses ζῶν twelve times in chapters 5–8 with nine of these uses related to eschatological life (5:17, 18, 21; 6:4, 22, 23; 7:10; 8:6, 10), i.e., life that is already possessed but that waits for the full and final benefits yet to come. Thomas R. Schreiner (*Romans* [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 286) states, “The *eschaton* has entered the present for Paul, and hence believers ‘walk in newness of life’ now (6:4).” He suggests two aspects about this “life.” First, it fulfills the mandate given to Adam in Genesis (anticipated in the renewal of creation in Rom 8:18–25). Second, it points back to the eschatological life belonging to all God’s people in 1:17.

Another aspect of this “life” can be discerned from OT prophecies about life in the “age to come.” One of the blessings of this future age is obedient lives that flow from the new heart that God will give to his people (Ezek 36:26–27), particularly when they receive the blessing of his Spirit (37:14, 23–28). Clearly the idea of moral transformation is a part of the expectation of this eschatological life.

4. Walking in Newness of Life (6:4). In chapter 6 Paul's response to the foolish assertion that believers can sin with impunity includes a reference to their death with Christ (signified by the burial picture of baptism in the first phrase of v. 4). "Death with Christ" comes as a result of the believers' death to sin (v. 2) and is one of the metaphors Paul uses to describe the transfer they experience when they leave the old aeon of death "in Adam" and enter the new aeon of life "in Christ."³⁰ The ἵνα clause of 6:4b indicates that this death with Christ results in a new practice for believers: they now walk in "newness of life."³¹

5–6. Being Ashamed of Past Sin (6:21) and Producing Fruit Leading to Sanctification (6:22). In 6:15–23, Paul twice provides a description of life prior to salvation in contrast to the new life that believers enjoy after salvation (vv. 17–18 and vv. 20–22). In the second of these contrasts two righteous responses are revealed. In verse 21 Paul describes the Romans' past existence in the old realm, and he states that they had formerly (τότε) produced worthless fruit. Now that they have become believers, these old practices presently (νῦν) bring shame to them. Thus, one finds an expression of fruit-bearing: believers are ashamed when they think about the sinful practices that characterized their past lives.³² The other response comes as Paul gives the reason that Christians can obey the imperative of verse 19. In contrast to the days when they were enslaved to sin (v. 20), these believers are now free from sin and enslaved to God so that they produce fruit leading to sanctification (v. 22).³³ Paul contrasts the inevitability of their sinful actions prior to salvation with the inevitability of their righteous actions after salvation.

7–8. Bearing Fruit to God (7:4) and Serving in Newness of the Spirit (7:6). As Paul continues his answer to the rhetorical question of 6:15, he employs another purpose-result ἵνα clause in 7:4 with the same force he used in 6:4 to show the purpose-result of the believers' dying to the law and being with Christ: they are to bear fruit to God. Dying to the law is accomplished through the work of Christ, who also ensures that his purposes are manifested by the righteous fruit-bearing of those who belong to him. That this was Paul's intention is demonstrated in verses 5–6, where Paul describes the meaning of verse 4 in greater detail. In verse 5 he states that prior to the believers' salvation, their sinful practices produced fruit unto death. Verse 6 shows that once they became Christians, the result was that they served in newness of the Spirit (another righteous response).³⁴ Consequently, the result of being joined with Christ (εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἐτέρῳ) is that Christians produce fruit unto God.

³⁰A representative sampling of those who have contributed to this understanding includes the following: Daniel P. Bailey, "The Crucifixion of 'Our Old Man': Romans 6:6 in the Indicative and Imperative of Salvation" (M.A. thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1990), 5–12; Florence A. Morgan, "Romans 6.5a: United to a Death Like Christ's," *ETL* 59 (1983): 270; John Murray, "Definitive Sanctification," *CTJ* 2 (1967): 7; and Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (BZNW 32; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1966), 14–20, 39–43.

³¹The ἵνα is most likely functioning as a purpose-result ἵνα (see n. 16) since God is the one who is causing the believer to die with Christ with the purpose-result that the believer walks in newness of life.

³²As opposed to most of the expressions related to sanctification in Rom 5–8, the response of shame with regard to past actions is not an action but an attitude. As such, it is a moral response that could occur only in the lives of those who are being made holy by the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

³³Peterson, *Possessed by God*, 103, 139–42, argues that ἁγιασμόν in v. 22 is "sanctification as a dedicated state." His view supports the thesis of his book that "sanctification is primarily another way of describing what it means to be converted or brought to God in Christ." While his view provides a necessary corrective to the mistaken notion of NT sanctification as *primarily* a process of moral renewal and change, it appears that the connection of ἁγιασμόν with καρπὸν indicates that the sanctification spoken of here is experiential or ethical in nature. See 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thess 4:3, 4, 7; 5:23; 1 Tim 2:15; and 2 Tim 2:21 for other examples of this ethical aspect of sanctification in Paul's letters.

³⁴The Greek phrase here clearly indicates result: ὥστε δουλεύειν ὑμᾶς ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος.

9–10. Walking according to the Spirit (8:4) and Minding the Things of the Spirit (8:5). The next righteous response is located in 8:4. Paul begins chapter 8 by declaring that Christians are no longer under condemnation because of their relationship with Christ (8:1). He supports this statement with a reason: the Spirit has set believers free from the slavery of sin (v. 2).³⁵ Verse 3 gives the basis (γάρ) for this Spirit-induced freedom: it is the sin-condemning work of Christ (on the cross). The ἵνα clause of verse 4 provides the purpose for Christ’s work: the fulfillment of the righteous requirement of the law in believers. As argued previously in reference to Rom 6:4 and 7:4, the purpose behind God’s actions will be manifested in results. Thus, if God through Christ has condemned sin in order to see the righteous requirement of the law fulfilled in believers, this will certainly take place.

In 8:4b–11 Paul provides three descriptions of believers who experience the fulfillment of the righteous requirement of the Mosaic law. The first two of these are examples of fruit-bearing. First, in opposition to those who walk according to the flesh, believers walk according to the Spirit.³⁶ Second, these Spirit-directed people are defined in verse 5 as those who mind the things of the Spirit in contrast to those who mind the things of the flesh.³⁷ Third, Christians are indwelt by the Spirit (vv. 9–11).

11. Being Led by the Spirit (8:14). Paul follows his imperatival comments of verses 12 and 13 with a substantiating reason (γάρ) showing why believers can obey these directives: they are sons of God (v. 14b). Verse 14a describes the primary characteristic of those who are sons in that they are led by the Spirit. The present passive ἄγονται indicates that the Spirit actively leads the believer,³⁸ and verse 13b shows that the activity which the Spirit leads the believer to accomplish is the defeat of the sinful deeds of the body.³⁹ The implied response of following the Spirit’s leading constitutes yet another example of righteous responses in this chapter.

³⁵This statement on freedom is a common theme repeated several times in chapters 6 and 7 (6:6, 7, 14, 18, 22; 7:6).

³⁶The pronoun ἡμῖν in v. 4a is modified by the participial phrase τοῖς περιπατοῦσιν κατὰ πνεῦμα. For Paul the concept of walking has a moral connotation. On this point see T. J. Deidun, *New Covenant Morality in Paul* (AnBib 89; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 75–76; and Joseph O. Holloway, III, *ΠΕΡΙΠΑΤΕΩ as a Thematic Marker for Pauline Ethics* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 128–29. A note regarding the use of σὰρξ and πνεῦμα is also important at this point. Moo (*Romans*, 485) provides a helpful summary of the meaning of these terms: “‘To walk according to the flesh,’ then, is to have one’s life determined and directed by the values of ‘this world,’ of the world in rebellion against God. It is a lifestyle that is purely ‘human’ in its orientation. To ‘walk according to the Spirit,’ on the other hand, is to live under the control, and according to the values, of the ‘new age,’ created and dominated by God’s Spirit as his eschatological gift.” Also see Trevor J. Burke, “Adoption and the Spirit in Romans 8,” *EvQ* 70 (1998): 313; idem, *Adopted into God’s Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 22; Downers Grove: IVP, 2006), 159–72; and R. David Kaylor, *Paul’s Covenant Community: Jew and Gentile in Romans* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988), 143–48.

³⁷The verb φρονέω in Paul’s usage carries more than a simple reference to intellectual assent. The ideas of intending, purposing, and willing are also included (Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*, 76; and Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 219). This is substantiated in the text by Paul’s use of φρόνημα in v. 6. Deidun (76) describes the interplay between the work of God in creating a new will and the behavior of the Christian who exercises that will: “What the Spirit does is to endow man with a new will, of which it itself is the *constant* source and by which, therefore, the Law’s demand for an obedience pleasing to God . . . is fulfilled. The gospel is not a means given to man by which *he* can fulfil the Law’s demand, but the means *God* himself uses in order to . . . fulfil this demand in man. . . . But this does not mean that the activity whereby God fulfils the Law’s demand in the Christian does not *then* become the Christian’s *own* activity; for the new will with which he is endowed, and which constantly flows from the activity of the Spirit, is now truly his own.”

³⁸While the passive voice may suggest a lack of activity on the part of the subject (the believer), quite the opposite is implied here. For someone to be led by another, the righteous response of following must take place. The emphasis in v. 14 is upon the Spirit’s inevitable work of leading the Christian (only those who are led are “sons of God” and the context indicates that “sons of God” are children, heirs, and joint-heirs—vv. 16–17). The implication of this leading, however, involves the believer’s response of actively following.

³⁹Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*, 78; Brendan Byrne (“Sons of God”—“Seed of Abraham” [AnBib 83; Rome: Biblical

12. Praying for God's Help (8:15). A further ethical response resulting from the privilege of receiving the "Spirit of sonship" (v. 15) is that believers cry, "Abba Father." Since this cry was used by Jesus (Mark 14:36) when he prayed on the evening before his crucifixion, there appears to be a connection between it and intimate association with God.⁴⁰ This is a prayer (a righteous response) that could come only from one who personally knows God.⁴¹

13. Groaning for Bodily Redemption (8:23). In the next paragraph (8:18–30) Paul takes up the twin themes of suffering and glory. While discussing these ideas, he reveals that one of the actions characteristic of being a Christian is that groaning takes place during the period between initial justification and final glorification (v. 23). This groaning is best described as the "eager expectation of bodily 'redemption' (ἀπολύτρωσις [v. 23]) from the δουλεία τῆς φθορᾶς (v. 21) at the resurrection."⁴²

14. Expressing Love for God (8:28). Paul delineates two more examples of fruit-bearing in his description of God's eternal plan (vv. 28–30). In verse 28 God works all things together for good to "those who love God" and to "those who are called according to his purpose." The two parallel participial clauses indicate those for whom God is working. While the second clause speaks of the reality of being called by God, the first reveals an action believers do: they love God.

15. Being Conformed to the Image of Christ (8:29). The final response is mentioned in verse 29 where Paul states that believers are predestined to be conformed to Christ's image. The context of this statement appears to support both a present and an ultimately future experience of this conforming work in the lives of believers (similar to Paul's statement of the present transforming work of the Spirit in 2 Cor 3:18).⁴³

3. The Nature of Spiritual Fruit-Bearing in Romans 5–8

Now that the criteria have been used to identify fifteen righteous responses in these chapters, I must investigate each of the responses to determine whether Paul sees them as inevitable and necessary or as possible and potential.

Institute Press, 1979], 98) indicates that "those who are led" not only refers back to "those putting the deeds of the body to death," but it "catches up beyond this all the various descriptions of life in the Spirit of the preceding section (vv. 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11). It sums up the way in which the Christian allows his whole pattern of life to be determined by the Spirit (cf. Gal 5:18), who creates in him a new righteousness fulfilling the Law's demand"

⁴⁰James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1988), 453–54.

⁴¹Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:398–99.

⁴²James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus* (WUNT 2.48; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992), 265.

⁴³Several reasons support the present nature of the conforming ministry of God: (1) since the purpose of this conforming work is that Christ might become the firstborn among many brothers (8:29b), it would appear that the timing of the conforming ought to precede or at least coincide with that of Christ's designation as the firstborn "among many brothers," and this relationship appears to have already begun at salvation when believers become heirs and joint-heirs with Christ (8:17); (2) conformity to the image of Christ would seem to include the present suffering and obedience demanded of believers as they seek to follow in Christ's steps (Wright, "Romans," 602, and Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:432); (3) possession of the Spirit by Christians shows that they are being led as "sons of God" (8:9–14), which suggests that they are likewise being conformed to Christ's image (Michael Neary, "Creation and Pauline Soteriology," *ITQ* 50 [1983–84]: 22); and (4) Paul speaks of conformity to the image of Christ using the μορφή word group in several places where this conformity is the present experience of the believer (2 Cor 3:18; Gal 4:19; Rom 12:2; but see Phil 3:21 which refers to future conformity). Several disagree that there is any sort of present nature to this conforming ministry of God; they argue for an exclusively future nature of this ministry. See Byrne, "Sons of God" — "Seed of Abraham," 119; Moo, *Romans*, 535; and Judith M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away* (WUNT 37; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1990), 11.

3.1. Boasting in Hope, Tribulations, and God (5:2, 3, 11)

In 5:1–3, Paul gives at least two results of justification by using the verbs ἔχομεν and καυχώμεθα. If having peace with God is seen as a certain and inevitable blessing of all believers (a point substantiated by the certainty of reconciliation for all believers in v. 10), the grammatically parallel boasting must likewise be understood as a certain and inevitable blessing. Likewise in verse 11 the independent participle καυχώμενοι⁴⁴ is parallel to the future salvation promised in verse 10.⁴⁵ That this blessing is clearly an ethical action is self-evident, for placing confidence in God is an activity.⁴⁶ Finally, there is no indication in the context that Paul is limiting the activity of boasting to a select group of Christians. Rather, this activity is one in which he participated⁴⁷ and in which he expects all who have been reconciled to participate.

3.2. Demonstrating Love for God (5:5)

Several arguments show that ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ is a certain response made by believers. First, Paul's use of the inclusive "we" throughout this paragraph (5:1–11) is evident in verse 5 with the use of ἡμῶν, which indicates the location of this love for God, namely, in the hearts of Paul and his readers. Second, the agent who brings the ability to have this love for God is the Holy Spirit, and Paul is quite adamant in his assertion that *all* believers enjoy the indwelling ministry of the Spirit (8:9). To argue for the potentiality of believers' love for God would suggest that the Spirit produces this fruit in only some of the lives he indwells. Third, Paul uses the perfect indicative ἐκκέχυται evidencing his certainty of this occurrence as well as the continuance of the results of this action in believers.⁴⁸

3.3. Reigning in Life (5:17b)

The benefit of reigning in life is reserved for those who are in Christ as opposed to those who are in Adam. Paul sets up a contrast in verse 17 by showing that if death reigns as a result of one man's (Adam) sin, then, much more, those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life as a result of one man's (Christ) obedience. Clearly there are only two groups discussed in this verse: those who are in Christ (believers) and those who are in Adam (unbelievers). Paul describes believers in Christ as those who have received "the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness."⁴⁹ Further, these recipients are the ones who "reign in life." Therefore, on the one hand, those who accept Christ by faith are in Christ; grace and righteousness are their possessions while they reign in life. On

⁴⁴C. F. D. Moule (*An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* [2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959], 179) and Wallace (*Beyond the Basics*, 653) support the independent use of the participle here.

⁴⁵Moo, *Romans*, 313.

⁴⁶K. Barrett ("Boasting [καυχᾶσθαι, κτλ.] in the Pauline Epistles," in *L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, Style et Conception du Ministère* [ed. A. Vanhoye; BETL 73; Leuven: University Press, 1986], 368) writes, "This . . . is the kind of theological theme that cannot be viewed as an abstraction; it cannot fail to issue in psychological and thus in ethical expression."

⁴⁷Paul uses the inclusive "we" throughout 5:1–11. See Wallace (*Beyond the Basics*, 397–98) for discussion of the inclusive "we."

⁴⁸This is the basic meaning of the perfect tense in which action occurs in the past with results that continue into the present. See BDF §340. A more nuanced description of the perfect can be found in Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek New Testament with Reference to Tense and Mood* (Studies in Biblical Greek 1; New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 245–59.

⁴⁹This description prevents the interpreter from arguing for universalism in the Adam-Christ comparison. Clearly, the effects of Adam's sin are universal, but the effects of Christ's obedience salvifically benefit only those who receive the grace and the gift of righteousness *by faith*. This has been Paul's argument from 1:16 to 4:25 (note especially 3:21–28). It is also clearly stated in Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8–9; 2 Thess 1:8–9. See Moo (*Romans*, 340–44) for further insights regarding this issue.

the other hand, those in Adam are excluded from this benefit. Paul's theological argument in verse 17 demonstrates the necessary result of reigning in life for those in Christ. His discussion leaves no room for a hypothetical group of believers who fail to reign.⁵⁰

3.4. Walking in Newness of Life (6:4)

In 6:4 Paul describes the believers' death with Christ by referring to their burial with Christ in baptism. He then uses a ἵνα clause to show the purpose-result of the believers' death with Christ: walking in newness of life.⁵¹ Since God is the unnamed agent of the passive συνετάφημεν, his purpose for this action of burial is that believers live obediently, and since God is the actor, the divine purpose also becomes the result. Other indications of the inevitability of this response include the following: (1) the comparison of the believers' walk with that of Christ's resurrection proves that believers are presently walking in newness of life just as surely as Christ has been raised from the dead;⁵² (2) the imperatives of 6:11 and 13 are based on the indicative that "living" in newness of life is a present reality for believers (6:3–10);⁵³ and (3) the use of first person plural verbs and pronouns indicates the inclusion of all believers in this description.

3.5. Being Ashamed of Past Sin (6:21)

When Paul contrasts the former lifestyles of the Roman believers (6:20–21) with their present ones (6:22), he speaks of what they were (imperfect ἦτε twice in v. 20) formerly (τότε, v. 21) and what they now (νῦν, v. 21, and νυνί, v. 22) have presently (present tense ἔχετε). One of their present possessions is an attitude of shame (present tense ἐπαισχύνεσθε) regarding their sinful actions practiced prior to salvation. Along with this attitudinal response, believers presently enjoy freedom from sin's power, enslavement to God, fruit leading to sanctification, and eternal life (all are listed in v. 22). The attitude along with the blessings are all presented by Paul as necessary conditions or responses of believers. It would be quite impossible to suggest that some are conditional while the others are certain, for there is nothing to suggest a conditional element in the statement. Paul simply states facts that are true of believers (vv. 21–22) as opposed to facts true of unbelievers (these facts include being enslaved to sin and being free from righteousness in v. 20).⁵⁴ In the argument of 6:1–7:6, Paul attaches the blessing of being freed from sin and the law to the believers' death with Christ (6:6, 7; 7:6).⁵⁵ It follows, then, that all of these elements characteristic of believers in 6:21–22 should be understood as results of their death with Christ, a death that is true of all who have been buried with him in baptism (6:4). So the shame

⁵⁰Joseph C. Dillow (*The Reign of the Servant Kings: A Study of Eternal Security and the Final Significance of Man* [Haysville, NC: Schoettle, 1992], 362–63) argues for such a group. He suggests that those who reign in life are Christians who have come to experience "abundant life" as opposed to (actual) Christians who experience "emptiness, depression, and spiritual impoverishment" (357) because they have failed to take advantage of their new life in the Spirit.

⁵¹See n. 16 for references to this function of ἵνα.

⁵²Holloway, ΠΕΡΙΠΑΤΕΩ as a Thematic Marker, 120.

⁵³In v. 11 Paul commands his readers to think about (consider) the fact that they are already dead to sin (something he had stated to be true in v. 2) and alive to God (ζῶντας τῷ θεῷ). Similarly, in v. 13 he commands them to present themselves to God as those who are (already) "alive from the dead" (ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας).

⁵⁴As is often his pattern in chapter 6, Paul is reiterating a point he has just made in 6:17–18 where he states that before salvation they (Roman Christians) were servants of sin (v. 17a) and now after salvation they are free from sin and enslaved to righteousness (v. 18).

⁵⁵Again, death with Christ is a Pauline expression used only of believers in 6:1–7:6.

that believers feel with regard to their former lives in Adam is a reality for all believers and represents an inevitable, ethical response to the ministry of the Spirit in their lives.

3.6. Producing Fruit Leading to Sanctification (6:22)

The previous paragraph cited four blessings of the new life mentioned by Paul in 6:22: freedom from sin, enslavement to God, having fruit unto sanctification, and eternal life. These are presented as certain consequences true of all believers. Thus, those who have died with Christ are producing fruit leading to sanctification.

3.7. Bearing Fruit to God (7:4)

Paul concludes (ὥστε) his marriage analogy in 7:4 by stating that believers have died to the law through the body of Christ for the purpose of being united with him (εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἑτέρῳ).⁵⁶ Therefore, everyone who has died to the law and been united with him is included in this description. Paul is quite clear (he uses the purpose-result ἵνα as he did in 6:4) that the activity of bearing fruit to God is necessarily true for all believers in that he includes his fellow Christians (ἀδελφοί) and himself as those who bear fruit.⁵⁷

3.8. Serving in Newness of the Spirit (7:6)

Two factors support understanding the phrase “serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter” as a righteous response necessarily true of all believers. First, Paul uses a result infinitive (ὥστε δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς)⁵⁸ to explain what is true for all believers who have been released from the law.⁵⁹ Second, Paul makes a clear connection to the New Covenant and the blessings resulting from it in the lives of believers.⁶⁰ Ezekiel 36:26–27 indicates that the ministry of the Spirit in the New Covenant will result in the possession of a new heart and in the practice of obedience to God’s law. Consequently, Christians will surely respond in obedience because of the imprint made by the Spirit on the heart of all who are indwelt by him.

⁵⁶Paul treats “death to the law” in 7:4 in the same way as “death to sin” in 6:2–4 by suggesting that it occurs in the believer’s life as a result of death with Christ. When Paul states that death to the law occurs “through the body of Christ,” he is speaking of Christ’s death, and he clearly connects the believer to Christ’s death in 6:2–6. Thus, when the believer is said to die to the law through the body of Christ, he dies to the law by virtue of his death with Christ in his salvation.

⁵⁷Throughout this entire section of his argument (6:15–7:4a) Paul has been using second person plural verbs and pronouns, yet he changes to first person plural verbs and pronouns beginning with καρποφορήσωμεν at the end of 7:4 and continues this trend through verse 6. Though this does not prove that he does not consider the truth of 6:15–7:4a to apply to himself while he considers 7:4b–6 to apply to himself (particularly because he used first person verbs and pronouns in 6:1–14, which discusses many of the same ideas as 6:15–7:4a), it at least demonstrates that he includes himself in the fruit-bearing response. See Pratt, “The Relationship between Justification and Sanctification in Romans 5–8,” 218.

⁵⁸All grammars agree that the formula ὥστε + infinitive indicates result.

⁵⁹The contrast Paul makes between the former days prior to salvation spoken of in 7:5 and the present (νυνί) of the new life in Christ in 7:6 is reminiscent of the same point he makes in 6:17–18 and 6:20–22.

⁶⁰Many have written on the connection of 7:6 to 2 Cor 3:6 and the reference of these passages to the New Covenant promises of the OT. See A. Feuillet, “Les attaches bibliques des antithèses Pauliniennes dans la Première Partie de L’Épître aux Romains (1–8),” in *Mélanges Bibliques en Hommage au R. P. Béda Rigaux* (ed. Albert Descamps and André de Halleux; Gembloux: Duculot, 1970), 342–45; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993), 323, 460; Bernardin Schneider, “The Meaning of St. Paul’s Antithesis ‘The Letter and the Spirit,’” *CBQ* 15 (1953): 201–7; and Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994), 197–98.

3.9. Walking according to the Spirit (8:4)

The first indication of the necessity of this righteous response in 8:4 is revealed by the use of the purpose-result ἵνα; God's power in contrast to the weakness of the law produces obedience to the law in all Christians. Second, when Paul states that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us (ἡμῖν) in 8:4a, he identifies both himself and his readers as the recipients of this blessing. Third, Paul further defines ἡμῖν in 8:4b with the substantival participle τοῖς περιπατοῦσιν with both a negative and positive description: believers do *not* walk according to the flesh but *do* walk according to the Spirit.⁶¹ This contrast between “flesh”-people and “Spirit”-people continues through verse 11. On the one hand, fleshly people set their minds on the things of the flesh (v. 5); their thinking results in death (v. 6); their thinking is in antagonism to God because it is not capable of submitting to him (v. 7); and they are not able to please God (v. 8). On the other hand, spiritual people set their minds on the things of the Spirit (v. 5); their thinking results in life and peace (v. 6); the Spirit indwells them (vv. 9b, 10a, 11a, 11c); the Spirit conveys resurrection life to them (v. 10c); and their mortal bodies will be made alive in the future (v. 11). Judging from the absolute nature of the contrasts made between those in the flesh and those in the Spirit in verses 5–11, believers enjoy the ministry of the Spirit including all of the blessings described in these verses. Hence, those who walk according to the Spirit are the same as those who are indwelt by the Spirit (to use but one of the many characteristics given in the passage).

3.10. Minding the Things of the Spirit (8:5)

The context identifies the individuals mentioned in 8:5. Those who are in the Spirit, a participial phrase that differs from that of the preceding verse only in the verbal used (ὄντες rather than περιπατοῦσιν), mind the things of the Spirit. As already shown in the previous paragraph, the contrast between the Spirit and flesh in 8:4–11 indicates a solid distinction between these two groups of people. Clearly, all who mind the things of the Spirit are believers, who inevitably obey the Spirit, in contrast to unbelievers, who inevitably obey the promptings of the flesh.

3.11. Being Led by the Spirit (8:14)

The interpretation of οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ in 8:14b has a direct effect upon whether ὅσοι πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται is conditional or certain since this latter phrase is a relative clause modifying οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ.⁶² There are two reasons for taking οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ as a reference to all believers showing that being led by the Spirit is an inevitable response. First, Paul gives the statement of verse 14 as the support (γάρ) for

⁶¹There are three reasons for understanding this participle in its typical descriptive sense rather than in a conditional sense (as does Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 488). First, the aorist passive πληρωθῆναι indicates that God through Christ has fulfilled the requirement of the law in Christians; he is the main actor. Second, the purpose-result ἵνα indicates that God's purpose of seeing the law fulfilled in Christians will certainly occur. Third, the typical usage of articular participles is to modify the noun to which they are related (Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 104).

⁶²There are some who would argue that υἱοὶ θεοῦ can be defined as referring to one of two classes of believers (in this case, a more privileged, spiritual group). They suggest that this better class is not attained until one “has become loyally submissive to the operation of the Spirit” (F. Godet, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [trans. A. Cusin; translation revised by Talbot W. Chambers; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956], 309). Ken Yates (“‘Sons of God’ and the Road to Grace,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 19 [2006]: 31–32) states a similar view: “The child of God then has the option to be led by the Spirit and present his body for obedience. He can then claim the title of mature ‘son.’” Dillow (*The Reign of the Servant Kings*, 368–71) also follows this line of reasoning. This methodological scheme of interpreting Paul's indicative statements through the lens of the imperative (e.g., Dillow, 369, states, “Those Christians who are ‘putting to death the deeds of the body’ [in obedience to the command of v. 13] are sons. . .”) demands attention and refutation, but that will have to be the focus of another essay.

the imperative of verse 13; if being a son is only a possibility, then certain hope in the Spirit's ability to aid in one's obedience to the command is unavailable for any believer who reads these verses. Second, the possession of the Spirit is given as a proof of sonship in verse 15 (γὰρ . . . ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας), and all genuine believers have received the Spirit according to verse 9. So since "sons of God" describes all believers, who have received the Spirit, being led by the Spirit is an inescapable occurrence for all believers.

3.12. Praying for God's Help (8:15)

In 8:15, Paul relates that those who have received the Spirit of adoption call out to God for help. As stated in the preceding paragraph, all believers have received the Spirit of adoption (especially since Paul states [in v. 9] that all believers receive the Spirit). Thus, just as it is certain that all believers receive the Spirit (vv. 9 and 15), it is also certain that all believers cry out to God for help.⁶³

3.13. Groaning for Bodily Redemption (8:23)

Paul leaves little doubt that his statement about believers in 8:23 should be taken in no other way than as a description necessarily true of all believers. Not only does he include himself in this account (ἡμεῖς), but he also gives indications in this verse that he is speaking of all believers. He states that all who have the firstfruits of the Spirit (τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος) groan to the Lord for the redemption of their bodies. Earlier in this chapter Paul had shown that all believers enjoy the indwelling ministry of the Spirit (8:9); so all Christians who have the Spirit will also groan. This groan of anticipation flows from the believer's relationship with Christ. Even though all believers enjoy present adoption (8:15), they long for future adoption (8:23). This desire, which prompts a specific act (groaning), is an unavoidable response prompted by the Spirit.

3.14. Expressing Love for God (8:28)

The parallel participial clauses of 8:28 serve as the indirect objects of συνεργεῖ, identifying those for whom God works all things. Both clauses speak of the same group of people: believers ("those called according to his purpose"). Those who have been called (8:30 indicates that all believers are included in "those called") are also people who love God. Loving God is an inevitable and certain reality for these who have been called. To suggest that some Christians might not love God would require the interpreter to admit that some Christians might not have been called.

3.15. Being Conformed to the Image of Christ (8:29)

In the chain of five aorist verbs detailing the outworking of God's purpose in the lives of believers (8:29–30), Paul provides two explanatory phrases with reference to the second of these verbs (προωρίσεν). The first of these phrases is of particular importance here ("conformed to the image of His Son"). That Paul considers conformity to be an absolute certainty is indicated by two factors. First, the fivefold linkage of verbs is presented as part of God's plan, which He is carrying forward to fruition and which culminates in the glorification of all believers.⁶⁴ Second, the lexical meaning of προωρίσεν retains a

⁶³C. E. B. Cranfield ("Paul's Teaching on Sanctification," *RefR* 48 [1995]: 222) provides a helpful comment in this regard: "If we are Christians at all, we do this, though it may be only very feebly, very falteringly, and with very limited comprehension of what we are doing. The Holy Spirit's continuing work of sanctification makes us do it more and more understandingly, sincerely, confidently, humbly."

⁶⁴Dunn (*Romans 1–8*, 482) writes, "Here Paul obviously means to embrace the whole sweep of time and history, from beginning to end, within the scope of these two verses (προ- . . . ἐδόξασεν)."

strong determinative flavor.⁶⁵ Hence, with God pictured as the determining will behind the believers' conformity to Christ, it is clear that this transforming work within the lives of believers will certainly occur.

3.16. Summary

The investigation of the fifteen responses indicates contextual evidence that supports each of the fifteen as a necessary outcome of justification. While this data clearly confirms the thesis of this essay, some may not agree with either the inclusion or assessment of *every* one of these responses. Three responses might be questioned on the basis of grammatical decisions,⁶⁶ and six other responses might be rendered suspect for theological reasons.⁶⁷ Six of these responses, however, remain particularly unambiguous in their support of the thesis that fruit-bearing inevitably flows from justification: boasting in hope, tribulations and God (5:2, 3, 11); being ashamed of past sin (6:21), bearing fruit to God (7:4), serving in newness of the Spirit (7:6), groaning for bodily redemption (8:23), and expressing love for God (8:28).⁶⁸

4. Conclusion

Paul's argument in Romans 5–8 confirms the truth that fruit-bearing necessarily and inevitably flows from justification. By suggesting specific criteria and then using those criteria to sift through Paul's statements in Romans 5–8, fifteen righteous responses were identified. After investigating each of these responses, Scripture shows that spiritual fruit-bearing by believers is inescapable and certain. Nothing in these four chapters suggests that a second work of grace or a crisis experience of surrender or dedication is required to begin the process of fruit-bearing in the life of the believer. In fact, quite the opposite appears to be the case: those whom God justifies, he also transforms.

Finally, permit me to offer some final points of clarification and reflection:

1. While Paul clearly speaks in regard to the necessity of fruit-bearing in the lives of the justified, he never suggests that this growth in righteous living is completed or perfected in the earthly existence of the believer. Indeed, he gives numerous imperatives to believers and continually calls them to obedience and growth.

⁶⁵Moo, *Romans*, 534, explains that the verb προώρισεν adds the preposition πρό to the verb ὀρίζω, which typically means “to appoint” or “to determine.” The idea of the verb is “to determine beforehand,” which is substantiated by its usage in various NT contexts such as its relation to the crucifixion (Acts 4:28), to the “wisdom” now manifested in Christ (1 Cor 2:7), and to believers (Eph 1:5, 11). The meaning of πρό relates to the idea of “before the foundation of the world” as shown in Eph 1:4–5.

⁶⁶(1) The suggestion that the “love of God” (ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ) is a plenary genitive in 5:5 could be understood as merely subjective and therefore not demonstrative of a righteous response. (2) Viewing the reign in life (5:17b) as both a present and future occurrence could be interpreted as referring only to the future experience of the believer. (3) Paul could very well be speaking of conformity to the image of Christ in 8:29 as a purely future event.

⁶⁷Wesleyan, Chaferian, and Keswick interpreters who disagree with my conclusions would argue that the contrasts between “the enslaved” and “the freed” in chapter 6 and the differences between “the spiritual” and “the fleshly” in chapter 8 are not intended to distinguish between believers and unbelievers but are rather given to describe two groups of believers: the obedient and the disobedient. This group of disputed responses includes the following: walking in newness of life (6:4), producing fruit leading to sanctification (6:22), walking according to the Spirit (8:4), minding the things of the Spirit (8:5), being led by the Spirit (8:14), and praying for God's help (8:15).

⁶⁸These are unambiguous particularly because no significant theological or grammatical arguments can be raised against them.

2. Romans 5–8 is not the only section of Pauline literature advocating that fruit-bearing is a necessary result of justification. I suggest that 1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 3:18; 5:16; 9:8; Eph 2:10; Phil 1:6; 2:13; and Tit 2:14 all provide further proof that Paul is consistent in his support of this truth.

3. In the larger enterprise of New Testament theology, the findings of this essay help to substantiate the doctrine of perseverance, that is, “[believers] continue in faith, love, and holiness because God freely save[s] them once for all.”⁶⁹ The many statements of Jesus regarding the necessity of fruit-bearing (e.g., Matt 13:23; Luke 6:43–45) agree with Paul. In the same way Peter (1 Pet 1:6, 8; 2 Pet 1:5–11), John (1 John 2:3–6; 3:11–18), and James (Jas 2:17, 20, 24) do as well.

4. A significant ramification of this essay is that Paul denies any teaching that would advocate two classes of Christians (e.g., the “spiritual” vs. the “fleshly”). While we all observe various levels or degrees of maturity and growth in the experience of believers, Paul gives no indication of distinct classes of Christians, and he certainly does not advocate certain types of decisions that would help to move a Christian out of one class into another.

5. This essay seeks to advocate the view that *God* initiates and brings forth fruit in the believer’s life. He does this through various means including his Word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit within the believer. The challenge remains for us who live at the “end of the ages” (1 Cor 10:11) to submit obediently to his gracious working in us (Phil 2:12–13).

While the divine-human connection in the work of Christian fruit-bearing certainly constitutes a mystery similar to others we find in Scripture,⁷⁰ we dare not stumble into the error of attaching too much value to the human part of the equation, tumbling toward perfectionism. Nor can we afford to overemphasize the divine work in our growth by advocating a type of quietism.⁷¹ No, a challenging yet theologically informed balance is required. May God give us strength to be rightly engaged in the pursuit of holiness, and may he be praised for completing what he graciously begins in the life of the believer.

⁶⁹Robert A. Peterson, “Preservation, Perseverance, Assurance, and Apostasy,” *Presb* 22 (1996): 33.

⁷⁰Paul provides evidence of the mystery of human and divine participation in fruit-bearing in 1 Cor 15:10 (ESV): “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”

⁷¹I am using this term in the sense of passively sitting back and doing nothing while expecting God to do all the work in one’s life.

Sola Fide Compromised? Martin Luther and the Doctrine of Baptism

— D. Patrick Ramsey —

Patrick Ramsey is pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church (OPC) in London, Kentucky.

The name of Martin Luther is perpetually linked to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Indeed, the mere mention of this great Reformer's name conjures up thoughts of *sola fide*. For the leading service he bequeathed to the Church "was the entire destruction of the doctrine of human merit, and the thorough establishment of the great scriptural truth of a purely gratuitous justification, through faith alone."¹ In addition to uncovering this hidden gem, Luther exposed its value in teaching that it is the article upon which the church stands or falls.²

These great contributions, notwithstanding, it is arguable that Luther's own doctrine of justification by faith alone is compromised by or at least in tension with his doctrine of baptism, particularly his understanding of baptismal regeneration. In addition to Luther's contemporary Anabaptist opponents, others like Karl Barth and James Atkinson have called attention to this problem.³ While not addressing Luther in particular, a number of Reformed theologians with a robust doctrine of the sacraments have viewed *sola fide* and baptismal regeneration as incompatible. For example, James Bannerman readily admits to his Baptist opponent that "if Sacraments are regarded as the causes or the means of justification, they are utterly inconsistent with the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone."⁴ Furthermore, he asserts that it is legalistic to make the sacraments "instruments of justification and the source of faith."⁵

Martin Luther, however, is not without his defenders. One of the main burdens of Jonathan Trigg's recent book on Luther's theology of baptism, which is based upon his doctoral dissertation, is to demonstrate that "the doctrine of justification by faith is intimately related to—indeed predicated upon—Luther's understanding of the abiding covenant of baptism."⁶ Although it may appear that there

¹William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (1862; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1989), 101.

²See Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (2d ed.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 180n3, 448.

³James Atkinson, *Martin Luther and the Birth of Protestantism* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968), 192; Karl Barth, *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism* (trans. Ernest A. Payne; London: SCM, 1963), 22–29; *Church Dogmatics* IV/4 (trans. G. W. Bromiley; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1969), 169. See also Jonathan D. Trigg, *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 4; David P. Scaer, "Luther, Baptism, and the Church today," *CTQ* 62 (1998): 251; R. Scott Clark, "Baptism and the Benefits of Christ: The Double Mode of Communion in the Covenant of Grace" *The Confessional Presbyterian* 2 (2006): 7.

⁴James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ* (2 vols.; 1869; repr., Edmonton, Canada: Still Waters Revival, 1991), 2:25. See also A.A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (1879; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1991), 628; R. C. Sproul, *Faith Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 75; Joel Beeke, "The Relation of Faith to Justification," in *Justification by Faith Alone* (ed. Don Kistler; Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1995), 89–91.

⁵*Ibid.*, 2:40.

⁶Trigg, *Baptism*, 2.

are tensions in his thought, “Luther’s baptismal doctrine, properly understood, is one of his sharpest expressions of justification by faith.”⁷ Similarly, Paul Althaus maintains that Luther’s “doctrine of baptism is basically nothing else than his doctrine of justification in concrete form.”⁸

Further support comes from Anthony Lane. In his discussion of baptism, one of the key issues involved in the Catholic-Protestant dialogue, Lane faults R. C. Sproul for interpreting the *sola fide* formula as directed against baptism. After noting that *sola fide*, as understood by Luther and the other Reformers, was directed against works but not word or sacrament, Lane bids us to remember that “Lutherans believing in baptismal regeneration are some of the most ardent proponents of justification by faith alone.”⁹ Justification and baptismal efficacy are two separate issues and therefore belief in baptismal regeneration need not conflict with one’s doctrine of *sola fide*.¹⁰

While thankful for Luther’s great contributions to the Church and recognizing that there is no scholarly consensus on this issue, this paper will argue that Luther’s doctrine of baptism is inconsistent with his doctrine of justification by faith alone. This is not to say, however, that Luther himself thought that the two could not be harmonized. Indeed, he vigorously argued that these two doctrines fit nicely together. Nor will this paper argue that Luther’s baptismal doctrine is identical to that of Medieval Christianity or Roman Catholicism as defined by the Council of Trent. Luther made significant advancements concerning baptism. The problem is that he did not go far enough, thereby creating tension with his affirmation of the article upon which the church stands or falls.

In light of this narrow focus, only those writings on baptism after Luther’s reformation breakthrough will be consulted. Pinpointing a date for this event is a notorious problem in Luther studies.¹¹ Scholars have suggested dates ranging from 1513 to 1520. Since Luther was unquestionably an evangelical in 1520, this paper will limit itself to his writings from that time onwards. It should also be noted that although there is a fundamental continuity in Luther’s baptismal thought over the years, there are some changes.¹² Therefore, particular attention will be paid to Luther’s catechisms since they express his mature and systematic thought on the subject.¹³

1. The Efficacy of Baptism: Luther’s Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration

When discussing Luther and the sacraments, one tends to gravitate towards his views on the Lord’s Supper, and with good reason. It was disagreement over this sacrament, and not baptism, that led to a division among the Protestant Reformers. Nonetheless, it is arguable that baptism held the preeminence in Luther’s thought and affection. With glowing praise, the German Reformer depicts baptism as excellent, glorious, exalted, precious, of greatest importance, and an inexpressible treasure.¹⁴

⁷Ibid., 226. See also 151.

⁸Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (trans. Robert C. Schultz; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 356.

⁹Anthony N. S. Lane, *Justification by Faith in Catholic-Protestant Dialogue: An Evangelical Assessment* (London: T&T Clark, 2002), 187.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹See Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology* (trans. Roy A. Harrisville; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 85–95.

¹²Trigg, *Baptism*, 10–11, 146–148. See also Althaus, *Luther*, 364, 369.

¹³Trigg, *Baptism*, 62–66.

¹⁴*The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 457, 458.

In fact, “no greater jewel . . . can adorn our body and soul than baptism.”¹⁵ Luther’s esteem for baptism was more than words. He meant what he said as evidenced by his practice. In times of temptation and anxiety, Luther clung to the fact that he had been baptized. Karl Barth recounts the following story:

It is related of Luther that he had hours during which he was confused about everything—about the Reformation, about his faith, even about the work of Jesus Christ Himself—hours when he knew of nothing else to help him (and help him it did) save the writing in chalk on his table of the two words: *Baptizatus sum!*¹⁶

This admiration for and use of baptism stemmed from Luther’s understanding of its efficacy as he himself tells us.¹⁷ And it is not hard to see why this is the case. For as we look at Luther’s teaching on baptism in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, Concerning Rebaptism, The Small Catechism, The Baptismal Booklet, and The Large Catechism*, we will see that baptism accomplishes a substantial amount and so naturally becomes the brightest jewel adorning the Christian.

1.1. The Babylonian Captivity of the Church

Having been excommunicated by the Pope, Martin Luther wrote three tracts in response in 1520, including *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, also known as *The Pagan Servitude of the Church*. A significant section of this tract is a discourse on baptism, and it is clearly written against the current medieval understanding of this sacrament. In continuity with the medieval Church, Luther affirms that God saves through baptism and that “grace” is “infused” in baptism.¹⁸ Yet, Luther differs with the medieval Church in how this is accomplished, which will be discussed in the next section, and what grace is given in baptism.

The medieval Church taught that justification began in baptism and continued by the sacrament of penance.¹⁹ Original sin was removed by the water of baptism while actual sin by penance. Jerome’s description of penitence as a second plank after shipwreck was employed to convey this concept. Those who fall into sin do not return again to baptism, the first plank of the ship, but to penitence for the forgiveness of sins.²⁰ By contrast, Luther says that justification begins and ends in baptism. As the sacrament of justification, baptism signifies “death and resurrection, i.e., the fulfilling and completion of justification.”²¹ In baptism, one truly dies and rises from the dead. Hence, Luther believes that it is reductionistic to view baptism as merely washing away sin.²²

¹⁵Ibid., 462.

¹⁶Barth, *Baptism*, 61–62. Thomas Manton: “Luther saith of himself, that when the devil tempted him to despair, or to any doubts and fears about the love of God or his mercy to sinners, he would always answer, *Ecce, ego baptizatus sum, et credo in Christum crucifixum*: ‘Behold, I am baptized, and believe in Christ crucified’” (“How Ought We to Improve Our Baptism,” in *Puritan Sermons 1659–1689* [6 vols.; 1845; repr., Wheaton: Richard Owen Roberts, 1981], 2:99).

¹⁷“No greater jewel, therefore, can adorn our body and soul than baptism, *for through it* we become completely holy and blessed, which no other kind of life and no work on earth can acquire” (*Book of Concord*, 462; emphasis mine; see also 459).

¹⁸Martin Luther, “The Pagan Servitude of the Church,” in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings* (ed. John Dillenberger; New York: Doubleday, 1961), 299, 303.

¹⁹McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 91. See also Mark Tranvik, “Luther on Baptism,” *LQ* 13 (1999): 76.

²⁰See Martin Luther, “The Pagan Servitude of the Church,” 292.

²¹Ibid., 301. See also Tranvik, “Luther on Baptism,” 79; Althaus, *Luther*, 356.

²²Ibid., 302.

Though in one sense justification is complete in baptism, in another sense it is not. It is complete by virtue of God's promise, yet incomplete in that the justified believer waits in hope for the consummation of his righteousness.²³ This accounts for Luther's assertion that the efficacy of baptism lasts a lifetime and that the Christian life is baptismal in character. Luther writes,

Although you only receive the sacrament of baptism once, you are continually baptized anew by faith, always dying and yet ever living. When you were baptized, your whole body was submerged and then came forth again out of the water. Similarly, the essence of the rite was that grace permeated your whole life, in both body and soul; and that it will bring you forth, at the last day, clothed in the white robe of immortality. It follows that we never lose the sign of baptism nor its force; indeed we are continually being rebaptized, until we attain to the completion of the sign at the last day.²⁴

Consequently, the confessional or any other means of grace does not replace the first plank of baptism. Baptism is for life. The Christian must continually return to the power that baptism exercises.²⁵ "All the sanctification of the Christian is thus nothing else than a completion of baptism."²⁶

Luther further differs with the medieval Church in that baptism is able to overcome unbelief and resistance to grace. The medieval Church had taught that baptism was always efficacious except in cases where an obstacle is placed by the one being baptized. Luther, however, says that baptism is so powerful it is able to change the hearts of the ungodly, infants and adults alike. In combination with the prayers and faith of the church, all sacraments are "efficacious in giving grace, not only those who offer no resistance, but even to those who resist most obstinately."²⁷

Thus, according to *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, Luther believed that the medieval Church denigrated the sacrament of baptism by teaching that it did too little: it covered only original sin and was ineffective in certain persons. Contradistinctively, Luther asserted that baptism provided full and complete justification that was to be embraced throughout one's life and could convert even the most hardened sinner. James Atkinson is therefore correct to point out that with respect to baptism Luther "was more of a sacramentalist than the Romanists themselves."²⁸

1.2. Concerning Rebaptism

After the Peasants' War, Martin Luther fired his theological arrows in another direction, viz., the Anabaptists, a growing radical movement that threatened the unity and stability of the Protestant Reformation. In reply to an inquiry from two pastors, Luther wrote a treatise on the subject of rebaptism in December 1527 and January 1528. Not surprisingly, he highlights the efficacy of baptism in this work.

²³McGrath writes, "Luther does not make the distinction between justification and sanctification associated with later Protestantism, treating justification as a process of becoming: *feri est iustificatio*. Justification is thus a 'sort of beginning of God's creation,' *initium aliquod creaturae eius*, by which the Christian waits in hope for the consummation of his righteousness" (*Iustitia Dei*, 200). See also Alister McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 107.

²⁴Ibid., 303.

²⁵Ibid. Cf. Tranvik, "Luther on Baptism," 87.

²⁶Althaus, *Luther*, 355.

²⁷Ibid., 308.

²⁸Atkinson, *Martin Luther*, 191.

A key component of his defense of infant baptism is the power of baptism to create faith in the infant. Where Christ speaks, there he can call forth spirit and faith. In baptism, Christ not only speaks, he baptizes, and therefore he can certainly call forth spirit and faith in the child. Luther writes,

We can hardly deny that the same Christ is present at baptism and in baptism, in fact is himself the baptizer, who in those days came in his mother's womb to John. In baptism he can speak as well through the mouth of the priest, as when he spoke through his mother. Since then he is present, speaks, and baptizes, why should not his Word and baptism call forth spirit and faith in the child as then it produced faith in John? He is the same one who speaks and acts then and now.²⁹

According to Luther, infant baptism is “the most certain form of baptism.” Adults can be hypocrites, feigning fidelity to Christ. A little child, however, is incapable of deception. Infant baptism is, therefore, efficacious, which is a primary reason they are brought to the font. Luther writes,

The most certain form of baptism is child baptism. For an adult might deceive and come to Christ as a Judas and have himself baptized. But a child cannot deceive. He comes to Christ in baptism, as John came to him, and as the children were brought to him, that his word and work might be effective in them, move them, and make them holy, because his Word and work cannot be without fruit. Yet it has this effect alone in the child. Were it to fail here it would fail everywhere and be in vain, which is impossible.³⁰

In light of the power of baptism to save infants, Luther argues that it is better to administer baptism to infants, even if it was true that the church throughout the centuries had been mistaken on this issue. In other words, it is better to be safe than sorry. For if it is true that baptism saves yet it is not administered, then the church would be “responsible for all the children who were lost because they were unbaptized—a cruel and terrible thing.”³¹ But if infant baptism is not right then the church would only “be guilty of no greater sin than the Word of God had been spoken and his sign given in vain.”³²

1.3. The Small Catechism and Baptismal Booklet

Based upon his sermons and motivated by pastoral need, Luther wrote his small catechism either at the end of 1528 or early 1529. In the section on the sacrament of baptism, Luther lists the gifts or benefits that baptism grants, namely, forgiveness of sins, redemption from death and the devil, and eternal salvation.³³

Appended to *The Small Catechism* is *The Baptismal Booklet*. This booklet was originally published in 1523 and based on medieval baptismal rites. It was revised in 1526 and subsequently included in the second edition of *The Small Catechism* in 1529.³⁴ Luther's liturgy indicates that the infant prior to baptism is possessed by the devil and a child of sin and wrath, while baptism delivers him from the devil, making him a child of God. Before the sacrament is administered the baptizer commands the unclean

²⁹Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* (ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann; 55 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1955–76), 40:242–43. See also 40:245–46.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 40:244.

³¹*Ibid.*, 40:254.

³²*Ibid.*

³³*Book of Concord*, 359.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 371n147.

spirit to depart to make room for the Holy Spirit. He then asks God to bless the infant with true faith in the Holy Spirit, to give the child spiritual rebirth and the promised kingdom. After the rite, the priest proclaims, “The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given birth to you for a second time through water and the Holy Spirit and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with his grace to eternal life.”³⁵

1.4. The Large Catechism

Also known as *The German Catechism*, this catechism, like its smaller counterpart, was published in 1529. Concerning what benefits, gifts, and effects baptism brings, Luther bases his answer upon Mark 16:16 and says,

This is the simplest way to put it: the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of baptism is that it saves. For no one is baptized in order to become a prince, but as the words say, ‘to be saved.’ To be saved, as everyone knows, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death and the devil, to enter into Christ’s kingdom, and to live with him forever.³⁶

Elsewhere, Luther notes that baptism promises and brings “victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, God’s grace, the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with his gifts.”³⁷ The power and effect of baptism, as best signified by the mode of immersion, “is nothing else than the slaying of the old Adam and the resurrection of the new creature, both of which must continue in us our whole life long.”³⁸

1.5. Summary

The sacrament of baptism is no mean thing in the eyes of Luther. Salvation in its entirety is given at the font.³⁹ In baptism, one is made a Christian; reborn; raised from the dead; brought into the Kingdom; given faith; adorned with holiness, righteousness, and wisdom; united to Christ; forgiven; justified; sanctified; and redeemed from sin, death, and the devil.⁴⁰ Baptism is the place where the “joyful exchange” between Christ and the sinner transpires.⁴¹

With such a view of what baptism accomplishes, it is easy to understand why this sacrament receives encomiums from Luther. Yet, how does he avoid, at least to his own satisfaction and that of others, the charge of contradicting the doctrine of justification by faith alone? Indeed, how can it be argued that Luther’s baptismal doctrine is one of his sharpest expressions of justification by faith? Appeals are made to other elements of Luther’s teaching on baptism, which we will now address.

³⁵Ibid., 375.

³⁶Ibid., 459.

³⁷Ibid., 461.

³⁸Ibid., 465.

³⁹Althaus, *Luther*, 353; Trigg, *Baptism*, 39.

⁴⁰See Trigg, *Baptism*, 75–77.

⁴¹Heiko Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil* (trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart; New York: Doubleday, 1989), 227; Tranvik, “Luther on Baptism,” 79.

2. Elements of Luther's Baptismal Doctrine That Are Consistent with Sola Fide

In treating it “in a systematic way,”⁴² Luther divides the baptismal section of his *Large Catechism* into three sub-sections, along with an excursus on infant baptism. The second section expounds the efficacy of baptism. The other two sections pertain to the nature and condition of baptism, both of which appear to make Luther's doctrine of baptismal regeneration compatible with *sola fide*.

2.1. The Nature of Baptism

Basing his comments on Matt 28:19 and Mark 16:16, Luther emphasizes first of all that baptism is of divine origin. It is not something that man invented. Rather, it is commanded and instituted by God. Thus, baptism may not be despised or regarded as something of no use.

Secondly, Luther notes that baptism is a work of God because we are baptized into God's name. Although baptism is performed by a man, “it is nevertheless truly God's own act.”⁴³ Outwardly, the sacrament of baptism may not look like much, but it is of far greater value than any work by the greatest saint by virtue of the fact that God, who works in baptism, is far nobler and better. The value of baptism must not be derived from the act itself but from the value of the one who performs it.⁴⁴

Thirdly, baptism is water and the word joined together. The addition of the word to the water is what makes baptism a sacrament. Without the word, the water “is not different from the water that the maid uses for cooking.”⁴⁵ But with the word, the water becomes “divine, holy, heavenly, holy and blessed.”⁴⁶ In answering his own question of what baptism is, Luther writes in *The Large Catechism*, “Namely, that it is not simply plain water, but water placed in the setting of God's Word and commandment and made holy by them. It is nothing else than God's water, not that the water itself is nobler than other water but that God's Word and commandment are added to it.”⁴⁷ Similarly, he writes in *The Small Catechism*, “Baptism is not simply plain water. Instead it is water enclosed in God's command and connected with God's Word.”⁴⁸

The word that is added to the water in baptism is variously described by Luther, in both catechisms, as command, word, and ordinance. This is somewhat different from his discussion in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, where he underscores the word “promise.”⁴⁹ The use of “command” as opposed to “promise” should not be construed as excluding the notion of promise or gospel. Luther stresses the command and divine ordinance of baptism in his catechisms because he is addressing primarily the errors of the Anabaptists whom he believed denigrated the sign.⁵⁰ Though “command” and “promise”

⁴²*Book of Concord*, 457.

⁴³*Ibid.* See also 460–61; Luther, “The Pagan Servitude of the Church,” 297; *Luther's Works*, 40:239.

⁴⁴*Book of Concord*, 458.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 459.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 458.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 359.

⁴⁹Luther, “The Pagan Servitude of the Church,” 293.

⁵⁰See *Book of Concord*, 457, 458, 460, where Luther refers to “new spirits” who believe that external things are useless. Cf. Trigg, *Baptism*, 75.

are not identical in meaning, the two are inseparable so that the word, which is added to the water, includes both concepts.⁵¹

The presence of the word inseparably joined to the water is what makes baptism, according to Luther, efficacious. Both catechisms assert that water does not grant salvation. After stating, in *The Large Catechism*, what baptism accomplishes, Luther writes,

Here again you see how baptism is to be regarded as precious and important, for in it we obtain such an inexpressible treasure. This indicates that it cannot be simple, ordinary water, for ordinary water could not have such an effect. But the Word does it, and this shows also, as we said above, that God's name is in it. And where God's name is, there must also be life and salvation. Thus it is well described as a divine, blessed, fruitful, and gracious water, for it is through the Word that it receives the power to become the "washing of regeneration," as St. Paul calls it in Titus 3[:5].⁵²

Defining baptism as God's work wherein he saves by means of his word or promise is a crucial aspect of Luther's baptismal doctrine because he thereby avoids the error of Thomas Aquinas and the Dominicans, "who forget the Word (God's institution) and say that God has placed a spiritual power in the water which, through the water, washes away sin."⁵³ This *ex opere operato* understanding of baptism nullifies the roles of promise and faith, perverting the sacrament into a work. Luther writes,

Therefore it cannot be true that there resides in the sacraments a power capable of giving justification, or that they are the "signs" of efficacious grace. All such things are said to the detriment of faith, and in ignorance of the divine promises. . . . In this way, the Romanists have put precepts in place of the sacraments, and works in place of faith. Now, if a sacrament were to give me grace just because I receive that sacrament, then surely I should obtain the grace, not by faith, but by my works. I should not gain the promise in the sacrament, but only the sign instituted and commanded by God.⁵⁴

Furthermore, by highlighting the divine promise in baptism, Luther is able to stress the necessity of faith. Wherever a divine promise is found, there faith is required.⁵⁵ Hence, New Testament signs are "accompanied by a word of promise demanding faith."⁵⁶ Baptism is God's work; and "God's works are salutary and necessary for salvation, and they do not exclude but rather demand faith."⁵⁷ Thus, by defining baptism as the word added to the water, Luther avoids, at least from one perspective, turning the sacrament into a work, and so does not contradict the article upon which the Church stands or falls.

2.2. The Condition of Baptism

The third sub-section in the section on baptism in *The Large Catechism* discusses who receives the gifts and benefits of baptism. Luther's unequivocal answer is that only the one who believes receives

⁵¹See Trigg, *Baptism*, 69.

⁵²*Book of Concord*, 459–60.

⁵³*Book of Concord*, 320.

⁵⁴Luther, "The Pagan Servitude of the Church," 300–301. See also Tranvik, "Luther on Baptism," 76–77.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 301.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 299.

⁵⁷*Book of Concord*, 461.

what is offered and promised in baptism. Indeed, “faith alone makes the person worthy to receive the saving, divine water profitably.”⁵⁸

The need for faith is a note that is heard throughout Luther’s evangelical writings, but perhaps it is loudest in his 1520 treatise *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, as is to be expected considering his audience. Repeatedly and in various ways, Luther stresses the necessity of faith. Devoid of faith, the sacrament is without personal benefit, and it becomes “a stumbling-block not only at the moment we receive baptism but for all our life thereafter.”⁵⁹ In fact, baptism was instituted to feed faith.⁶⁰ Therefore, “if you desire to be saved, you must start from faith in the sacraments—anterior to any works.”⁶¹ Although he appears to temper his language after the appearance of the Anabaptists, Luther is so adamant about stressing the requirement of faith alone that he is willing to say that the virtue of baptism “lies not so much in the faith or practice of the administrator, as in that of the recipient,” and that the whole effectiveness of New Testaments signs “lies in faith, and not in anything that is done.”⁶² Moreover, faith is so necessary that it can save even apart from the sacrament.⁶³ Baptism, therefore, justifies only in so far as what is promised is received by faith alone. It is a sacrament of justification simply because it is a sacrament of “a justificatory faith, and not of works.”⁶⁴ “Thus, baptism justifies nobody, and gives advantage to nobody; rather, faith in the word of the promise to which baptism was conjoined, is what justifies, and so completes, that which the baptism signified.”⁶⁵

The obvious objection to Luther’s insistence on faith is that it is an argument against infant baptism. Infants cannot exercise faith and therefore either faith is not a necessary condition or baptism does not save them. Luther faces this objection head on from the very beginning, though he does alter his answer over the years.⁶⁶ Wanting to maintain *sola fide* and the saving/justifying nature of infant baptism, Luther eventually comes to the settled conclusion that infants receive the Holy Spirit at baptism and believe with their own faith.⁶⁷

At this stage, it becomes clear why it is sometimes asserted that Luther’s baptismal doctrine is his doctrine of justification by faith. The gospel promise is offered and received by faith alone in baptism. Baptism is not our work, but God’s work; it is not Law but Gospel. Nevertheless, as we continue to explore Luther’s baptismal doctrine the tension with *sola fide* will heighten.

3. Problems with Luther’s Baptismal Doctrine

Although Luther rejected the Thomistic *ex opere operato* understanding of baptism, David Scaer notes that for Luther “baptism possesses such an objective reality, that it seems to take on an *ex opere*

⁵⁸Ibid., 460.

⁵⁹Luther, “The Pagan Servitude of the Church,” 293.

⁶⁰Ibid., 295.

⁶¹Ibid., 296.

⁶²Ibid., 298, 299.

⁶³Ibid., 301.

⁶⁴Ibid., 299.

⁶⁵Ibid., 300.

⁶⁶See Althaus, *Luther*, 364; John W. Riggs, *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 28–29.

⁶⁷Ibid., 364–69.

operato character.”⁶⁸ This is certainly the case, at least with respect to “the most certain form of baptism,” viz., infant baptism.⁶⁹ As we have seen, baptism saves. The word and therefore God’s name is in the water. “And where God’s name is, there must also be life and salvation.”⁷⁰ Consequently, the water of baptism is salvific. Specifically, the infant is regenerated and given faith, enabling him to be justified.

Karl Barth finds Luther’s position to be problematic.⁷¹ As Trigg puts it, “How can Luther’s demand for a conscious, individual *fides explicita* be reconciled with the statement that the infant ‘becomes a saint in the hands of the priest?’”⁷² We have seen that Luther’s definitive answer to this problem is that the infant himself has faith. Barth, however, is not convinced, taking issue with the idea of infant faith.⁷³ But even if we grant the notion of infant faith it is still hard to see how Luther avoids the same charge he lays against the Thomists. Baptism is efficacious apart from faith.⁷⁴ To be sure, one is not technically justified apart from faith as it is given in baptism. Nevertheless, saving grace that necessarily results in justification is automatically given in the sacrament apart from faith. How then does performing the rite of baptism in obedience to God’s command not become a work that God rewards with justification? Undoubtedly, Luther himself would answer that God, and not man, is the one who acts or works in baptism, thereby even preventing faith, which is given in baptism, from becoming a work. Therefore, baptism cannot be characterized as a work we do and that God rewards. Indeed, Jonathan Trigg vigorously argues this point on Luther’s behalf:

To some it has appeared that the tensions surrounding baptism in Luther’s theology are unsustainable. His recognition of baptismal regeneration is seen to be on a collision course with the central discoveries of his reformation breakthrough, above all with his doctrine of justification by faith. Yet Luther’s baptismal doctrine, properly understood, is one of his sharpest expressions of justification by faith. The utter objectivity of baptism as divine word and work prevents the faith which grasps it becoming a self-conscious work of human piety.⁷⁵

It is still the case, however, that God commands us to baptize and requires us to submit to baptism. Consequently, it is a rite performed and submitted to by man in obedience to God. Thus, it does not seem that Luther can fully evade the charge he lays at the feet of the Thomists.

A related problem is that Luther’s view of the efficacy of baptism is in tension with his belief that baptism signifies and accomplishes full and complete justification. This tension is created by the fact that baptized people apostatize. Since people apostatize then either baptism does not save infants or complete justification is not given in baptism. Though both options are unacceptable to Luther, the fact

⁶⁸Scaer, “Luther, Baptism, and the Church today,” 265. See also Trigg, *Baptism*, 77.

⁶⁹*Luther’s Works*, 40:244.

⁷⁰*Book of Concord*, 460.

⁷¹Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/4, 169.

⁷²Trigg, *Baptism*, 4.

⁷³Barth, *Baptism*, 46–47; idem, *Church Dogmatics* IV/4, 187.

⁷⁴J. D. C. Fisher writes, “Thus in order not to contradict his assertion that the sacraments could not confer grace unless there were faith in the recipients, Luther was forced to contend that in some sense infants could have faith. But his argument is not wholly convincing, and seems to attribute to the baptism of an infant an objective efficaciousness inconsistent with what he said elsewhere about the necessity of personal faith,” *Christian Initiation: the Reformation Period* (Chicago: Hillenbrand, 2007), 5. See also Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/4, 172.

⁷⁵Trigg, *Baptism*, 226. See also Althaus, *Luther*, 354–56.

that the work of baptism is not completed until death lends itself to the latter. Interestingly, in order to resolve this tension, later Lutheranism taught that what is given in baptism can be lost.⁷⁶

The central problem, however, with Luther's doctrine of baptism is that, while it is not absolutely necessary, it is ordinarily necessary for salvation. Writing in 1520 against the medieval tradition, Luther willingly acknowledges that one can be saved apart from the sacrament, though not apart from faith.⁷⁷ He maintains this belief even through his debates with the Anabaptists where he emphasizes the power and necessity of baptism. Noting that the word can exist without the sacrament, but not vice versa, Luther says that "in case of necessity, a man can be saved without the sacrament, but not without the word; this is true of those who desire baptism but die before they can receive it."⁷⁸ Similarly, he says in his lectures on Genesis that God is able to save without baptism.⁷⁹ Examples of salvation apart from baptism include children who die before being baptized; believing adults who are unable to be baptized before death; and persons who believe they were baptized as infants but in reality had not been.⁸⁰

Apart from these qualifications, Luther unequivocally stressed the importance of baptism for justification. Baptism is the place where God is to be found and so where man is to believe in order to be justified. This is not to say that there is anything inherent in water that makes it efficacious. Just the opposite is true. There is nothing in or about the water that is appealing. However, God has chosen, in accordance with *potentia ordinata* (ordained power), to save man through the external sign of water.⁸¹ In other words, "baptism is a trysting place appointed for the encounter between God and man."⁸²

Justification, therefore, does not take place prior to but in baptism. This is a point that Luther underscores against the Anabaptists who saw the sacrament as subsequent to conversion.⁸³ Since God works through the sacrament to save the one being baptized, "salvation does not occur in an experience of subjective ecstasy; it happens at the moment the baptized is washed with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."⁸⁴ Baptism is the place "where the Triune God in all his power makes himself concretely present and brings the person being baptized into his kingdom."⁸⁵ While acknowledging that Abraham was justified before he received the sacrament, Luther says that his circumcision, like Christ's baptism, was exceptional. All those who follow after Abraham and Christ are "made righteous by believing the promise and making use of the sacrament in faith."⁸⁶ Hence, Tranvik correctly observes that for Luther "baptism is the earthly means by which the believer participates in justification."⁸⁷

As the place God has ordained to justify his people, baptism is therefore ordinarily necessary for justification: "God is able to save without Baptism. . . . But in the church we must judge and teach,

⁷⁶Clark, "Baptism and the Benefits of Christ," 7.

⁷⁷Luther, "The Pagan Servitude of the Church," 301.

⁷⁸Cited by Althaus, *Luther*, 349n19.

⁷⁹See *Luther's Works*, 3:274.

⁸⁰Trigg, *Baptism*, 41, 44; *Luther's Works*, 40:258; 3:274.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 26–27.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 30.

⁸³Tranvik, "Luther on Baptism," 82.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 83.

⁸⁶*Luther's Works*, 3:87. On the same page Luther writes: "Thus circumcision was enjoined upon Abraham in order that for his descendents it might be a sacrament through which they would be made righteous if they believed the promise which the Lord had attached to it." Cf. Trigg, *Baptism*, 41.

⁸⁷Tranvik, "Luther on Baptism," 87.

in accordance with God's ordered power, that without that outward Baptism no one is saved."⁸⁸ Also, against the Anabaptists, Luther accentuates this point. He marshals two main arguments in his *Large Catechism*. First, baptism needs to be not only observed, but cherished because God commanded and instituted it.⁸⁹ Second, contrary to the "new spirits" who claim that faith alone saves apart from external things, baptism is necessary for this reason:

Faith must have something to believe—something to which it may cling and upon which it may stand. Thus faith clings to the water and believes it to be baptism, in which there is sheer salvation and life, not through the water, as we have sufficiently stated, but through its incorporation with God's Word and ordinance and the joining of his name to it. When I believe this, what is it but believing in God as the one who has bestowed and implanted his Word in baptism and has offered us this external thing within which we can grasp this treasure.⁹⁰

Since justification does not occur apart from the reception of the sacrament of baptism, the doctrine of justification is compromised because we are not justified by faith alone but by faith and baptism. One must believe and be baptized. Luther's qualifications notwithstanding, his view inevitably turns baptism into a work. This is most clearly seen in the case of an adult. Since forgiveness is ordinarily only given in baptism, when an adult hears and believes the gospel he must remain in an unjustified state until he obeys the command to be baptized. Consequently, faith alone in the promise is not enough for justification. Obedience must be added to faith.

Once again, we can hear Luther and his defenders protesting that baptism is not a work. The only thing man does in baptism is believe, which itself is a gift of God. Baptism is simply the earthly means by which God has chosen to impart salvation. In response, it must be stressed that submission to baptism is an act of obedience to God that is done in addition to believing the gospel. Justification, therefore, is by faith in the gospel plus obedience to God's command to be baptized. This is contrary to the Scriptures and akin to the Galatian heresy. John 5:24 states that he who hears the word and believes in Jesus has passed from death into life. One is justified at the moment one believes, and not later at baptism. The Galatians had their sins pardoned and received the Holy Spirit when they believed the gospel and not after they had obeyed the law of God (Gal 3:1–9; Acts 13:48, 52; 14:1). In Gal 3:2 (NIV) Paul rhetorically asks the Galatians, "I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?" Paul does not say "by believing and being baptized." In a passage where Paul is vigorously defending the biblical way of salvation, one would expect Paul to mention baptism. But he does not because the Galatians received the Spirit when they believed what they heard, in contrast to any further work of obedience. James R. White comments,

The reception of the Spirit was a sign, in Paul's theology, of the redeemed (Ephesians 1:13–14). Therefore, since the presence of the Spirit in a person's life was evidence of his justification and redemption, Paul asks a logical question: How did the Galatians receive the Spirit, by works of righteousness or by hearing of faith? And since the answer to this question was all too obvious, the only logical conclusion was that any teaching that said righteousness came about only *after* certain rites or rituals must be false on its face. So it remains today—anyone who adds "requirements" to the gospel

⁸⁸Luther's Works, 3:274.

⁸⁹Book of Concord, 457.

⁹⁰Ibid., 460.

such as sacraments, baptism, various forms of obedience, etc., falls into the same error that Paul here attacks.⁹¹

Later Lutheranism, and perhaps Luther himself,⁹² teaches that baptism achieves something different in adults than in children. This “strange position,” as Karl Barth describes it,⁹³ states that baptism works regeneration and faith in infants. But in adults, since they must believe before baptism, it only seals and confirms the grace of God, thereby, oddly enough, approximating the Reformed doctrine of the sacraments.⁹⁴ Limiting baptismal regeneration to infants, however, does not fully resolve the problem. If infants can truly believe then why is it still necessary for them to receive baptism? Luther himself admits that Christ’s word was able to evoke faith in John while he was in the womb.⁹⁵ Thus, an infant’s faith in Jesus by means of the spoken gospel should be sufficient for his justification. Adding a further requirement for justification such as obeying the command to baptize, therefore, compromises *sola fide*.

The final problem to note concerning Luther’s doctrine of baptism is that it fails to escape the sacerdotalism of the medieval Church.⁹⁶ Since only those called to the priesthood are to administer the sacraments⁹⁷ and baptism is necessary for justification, the people remain enslaved to the church.⁹⁸ Alister McGrath’s summary and analysis of the medieval system equally applies to Luther:

In conclusion, it may be stated that the medieval period saw the justification of the sinner firmly linked to the sacramental life of the church, a sound theological link having been established between justification and the sacraments. This linking of justification to the sacramental system of the church has profound theological and pastoral consequences, of which the most important is the tendency to assert *iustificatio extra ecclesiam non est* [there is no justification outside the church]. Although the theologians of the medieval period were aware that God was not bound by the sacraments, the tendency to emphasise the reliability of the established order of salvation, of which the sacramental system is part, can only have served to convey the impression that the sinner who wishes to be reconciled to God must, *de facto*, seek the assistance of a priest.⁹⁹

4. Conclusion

There is no question as to the significant service that Martin Luther rendered to the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. His recovery of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, along with his doctrine of Scripture, stands at the fore of his many accomplishments. All true believers owe a tremendous debt to this great Reformer. Yet, no one this side of eternity is fully sound or completely consistent in doctrine

⁹¹James R. White, *The God Who Justifies* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2001), 297–98.

⁹²See *Book of Concord*, 322–23.

⁹³Barth, *Baptism*, 46.

⁹⁴See Cunningham, *The Reformers*, 263–64; Henry Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, 1905), 335.

⁹⁵*Luther’s Works*, 40:242–43.

⁹⁶See B. B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation* (repr., Avinger, TX: Simpson, 1989), 62–63.

⁹⁷*Book of Concord*, 46.

⁹⁸See Beeke, “The Relation of Faith to Justification,” 90.

⁹⁹McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 99.

or practice. Indeed, it is possible to be inconsistent with those doctrines we regard to be of the greatest importance. Martin Luther, so we have argued, is a case in point. Although he made noted advancements concerning the doctrine of baptism, especially with his discussion on promise and faith, Luther failed to undo every rope that the medieval sacramental system had used to bind the Christian. By maintaining that baptism is the ordinarily necessary occasion of justification and by holding to an essentially *ex opere operato* understanding, Martin Luther unwittingly compromised his cherished doctrine of justification by faith alone. Stressing the objectivity of baptism as God's saving word and work, as does Trigg, is not enough to vindicate Luther. For when baptism becomes the means of justification, responding to the gospel in faith is no longer sufficient. One must believe and be baptized.

The necessity of baptism for justification is by no means a belief of a bygone era or merely a unique tenet of contemporary Lutheranism. It is advocated today, sometimes quite strenuously, by various sections of Protestantism. Those with the loudest voice belong to what is sometimes called "The Restoration Movement," and are associated with the Christian Church and the Church of Christ. Some teach the absolute necessity of baptism for justification while others like Luther allow for exceptions. An example of the latter is Jack Cottrell, professor of theological studies at Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary.¹⁰⁰ It is not surprising then that he paints Luther in a very favorable light.¹⁰¹

From another direction, a controversy has arisen recently among Reformed churches in America over this issue of baptism and justification due to proposals by the so-called Federal Visionists. Some have affirmed a form of baptismal regeneration, viewing baptism as a converting ordinance and/or as ordinarily necessary for entrance into the church and consequently for salvation, including justification.¹⁰² Most striking in this regard are the views of Rich Lusk, pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, AL. According to Lusk, baptism is God's instrument of justification and the means by which the Spirit unites a person to Christ.¹⁰³ Forgiveness is not granted when one believes the gospel, but later at baptism. Hearing the gospel, faith, repentance, and baptism are a package-deal. Hence, Lusk tentatively suggests that the Apostle Paul was not forgiven on the road to Damascus, but a few days later when he was baptized by Ananias.¹⁰⁴

By viewing baptism as the ordinarily necessary instrument and occasion for justification, Restorationists and Federal Visionists fall into the same error as Martin Luther and either contradict (Restorationists) or undermine (Federal Visionists) the doctrine of justification by faith alone. As we have previously noted, God justifies the sinner the moment he believes and thus before baptism. Some attempt to evade this argument by distinguishing between title and possession. The believing sinner has the right to justification before baptism while he possesses it at baptism. But as Robert Dabney points out in his discussion of Alexander Campbell's doctrine of baptism, this still does not comport with what

¹⁰⁰See his *Baptism: A Biblical Study* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1989).

¹⁰¹Jack Cottrell, "The History of Baptism, Part One: From Paul to Luther," *Christian Standard* (2004): 7–9.

¹⁰²Douglas Wilson finds support for his view of baptismal regeneration in the Westminster Standards. See his *Reformed Is Not Enough: Recovering the Objectivity of the Covenant* (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2002), 103–7; E. Calvin Beisner, ed., *The Auburn Avenue Theology, Pros and Cons: Debating the Federal Vision* (Fort Lauderdale, FL: Knox Theological Seminary, 2004). For an opposing view of the Westminster Standards, see D. Patrick Ramsey, "Baptismal Regeneration and the Westminster Confession of Faith," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 4 (2008): 183–93.

¹⁰³See his internet essays, "Faith, Baptism, and Justification," <http://www.hornes.org/theologia/rich-lusk/faith-baptism-and-justification>, accessed May 6, 2009; "Do I Believe in Baptismal Regeneration?" <http://www.trinity-pres.net/essays/do-i-believe-in-baptismal-regeneration.pdf>, accessed May 6, 2009.

¹⁰⁴See his internet essay, "Some Thoughts on the Means of Grace: A Few Proposals" <http://www.hornes.org/theologia/rich-lusk/some-thoughts-on-the-means-of-grace>, accessed May 6, 2009.

the Apostle John says, namely, the believing sinner has passed from death to life.¹⁰⁵ It is for this reason baptism does not justify, even though it may convey saving grace. William Cunningham writes,

It is a fundamental principle of scriptural doctrine, that justification and regeneration are necessarily and invariably connected with faith, and that they are cotemporaneous with it, whatever may be the precise relation subsisting among them in the order of nature. Whoever has been enabled to believe in Jesus Christ has been justified and regenerated; he has passed through that great ordeal on which salvation depends, and which can occur but once in the history of a soul. And if these principles are well founded, then the spiritual blessings which the sacraments may be instrumental in conveying, can be those only which men still stand in need of, with a view to their salvation, after they have been justified and regenerated by faith.¹⁰⁶

As we construct our own view of baptism it is important that we learn from the past. We should learn from our spiritual forefathers, both from their triumphs and their mistakes. One important lesson that we glean from the writings of the great Reformer Martin Luther is that in our worthy quest to highlight the importance of baptism and to seriously wrestle with the biblical passages that connect conversion with baptism, we must be careful not to impinge upon the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone

¹⁰⁵Robert Lewis Dabney, *Discussions* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1982), 1:347–48.

¹⁰⁶Cunningham, *Reformers*, 273.

The Inexhaustible Fountain of All Good Things: Union with Christ in Calvin on Ephesians

— Lee Gatiss —

Lee Gatiss is Associate Minister of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate in London and editor of The Theologian: The Internet Journal for Integrated Theology (www.theologian.org.uk). In Autumn 2009 he plans to begin a PhD at Cambridge University in seventeenth-century biblical interpretation.

We should be satisfied with the benefits of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that when we are grafted into his body and made one with him by belief of the gospel, then we may assure ourselves that he is the fountain which never dries up, nor can ever become exhausted, and that in him we have all variety of good things, and all perfection.¹

July 10, 2009 was the 500th birthday of the acclaimed French Reformer John Calvin. For many the mention of his name immediately calls to mind an image of a stern, bearded systematician whose compassionless logic and doctrine of predestination represent all that is bad about theology. Yet those who have spent any time getting to know Calvin's work firsthand will hardly recognise this clichéd caricature (apart from the fact that he did have a beard). The man whose most famous work, *The Institutes*, claims to contain "almost the whole sum of piety" and begins by extolling the value of knowing God, was a devout and passionate man with a touchingly pious personal motto: "My heart I offer you, O Lord, promptly and sincerely." It is a shame that this sentiment is not the first thing that comes to mind when we remember this great servant of God.

Whilst election is not, of course, an unimportant theme in Calvin's work, the subject of this article—union with Christ—is a much more pervasive one. It is undoubtedly the key idea in his teaching on the way we receive the grace of Christ. While refuting Osiander, one of his German Lutheran opponents, Calvin says, "that joining together of Head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our heart—in short, that mystical union—are accorded by us the highest degree of importance."² Calvin's application of the gospel is summed up in what he says about union with Christ. Here more than anywhere we hear the heartbeat of the preacher who is committed not to cold abstract theologising but a personal, passionate, and pious relationship with his Lord and Saviour. So to celebrate his birthday we could do a lot worse than return to Calvin's biblical emphasis on the believer's union with Christ to encourage us in presenting a Christ-centred gospel to the alienated and relationally-hungry inhabitants of the twenty-first century. In the process, we will also find a doctrinal resource of immense value in refuting false teaching, both ancient and modern.

The title of this article reflects Calvin's lovely and oft-repeated emphasis on Christ as the inexhaustible fountain of all good things, from whom—by means of our union with him—we draw our

¹J. Calvin, *Sermons on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (trans. A. Golding; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1973), 355.

²J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. J. T. McNeill; trans. F. L. Battles; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 737 (3.11.10).

life, our righteousness, and our sanctification.³ Though this language may be common in Calvin, it was, however, no common or merely conventional thing for him. He is amazed by it—indeed he says that union with Christ “ought to ravish our minds in astonishment,”⁴ and the vocabulary he uses to describe it is accordingly rich and varied.⁵ So we dive in expecting to be seduced by what Calvin says about our intimate relationship with Christ. We will listen to what he says under three headings: the necessity of union with Christ, the benefits of that union, and the importance of “closing the gap” between us and God (which has particular reference to the pastoral and doctrinal errors addressed by this doctrine).

We will particularly concentrate on Calvin’s work on Ephesians, as seen in his commentary and sermons on that book.⁶ The Apostle Paul’s letter itself contains the “in Christ” formula several times, and more than one *locus classicus* for the doctrine of union (such as Eph 5:28–32). This furnishes Calvin with many exegetically warranted opportunities to discuss union with Christ. It also furnishes us with over 850 pages of opportunities to examine his regular pastoral use of it, his exegetical workings, and the links he makes between union and other doctrinal loci.

While many may know him just as a systematic theologian, Calvin’s commentaries and sermons take up far more space in his collected works than the *Institutes*. As a biblical commentator, he was “unique and extremely illuminating . . . an endlessly fresh and eye-opening interpreter.”⁷ Yet when Calvin reviewed his life’s work on his deathbed, “he talked more about his sermons than anything.”⁸ Between 1541 and 1564 he is estimated to have preached around 4,000 sermons about thirty-five to forty minutes long, without notes but not without preparation, twice on Sundays and once or twice midweek.⁹ The forty-eight sermons on Ephesians were first preached ten years after his commentary was published, on Sundays from May 1558 to March 1559.¹⁰ In contrast to the mere thirty or so references to union doctrine in the commentary,¹¹ around 90 percent of the sermons mention and make use of it in some way.¹² It seems to be one of his default ways of speaking about the blessings and benefits of the gospel.¹³

³He is fond of alluding to Col 1:19 and 2:3 (e.g., *Sermons*, 118, 380, 396), but his own “fountain” image is pervasive (e.g., *Sermons*, 124, 169, 220, 320, 355, 402, 404, 606, 616, 703). There is a mixture of the two ideas in *Institutes of the Christian Religion: 1536 Edition* (ed. and trans. F. L. Battles; London: Collins, 1986), 57.

⁴*Sermons*, 615.

⁵E.g., in his *Commentary*: spiritual union (324), fellowship (262), intercourse (262, 323), and gathered together in Christ (271). In his *Sermons*: communication (511), engrafting (615), head-members relation (291), clothed with him (194), partakers of him (205), joined to him (222), cleaving to him (227), made one with him (282), he dwells in us in a secret union (290), we live in him (615), we put on Christ (333), incorporated into him (501), linked to him (595), and God has conjoined himself with us (616).

⁶The Commentary is *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians in Calvin’s Commentaries* (vol. 21; trans. W. Pringle; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993).

⁷J. Haroutunian, ed., *Calvin: Commentaries* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958), 15.

⁸J. D. Currid, *Calvin and the Biblical Languages* (Fearn, Ross-Shire: Mentor, 2007), 11.

⁹Currid, *Calvin and the Biblical Languages*, 22–26.

¹⁰Published in French (1562) and English (1577). De Greef, *The Writings of John Calvin*, 112–14, gives the date of the first sermon as May 15, 1558; the English edition claims May 1 (*Sermons*, viii). See R. C. Zachman, *John Calvin as Teacher, Pastor, and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 147–72.

¹¹For the most developed, see *Commentary*, 220–25 (Eph 2:1–7), 322–25 (Eph 5:28–33). Calvin often passes over a union text without comment: in *Commentary*, 207 (1:13), he supplies a verb which removes a possible reference to union, and on 235 (2:13), 245 (2:22), 309 (5:8), and 334 (6:10), he declines to comment on it, despite significant textual warrant.

¹²Only five of forty-eight sermons fail to mention it (4:31–5:2; 5:11–14, 15–18; 6:1–4, 10–12).

¹³See where the text does not itself utilise union language, e.g., *Sermons*, 181, 205, 240, 313, 438, 640.

It is significant that these sermons were preached at the same time as Calvin was revising the *Institutes* for the very last time. Richard Muller suggests that “significant editing sometimes occur[s] in strata of the *Institutes* that follow a series of sermons.”¹⁴ The same effect can be observed as a result of Calvin’s work on his commentaries.¹⁵ In my view, a good case can be made that union language becomes much stronger and more important in the final 1559 edition of the systematic work precisely because Calvin was preaching on Ephesians.¹⁶ Certainly we can say that near the end of his life the mature Calvin held the doctrine of union with Christ to be both vital and exceedingly precious.

1. The Necessity of Union

We begin, then, by looking at our need of union with Christ, as Calvin expounds it. In the *Institutes* he begins Book 3 by saying Christ’s work is “useless and of no value for us” if we are separated from him: “all that he possesses is nothing to us until we grow into one body with him.”¹⁷ Yet the situation outside of Christ is much worse than merely missing out on blessings proffered to us as a result of his suffering. Calvin sees things much more radically. Preaching on “you have put off the old man” in Eph 4:22, he says,

For we know that there are (so to speak) two fountain-heads of mankind, that is to say, Adam and our Lord Jesus Christ. Now with regard to our first birth we all come out of the fountain of Adam and are corrupted with sinfulness, so that there is nothing but perverseness and cursedness in our souls. It is necessary for us then to be renewed in Jesus Christ, and to be made new creatures.¹⁸

Fundamental to Calvin’s thought regarding our need for union with Christ is our preexisting union with Adam. It is true that “while we are out of Christ, all is under the dominion of Satan,”¹⁹ yet more importantly it is this relationship with Adam (nowhere mentioned by name in Ephesians itself) which separates us from God and renders us liable to his judgment. This makes renewal “in Christ” an absolute necessity for us. As Calvin says in the very next sermon on Eph 4:23–26, again utilising the fountain motif,

when our father Adam was once fallen, and had become alienated from the fountain of life, he was soon stripped stark naked of all good. For being separated from God, what

¹⁴R. A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 115.

¹⁵On the relationship between Books 1 and 2 and Calvin’s commentaries on the Gospels and OT historical books, see S. Edmondson, “The Biblical Historical Structure of Calvin’s *Institutes*,” *SJT* 59 (2006): 1–13. On Book 3 and the 1556 Romans commentary, see M. A. Garcia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin’s Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2008), 90.

¹⁶A separate article would be needed to prove this hypothesis. But note Ephesians quotations in 2.12.5 (added in 1559), as well as the major new section in 3.1.1 concerning union in which the first scriptural allusion is Eph 1:22 (or 4:15). See also the note on 340 of the Battles translation (2.6.1) on how soteriology is introduced in a new chapter by “this radical *in Christo* passage.”

¹⁷*Institutes* 3.1.1.

¹⁸*Sermons*, 426. See *Commentary*, 294–95.

¹⁹*Commentary*, 309.

could he be but utterly lost and hopeless? Can we find either life, or righteousness, or holiness, or soundness, or uprightness out of God?²⁰

Note that *we* are implicated in Adam's fall and *our* nature is affected by it, just as Calvin establishes in *Institutes* 2.1 (followed by the Reformed tradition generally).²¹ Hence Calvin sees the human plight from the angle of separation from God which makes us devoid of all good, both righteousness and holiness, and also from the angle of our union with Adam. He goes on to prescribe the remedy for such separation in terms of union with Christ, saying, "just as Adam ruined us and plunged us with himself into the abyss of death, so we are new created by God in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . we must rise again in him if we would live indeed . . . we must be new[ly] created in Jesus Christ."²² As Edmondson rightly summarises, for Calvin, "Adam's fall and the resultant alienation of humanity from God form the primary context for speaking of Christ as Mediator,"²³ so also does it form the primary context for speaking of our need for union with him.²⁴

The same basic idea of our desperate spiritual need for union with Christ is also communicated in other ways throughout the *Sermons*, without reference to Adam. So preaching on "they were at that time without Christ" in Eph 2:11, Calvin declares, "since we can have neither life, nor soul health, nor righteousness, nor anything else that is allowable, except in Jesus Christ, it is just the same as saying that we have nothing but utter wickedness and perdition in ourselves."²⁵ Again, in his sermon on Eph 6:19–24, he asks, "what is the reason that we are so corrupted in our nature that we are void of all goodness and filled with all kinds of vices, and in short, we are altogether detestable, except that we are utterly estranged from our Lord Jesus Christ who is the fountain of all goodness?"²⁶ Our evil works and nature in God's sight are due to our estrangement from Christ and necessitate a reunion as the only way to regain what was lost. Not only does separation from God equate to spiritual death,²⁷ but it also ruins any physical blessings we may possess: "they would all be converted to evil, if we were not members of our Lord Jesus Christ."²⁸

Interestingly, Calvin also sees that God himself has a need, in some way, for union with us. Commenting on the church as Christ's "fullness" in Eph 1:23, Calvin boldly asserts that it is "the highest honour of the Church, that, until he is united to us, the Son of God reckons himself in some measure imperfect . . . not until we are along with him, does he possess all his parts, or wish to be regarded as complete!"²⁹ Not that this strictly challenges his self-sufficiency or aseity as such, but rather it is "as if a father should say, 'My house seems empty to me, when I do not see my child in it.' A husband will say, 'I seem to be only half a man when my wife is not with me.'"³⁰

²⁰*Sermons*, 436. See *Commentary*, 220, and Ephesians references in 3.24.10.

²¹On this see John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin*, reprinted in *Justified in Christ: God's Plan for Us in Justification* (ed. K. Scott Oliphint; Fearn, Ross-shire: Mentor, 2007), 203–94 (esp. 219–20 for criticism of Calvin and 223–41 on two ways of conceiving union with Adam).

²²*Sermons*, 436–37. See Adam-Christ contrasts on 153, 194, 206, 334, 508, 601; *Commentary*, 198, 225, 229.

²³S. Edmondson, *Calvin's Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 30.

²⁴See also 1 Cor 15:22 in *Sermons*, 601.

²⁵*Sermons*, 172. See *Commentary*, 219.

²⁶*Sermons*, 702–3.

²⁷*Sermons*, 128.

²⁸*Sermons*, 571.

²⁹*Commentary*, 218.

³⁰*Sermons*, 123. Brief comments in *Commentary* become a fuller exposition in *Sermons*.

So in summary, Calvin teaches that as spiritual descendents of Adam we are estranged from God. To escape his curse and be renewed with all spiritual life and health we must be united to God by Christ. Until that union is achieved with all his people, Christ regards himself as being without his fullness; yet this must be a gracious, unmerited impetus on his part since in our natural state we show no inclination towards him.

2. *The Benefits of Union*

Lane G. Tipton argues biblically that “Jesus Christ, as crucified and resurrected, contains within himself—distinctly, inseparably, simultaneously and eschatologically—every soteriological benefit given to the church” and that “there are no benefits of the gospel apart from union with Christ.”³¹ That is certainly the view that Calvin espouses in his work on Ephesians.

To begin with, Christ received all good things from his Father for us, “with the condition that if we are truly members of his body, all things that he has belong to us.”³² Not only so but “the Father has not given him some particular portion only, but in such a way that all of us may so draw from his plenitude that we can not lack anything, for he is the fountain that can never be drained dry.”³³ Later Reformed emphases chime in well with this: Vos insists, for instance, when discussing union with Christ and the *ordo salutis*, “There is no gift that has not been earned by Him”;³⁴ and Horton, when outlining the covenant of redemption concludes, “The mutual giving between the persons of the Trinity extends outward *ad extra* to their acts of giving to creatures: gift-giving *between* them is the ground for the gifts *from* them to us.”³⁵

Yet according to Calvin what we are offered is not merely gifts but Christ himself. God “has joined himself to us in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him we are made partakers both of him and all his benefits.”³⁶ Indeed, as he goes on to note later when speaking of “growing up into Christ” (Eph 4:15–16), “we cannot possess the good things of our Lord Jesus Christ to take any profit from them, unless we first enjoy him. And that is the very reason why he gives himself to us.”³⁷ Thus, at the end of one sermon Calvin arrestingly presents Christ as inviting his hearers, “I am yours, possess ye me.”³⁸

Moreover, this is not something to be, as it were, hoarded by the congregation alone; such union is part of the grace which Calvin regularly prays will be given “not only to us but also to all peoples” as he concludes many of his sermons.³⁹ Christ offers us, in union with himself, all that we need for perfect happiness, all we can wish for, everything necessary for our joy and contentment.⁴⁰ He has all power and strength in him and can give it to us, as Calvin points out when Paul refers to that key Ephesian theme

³¹L. G. Tipton, “Union with Christ and Justification,” in *Justified in Christ: God’s Plan for Us in Justification* (ed. K. Scott Oliphant; Fearn, Ross-shire: Mentor, 2007), 32, 34.

³²Calvin, *Sermons*, 116–17.

³³*Sermons*, 704.

³⁴G. Vos, “The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology,” in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos* (ed. R. B. Gaffin; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980), 248.

³⁵M. S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 138.

³⁶*Sermons*, 289.

³⁷*Sermons*, 403, 401. See *Commentary*, 240, 262; *Institutes* 3.2.24. See also H. Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith* (trans. H. Zylstra; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 399 who concludes that the benefits cannot be separated from Christ’s person.

³⁸*Sermons*, 404.

³⁹*Sermons*, 21. See 475, 505, 591 for links to future consummated union. See also 49, 126, 184, 241.

⁴⁰*Sermons*, 73, 267, 269.

of power in 1:19 and 6:10.⁴¹ Indeed, all Christ's possessions belong to us in faith-union, in such a way that "once we are possessed of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may well give up all other things as superfluous and profitless."⁴²

2.1. Benefits Together

Controversy between Reformed and Lutheran scholars often centres around the relation of union with Christ to justification in the *ordo salutis*. Many have conceived of justification as the basis for union; Gaffin, Tipton, and Lillback have all convincingly shown that this is not in keeping with Calvin's particular way of relating the benefits of union and that this has traditionally been a more Lutheran move.⁴³ As Garcia summarises it, "the Lutheran and Reformed strands of the Reformation . . . adopted distinguishable understandings of the justification/sanctification relationship."⁴⁴ So it is surprising to find some, such as Michael Horton, arguing for that more Lutheran conception as if it were Calvin's. Horton writes that justification "is the forensic basis of union with Christ" and "the forensic origin of our union with Christ, from which all of our covenantal blessings flow."⁴⁵ Continuing the theme, he goes on to say that "Christ alone is the basis for justification and union, but the act of justification is logically prior to union."⁴⁶ He cites Berkhof in support of what he calls the "classic Reformed interpretation" of the relationship between union and justification,⁴⁷ but also claims the patronage of Calvin himself:

Regardless of whether union temporally preceded justification, Calvin is clear that the latter is the basis for the former: "Most people regard partaking of Christ (*Christi esse participem*) and believing in Christ as the same thing. But our partaking of Christ (*participatio quam habemus cum Christo*) is rather the effect of believing (*fidei effectus*)."
 . . . Forensic justification through faith alone is the fountain of union with Christ in all of its renewing aspects.⁴⁸

Since he is quoting from Calvin's commentary on Eph 3:17 here (and utilising the fountain metaphor too, no less) it is especially important for us to assess this claim. Horton appears to have inverted Calvin's teaching, missing the fact that for Calvin justification is a benefit of union with Christ and not the basis for it. As the quotation he uses from Calvin says, it is *faith* which effects our partaking of Christ, not justification (which is not mentioned in the quotation he gives, or its context, or the text being commented on).⁴⁹ To say that one of the benefits of union with Christ is the basis for the union

⁴¹*Sermons*, 108, 653.

⁴²*Sermons*, 76, 249.

⁴³Gaffin, "Biblical Theology and the Westminster Standards," 173; Tipton, "Union with Christ and Justification," 42–45; P. A. Lillback, "Calvin's Development of the Doctrine of Forensic Justification: Calvin and the Early Lutherans on the Relationship of Justification and Renewal," in *Justified in Christ: God's Plan for Us in Justification* (ed. K. Scott Oliphint; Fearn, Ross-shire: Mentor, 2007), 51–80.

⁴⁴Garcia, *Life in Christ*, 252.

⁴⁵Horton, *Covenant and Salvation*, 129, 138–39.

⁴⁶*Covenant and Salvation*, 147.

⁴⁷*Covenant and Salvation*, 147–48, citing L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 452.

⁴⁸*Covenant and Salvation*, 143; quoting Calvin, *Commentary*, 262.

⁴⁹Justification is mentioned once in the *Commentary* (230). The verb "justify" does not occur in the theological sense, while "justified" and "justifies" occur once each (outside quotations of 1 Cor 6:11 and Rom 8:30). None of these have any relevance to Horton's point.

itself, or that it is logically prior to the union in and through which it is received does not seem to make good sense of Calvin. Strangely, perhaps the clearest expression of this is in *Institutes* 3.16.1, which Horton himself quotes:

Although we may distinguish them [justification and sanctification], Christ contains both of them inseparably in himself. Do you wish, then, to attain righteousness in Christ? You must first possess Christ; but you cannot possess him without being made partaker in his sanctification, because he cannot be divided into pieces. Since, therefore, it is solely by expending himself that the Lord gives us these benefits to enjoy, he bestows both of them at the same time, the one never without the other. Thus it is clear how true it is that we are justified not without works yet not through works, since in our sharing in Christ, which justifies us, sanctification is just as much included as righteousness.⁵⁰

Both this and the preceding paragraph in Calvin make it clear that justification and sanctification are both received *at the same time*. Moreover it is explicitly our “sharing in Christ” which is said to justify us. For Horton’s interpretation to be accurate that would have to be the other way around—“our justification, which unites us to Christ.” This, however, would not only prove Horton’s point about the relationship of union and justification but also (in the context of that sentence) confound justification and sanctification, which Calvin is always extremely careful to avoid. Of course justification is important—“the main hinge on which religion turns”⁵¹—but that does not mean it is prior to or more basic than union theologically.⁵² Luther himself declared that if the article of justification stands, the church stands but that if it falls, the church falls;⁵³ and yet for him “the question on which everything hinges” was the bondage of the will.⁵⁴ We need not always read such language absolutely.⁵⁵

For Calvin then, justification and sanctification are distinct yet inseparable, and simultaneously bestowed on us in union with Christ by faith.⁵⁶ In Christ, the sun, we have both light and heat, justification and sanctification, distinguishable but together.⁵⁷ Union with him can be said to justify us or, indeed, to be the fountain of our justification, but not vice versa. We can also see this illustrated in Calvin’s work on Ephesians. The term “righteousness” can often be used interchangeably with “justification,” especially in forensic contexts.⁵⁸ So when Calvin says that “out of Christ there is no righteousness” and that righteousness “is offered to us in Christ by the gospel,” we see here that a right standing with God is one of those blessings offered to us in union with Christ.⁵⁹ If justification is taken to be synonymous with forgiveness of sins then perhaps Eph 1:7 itself could convince us that this is a blessing obtained *in* Christ

⁵⁰*Institutes* 3.16.1. See *Covenant and Salvation*, 142.

⁵¹*Institutes* 3.11.1.

⁵²See R. B. Gaffin, “Justification and Union with Christ,” in *A Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis* (ed. D. W. Hall and P. A. Lillback; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2008), 257.

⁵³*D. Martin Luthers Werke* (90 vols.; Kritische Gesamtausgabe; Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–), 40:3.352.3.

⁵⁴E. G. Rupp and P. S. Watson, *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 333.

⁵⁵Calvin even refers to *faith* as the chief of all spiritual benefits in *Sermons*, 28. I am grateful to Dr. Horton, whom I greatly admire and respect, for friendly email and face-to-face discussions on all this.

⁵⁶Garcia calls this a *unio Christi-duplex gratia* soteriology (*Life in Christ*, 3).

⁵⁷*Institutes* 3.11.6.

⁵⁸Calvin takes “righteousness” in Eph 4:24 as ethical rather than forensic, and he rules out an imputed righteousness sense in 6:14.

⁵⁹*Commentary*, 223, 228.

and not something upon which that union is based.⁶⁰ Other synonyms and antonyms for justification are also used by Calvin in relation to union.⁶¹

This would seem to imply very strongly that for Calvin justification, the imputation of righteousness, does not take place *prior* to union, but is in fact one of the manifold blessings obtained in union itself.⁶² As he says in his refutation of Osiander, “Just as one cannot tear Jesus Christ into pieces, so also these two are inseparable since we receive them together and conjointly in him, namely, righteousness and sanctification.”⁶³ Indeed, as Gaffin has suggested by examining the structure of Book 3 of the *Institutes*, “the relative ‘ordo’ or priority of justification and sanctification is indifferent theologically” to Calvin.⁶⁴ Precisely because both are given simultaneously in union with Christ it does not matter if one treats sanctification before justification (as Calvin so startlingly does) or vice versa: neither has logical or temporal priority on his model. In Christ by faith we obtain both a new life and a new legal status. Christ is the source of both; the legal change does not create the life, or vice versa.

2.2. Benefits to Come

In another sense, the benefits received in union with Christ are not perfected at the point of faith. Ephesians itself bases imperatives upon the doctrine of union: in Eph 4:25 Paul exhorts his readers to speak the truth “*for* we are members one of another.” This presupposes the existence of a spiritual unity among believers in the church which binds them to one another even as it binds them to Christ (Eph 1:10; 4:1). In the same way, Calvin often bases exhortations upon the union of Christ with his people: “Seeing that we are members of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is fitting that we should link together in true unity, or else we shall, as much as in us lies, tear his body in pieces.”⁶⁵

Calvin also often links union with Christ to rule by Christ, to make it clear that cleaving to him requires submission to his governance: “we must learn to allow ourselves to be ruled and to be held in check by the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, that thereby we may show ourselves to be true members of his body.”⁶⁶ We also can be said to submit to him *in order that* we might partake of his benefits,⁶⁷ and be motivated to mortification by our union with him.⁶⁸ Conversely, we are warned that sin cuts us off from Christ, our ungodliness threatening and hindering our union.⁶⁹

In addition, although believers are already said to be joined to and incorporated in Christ by their present faith, there remains a future aspect to our union with Christ. We do not have the full enjoyment

⁶⁰See *Sermons*, 295, for the equation of justification and forgiveness. See also the citation of similar passages (Phil 3:8–9; 2 Cor 5:19–21; 1 Cor 1:30) by D. A. Carson, “The Vindication of Imputation: Of Fields of Discourse and Semantic Fields,” in *Justification: What’s at Stake in the Current Debates?* (ed. M. Husbands and D. J. Treier; Leicester: Apollos, 2004), 72.

⁶¹*Sermons*, 44, 172, 380.

⁶²See *Sermons*, 220, for our righteousness as flowing only from “the fountain of all good” in Christ, and 559 for several benefits obtained “in our Lord Jesus Christ,” including “full righteousness.”

⁶³*Institutes* 3.11.6, from Garcia, *Life in Christ*, 2n3 (a slightly different translation from Battles, 732).

⁶⁴Gaffin, “Biblical Theology and the Westminster Standards,” 177.

⁶⁵*Sermons*, 333. Note Calvin’s standard image of tearing Christ in pieces. For other exhortations see *Sermons*, 293, 326, 443.

⁶⁶*Sermons*, 119. See 595 for the related idea of following Jesus and 292, 357, and 705 for the indwelling Spirit who reigns over us (through the word); 327 links “joined together” language with Christ reigning over us.

⁶⁷E.g., *Sermons*, 572, 573 of wives.

⁶⁸E.g., *Sermons*, 575, 673.

⁶⁹*Sermons*, 360, 495.

of all the riches in Christ which are communicated to us, yet one day we shall be filled to the full “when he has joined us perfectly to him.”⁷⁰ This is something for which Calvin occasionally prays at the end of a sermon. So, for instance, at the end of the sermon on Eph 2:8–10, he prays that God would increase his grace in us “until he takes us away out of this world and joins us with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the fountain of all perfection, that we may also be perfect in him.”⁷¹ That future consummated union with God is seen as a godly aspiration: “having him as our Head, we all reach out to God, and aspire to him, desiring nothing but to be one with him.”⁷² Yet the future is assured precisely because of our present union with Christ by the Spirit.⁷³

The question naturally arises, “Why does God not join us to himself in perfection immediately?” Calvin’s reflection on this in the sermon on Eph 4:6–8 is that God designs by this delay to teach us humility and dependence on him, and yet also to show us that we ought to value other people within the body.⁷⁴ This latter emphasis is a reminder that God “sends forth his spiritual benefits and good among us by such channels as he thinks good,”⁷⁵ for as he says elsewhere, “faith cannot be without humility, and God tests it in making mortal men to be the means by which he communicates himself to us.”⁷⁶

3. Closing the Gap in Union

3.1. Roman Catholic Errors

We now turn to another controversial aspect of union with Christ, the way in which union closes the gap between God and us. This will bring us into areas of conflict with Lutheran and Roman Catholic theologies particularly. Calvin’s doctrine was a matter of some controversy in his own time of course, and he always wrote and preached with that in mind. The most palpable polemical context for his sermons is, naturally, the ongoing battle with Roman Catholicism. He will often write or speak against “papist” doctrines or practices,⁷⁷ but his big issue with Roman doctrine is the distance it puts between Christ and his people. He inveighs against “the folly of popedom in conceiving patrons, advocates, and mediators towards God”; “the papists have,” he says, “imagined themselves to be separated from our Lord Jesus Christ, not knowing that he has become our brother in order that we might have intimate access to him.”⁷⁸

So rather than viewing God as standing afar off and remaining aloof from us so that we must run to patron saints or to Mary, “we must go straight to our Lord Jesus Christ,” or in effect we are saying “Jesus Christ is nothing to us, neither do we have access or approach to him.”⁷⁹ Ironically, Calvin presents the

⁷⁰*Sermons*, 109–10. See 403.

⁷¹*Sermons*, 168–69. See prayers on 316, 475, 505.

⁷²*Sermons*, 336. See *Institutes* 3.2.24.

⁷³See *Sermons*, 154, 468.

⁷⁴*Sermons*, 339–40.

⁷⁵*Sermons*, 120. See 402 and *Commentary*, 288.

⁷⁶*Sermons*, 215. See the idea that God sends blessings “from the inexhaustible fountain of his liberality” to us through people “as rivulets” (“Catechism of the Church of Geneva,” in Calvin, *Treatises on the Sacraments* [trans. H. Beveridge; Fearn: Christian Heritage, 2002], 70–71).

⁷⁷E.g., *Sermons*, 204.

⁷⁸*Sermons*, 113.

⁷⁹*Sermons*, 119, 123.

doctrine of union with Christ as the only true way to be united with the saints of old, who together with us are conjoined to Christ by faith.⁸⁰ To interpose them somehow in between Christ and his living people was, however, simply to deny that a true, vital union existed between them.

3.2. Protestant Errors

One of the main areas of contention between the Reformers and Rome was always the sacraments. Yet interestingly, Calvin's main argument on this score in the Ephesians work is not against transubstantiation but against the sacramentology of other Protestants (such as Lutherans and those who held the Supper to be a mere commemoration) because of their concomitant errors regarding our supposed distance from Christ. The link between union and the sacraments is of course the operation of the Spirit as the bond of our union with Christ,⁸¹ and to speak of the Spirit brings the trinitarian nature of Calvin's doctrine into view. Union with Christ is union with the Father in Christ by the Spirit.⁸² The distance between each member of the trinity and the church has been closed: the Father dwells in us by the Spirit,⁸³ and Christ comes to us by his (the Spirit's) power.⁸⁴ All three members of the trinity are at work in union since "it is by the power of the Spirit, and not by the order of nature, nor in any common fashion, that we are of the bone and of the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the reason why we are members of his body is that God his Father has ordained and established him as our Head."⁸⁵ The role of both the Father and the Spirit is to ensure that any gap between us and Christ is closed.

The link between pneumatology and sacramentology in Calvin's thought appears numerous times, quite apart from explicit discussion of the sacraments themselves. So on several occasions he comments that the Spirit's dwelling in us enables us to live by Christ's substance, that his body and blood flow to us by the Spirit's power.⁸⁶ In John 6:56 Christ says, "Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" making this a key passage for the doctrine of union. It has often been seen as referring to the Lord's Supper directly,⁸⁷ and for Calvin there is certainly a link. Yet it is at the level of union with Christ that the connection is seen: "in the sixth chapter of John, [Christ] discourses copiously and professedly on that mystery of sacred conjunction of which He afterwards held forth a mirror in the sacraments."⁸⁸ That is, for Calvin John 6 is not about the sacraments *per se*,⁸⁹ but both John 6 and the sacraments are about union with Christ; and the way that he sees the eating and drinking to be taking place in both is through the Spirit. Through his instrumentality we live by Christ's substance, so that he is anything but distant and detached from us: "the supper ought to serve as a ladder in this search

⁸⁰Calvin sees angels, patriarchs, prophets, and holy kings as our companions in union with Christ, as well as other living Christians. See *Sermons*, 113, 117, 120, 223–24.

⁸¹See *Institutes* 3.1.1.

⁸²See *Commentary*, 205, and union with the Father on 220, 235.

⁸³*Sermons*, 333. See *Commentary*, 270.

⁸⁴*Sermons*, 291, 355, 579–81, 603. See *Commentary*, 262, 291.

⁸⁵*Sermons*, 602.

⁸⁶See the idea of living by Christ's "substance" in *Sermons*, 356, 360, 404. See *Commentary*, 324.

⁸⁷See the helpful discussions in L. L. Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (2d ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 331–33, and D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Pillar New Testament Commentary; Leicester: IVP, 1991), 277–78.

⁸⁸Quoted in R. S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic, 1995), 198. See *Commentary*, 323, and *Sermons*, 578, 614.

⁸⁹See on John 6:53 in *Commentaries on the Gospel according to John in Calvin's Commentaries: Volume XVII* (trans. W. Pringle; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 265.

for our Lord Jesus Christ. It is meant to confirm us in the assurance that he dwells in us and that we are made one with him.”⁹⁰

This means that Calvin has no time for mere commemorationism. In 1539 he added a section to the *Institutes* concerning the sense in which Christ’s body is life-giving, and it is full of references to Ephesians: “the flesh of Christ is like a rich and inexhaustible fountain that pours into us the life springing forth from the Godhead into itself,” he says, quoting in support Eph 1:23; 4:15–16; 5:30, 32.⁹¹ He makes reference to a “commemoration only” view in his commentary also, labelling it “egregiously mistaken.”⁹² Many of the references on this point are to passages in Eph 5, which Calvin held to be important not just for understanding marriage but also for grasping the Lord’s Supper.⁹³ It is interesting to note that when concerned theologically with our potential isolation from *Christ*, Calvin should find such riches in a passage about marriage which was itself instituted precisely because “it is not good that man should be alone” (Gen 2:18).

Not only is Calvin against mere memorialism but he also writes and speaks against a Lutheran sacramentology/christology.⁹⁴ This again is raised in connection with the distance of Christ from his people. For example, he comments on Eph 4:10, “When we hear of the ascension of Christ, it instantly strikes our minds that he is removed to a great distance from us; and so he actually is, with respect to his body and human presence. But Paul reminds us, that, while he is removed from us in bodily presence, he *fills all things* by the power of his Spirit.”⁹⁵ In the sermon on this same passage, he says, “Jesus Christ is not so locked up in any one place but that we may feel him present, and that he dwells in us, and that he fills all things [but] *not with his body* as some have crudely imagined.”⁹⁶ He has some pastoral sensitivity to the reasons why some may feel the need of such a doctrine, namely the felt remoteness of Christ. This gulf is bridged by his doctrine of union, carefully stated to guard against the Lutheran doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ’s body: “He is gone up to fill all things,” he preaches, “*not with his body*, but with his benefits and gifts. For however great the distance may be between our Lord Jesus Christ and us, as far as heaven and earth are concerned, yet nevertheless he does not cease to dwell in us, but will have us also to be one with him.”⁹⁷

3.3. The Incarnation

There is another sense in which Christ has closed the gap between us and God, yet not in an inherently salvific way. Calvin also speaks, of course, about the incarnation itself as a union of Christ with us. So as he begins to speak about Eph 5:28 and how we are of the flesh and bones of our Lord, he says that Jesus “has taken a nature that is common to us, by which he has made himself intimate with us.”

⁹⁰*Sermons*, 581. See also 403. Baptism is not so prominent, though see *Sermons*, 193, 330.

⁹¹*Institutes* 4.17.9. He quotes the passages themselves. We cannot rely on citations of biblical texts found in modern translations of the *Institutes* since the majority do not appear in Calvin’s originals. See Muller, *Unaccommodated Calvin*, 141.

⁹²*Commentary*, 323.

⁹³Calvin was not alone in ascribing great importance to Eph 5. See H. Zanchius, *Of the Spirituall Marriage between Christ and the Church, and every Faithfull Man* (Cambridge: John Legate, 1592). Interestingly Zanchius speaks similarly to Calvin, “God has set and established all good things in Christ alone the Mediatour, so that unlesse they be communicated, and come from Christ as from the fountaine, none can be made partaker of them” (132–33).

⁹⁴See Garcia, *Life in Christ*, 149–95.

⁹⁵*Commentary*, 276.

⁹⁶*Sermons*, 353 (emphasis mine), 355.

⁹⁷*Sermons*, 346 (emphasis mine). See also 357 and *Institutes* 4.2.24.

In that sense he is bone of our bones.⁹⁸ It could sound as if Christ has saved us in the incarnation itself when Calvin preaches, “we are all knit together in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is because he took our nature upon him and by that means abolished and took away the malediction that was in Adam.”⁹⁹ So writes Trevor Hart:

The Incarnation is the Atonement. God and man *have been* reconciled in their personal union in Christ. The relationship between them has been restored and renewed. “Atonement” is not simply a consequence of something that Christ does, which pertains to us individually and independently of him. Nor is the Incarnation to be considered a mere prerequisite of some atoning act or other. The two things stand and fall together, for they are one and the same.¹⁰⁰

Yet this union of two natures in Christ, when Calvin unpacks it further elsewhere, is definitely not inherently salvific; God and man have not been reconciled by incarnation but by the atonement as a distinct (yet inseparable) act of God. Calvin makes this patently clear in his exposition of Ephesians. In the commentary, for example, he unpacks Eph 5:30–31 by saying, “‘We are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh,’ (Gen. ii.23) *not because, like ourselves, he has a human nature*, but because, by the power of his Spirit, he makes us a part of his body, so that from him we derive our life.”¹⁰¹ In his preaching on Eph 5:28–30 he unravels these things further. He says of Christ: “he could not be the mediator between God and us, unless he had been of our nature.” Why not?

For he could not have atoned for the offences through which we were bound to endless damnation, unless he had clothed himself with our body . . . so it was necessary for our Lord Jesus Christ to be our flesh in our body. . . . However, there is another matter to note . . . it is not intended that we should be so bold as to think to approach Jesus Christ, *as though we were linked to him of ourselves and of our own nature*, but that is done in the power of his Holy Spirit, and *not in the substance of his body*.¹⁰²

The point here is that Christ’s mere possession of a human nature like ours (Christmas) does not enable us to approach him or link us to him savingly. Yet it was a necessary prerequisite to our salvation (Easter), something he had to do in order to make atonement for us. The saving union by which we obtain all his benefits is not a merely natural thing, but a sovereign act of God’s Holy Spirit. As Calvin goes on to say, “it is by the power of the Spirit, and not by the order of nature, nor in any common fashion, that we are of the bone and of the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . [it] is done specially when he so works by the power of his Holy Spirit that he is our Head, and we are gathered together in him and have a heavenly status.”¹⁰³

So, to put it pithily, Christ takes our flesh and bones so that we might become bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. Christ unites himself with humanity physically, in order to redeem his elect completely.

⁹⁸*Sermons*, 600–601.

⁹⁹*Sermons*, 206. See also 391.

¹⁰⁰T. Hart, “Humankind in Christ and Christ in Humankind: Salvation as Participation in Our Substitute in the Theology of John Calvin,” *SJT* 42 (1989): 83–84. See also J. B. Torrance, “The Incarnation and ‘Limited Atonement,’” *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 2 (1984): 32–40.

¹⁰¹*Commentary*, 323–324 (emphasis mine).

¹⁰²*Sermons*, 601 (emphasis mine).

¹⁰³*Sermons*, 602.

Or in other words, faith union for Calvin is like marriage, and “Between a man and his wife there is a far closer relation; for they not only are united by a resemblance of nature, but by the bond of marriage have become one man.”¹⁰⁴ One can, after all, marry only someone who shares one’s nature, and not a dog or a cat (in England at least). Yet one does not, obviously, marry everyone who shares one’s nature! So a shared human nature does not in and of itself constitute a marriage, just as (contra Hart) the incarnation is not the atonement or the resurrection or the ascension. Yet it is a necessary step towards those events in the *historia salutis* which make possible our incorporation in Christ in the *ordo salutis*. So to conclude, the pastoral application of the incarnation and union doctrine Calvin outlines is related again to the idea of closing the gap between God and man.

4. Conclusion

We have seen then that Calvin’s work on Ephesians contains much of great interest and usefulness regarding the doctrine of the believer’s (and the church’s) union with Christ. What is latent in the commentary is often made patent in the sermons, which in turn had an effect on Calvin’s more systematic presentation in the *Institutes*. Union with Christ is presented as an essential part of our salvation, made necessary by our natural and damning union with fallen Adam. It encourages us to flee to Christ, the fountain of all perfection and goodness, to drink deeply from his blessings and benefit from all his riches which are ours distinctly, inseparably, and simultaneously in him. In its pastoral application we see that, for Calvin the scholar-pastor, to speak of our marriage to Christ by faith was a powerful and effective means of bringing Christ close to his people that they might be guarded from false teaching and encouraged to cleave to him who was the source of their life—their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor 1:30).

For those seeking a way to present the good news to a new generation, for whom the jargon of the institutional church is a foreign tongue, this emphasis in Calvin is something worth recovering and exploring in our own ministry. We have often said that Christianity is about relationship and not religion, and everybody understands relationships. While not everything can be squeezed into this mould, Calvin’s use of the doctrine of union with Christ shows it can be an immensely rich and useful way of expressing the truths of the gospel and working through theological problems. Neglecting it can lead to some serious errors both doctrinally and practically. Yet getting it right helps tremendously in making the connections between what Christ has done in history and what he can do for us (at both individual and corporate levels), connections we often find difficult to make in a way that is both biblically accurate and comprehensible to our peers. For Calvin, who wished the grace of the gospel to be granted “not only to us but also to all peoples,” it would be a fine legacy if his teaching on union were to aid us, 450 years after he preached on Ephesians and finished his immortal *Institutes*, in playing our part in that great commission.

¹⁰⁴*Commentary*, 322.

PASTORAL PENSÉES

Power in Preaching: Desire (1 Corinthians 2:1-5) Part 1 of 3¹

— Raymond C. Ortlund Jr. —

Ray Ortlund is pastor of Immanuel Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He served as Associate Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois from 1989 to 1998, and he has pastored churches in California, Oregon, and Georgia. In addition to numerous essays and articles, he has authored five books.

We begin with a question of translation. Many translations place a period after the word “conviction” in 1 Thess 1:5: “in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.”² Then a new sentence begins, “You know what kind of men we proved to be . . .” But there is a conjunction in Paul’s text: “in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction, *just as* [καθώς] you know what kind of men we proved to be . . .” If we overlook the logical hinge καθώς, we miss the force of what Paul is saying. If we include it, the whole passage opens up.

Paul is not simply juxtaposing the power of his preaching with the manner of his living. He is *correlating* the power of his preaching with the manner of his living. Paul is not recalling the power of his preaching *and* the manner of his living. He is explaining the power of his preaching *in relation to* the manner of his living: “Our gospel came to you not only in word but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction, *just as* you know what kind of men we proved to be . . .”

The Holy Spirit did not fall on Paul’s ministry by a wonderful luck. The power of Paul’s preaching to the Thessalonians depended on the kind of man Paul was among the Thessalonians. This lies at the heart of this lecture. The divine power in what we preach to people runs concurrent with the kind of men we are with people. Paul restates himself in 1 Thess 2:10 and 13:

You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. . . . When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

¹The three articles in this series are lightly edited manuscripts from the 2008 E. Y. Mullins Lectures presented at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on September 30 and October 1–2, 2008 (available at http://www.sbts.edu/resources/Audio_Resources/Mullins_Lectures.aspx). Part 1 (“Power in Preaching: Decide [1 Corinthians 2:1–5]”) was published in *Themelios* 34 (2009): 79–86, and part 3 (“Power in Preaching: Delight [2 Corinthians 12:1–10]”) will be published in *Themelios* 34:3 (2009).

²Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The Thessalonians saw in Paul the living embodiment of what he was preaching, and that intensified the impact of his message. How could it be otherwise? But here is the lovely thing about it: Paul never meant to be impressive to them; he wanted only to get close to them. That love is what made the impression because the human love they felt in Paul made real the divine love preached by Paul. Here then is our take-away from 1 Thess 1–2: *The divine power with which we preach to people is inseparable from the kind of men we are with people.*

Let's think it through by asking two questions. First, what kind of impact did God give through Paul's preaching? Second, what kind of man was Paul in his living?

1. What Kind of Impact Did God Give Through Paul's Preaching? (1 Thess 1:5)

1.1. The Gospel in Words

Our gospel came to you not only in word . . . (1 Thess 1:5).

Paul does not say, "We came to you." He says, "Our gospel came to you." He was so focused on the gospel that, when Paul came to town, the gospel came to town. Neither does Paul say, "Our gospel came to you not in word." He says, "Our gospel came to you not *only* in word." Gospel communication demands more than words, but never allows for less. The gospel has specific content calling for worthy and clear words. His words were so important to Paul that he asked the Ephesians to pray that "words may be given to me in opening my mouth" (Eph 6:19). Think of Jeremiah. God stretched out his hand and touched Jeremiah's mouth and put his words into that man's mouth (Jer 1:9–10). Jeremiah felt so inadequate because he was. What matters for us all is not our mouths but whose word is in our mouths. As someone recently said, Billy Graham might be a better preacher than you, but his gospel is no better than yours. The gospel you preach has all the power of God to create a new human race—which is exactly what it's doing, and you're a part of that miracle.

Francis of Assisi is quoted as saying, "Preach the gospel at all times; if necessary, use words." That notion is wrong. We want our lives to line up with what we say. That's where Paul is going here. But even a perfect life without words is not enough. Jesus preached. It is gospel words that God empowers to bring down strongholds of falsehood in our thinking and establish new worlds of peace and joy and justice. That's why the devil wants to silence you. It's okay with him if you live "a good Christian life" if you'll just keep your mouth shut. How did the Sanhedrin threaten the apostles? "They charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:18). And the apostles, who were shaken by that (can you imagine seeing your face on wanted posters all over town?), went back to the church and had a prayer meeting. What did they ask God to do? Not to make all the wanted posters disappear. This is what they begged God for: "And now Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness" (Acts 4:29). When Paul came to Thessalonica, the gospel came. It came in the form of words. But there was more.

1.2. The Gospel in Power

Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power . . . (1 Thess 1:5).

Some interpreters construe these power-descriptions with reference to Paul's experience—that Paul was feeling the power and the Holy Spirit and full conviction as he preached. Doubtless he was.

But that is not his point here. He is recalling to the Thessalonians what they were experiencing through his preaching. How do we know that? Because of the function of 1:5 in the argument. In 1:4, Paul says, “For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you.” How does Paul know that God has chosen them? What is the evidence of their election? Verse 5: “Because our gospel came to you not only in word but also in power.” His point is the proof of their election in the power they experienced under the ministry of the gospel.

By the way, isn’t Paul also implying that the non-elect can sit in our churches and hear the gospel, but all that happens to them is the ordinary experience of human communication? It might even move them to tears. They might, like the demons, believe and shudder.³ But what sets the elect apart is the power of God making the gospel not just a message but an experience that brings God’s eternally electing love into their hearts as the blazing new center of their existence. As the non-elect hear merely an idea, even a moving idea, the elect are acted upon by a power from beyond this world. When William C. Burns preached in Perth in 1840, one man whose life was changed said, “It is surely something altogether unearthly that has come to the town.”⁴ That is what God can do. And there is more.

1.3. The Gospel in the Holy Spirit

Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit . . .
(1 Thess 1:5).

The experience given to the Thessalonians was mysterious, miraculous and sacred. “So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). We don’t understand how the Holy Spirit works, but God’s people know what it means for him to draw near as a felt presence through the human ministry of the gospel. Just as our bodies are multisensory, so are our souls. In the Spirit-given miracle of regeneration, our spiritual senses come alive again to God. The ear of the soul opens up. Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice” (John 10:27). Paul asked, “How are they to believe in him whom they have never heard?” (Rom 10:14).⁵ Stated positively, “They do believe him whom they hear in the preaching of the gospel.” The eyes of our hearts are enlightened (Eph 1:18) as Christ shines upon us (Eph 5:14). We receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the spiritually visible face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:6). The smelling salts of the gospel arouse in us an awareness of a fragrance from life to life (2 Cor 2:16). Jesus is felt to be a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (Eph 5:2). We taste the heavenly gift and the goodness of the Lord,

³Cf. Dane Ortlund, *A New Inner Relish: Christian Motivation in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards* (Rossshire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2008), 104–5:

Non-Christians may understand the gospel with their head to much the same degree as believers. . . . According to Scripture, in fact, we need not limit this to the human realm: demons, too, can understand divine things with penetrating insight. James 2:19 tells us that “Even the demons believe—and shudder!” The devil and his minions would ace the exams given in our best seminaries. Their orthodoxy is impeccable. There is not one heretic among them. In the sermon “True Grace Distinguished from the Experience of Devils,” Edwards provocatively writes: “The devil is orthodox in his faith; he believes the true scheme of doctrine; he is no Deist, Socinian, Arian, Pelagian, or antinomian; the articles of his faith are all sound, and in them he is thoroughly established.” International awards for “Best Theologians” ought to go to the inhabitants of Hell. And if Satan be their pope, infallible he most certainly is. If post-Enlightenment thought is right in attributing pre-eminence to the cognitive over the affective, let’s sign up the demons to teach our next *Evangelism Explosion* seminar. Surely they understand the truth of the gospel better than anyone.

⁴Islay Burns, *Memoir of the Rev. Wm. C. Burns: Missionary to China from the English Presbyterian Church* (London: Nisbet, 1870), 144.

⁵Correcting the ESV. Cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975–79), 2:534.

and we long for the pure milk of the Word (Ps 34:8; Heb 6:4–5; 1 Pet 2:2–3). The Holy Spirit works with the gospel to re-sensitize our hearts to the things of God. Jesus Christ crucified becomes more real and more wonderful than the tangible things of all this world. But there is more.

1.4. The Gospel with Full Conviction

Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction . . . (1 Thess 1:5).

Paul didn't have to talk the Thessalonians into it, nor did they have to make themselves believe. God the Holy Spirit gave them the gift of certainty, and they had no lingering doubts, no buyer's remorse. In your heart you have something like a light switch. Flip that switch, the lights come on, and everything changes. But that light switch is too deep inside you for you to reach it. No one can but God alone. He does it through the preaching of the gospel. God makes the truth of Christ so clear and distinct that it takes its rightful place, in people's minds, in that position of authority by which all other ideas are adjudicated. The gospel becomes the sunlight in which believers see everything else. The gospel is not only what they see but what they see *with*. They appreciate evidences as encouragements, but they don't require evidences as necessities. They no longer look for some independently available "real world" from which they can look down and assess the truthfulness and value and authority and relevance of the gospel. The gospel is seen to *be* the truth and *their* truth. This is God's ministry of "full conviction." And it creates heroic Christians who can face anything.

When Paul came to Thessalonica, the gospel came, and so did God. He worked gospel miracles through Paul, who himself correlates this impact with the kind of man he and his team were: "Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction, *just as* you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake" (1:5). The next question is obvious.

2. What Kind of Man Was Paul? (1 Thess 1:5; 2:1–20)

The key is the last phrase in 1:5: "for your sake." When the message of divine love that they heard from Paul and the life of human love that they saw in Paul flowed together, the gospel got traction in their lives. Nothing selfish in Paul complicated that. The beautiful man he was embodied the beautiful truth he preached, *and the Thessalonians could see it*. Paul does not say here in 1:5, "just as we proved to be a certain way among you." He says, "just as *you know* what kind of men we proved to be among you." Paul is appealing to what they themselves can vouch for. In 2:1 Paul says, "You yourselves know, brothers." In 2:2 he says, "As you know." In 2:5 he says again, "As you know." In 2:9 he says, "You remember, brothers." In 2:10, "You are witnesses." In 2:11, "You know." As Paul pulls up these memories, he isn't worried what they might think. He can leave it up to them to draw their own conclusions, because *they know* how he lived among them. His proven track record of unselfish love makes the phrase "for your sake" at the end of 1:5 shine with the credibility of human loveliness, and in the rest of the passage Paul unpacks the words "for your sake." He pulls up more and more memories of their happy experience together, and we get to listen in on the conversation, to learn what kind of preacher may properly look for power, the Holy Spirit, and full conviction in his ministry.

In chapter 2 Paul shows us four marks of the kind of man he was among the Thessalonians for their sake: boldness in response to opposition (2:1–4); gentleness in response to immaturity (2:5–8); work in response to need (2:9–12); and yearning in response to separation (2:17–20). The most obvious feature of chapter 2—and the most important—is the overflowing emotional tone of it. The relational emotions packed inside the three simple words “for your sake” explode with color and fullness and beauty in chapter 2.

2.1. Boldness in Response to Opposition (1 Thess 2:1–4)

Some preachers are a real pain in the neck. Their boldness is fleshly bravado. The hidden motive is to use people in order to gratify their own personal ego-needs. Paul was bold, but not that way. His unselfish love is the whole point of this lecture. He did endure strife. The man we revere today as the great apostle was in his own time perceived as controversial. Why? He took the implications of the gospel to a new level in his ministry to the Gentiles. He did it boldly. The New Testament word for boldness—Paul uses the verbal form here in 2:2—is a compound of $\pi\alpha\nu$ + $\rho\eta\sigma\iota\alpha$,⁶ suggesting boldness as an “all-saying” candor and frankness. Boldness says, “I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27), though it was a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles (1 Cor 1:23).

Paul paid a price for that. He had already suffered in Philippi. Then he went on to Thessalonica “in the midst of much conflict” (1 Thess 2:2). What sustained his boldness? He set his heart on God: “We speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts” (2:4). And the wonderful thing was that he felt God’s approval: “We have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel.” He wasn’t ministering for God’s approval but out of God’s approval. He ministered not out of emotional emptiness but out of emotional fullness. The felt smile of God gave him the personal objectivity to love people rather than use them.

If we need people in the wrong way, just to help us stand on our own two feet as men, we will end up manipulating them for our own needs. That would be displeasing to God and disempowering to the gospel. But if we’re standing on the emotional bedrock of God’s overflowing approval in Christ, then we can love people. That’s when we have something to give them consistent with the gospel itself—the smile of God on terms of grace through Jesus Christ crucified. Richard Lovelace nails it for us preachers when he writes,

Only a fraction of the present body of professing Christians are [*sic*] solidly appropriating the justifying work of Christ in their lives. . . . Few know enough to start each day with a thoroughgoing stand upon Luther’s platform: you are accepted, looking outward in faith and claiming the wholly alien righteousness of Christ as the only ground for acceptance, relaxing in that quality of trust which will produce increasing sanctification as faith is active in love and gratitude. In order for a pure and lasting work of spiritual renewal to take place within the church, multitudes within it must be led to build their lives on this foundation.⁷

My brothers, let that renewal begin with us. Let’s begin each day with this astonishing thought: We have God’s approval already, and on terms of grace in Christ. You do not need to become the next big name in American preaching to feel that your life is worth something. If you go that way, you will be

⁶Cf. BDF §11(1).

⁷Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1979), 101–2.

unable to love people. Your ministry will be about you. But if you begin every day with the happy truth that *you are accepted* in Christ, you'll have something to give. But watch your heart like a hawk. Every heart is capable of the reverse-alchemy by which the golden gospel is turned into leaden law. Martin Luther wrote,

It is the supreme art of the devil that he can make the law out of the gospel. If I can hold onto the distinction between law and gospel, I can say to him any and every time that he should kiss my backside. . . . Once I debate about what I have done and left undone, I am finished. But if I reply on the basis of the gospel, "The forgiveness of sins covers it all," I have won.⁸

We win the battle against self-centered ministry not by debating within ourselves what we deserve but by announcing to ourselves what Christ has given us. Further, Christ has set us apart as preachers of this liberating gospel. God must love us very much. Let the happiness of it comfort your heart.

But as instructive as Paul's boldness is, we're still looking for a fuller explanation of the phrase, "for your sake."

2.2. Gentleness in Response to Immaturity (1 Thess 2:5–8)

The key is 2:7: "We were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children." Paul was no babysitter, tolerating the antics of someone else's children until the parents returned home. He cared for them as a mother does her own children. He was gentle, kind, soft, mild, soothing, not intense, not formidable, not threatening. He could see how much they didn't understand as new converts. But their immaturity wasn't a problem for Paul any more than the infancy of a newborn baby is a problem to its parents. The joy is in the child itself, the new life, the future. Paul loved these new Christians not just for what they were but for what God would make of them. He loved them in hope, and this love possessed him, sweeping him away to lengths of sacrifice only a parent understands: "Being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us" (2:8). Contrary to the *ESV*, Paul doesn't say he was ready to give himself away, prepared in principle to give himself away; he is saying he actually did it: "We were delighted to share with you . . ." (*NIV*). He didn't resent them for what they cost him. He wasn't sulking with the thought, "They have no idea the price I'm paying for them." He wasn't waiting for a huge thank-you. He was happy to give his life away. He puts "we were delighted" in the imperfect tense because it was his whole mentality. He wasn't jealous of his boundaries. Moment by moment, the question in his mind was, "How can I right now give myself away to these dear people?"

We have come to the heart of the passage. We are seeing what that phrase "for your sake" back in 1:5 really means. We are seeing what kind of man Paul was. He *desired* them. He did not desire their money or their praise or power over them. He desired *them*—and not that they would give to him but that they would let him give to them. The word translated "being affectionately desirous" in 2:8 (ὀμειρόμενοι) is used only here in the New Testament and rarely outside the New Testament. This word is found inscribed on a fourth-century grave describing the yearnings of two parents for their son buried there.⁹ Is there any more tender yearning?

⁸Quoted in Reinhard Slenczka, "Luther's Care of Souls for Our Times," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 67 (2003): 42.

⁹Cf. *MM*, s.v. ὀμείρομαι.

Not only did Paul have no ulterior motives of self-seeking, he was positively filled with motherly emotion for the Thessalonians—and he wasn’t embarrassed to show it. And remember—Paul is not telling them here how he felt; he is recalling what they themselves saw in the kind of man he was. How could they not take such a man seriously? How could his message not make an impact?

George Whitefield loved people, and they felt it. He writes in his journal about such a preaching occasion:

I began to speak, as the Lord gave me utterance. At first, the people seemed unaffected, but in the midst of my discourse, the power of the Lord Jesus came upon me, and I felt such a struggling within myself for the people as I scarce ever felt before. The hearers began to be melted down immediately and to cry much; and we had good reason to hope the Lord intended good for many.¹⁰

May that loving power come upon us.

2.3. Work in Response to Need (1 Thess 2:9–12)

Now Paul changes his simile from a mother to a father as he strains at the leash of language to describe the relational and emotional experience they all shared together: “For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory” (2:11–12). That’s what good fathers do. They inspire their kids. Mom nurtures. Dad challenges. Kids need both, and Paul did both. In one-on-one conversations, Paul looked them right in the eye and urged them strongly toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. He had the moral authority to do that because as their spiritual father he worked hard to provide for them: “We worked night and day that we might not be a burden to any of you” (2:9).

In 2:13–16, Paul builds a sidebar. He returns to the point he made in 1:5—the powerful impact of the gospel—with fuller details about the price the Thessalonians have paid for their newfound faith. In this paragraph his focus shifts from what kind of man Paul was to what kind of converts the Thessalonians have become. He shows that he understands the struggle they are facing, but he doesn’t let the thought of backing off even enter their minds. He shows them the nobility of their cause and the eternal consequences at stake. But their crisis does open the door for Paul to reassure them yet further of his feelings for them, now in an intensely climactic outpouring of love.

2.4. Yearning in Response to Separation (1 Thess 2:17–20)

“We were torn away from you, brothers” (2:17). Or, as BDAG translates it, “we were made orphans by separation from you.”¹¹ Paul felt like a mother to them, like a father to them, and now like an orphan from them. What emotional depth is this man *not* capable of? We might think, “Paul, aren’t you overreacting? You yourself say here it’s only ‘for a short time.’” But our emotional stinginess is the very weakness the Holy Spirit gently brings to the surface by showing us the generous heart of Paul. There are many “one anothers” in the New Testament. Where among them does the Bible say, “Love one another moderately”?

¹⁰Quoted in Archibald Alexander, *The Log College: Biographical Sketches of William Tennent and His Students* (1851; reprint, London: Banner of Truth, 1968), 19.

¹¹BDAG, s.v. ἀπορφανίζω.

Heaping terms upon terms, Paul describes his feelings as “great desire” here in 2:17, even as he was “affectionately desirous” of them in 2:8. But he uses a different word here in 2:17—the noun often used elsewhere in the New Testament for “lust.” What does Paul desire so ardently? Just this: “to see you face to face.” There is something irreplaceable, almost mystical, about a human face-to-face encounter. Email might be the crudest form of communication ever invented. Here’s a better way: “to see you face to face.” It’s so simple, so effective. As Jean-Paul Sartre said, “Revolution is seeing each other a lot.”¹² Getting together makes everything good more powerful. Paul the preacher said, “We endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face.” He was writing this letter to say that. This letter itself could not accomplish all that he wants. A letter is good, but face-to-face is better. Satan knows it. The greatest strategist against the cause of Christ in all the universe bends his terrible designs again and again to this end, as we see in 2:18, that we would *not* see one another.

Finally, with language that might seem reckless, even borderline idolatrous, Paul opens his heart without holding back: “For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy” (2:19–20). What is the crowning glory, the pride and joy, of Paul’s life mission? Is it not the Thessalonians? That is how unguardedly, if I may put it that way, Paul identifies with his people. And wearing the crown that they are to him and feeling the joy that they are to him “before our Lord Jesus at his coming” means it is permanent. It is recognized by the Lord Jesus himself as authentic and worthy. The special love between pastor and people begins in time but never ends throughout eternity. Even if Satan hinders Paul’s reunion with his friends in this life, they will meet again as pastor and people, and it will be immeasurably happy forever.

3. Conclusion

When the risen Lord of the church sends you to a people as their pastor, he is not sending you to them as their critic but as their friend. They may be immature. They may be bogged down in tradition or dazzled by neomania. But they are yours by the gracious appointment of Christ, and you will know them forever. If you hope for the gospel to work in their hearts with power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction, as of course you do, then don’t just preach to them; desire them. Desire not what they can do for you but what you can do for them. Love them, enjoy them, delight in them, honor them. When other pastors gripe about their churches, you set another tone. Lift your people up. Be their champion and defender. They are your glory and joy at the Second Coming. I close with Spurgeon:

A man who is to do much with men must love them and feel at home with them. An individual who has no geniality about him had better be an undertaker and bury the dead, for he will never succeed in influencing the living. . . . A man must have a great heart, if he would have a great congregation. His heart should be as capacious as those noble harbors along our coast, which contain sea-room for a fleet. When a man has a large, loving heart, men go to him as ships to a haven and feel at peace when they have anchored under the lee of his friendship. Such a man is hearty in private as well as in public; his blood is not cold and fishy but he is warm as your own fireside. No pride and selfishness chill you when you approach him; he has his doors all open to receive you,

¹²Quoted in Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts on the Sixties* (New York: Summit, 1989), 80.

and you are home with him at once. Such men I would persuade you to be, every one of you.¹³

¹³C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 169.

Book Reviews

— OLD TESTAMENT —

- A. Philip Brown II and Bryan W. Smith, eds. *A Reader's Hebrew Bible*.
Reviewed by Christopher W. Cowan 219
- Jill Middlemas. *The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and
Theology of the "Exile."* Reviewed by Ben J. M. Johnson 220
- Gregory K. Beale. *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry*.
Reviewed by Matthieu Richelle 222
- Bruce Waltke, with Charles Yu. *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical,
and Thematic Approach*. Reviewed by Rodrigo de Sousa 223

— NEW TESTAMENT —

- Joseph Fitzmyer. *First Corinthians*. Reviewed by Nijay K. Gupta 225
- The Anchor Yale Bible*. Edited by William Foxwell Albright, David Noel Freedman,
and John J. Collins. Reviewed by Andrew David Naselli 226
- Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell. *James*. Reviewed by Scott Newman 228
- Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Richard B. Hays, eds. *Seeking the Identity of Jesus:
A Pilgrimage*. Reviewed by Michael J. Thate 229
- Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett, eds. *The Reception of the New Testament
in the Apostolic Fathers*. Reviewed by H. Drake Williams III 232

— HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY —

- D. G. Hart. *John Williamson Nevin: High-Church Calvinist*.
Reviewed by Christopher C. Cooper 234
- Charles Kannengiesser. *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*. Reviewed by Matthew R. Crawford 236
- James Leo Garrett. *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*. Reviewed by Nathan A. Finn 237
- Herman J. Selderhuis. *John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life*. Reviewed by David Roach 239
- David W. Hall. *The Legacy of John Calvin: His Influence on the Modern World*.
Reviewed by Jeffrey Robinson 240
- Jonathan Edwards. *Catalogues of Books*. Edited by Peter J. Thuesen.
Reviewed by Jeffrey C. Waddington 242

— SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND BIOETHICS —

- Marc Cortez. *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies: An Exercise in Christological Anthropology and Its Significance for the Mind/Body Debate*. Reviewed by Michael Allen 243
- Christopher R. Seitz. *Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets*. Reviewed by Stephen Dempster 245
- Gerard F. O'Hanlon. *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Reviewed by Stephen M. Garrett 248
- Craig L. Blomberg and Sung Wook Chung, eds. *A Case for Historic Premillennialism: An Alternative to "Left Behind" Eschatology*. Reviewed by A. J. Gibson 250
- Karl Barth. *Church Dogmatics*. 14 vols. Edited by Thomas F Torrance and Geoffrey Bromiley. Reviewed by David Gibson 252
- Craig A. Evans and Emanuel Tov, eds. *Exploring the Origins of the Bible: Canon Formation in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective*. Reviewed by David G. Graves 254
- John Frame. *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*. A Theology of Lordship. Reviewed by K. T. Magnuson 256
- Colin E. Gunton. *The Barth Lectures*. Transcribed and edited by Paul H. Brazier. Reviewed by Scott Harrower 257
- Matt Jenson. *The Gravity of Sin: Augustine, Luther and Barth on 'Homo Incurvatus in Se'*. Reviewed by Adam J. Johnson 259
- Thomas G. Weinandy. *Athanasius: A Theological Introduction*. Reviewed by Adam J. Johnson 260
- David Gibson and Daniel Strange, eds. *Engaging with Barth: Contemporary Evangelical Critiques*. Reviewed by Peter Orr 262
- Gary L. W. Johnson and Ronald N. Gleason, eds. *Reforming or Conforming? Post-Conservative Evangelicals and the Emerging Church*. Reviewed by Armida Belmonte Stephens 264
- I. Howard Marshall. *Aspects of the Atonement: Cross and Resurrection in the Reconciling of God and Humanity*.
- Stephen R. Holmes. *The Wondrous Cross: Atonement and Penal Substitution in the Bible and History*. Reviewed by Erik Thoennes 266

Book Notes

- Graeme Finlay, Stephen Lloyd, Stephen Pattemore, and David Swift. *Debating Darwin: Two Debates: Is Darwinism True and Does it Matter*. Reviewed by Hans Madueme 269
- Eric D. Bristley. *Guide to the Writings of Herman Bavinck (1854–1921)*. Reviewed by Hans Madueme 270
- J. Daryl Charles. *Retrieving the Natural Law: A Return to Moral First Things*. Reviewed by Hans Madueme 270

Anthony N. S. Lane. *A Reader's Guide to Calvin's Institutes*. Reviewed by Hans Madueme 271

— ETHICS AND PASTORALIA —

Mark Dever and Paul Alexander. *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel*.
Reviewed by Jason M. Curtis 272

Graham Tomlin. *The Provocative Church*. Reviewed by Jason M. Curtis 273

Paul E. Miller. *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*.
Reviewed by Rhett Dodson 274

T. David Gordon. *Why Johnny Can't Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers*.
Reviewed by Rhett Dodson 276

Marion L. S. Carson. *The Pastoral Care of People with Mental Health Problems*.
Reviewed by Andrew McKie 277

— MISSION AND CULTURE —

D. A. Carson. *Christ and Culture Revisited*. Reviewed by Ted Newell 278

Jason E. Vickers. *Wesley: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Reviewed by Dave Williams 280

— OLD TESTAMENT —

A. Philip Brown II and Bryan W. Smith, eds. *A Reader's Hebrew Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008. xxviii + 1,652 pp. £34.49/\$49.99.

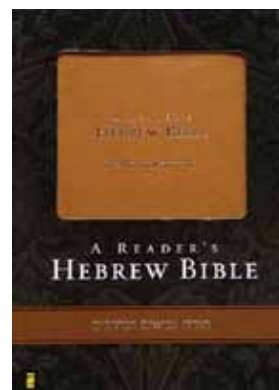
While students of the biblical languages have been served by reader's lexicons of the Old and New Testaments for several decades, reader's editions of the biblical texts themselves are a new and welcomed innovation. Given the publication of reader's editions of the Greek NT in the last several years, it was only a matter of time before a reader's edition of the Hebrew OT was produced. *A Reader's Hebrew Bible* (hereafter, *RHB*) is the first of its kind, published by Zondervan—whose *A Reader's Greek New Testament* is currently in its second edition (2007).

RHB is edited by A. Philip Brown II, associate professor of Bible and Theology at God's Bible School and College in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Bryan W. Smith, Bible integration coordinator at Bob Jones University Press. According to the editors, the goal of *RHB* is to "facilitate the regular reading of the Scriptures in Hebrew and Aramaic." As with the Greek NT, the great challenge to reading the Hebrew OT with proficiency is acquiring an adequate vocabulary. Memorizing vocabulary is one of the most difficult—yet essential—aspects of learning a language. In the case of the OT, the difficulty is compounded, given the greater total number of vocabulary and of rare words than are in the NT. A few statistics may help make the picture clear.

There are roughly 8,600 total vocabulary words in the OT. About 600 of them occur fifty times or more, accounting for approximately 80% of OT word occurrences. This is what most theological students will have memorized after two or three semesters of Hebrew—an encouraging accomplishment. The remaining 8000 OT vocabulary words only account for 20% of all word occurrences. This latter fact sounds great, until one realizes that this 20% actually translates into 84,000 word occurrences—no small number!

This is why *RHB* is such a helpful tool to aid students, pastors, and scholars in reading proficiency. It includes the Hebrew and Aramaic Bible using the Westminster Leningrad Codex version 4.4 (maintained by the Alan Groves Center for Advanced Biblical Research), which is almost identical to *BHS* and *BHQ*, but without a textual apparatus (*RHB* is, of course, not intended to replace such critical editions of the Hebrew text). Words occurring 100 times or less in the Hebrew Bible are marked numerically in the text. The footnoted glosses for these words are then provided at the bottom of each page. Thus, readers spend less time referencing a lexicon and more time actually reading.

Other features include the following: (1) Hebrew proper nouns appearing less than 100 times are screened in gray in the text. Aramaic proper nouns occurring less than 25 times are also screened in gray. This graciously prevents readers from searching the lexicon in vain for a word that happens to be person's name! (2) Each footnoted entry at the bottom of the page includes the Hebrew lemma, the stem (for verbs), and glosses from *HALOT* and *BDB* (and sometimes alternate sources) that are in most cases context-specific. (3) In the "Introduction," the editors provide a detailed and helpful explanation of the method behind their gloss listings. (4) Appendix A offers a glossary of words occurring more than 100 times in the Hebrew Bible. This is also available as a downloadable PDF file from the Zondervan



website that can be printed and folded into a booklet. (5) Appendix B is a list of differences between the Leningrad Codex and *BHS*. (6) *RHB* comes in a nice Italian Duo-Tone binding—no doubt making it much more affordable than a hardback. In terms of size, *RHB* is a bit larger than *BHS* (9.9 x 7.2 x 2.1 inches compared to 7.6 x 5.6 x 1.6, respectively), but not cumbersome. For its size, it is surprisingly lightweight. The pages are thin, allowing you to see the text on the opposite side. But this is not distracting. Thicker paper would certainly have produced a more massive product

My only criticism of *RHB* is that the footnoted gloss list at the bottom of the page is in paragraph style, like Zondervan's *A Reader's Greek New Testament*. I much prefer the layout of the *UBS Greek New Testament: A Readers Edition* (Hendrickson, 2007), in which the glosses are presented in two columns. In my opinion, the column layout is more user-friendly. The paragraph layout in *RHB*, in comparison, can make it a little more difficult to find the appropriate gloss quickly.

One should also note that the chief advantage of a reader's edition (whether of the OT or NT) holds the seeds of a potential danger. The reader who is freed from the frequent need to look up words in a lexicon may, as a result, assume he understands the meaning of a word by simply reading the gloss. But familiarity with Hebrew and Greek lexica is essential to understanding the nuances of meaning that a given word can have in various contexts. Serious exegetical study requires that Bible students not dispense with their *BDB* lexicon when they acquire *RHB*. I am grateful that the authors address this concern in their Introduction and warn against it.

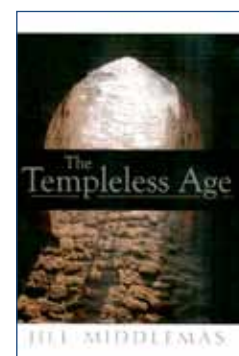
Many wonderful resources are available today to assist in learning the biblical languages. However, nothing improves one's ability to read Hebrew like actually reading Hebrew! *A Reader's Hebrew Bible* admirably facilitates this goal. The editors should be commended for their work.

Christopher W. Cowan
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Jill Middlemas. *The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the "Exile."* Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007. x + 174 pp. £16.00/\$24.95.

Jill Middlemas, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Theology at Aarhus University, has provided a concise and readable introduction to the literature and thought of the period usually regarded as "the exile." She examines the texts regarded by the standard historical critical school as being "exilic" in origin: Lamentations, several Psalms, the Deuteronomistic History, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah, Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, and the Holiness Code. But this is only one part of her purpose. Her other major goal, as the title implies, is to reconsider the period known as "the exile" as "the templeless age."

In her introduction Middlemas makes her case for the reclassification of the period from 587 to 539 BCE by identifying five reasons why her terminology more aptly describes this period than the designation of "exile": (1) there were three separate deportations in 598, 587, and 582 BCE; (2) "some people chose to flee from Judah" rather than be exiled; (3) the designation "exile" speaks only from the perspective of those who were forced to leave, not those who



remained; (4) there clearly were, even in the biblical record, people who were left behind; and (5) “the exile in certain respects never ceased” (pp. 3–5).

After a helpful review of the history of this period, taking seriously both the literary and archaeological record (chap. 1), Middlemas examines the texts by organizing them into a three-part thematic structure: the aftermath of disaster, between judgment and hope, and the turn to hope. In the first part, the “Aftermath of Disaster” (chaps. 2–3), Middlemas examines Lamentations, several Psalms, Isa 63:7–64:11 and the Deuteronomistic History (much of Deuteronomy—2 Kings). According to Middlemas this literature was intended to help the people take stock of the disaster of 587 BCE by offering a venue for lament, an interpretation of what has happened and by looking forward to the future with hope. The next major section is termed “Between Judgment and Hope” (chap. 4). Here Middlemas examines the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezek 1–39. Though Jeremiah and Ezekiel are in some sense different, both “speak of judgment and salvation” (p. 89), placing themselves between judgment and hope. The final section is “The Turn to Hope” (chaps. 5–6). In this section the author deals with Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 40–55), Ezek 40–48, Haggai, Zech 1–8 (or Proto-Zechariah), and the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26). This literature speaks about a return to the land and about the way the people need to live in order to bring that to fruition by stressing both the holiness of God and the need for the people to be holy and covenantally faithful.

Middlemas’s book must be appreciated on two levels. The first is her success in introducing the literature and thought of this period to the average reader. Her prose is readable and her discussion often quite nuanced, allowing the text to have its say while also respecting the finds of archaeology and critical inquiry. She is operating from a critical perspective that would not be appreciated by many evangelicals, which means she is examining literature that not all would agree comes from the “templeless age.” But she is forthright in her perspective, and it does not detract from her discussion of the texts. She does, however, run into the problem of making some unwarranted assumptions. For example, she asserts, “Until the collapse of Jerusalem, Yahweh was considered the supreme among many gods (monolatry rather than monotheism)” (p. 106). This type of statement without any argumentation is problematic. This implies to the lay reader that the existence of Israel as a monolatrous faith prior to the fall of Jerusalem is a fact rather than a scholarly opinion about which there is much debate. This kind of rhetoric, though understandable in a short introduction, is regrettable because of the effect it can have upon a generalist reader.

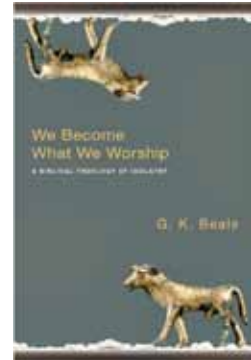
The second level at which to appreciate Middlemas’s work is her appeal for the designation of the period from 587 to 515 BCE as “the templeless age.” Her arguments for this change in terminology are good and often seem well justified. But, perhaps more importantly, she is correct when she points out that thinking of this period as “the templeless age” rather than “the exile” causes the reader to think from a slightly different perspective. She argues that if the label “the exile” creates a sense of particularity and difference, “templeless” highlights that which is held in common, and suggests creative, unifying strategies for communities of faith today” (p. 143).

In the final analysis Middlemas has offered a good presentation of the literature often associated with the period known as “exile” both historically and thematically. Whether or not we agree to dispense with “exile” language, I hope that Middlemas’s presentation receives a good hearing, for her view allows the reader to encounter the text from a slightly different perspective that is well worth considering.

Ben J. M. Johnson
Western Seminary
Portland, Oregon, USA

Gregory K. Beale. *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2008. 341 pp. £14.99/\$26.00.

Four years after *The Temple and the Church's Mission* (IVP, 2004), Beale resumes his work in biblical theology and turns to the subject of idolatry. More precisely, this work studies a neglected aspect of worship: “what people revere, they resemble, either for ruin or for restoration” (p. 16). The author first shows that this idea underlies Isa 6, and then tries to trace this theme in all the biblical passages that are intertextually related to it.



In the introduction Beale outlines his methodology and his conception of doing biblical theology *via* intertextuality. In particular, he considers that a text alluding to another one can develop an idea unforeseen by the former author but contained in his “willed type” in the sense that if one had asked him, he would have acknowledged that the “new” feature was implicitly held in his words and conformed to his intention, albeit not immediately present in his conscious thoughts when writing. Chapter 2 is devoted to demonstrating that Isa 6: 9–10 (the “foundational example”), where God commands his prophet to render the ears of the Israelites dull and their eyes dim, describes a judgment on idolatry, although this sin is not explicitly mentioned. Indeed, other biblical occurrences of the “organ-malfunction language” (to have ears but not to hear, etc.) are related to idol worship. The punishment consists of making people similar to the inanimate images they revere: deaf and blind. The following sections examine the data in the rest of the OT (chaps. 3–4), Judaism (chap. 5), the Gospels (chap. 6), Acts (chap. 7), Paul’s epistles (chap. 8), and Revelation (chap. 9). Two final chapters are respectively devoted to the “reversal from reflecting the image of idols to reflecting God’s image” and to applications for the present day.

In many respects, this book proves to be extremely interesting.

1. The author has chosen to tackle an aspect that is little studied and yet potentially rich in applications. The principle “we become like what we worship” is a fundamental one in spiritual life, and has a positive side: being increasingly transformed into the image of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18). Beale’s range of references encompasses excellent exegetical essays as well as books by authors such as John Piper and David F. Wells. It is a model for exegetes concerned with writing books for the Church.

2. This work deserves admiration: the author, a well known NT scholar, has furnished a very detailed study in OT exegesis (many technical aspects are addressed, though briefly, especially in the footnotes).

3. The study is very clearly presented. Each intertextual link is outlined with detailed explanations and tables.

Nonetheless, two important questions arise. Are the alleged intertextual links rigorously proved? If so, are the *consequences* of these links for the interpretation correctly drawn, or are they exaggerated? With regard to the first question, Beale appears relatively cautious in establishing links. As for the second, a case-by-case examination would be necessary. For Isa 6, the demonstration is fascinating; several others seem debatable, for three reasons.

1. There is evidently a risk of eisegesis. For example, Beale sometimes imports patterns from the context of a verse into another text that quotes it, and sometimes the relevance of these patterns is questionable. It is certainly possible that an author implicitly refers to the broad context of the verse he quotes, so that exploring this track is relevant and even necessary, but caution is needed. For example, Mark 7:6–7 is a quotation of Isa 29:13. Neither Mark 7 nor Isa 29 explicitly addresses idolatry. But

since Isa 29:9–10 alludes to Isa 6:9–10, where a judgment is given against idolatry (but again, only implicitly), Beale considers that all of these texts are concerned with idolatry (pp. 166–68). (He also argues that Isa 30:1–5, where he sees an allusion to idolatry, explains the criticisms of Isa 29; but these are different oracles, and their relationship is far from obvious.) Admittedly, the conclusion for Mark 7 seems theologically correct (human traditions were idols for Pharisees), but while some will find this demonstration brilliant, others will take it for eisegesis through “intertextual contagion.”

2. From time to time, deductions seem to be made too quickly. It is important that Beale tries to point out all the arguments that support his thesis in the different texts he studies. It turns out, however, that his interpretation often seems at best *possible* and far from absolutely proved. This is the case for the verses speaking about idolaters having exchanged their glory for worthless things (e.g., Ps 106:20) and where Beale detects an allusion to the “glorious reflection” of God. Likewise, is it certain that the mark stamped on worshipers in Revelation, or the gift of a new name, necessarily implies, in itself, a *likeness* to the Beast or to the Lord (pp. 256)?

3. Several theological suggestions can surprise. For example, not everybody thinks that Adam was commissioned to prevent the snake from entering the Garden (p. 132).

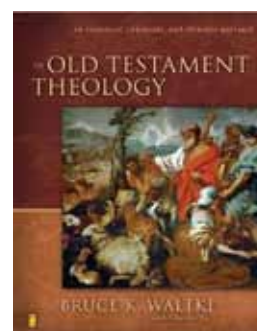
Overall, despite some shortcomings, many fascinating questions arise when reading the rationales stemming from intertextual links in order to shed light on the interpretation. The main thesis is well established, and even when one is not convinced, the discussions are stimulating. Preachers, students, and teachers will find in this exciting book not only original ideas, but also food for thought about the relevance of intertextuality for biblical theology.

Matthieu Richelle
Faculté Libre de Théologie Evangélique
Vaux-sur-Seine, France

Bruce Waltke, with Charles Yu. *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 1,040 pp. £26.99/\$44.99.

An Old Testament Theology has as its starting point the conviction that the OT is at its core a revelation of the nature and character of God and his living and intricate relationship with history. Therefore, while being through and through a biblical theology in that it focuses on redemptive *history*, it never loses its primary focus on *theology* as such, that is, in the self-disclosure of God found in the OT.

The approach is historical and chronological, with special emphasis on rhetorical criticism. The book contains three main sections. Part One is the Introduction, which runs for about 140 pages. In this helpful section, Waltke provides an overview of the field, describing the basis, task, and method of OT theology. Though the discussion is not as in-depth as the one found in other books—for instance, Barr’s *The Concept of Biblical Theology*—it is very good at an introductory level. The major section is Part Two (pp. 173–802). Entitled “Primary History,” it overviews the narrative of God’s self-revelation in history from Genesis to the Historical Books. Part Three (“Other Writings”) is devoted to prophecy, the Psalms, and the Wisdom Books.



Waltke's book is a refreshing new contribution to the field. As is characteristic with all of Waltke's work, here we find a perfect blend of solid scholarship, mastery of the biblical languages and text, and thorough knowledge of secondary literature. The book's primary strength, however, is its unabashedly spiritual and theological focus. Waltke affirms that the objectives of the book are to know God personally, to understand the nature of God's revelation, to know self, to understand the OT, to understand the NT, and to contribute to spiritual formation. In this reviewer's opinion, this should be the distinctive hallmarks of evangelical scholarship. Waltke's own account of the evangelical perspective is balanced and very helpful (cf. p. 77).

Theological students, ministers, and educated lay leaders should benefit greatly from this work. The content is sound and thorough, and the organization of the material is didactic and clear. Paradoxically, the didactic approach of Waltke—much of the material in the book consists of lecture notes compiled and edited by Charles Yu—is the source of the most negative aspects of the book.

This is because Waltke has the tendency to organize neatly much of his material under memorable or schematic headings. For instance, in his account of approaches to the Bible in the Christian world, he provides the following scheme (cf. pp. 73–77): liberal theologians stand *above* the Bible; neoorthodox theologians stand *before* the Bible; traditionalists place traditions/confessions *alongside* the Bible; fundamentalists stand *on* the Bible; and evangelicals stand *under* the Bible. While this is certainly helpful as a mnemonic device to map out positions, it also sweeps too broadly across the field. Of course, since the book is geared toward students one cannot expect discussions that are too deep. As it is, the book already runs well over a thousand pages. But if Waltke's theology is to be praised for its display of what is best in evangelical theology—the combination of high-level scholarship and piety—the reader should also be warned that it can also at times be charged with the most serious problem of evangelical thought, namely, the frequent “oversimplification” of issues and discussions that are extremely complex. This problem is particularly felt in the presentation of narrative theology and its general guiding principles.

In this connection, one needs to mention Waltke's organization of all the biblical material under the heading “The Gift of . . .” The titles of all the chapters in Parts Two and Three are written with this formula: “The Gift of the Cosmos,” “The Gift of Liturgy,” “The Gift of True Strength: 1 Samuel,” “The Gift of Hymns and the Messiah: The Psalms,” etc.

The criticisms leveled above should in no way discourage the reading of the book. This is the result of a lifetime of research and teaching by one of the most important OT scholars in the evangelical world. This in itself is sufficient reason for purchasing it. Those who are familiar with Waltke's scholarship will not be disappointed. The theological insights in this book are fundamental for the construction of a biblical theology that is sound, thoroughly evangelical, and vital for theological reflection and practical action. In this regard, special mention is to be made of the discussion of the theme of the Land as it overflows into the NT and Christian theology (pp. 558–87). This section provides important guidelines for Christians who want to be biblically informed on this timely issue. Overall, Waltke's *tour de force* is essential reading for all who desire a closer relationship with the OT and the God revealed therein.

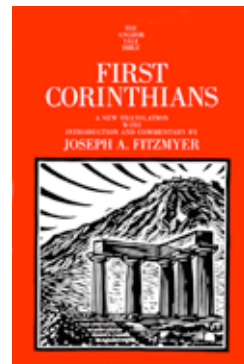
Rodrigo de Sousa
Mackenzie University
São Paulo, Brazil

— NEW TESTAMENT —

Joseph Fitzmyer. *First Corinthians*. Anchor Yale Bible. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. xxv + 660 pp. \$55.00.

Joseph Fitzmyer, a Jesuit priest and Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at the Catholic University of America, is a well-known figure in Pauline scholarship. Therefore, the choice of the editors of the Anchor (now Anchor Yale) Bible commentary series to invite Fitzmyer to pen this 1 Corinthians volume is not surprising. Indeed, in the same series he has written on Luke (1982), Romans (1993), Acts (1998), and Philemon (2000).

In terms of the general historical-critical orientation and approach of the series, Fitzmyer is also a wise choice as per the editors' description: the Anchor Yale Bible intends to 'arrive at the meaning of biblical literature through exact translation and extended exposition, and to reconstruct the ancient setting of the biblical story, as well as the circumstances of its transcription and the characteristics of its transcribers'. Though the editors claim that the series is geared toward a very general readership, many students may be intimidated by this more-than-six-hundred-page tome. The first fifteen pages of the commentary comprise Fitzmyer's own translation of 1 Corinthians. This is followed by an extensive 'introduction' to the epistle which covers standard topics such as Corinth as a city, the people of Corinth, Paul's ministry there, and characteristic literary and theological features of the letter. The remainder of the book is a section-by-section treatment of the pericopae in the epistle. In each passage, Fitzmyer offers a translation, a general discussion of the section (called 'Comment') and a series of exegetical annotations (called 'Notes').



In terms of general theological orientation, Fitzmyer does not clearly divulge his views on major cruxes in the introduction, choosing instead to treat each passage on its own. This is refreshing in that he does not seem to overlay his own view or perspective onto the whole letter. However, the drawback is that this tends to be a commentary that is almost simply a series of disjointed 'comments' on the text. Fitzmyer's strengths, though, are perspicuous. He is a master philologist and, thus, offers numerous linguistic, semantic, rhetorical, and historical-comparative insights. Illuminating references to Stoic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and ancient inscriptions abound. Also, Fitzmyer tends to point out how a particular verse or passage has been influential in the development of Christian doctrine, such as in the case of ministerial celibacy.

At times, one can detect where Fitzmyer falls on major issues. For instance, on the debate concerning whether or not the Corinthians suffered from an over-realized eschatology (a la Thiselton, Fee), Fitzmyer prefers to see the triumphal language of the Corinthians as following certain lines of Greek philosophy (see, e.g., pp. 217–18). And, on the matter of whether *sōma* should be interpreted as 'self' (Bultmann) or 'physical body' (R. Gundry), Fitzmyer tends to side with the latter.

My overall impression is that this commentary works best as a reference resource. Some commentaries are built upon a particular social, literary, or theological premise (or a combination of them), and the verse-by-verse comments are read in light of this construction. Fitzmyer does no such thing. What this boils down to, then, is a preference for what commentaries do and to what ends they are used. Consulting Fitzmyer's work will be most profitable when the interpreter wishes to determine

any relevant comparative literature, whether Jewish or Greco-Roman. Also, on major textual cruxes, Fitzmyer does relatively well at presenting the options, though one should not expect a firm ‘right answer’ from him. While I would not recommend this commentary if a student or minister could only have one resource on 1 Corinthians, nevertheless, there is much wisdom and insight in these pages for the patient reader.

Nijay K. Gupta
Durham University
Durham, England, UK

The Anchor Yale Bible. Edited by William Foxwell Albright, David Noel Freedman, and John J. Collins. 84 vols. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964– . 44,123 pp. (not including front matter). 1 CD-ROM. \$2,995.95. <http://www.logos.com/AnchorYaleBible>

The Anchor Yale Bible (henceforth AYB) is a massive and mixed commentary series covering most of the OT (50 vols.), NT (26 vols.), and Apocrypha (8 vols.). The commentaries include introductions, original translations, historical and literary criticism, outlines, verse-by-verse comments, maps and illustrations, and bibliographies. The AYB is international and ecumenical, authored by Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish scholars. Its current general editor, John J. Collins, explains, “The project is not sponsored by any ecclesiastical organization and is not intended to reflect any particular theological doctrine. . . . It aims to present the best contemporary scholarship in a way that is accessible not only to scholars but also to the educated nonspecialist.” Further, it gleans “insights from modern methods, such as sociological and literary criticism.”



These guidelines explain why many contributors employ critical tools in a way that evangelicals do not and even deny Bible doctrines that are essential to the Christian faith. So in this sense, the AYB is a mixed series that is not nearly as trustworthy as series such as the Pillar NT Commentary, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT, and New International Commentary on the OT and NT. Further, the AYB volumes are often not “accessible . . . to the educated nonspecialist” but are of use to scholars and virtually no one else. Some AYB volumes offer disappointingly sparse exegesis (e.g., Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella on Daniel, W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann on Matthew), reject the unity of the book on which they comment (e.g., Ephraim A. Speiser on Genesis, William H. C. Propp’s two volumes on Exodus, Joseph Blenkinsopp’s three volumes on Isaiah; Josephine Massynberde Ford on Revelation), or are beyond methodological controls (e.g., Mitchell Dahood’s three volumes on Psalms, Jerome H. Neyrey on 2 Peter and Jude).

On the other hand, some of the AYB volumes make outstanding scholarly contributions in linguistics and historical-grammatical exegesis (e.g., Jacob Milgrom’s three volumes on Leviticus, Marvin H. Pope on Song of Songs, Jack R. Lundbom’s three volumes on Jeremiah, Paul R. Raabe on Obadiah, Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman on Micah, Raymond E. Brown’s two volumes on John, and Joseph A. Fitzmyer on Luke, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Philemon). In general, the AYB’s strengths include scholarly exegesis and bibliographies, and its weaknesses include its liberal use of historical and literary criticism and a lack of biblical- and systematic-theological synthesis. Although the AYB is not

the first place evangelical pastors should turn for sermon preparation, it is a useful resource for biblical scholars.

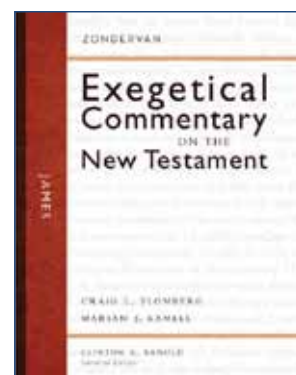
Defending the scholarly value of the AYB is not difficult, but the question in the minds of most readers is probably “But is it worth \$3,000?” That is an average of \$35.67 for each volume. It would cost about \$3,350 to buy each of the eighty-four print volumes on Amazon.com (computed on May 28, 2009), and Yale University Press offers them in bundles for \$2,660 (\$1,600 for the OT, \$830 for the NT, and \$230 for the Apocrypha). Nevertheless, I am persuaded that owning the AYB in the Libronix Digital Library System (owned by Logos Research Systems, Inc., the makers of Logos Bible Software) is far superior to owning print copies and that the price is reasonable. I have made a case elsewhere for using electronic commentaries in Libronix: “Review of Scholar’s Library: Gold, Version 3, by Logos Bible Software,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 11 (2006): 151–60; and “PNTC, BECNT, and NIGTC: Three New Testament Commentary Series Available Electronically in Libronix,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 12 (2007): 81–99. In short, using electronic commentaries in Libronix is more efficient than using print commentaries for two primary reasons: searchability and versatility. (1) Commentaries in Libronix have multiple searching capabilities that far exceed print commentaries in both speed and thoroughness, and (2) commentaries in Libronix are superior to print commentaries with reference to accessibility, readability, marking, copying and pasting, saving, and linking. Yale University Press and Logos Bible Software have done Bible students a great service by making the AYB available electronically.

Andrew David Naselli
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, Illinois, USA

Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell. *James*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.

This commentary on the Epistle of James serves as the inaugural volume in the brand new Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (ZECNT) series. Rather than add to the proliferation of critical commentary series on the market, the editors of this series have chosen to target an audience who has a working knowledge of Koine Greek and are interested in exegetical questions that go beyond the limits of traditional English language commentaries. However, they also want to ensure that the ZECNT commentaries do not lose sight of the literary-theological forest for the exegetical trees. Thus, for each pericope, the commentaries will include a section on the literary context, the main idea of the passage, a translation and graphical layout of the pericope, the structure, an exegetical outline, and a more detailed examination of the grammar, syntax, and exegetical issues within the passage. In addition, the editors are interested in putting the exegetical process to work on behalf of a theology that addresses the crucial questions and needs of the Church. As such, the discussion of each unit of text ends with “Theology in Application” in which the practical theological implications from the pericope are explored for the life of the Church.

In light of these impressive and laudable ambitions, we may ask how does this volume on James fare when weighed against the goals for the series? It appears that Blomberg and Kamell have done an



admirable job at setting the bar high for the remainder of ZECNT's slated volumes. The introduction provides a good overview of general introductory matters including a helpful survey of approaches to the vexed question of James' structure. In their view, chapter 1 lays out and then restates the three key themes of the letter, namely, trials in the Christian life, wisdom, and riches and poverty, which are then discussed in reverse order throughout the remainder of the letter in chapters 2–5. As they proceed to comment on the text of James, they are careful to orient themselves to this overarching structure at each step. The structure of the commentary makes it particularly helpful for serious teachers and preachers in the Church as each pericope is oriented to the rest of the letter by setting it within the larger literary context and structure and by clearly stating the main idea of each unit. Unique to this commentary and something that ought to be increasingly present in exegetical commentaries is a graphical representation of the structure of each pericope. The authors have essentially created a sentence-flow diagram for each unit with annotations to help the reader discern the logical flow of the passage as the authors see it. Their detailed analysis of each pericope focuses on the overall flow and content and gets into exegetical issues at a comfortable depth and dives into grammatical, syntactical, and linguistic analysis as needed for understanding the flow of the unit. While the authors remain careful at all times not to get bogged down into questions of exegetical minutiae, they demonstrate in their footnotes and bibliography that they have done their homework and are familiar with the best of contemporary scholarship on James.

Theologically, Blomberg and Kamell remain squarely in the middle of the conservative, evangelical camp. They maintain the traditional Protestant interpretation of James 2, which demonstrates that James and Paul were not contradictory in their understanding of the role of faith and works in justification, although they rightly maintain that James' discussion of the topic in Jas 2:14–26 is not an abstract discussion of theological categories but rather is grounded in his discussion of wealth and poverty that runs through chapter 2. Furthermore, they are faithful to demonstrate throughout the letter, on the basis of historical research and careful attention to James' argument, that "the rich" in the churches James addresses are most likely Christians, contra much of the exegesis in liberation theology. A very welcome feature of the commentary is the concluding chapter on the theology of James in which the authors summarize the themes of the letter and demonstrate their opinion that the various themes and emphases are unified by an emphasis on YHWH God in His unity and simplicity.

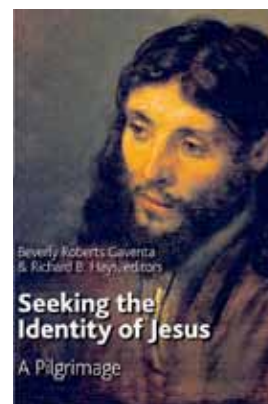
The ZECNT commentary on James is a welcome addition to the field of evangelical, exegetical commentaries. Several of its features are unique and, I believe, will prove to become standard features in future commentaries as they prove their worth for scholars, pastors, and students alike through their inclusion in this series. While professional biblical scholars will find useful features in this commentary, it should prove most valuable for pastors and theological students who have a working knowledge of Greek and are interested in a modest depth of exegetical detail that continually orients the reader to the broader literary and theological structure of the Epistle.

Scott Newman
Wheaton College Graduate School
Wheaton, Illinois, USA

Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Richard B. Hays, eds. *Seeking the Identity of Jesus: A Pilgrimage*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 345 pp. \$28.00.

The Question: “Who Do You Say that I Am?”

The conversation begun in Caesarea Philippi between the Nazarene and his followers continues to echo into the present: “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” (Matt 16:13–20 / Mark 8:27–30 / Luke 9:18–27). His initial interlocutors suggested John the Baptist loosed from death, Elijah, Jeremiah, or perhaps a prophet of old. Subsequent respondents have proposed a millennial apocalyptic prophet, a cynic-like sage of subversive wisdom, or a revolutionary of social change. None of these answers will do, however, with any sort of ontological finality. Jesus responds: “But you; who do you say I am?” (Matt 16:15 / Mark 8:29 / Luke 9:20). The question, cast in the plural, expects a singular response both then and now. This is what makes seeking after the identity of Jesus so difficult: the pilgrimage is one of recognition *and* personal confession. Or, to appropriate from John Steinbeck’s classification of the Mexican sierra in his introduction to *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, “technical objectivity” and “subjective related reality.” “The problem for seekers of Jesus,” of course, “is to sort out what is genuine from what is spurious” (p. 1).



The Book: *Seeking the Identity of Jesus*

This is the perplexing axis *Seeking the Identity of Jesus: A Pilgrimage* works along with admirable deftness and subtlety. The volume had its origins in the research initiative of Princeton’s Center of Theological Inquiry: “The Identity of Jesus Project,” a follow-up to “The Scripture Project,” whose proceedings were published as *The Art of Reading Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). The Jesus Project met twice annually for three years (2003 to 2006), and included a scholarly ensemble of specialists of Old and New Testaments, early Christianity, theologians, and church historians. All members, though of various ecclesiological and theological backgrounds, are “confessing Christians” (p. 4).

The book divides into three main sections—Sources and Methods, The Testimony of the Biblical Witnesses, The Testimony of the Church—with a chapter both situating and introducing the volume as well as a brief epilogue by the editors. There is also a helpful recommended reading section for those wishing to continue their pilgrimage.

Reviewing a book like this is difficult for many reasons not least owing to the limitations of space. Therefore we will focus primarily on the editors’ introduction as well as the first five chapters, which set a sort of methodological basis for what follows—though, of course, each subsequent chapter sets its own method with varying degrees of specificity.

The editors’ introduction orientates the project around three main themes: Sources for Knowledge of Jesus; Converging Visions of Jesus; and, Unresolved Issues (pp. 6–24). Though the editors see some value in extracanonical writings, the biblical witness and especially the four Gospels are the primary sources for our knowledge of Jesus and preservers of the early church’s memories of him (p. 6). These

Gospels take the form of narratives, portray Jesus as an historical figure, and make referential historical claims. These texts, however, cannot be reduced merely to historical reports: they are works of proclamation and theological portraits of Jesus and are complementary testimonies about the complex figure of Jesus the Christ (pp. 6–8). Though the work of several contributors, the editors see several converging visions of Jesus emerge throughout the book:

1. Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew (p. 19).
2. The identity of Jesus is reliably attested and known in the OT and NT (p. 19).
3. The entirety of the canonical witness is indispensable to a faithful rendering of the figure of Jesus (p. 19).
4. In order to understand the identity of Jesus rightly, the church must constantly engage in the practice of deep, sustained reading of these texts (p. 20).
5. To come to grips with the identity of Jesus, we must know him as he is presented to us through the medium of the narrative (p. 20).
6. The trajectory begun within the NT of interpreting Jesus' identity in and for the church has continued throughout Christian history (p. 20).
7. Jesus is not dead; he lives (p. 21).
8. Because Jesus remains a living presence, he can be encountered in the community of his people, the body of Christ (p. 21).
9. Jesus is a disturbing, destabilizing figure (p. 21).
10. The identity of Jesus is something that must be learned through long-term discipline (p. 22).

The editors recognize three persistent or unresolved issues: the relationship between historical reconstruction of the Nazarene with the “canonical” interpretation and the ecclesial rule of faith (p. 23); the unity and diversity within Scripture itself (p. 23); and the proper emphasis to be assigned to the role of experience and living encounters with the risen Jesus (p. 24).

William C. Placher's chapter, “How the Gospels Mean,” gives hermeneutical focus to seeking the identity of Jesus *in the Gospels* (pp. 27–42). His argument is that the Gospels are neither fiction, myth, nor history of the modern sort (pp. 28–36); rather, they are “history-like witnesses to truths both historical and transcendent” (pp. 37–39). There is a sense in which the identity of Jesus must be freed from the formidable textual enclosures imposed by readings that are *au pied de la lettre* or a mere storehouse of *ipsissima verba*. The texts do not constitute the personhood of Jesus, they *illustrate* it (p. 34).

Robert W. Jensen's chapter, “Identity, Jesus, and Exegesis” (pp. 43–59), “briefly consider[s] the general notion of identity” and its role in the theological tradition (p. 43). Jensen sees identities as “diachronic: an entity's identity is what allows it to be identified by the same proper name or identifying description on different occasions without equivocation” (p. 44). One wishes for an interaction with Paul Ricoeur and his notions of identity as sameness (*idem*) and identity as selfhood (*ipse*) here, but to no avail. He settles with a workable definition: “an identity . . . is what can be repeatedly specified by a proper name or an identifying description, particularly with respect to what . . . may be called a person” (pp. 44–45). In any case, Jensen helpfully adds to the complexity of seeking after the identity of Jesus by demonstrating how one must consider both his human and divine natures (p. 56). The identity of Jesus is the identity of both the Nazarene and the second person of the Trinity. Therefore, “when we ask about the identity of Jesus, historical and systematic questions cannot be separated” (p. 47).

Markus Bockmuehl's essay, "God's Life as a Jew: Remembering the Son of God as Son of David" (pp. 60–78), follows Ricoeur's proposal of identity as "a function of permanence over time" (p. 61) and suggests, "the identity of Jesus remains incomprehensible apart from the evangelists' apostolic memory and testimony to the migrant prophet and Messiah from Nazareth 'on a mission from God'" (p. 75). Therefore no "theological conscionable construal of Jesus' identity can finally bypass this vital and personified commitment to the salvation of Israel, centered on the city over which Jesus lamented, and where he died" (pp. 75–76). And that this identity "did not change on Easter Sunday"; rather, the resurrection "confirmed this identity" (p. 77).

Dale C. Allison Jr.'s "The Historians' Jesus and the Church" (pp. 79–95) demonstrates the "seriously defective" nature of the traditional criteria of authenticity (p. 79) while offering a challenging reading of memory, fiction-but-not-pure-fiction, and history in historical Jesus reconstruction. Allison's chapter might ruffle some evangelical feathers, but this essay is an informative, challenging, and needed read.

Francis Watson's *Veritas Christi: How to Get from the Jesus of History to the Christ of Faith without Losing One's Way* (pp. 96–114) looks at the disjunction between the historical Jesus and early Church's memory of him. Watson argues that while "the scope . . . and significance of this distinction still need to be clarified, the distinction itself is not the product of incoherent thinking or willful unbelief" (p. 101). Indeed, it is possible for the "scholarly construct" of the historical Jesus to be "*reintegrated* into the canonical image of the historic, biblical Christ" (p. 101), but not without first understanding the proper nature of this disjunction. Watson then ventures his thesis on the "dynamics of reception," viz., "The theologically significant Jesus (the Christ of faith) is the Jesus whose reception by his first followers is definitively articulated in the fourfold Gospel narrative" (p. 105).

The identity of Jesus is then traced through various parts of Scripture, tradition, and ecclesial testimony. All display varying levels of excellence, but some are simply breathtaking. Dale C. Allison Jr.'s "The Embodiment of God's Will: Jesus in Matthew" (pp. 117–32) and Joel Marcus's "Identity and Ambiguity in Markan Christology" (pp. 133–47) deserve special mention among the Gospels as does the lively essay by Richard B. Hays: "The Story of God's Son: The Identity of Jesus in the Letters of Paul" (pp. 180–99). The two essays on the OT—Gary A. Anderson's "Moses and Jonah in Gethsemane: Representation and Impassibility in Their Old Testament Inflections" (pp. 215–31) and R. W. L. Moberly's "Isaiah and Jesus: How Might the Old Testament Inform Contemporary Christology?" (pp. 232–48)—open inspiring vistas through which to seek the identity of Jesus, and Sarah Coakley's "The Identity of the Risen Jesus: Finding Jesus Christ in the Poor" (pp. 301–19) is as challenging as it is brilliant.

One of the weaknesses of the book is in its omissions. It is hard to think of a volume on the identity of Jesus without the portrait of the Seer—to say nothing of the Catholic Epistles or the Johannine epistles. A more sustained conversation on what constitutes identity—a term fraught with potential anachronism—would have been helpful. Moreover, the inclusion of more ethnically and culturally diverse voices would have added texture to the volume. Though diversity alone is no safeguard against hegemony, it has real potential in staving off "group think." There seems to be something slightly incongruous about tenured professors from prestigious universities spending their sabbaticals writing on a "disturbing and destabilizing" Jesus.

The jab at evangelicalism on pp. 1-2 is scoring points at best and a cheap shot at worst. One grows tired of the tawdry caricature of an evangelical Jesus "generally aloof from real-world affairs in the present," and the "inspiration and authorizer of the American empire" (2). If this is your form of

evangelicalism you are not an evangelical. If this is your critique of evangelicalism you should broaden your sampling to those outside the Falwell / TBN genre.

The Summons: History and the Interrogative Mood

Nevertheless, it is hard to think of a more worthwhile (and challenging) book than *Seeking the Identity of Jesus* for students or pastors to read on the complexities of Jesus' identity. There is a persistent ecclesiological captivity of Jesus that needs to be matched by an equally persistent iconoclasm. If our reconstruction of Jesus is made to be another "one of us" who toes our party line, we have "another Jesus" (2 Cor 11:4), a Jesus who is no Jesus, a Jesus incapable of redeeming the world and ourselves. Nor can we leave Jesus in the past, a mere artifact of antiquity. The risen Christ refuses the shackles of the historians' Jesus. History remains summoned in the interrogative mood: "Who do you say that I am?" Because Jesus is the living Jesus, the risen Lord present in the community of faith, the question persists. In answering this question the contributors of *Seeking the Identity of Jesus* have provided us all a great place to start.

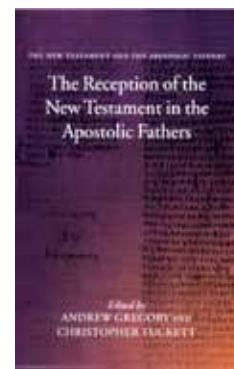
Michael J. Thate
Durham University
Durham, England, UK

Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett, eds. *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. xiv + 375 pp. £67.00/\$144.00.

The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers is an important volume for all those who are interested in Christian origins, development of the NT canon, and the development of the early church and its ministry. While many within today's church think of Christianity in terms of the NT alone, the documents that follow the NT, known as the Apostolic Fathers, have much to tell about the formation of the canon of the NT, what Christian beliefs became prominent, and how Christian beliefs were transmitted in the church.

The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers and its companion volume, *Trajectories through the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers*, are academic volumes devoted to such issues. Both were printed in commemoration of the 1905 publication by the Oxford Society of Historical Theology entitled *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*. One hundred years later Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett have edited a series of essays in two volumes in commemoration of the publication of the landmark work. These two volumes "are intended to update, develop, and widen the scope of the issues" considered in the book published in 1905 (p. v).

Four essays preface the reconsideration of the 1905 findings. Bart Ehrman's article "Textual Traditions Compared: The New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers" engages in a comparative analysis of textual variations. Ehrman examines how the NT and the Apostolic Fathers were transmitted, seeking to draw comparisons from the text criticism of both sets of documents. He concludes, "there appears to be no noticeable difference in the kinds of alteration one finds made by scribes in New Testament writings,



on the one hand, and writings of the Apostolic Fathers, on the other” (p. 11). The one difference that he finds is that none of the texts from the Apostolic Fathers was copied as frequently as the NT writings. The patterns of accidental and intentional changes are the same as those of the NT writings.

William Petersen’s “Textual Traditions Examined: What the Text of the Apostolic Fathers tells us about the Text of the New Testament in the Second Century” attempts to draw conclusions about the wording of the NT. He states that the conclusion from the 1905 volume is “in the overwhelming majority of cases, those passages in the Apostolic Fathers which offer recognizable parallels with our present-day New Testament display a text that is very different from what we now find in our modern critical editions of the New Testament” (p. 34). It is unfortunate that this is the basis for Petersen’s article as it discounts that the Apostolic Fathers may have quoted from memory, perhaps altering the wording by mistake, a conclusion at which a number of contributors from the 1905 volume arrived.

Petersen then goes on to conclude that instead of asking questions about which books of the NT are evidenced in the Apostolic Fathers, the question should be “what textual parallels are there for recognizable patterns within the Apostolic Fathers, and what do these parallels tell us about the *textual complexion* of the documents—whatever they may have been—that were known to the Apostolic Fathers?” (p. 45). Such a conclusion reflects an unfortunate bias to a fluid and evolving text of the NT in the second century.

J. Keith Elliot’s “Absent Witnesses? The Critical Apparatus to the Greek New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers” wishes to promote a greater use of the Apostolic Fathers for the text criticism of the NT. He proposes twenty places where evidence from the Apostolic Fathers should be included in the textual apparatus. Whether every case is worth adding or not, Elliot provides a convincing case for a greater use of the Apostolic Fathers in text critical decisions. Such a viewpoint receives support from a number of other scholars such as S. R. Pickering, Stanley Porter, and Tjitze Baarda.

The editors, Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett, also provide a challenging introductory essay entitled “Reflections on Method: What Constitutes the Use of the Writings That Later Formed the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers?” They address questions such as: what constitutes the use of one text in another, what constitutes an allusion instead of a deliberate quotation, when can one determine whether there is deliberate dependence, and how should certainty be assessed? Methodology for determining what a citation, allusion, echo, or theme in the NT has been an important topic in modern scholarship and one largely neglected in the 1905 volume. Gregory and Tuckett question the surety of the 1905 findings, which classified appearances of the NT in the Apostolic Fathers by labeling them A for “no reasonable doubt,” B for “high probability,” C for “lower probability,” and D for “some possibility.” While Gregory and Tuckett rightly challenge the uniformity of the 1905 volume, it is unfortunate that they do not provide any clearer method for determining the presence of the NT in the Apostolic Fathers.

Following these introductory essays, *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* considers each of the writings from the Apostolic Fathers individually in each chapter. Established scholars examine each of the Apostolic Fathers—*Didache* (Christopher Tuckett), *First Clement* (Andrew Gregory), Epistles of Ignatius (Paul Foster), Polycarp’s *Letter to the Philippians* (Michael W. Holmes), *Epistle of Barnabas* (James Carleton-Pagett), *2 Clement* (Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett), and the *Shepherd of Hermas* (Joseph Verheyden). As would be expected, they generally find fewer certain references of the NT in the Apostolic Fathers.

The manner of presentation and investigation of NT sources in the Apostolic Fathers in this volume has advantages and drawbacks. The Greek text of the NT and Apostolic Fathers are listed side by side. There is also extensive commenting following each reference that interacts with the latest secondary literature. Unfortunately, there is no summary table of references like the 1905 edition. Those who cannot follow Greek will be at a disadvantage in assessing the results.

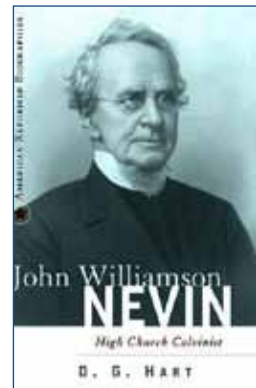
This volume is an important addition to those interested in the presence of the NT in the Apostolic Fathers. It is of importance to those interested in Christian origins, but it is likely beyond the undergraduate student. Due to manner of presentation, the 1905 edition, *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*, still is the primary reference for investigation into this important field of study. *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* is an important supplement.

H. Drake Williams III
Tyndale Theological Seminary
Badhoevedorp, North Holland, the Netherlands

— HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY —

D. G. Hart. *John Williamson Nevin: High-Church Calvinist*. American Reformed Biographies. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2005. 271 pp. \$22.99.

John Williamson Nevin is a relatively unknown academic theologian from the nineteenth century who “should matter to American Presbyterians and Reformed Christians more than he does” (p. 17), or, at least, that is what D. G. Hart argues in *John Williamson Nevin: High Church Calvinist*. In this addition to the American Reformed Biographies series, Hart puts flesh and blood upon his earlier assertion that confessional Protestantism and revival-inspired Protestantism compose two disparate movements (see D. G. Hart, *The Lost Soul of American Protestantism* [Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002]). Hart avers that the former represents the older, churchly Protestantism of the reformers and the Reformed confessions, while the latter represents a newer, experiential Protestantism wherein the institutional church, the clergy, and the sacraments are no longer conceived as central to the Christian life (p. 25).



According to Hart, Nevin is representative of a relatively small number of theologians in the nineteenth century who recognized this trend in American Christianity and who devoted his career as a writing theologian to this issue. As he follows Nevin’s Scotch-Irish Presbyterian upbringing, his initial exposure to revival-inspired piety as a student, and his rejection of modern Protestantism in favor of historic Protestantism, Hart shows how Nevin’s life and ministry revolved around his concern for the health of the institutional church. Through Nevin’s devotion to the well-being of American Christianity, Hart goes on to argue throughout the book that Nevin’s life and work ought to matter today because of his contribution “to American Protestantism generally and to the Reformed tradition specifically.” Generally, Hart explains that Nevin “identified the fissure dividing historic Protestantism from a novel form that was dominating religious life in the United States.” Specifically, Nevin contributed to the

Reformed tradition through his emphasis on the historic Protestant “regard for the church as a mediator of divine grace” (p. 34).

A strength of this work is that as Hart traces and explores Nevin’s life and work (even though he agrees with Nevin that there exists a fundamental difference between historic Protestantism and revival-inspired Protestantism), Hart carefully allows Nevin to make his case in his own way and on his own terms. As a result, readers are given an interpretation of American Christianity before the twentieth century not only from Hart, but primarily from a historically astute theologian from the period under discussion. Furthermore, through tracing Nevin’s quest for a faith that comforts amidst the trials and tribulations of life in this present evil age, Hart demonstrates that Nevin’s criticisms of American Christianity did not come from a cold academician, but from a deeply religious individual who experienced both the churchly piety of historic Protestantism and the revivalistic piety of popular Christianity and who found the latter way of religion wanting. Because Hart points out the spiritual struggles and trials that Nevin faced, Hart’s work on Nevin is also encouraging and comforting for believers as it reminds us of the importance of trusting in the objective promises of the gospel. However, I feel obliged to point out that the book is not as encouraging or comforting as the church, the preaching of the word, and the sacraments, lest Hart fuel a non-churchly form of devotion that he did not intend!

Another strength of Hart’s analysis of Nevin’s life and work is that it adds not only to the current discussion concerning the continuity and discontinuity between evangelical Protestantism and historic Protestantism, but it adds also to the related dialogue concerning what is the critical period for American Protestantism (pp. 230–36). Hart points out that the way in which a historian identifies the critical period in American church history depends largely on ecclesiological presuppositions. He explains that if an historian judges the church based upon its relationship to external matters, such as “the economy, the world of learning, or domestic or international affairs,” then the post-Civil War period was perhaps the critical period for American Protestants (p. 233). However, if an historian measures the health of the church by internal matters, such as “its worship, its sacramental life, its creed,” then the turning point for Protestants in America “came well before the late nineteenth century,” and at the point in time when Protestants abandoned the conception of the church as the mediator of divine grace (p. 233). Whether or not one agrees with Hart and Nevin, this point should cause students of the period to reconsider the role that presuppositions play in their historiography.

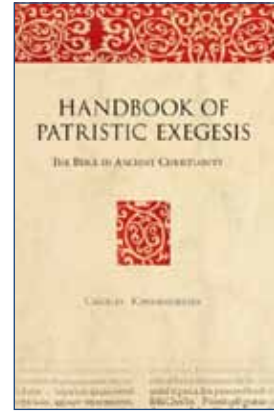
Although some will see this as a strength, those who envision more continuity than discontinuity between historic Protestantism and evangelical Protestantism will detect a weakness in Hart’s conclusion. Hart does not venture so far as to suggest that the different forms of Protestantism make up two different religions, as did Nevin (p. 234). Nevertheless, Hart does not hide his fundamental agreement with Nevin concerning the validity of making a distinction between historic Protestantism and revival-inspired Protestantism and of arguing for the superiority of the former over the latter.

In conclusion, Hart’s work on Nevin serves as a helpful addition to studies in American Christianity from an astute historian who considers himself a confessional rather than an evangelical Protestant. Those scholars, students, and pastors who work through this volume will likely sharpen their own understanding of the importance and comfort of the church, the clergy, and the sacraments.

Christopher C. Cooper
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Charles Kannengiesser. *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*. The Bible in Ancient Christianity 1. Boston: Brill, 2006. xxxiv + 1,496 pp. £154.00/\$228.00.

The *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* is a welcome addition to the growing body of literature on the interpretation of the Bible among the church fathers. This is a field that evangelicals have, for the most part, been slow to engage. Far too often patristic exegesis is simply derided with well-worn epithets such as allegory, and those examples of patristic interpretation adduced in introductory books on hermeneutics are often the worst examples that do not justly represent the fathers' interpretive approach. Such an attitude creates a tacit tension for evangelicals who nevertheless staunchly maintain the creeds of Nicaea and Chalcedon, for the theological conclusions reached at those ecumenical councils were based upon the fathers' exegetical meditations. It is high time for evangelicals to awaken to the vast body of patristic exegesis and, indeed, to sit at the feet of the fathers as they think upon Scripture.



The history-of-dogma approach to the fathers (e.g., von Harnack) that began in the eighteenth century tended to obscure the exegetical contributions of the church fathers by emphasizing only the development of doctrine. As a result, even today patristic interpretation of the Bible is often overlooked. As stated in the introduction to this volume, “The centrality of the Bible to the whole patristic reality is something that is not generally recognized” (p. 12). For example, the fifth-century bishop Cyril of Alexandria is most remembered for his involvement in the christological controversies surrounding the Council of Ephesus (431), even though approximately seventy-percent of his surviving corpus consists of exegetical commentaries on Scripture, much of which remains untranslated into any modern language. *The Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* is a good place to start for those who wish to explore the fathers' approach to Scripture.

The sheer size of *The Handbook for Patristic Exegesis* is a testament to the degree of labor that went into its making. Previously published as two volumes, it has recently been released in a single bound volume. The author, Charles Kannengiesser, a widely respected scholar in the field who formerly taught at Notre Dame and the Institut Catholique of Paris, says in the introduction that the book was ten years in the making. The goal of the volume is not to make an original contribution, but “through analyzing relevant scholarly contributions, to attempt a coherent understanding of scholarly achievements within the whole field of patristic exegesis for almost a century” (p. 3). The book is divided into two parts. The first part, consisting of approximately the first quarter of the book, is essentially a short introduction to the field. Kannengiesser reviews the past fifty years of international research in the field, along with brief discussions of Jewish interpretation and Graeco-Roman rhetoric, two foundational contexts for understanding the fathers' exegesis. Next is a discussion of patristic hermeneutics and a book-by-book overview of how the fathers approached individual books of the Bible.

The second part of the handbook is a chronological survey of the individual fathers and movements. The period surveyed spans the first century to the seventh century in the West and the ninth century in the East. For every person (e.g., “Justin of Rome”) or significant topic (e.g., “The Formation of the Scriptural Canon”), Kannengiesser provides a brief overview of the issue and then a bibliography for further study. The bibliographies prove to be one of the most useful parts of the book, as they list critical editions of an author's works (if available) and modern translations, along with monographs and articles

on an author's exegesis. The studies listed in the bibliographies survey scholarship broadly, including sources in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Latin. Kannengiesser even has a chapter on patristic exegesis in Armenian, Georgian, Coptic, and Ethiopian Christian literature, languages that are often overlooked in the field, and in which much further work remains to be done. As a result, *The Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* serves as an ideal starting point for any research project on the interpretation of the Bible among the fathers.

It should be noted that, although Kannengiesser is the primary author of the book, there are several other "special contributions" from other recognized scholars in the field. For example, Sydney H. Griffith of Catholic University of America authored the section on Ephraem the Syrian, while the chapter on patristic exegesis of the books of the Bible was written by David L. Balás of the University of Dallas and D. Jeffrey Bingham of Dallas Theological Seminary.

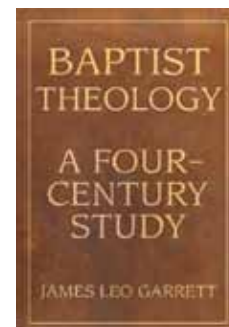
Patristic exegesis should be especially useful to evangelicals engaged in a variety of research projects. For example, the fathers did not approach the study of the Bible assuming the modern dichotomy between biblical studies and systematic theology, and as a result, their exegesis is intimately interwoven with their theology. Those modern theologians and biblical scholars involved in the burgeoning movement of theological interpretation should find the fathers especially useful dialogue partners. Furthermore, the fathers' interpretation was also profoundly spiritual and ecclesial, and so should interest those involved in modern attempts at spiritual theology. As seen in Athanasius' *Letter to Marcellinus*, "It was through seeing themselves in that mirror [of Scripture] that Christian believers found a coherent expression for both their most intimate convictions and their collective behavior" (p. 14).

The Bible has always been at the heart of evangelical identity and conviction, and rightly so. The plowman can sit and profitably read and understand the Scriptures with only the aid of the Holy Spirit. However, the doctrine of the perspicuity of Scripture does not negate the benefit of hearing the exegetical meditations of others. "In an abundance of counselors there is safety" (Prov 11:14). It is time for evangelicals to arise and claim the great patristic exegetical heritage as their own. For those who wish to undertake this task, *The Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* is an indispensable tool.

Matthew R. Crawford
Durham University
Durham, England, UK

James Leo Garrett. *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009. 743 pp. \$55.00.

Over the past half century, James Leo Garrett has established himself as the dean of Baptist historical theologians. In the course of his distinguished career he has served on the faculties of Baylor University, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has written widely on such matters as Free Church ecclesiology, Baptist history and identity, church discipline, and the relationship between Southern Baptists and American evangelicalism. He is also the author of a significant two-volume systematic theology. These themes come together in *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*, which is a comprehensive



survey of Baptist historical theology. It is fitting that Garrett's *magnum opus* appears in 2009, when Baptists celebrate the 400th anniversary of their movement.

Baptist Theology is divided into thirteen lengthy chapters organized in a basically chronological manner. The first three chapters explore Baptist theological roots and the origins of the English General (Arminian) and Particular (Calvinistic) Baptists, respectively. Chapter four addresses early American Baptists, and chapter five surveys advocates and opponents of the missionary awakening among Baptists in both North America and Britain during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Chapters six and seven give significant attention to theological controversies such as Landmarkism, the Stone-Campbell movement, the Down Grade Controversy in Britain, and the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversies in North America.

Chapter eight is devoted to Baptist participants in the academic biblical theology movement, while chapter nine examines Southern Baptist thought in the twentieth century. The next three chapters are rather eclectic, focusing upon Baptist neo-evangelicals in the mid-twentieth century, progressive Baptists attempting to “re-envision” Baptist identity, “incursions” into Baptist theology such as dispensationalism and various types of leftward theological trends, and the influence of missiology and globalization on Baptist thought. The final chapter discusses ten “new voices” in Baptist theology since World War II.

There is much to commend about this book. Garrett helpfully argues that Baptists have theological roots in multiple movements, regardless of what one believes about Baptists' historical roots. Generally speaking, he does a fine job of describing the diversity within theological sub-movements among Baptists. The sections that focus on more recent Baptist thinkers is very helpful and complements earlier studies of individual Baptist theologians like the two collections of essays edited by Timothy George and David Dockery (*Baptist Theologians* [1990]; *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition* [2001]). The sections on Baptist scholars in the two-thirds world are also a helpful contribution to Baptist historical theology. His discussion of the recent Inerrancy Controversy in the SBC is fairly evenhanded, a rarity among Baptist scholars, most of whom have a personal stake in one side or the other. Garrett also appropriately treats both pastor-theologians and academic theologians, both of whom have significantly shaped the Baptist tradition.

Garrett does offer the occasional questionable interpretation or oversimplification. He gives little attention to theological development between the first and second generations of English Particular Baptists, a topic of considerable scholarly debate in recent years. He also seems to virtually equate English hyper-Calvinism with High Calvinism, failing to recognize that not all of the latter moved to embrace the evangelistic hesitancy of the former. When discussing Southern Baptist Landmarkism, Garrett correctly notes the “high church” nature of the movement, but he argues that practices like a rejection of close communion and alien immersions are Landmark doctrines, even though those positions were common among American Baptists well over a century before Landmarkism.

The scope of Garrett's study is impressive; there is simply no other work that contains this much information about Baptist historical theology. Garrett painstakingly summarizes virtually every confession of faith, parses nearly every variation in doctrine, and extensively interacts with an enormous amount of primary and secondary sources, including dozens of unpublished dissertations. At times Garrett is encyclopedic to a fault; one chapter contains almost 600 footnotes. There is also little effort to synthesize material and/or draw wider implications for Baptist history and thought.

Despite the comprehensive nature of *Baptist Theology*, there are several curious omissions. Garrett says little about Canadian Baptist thinkers and African American Baptist theologians. In his chapter on biblical theologians, he overlooks significant works like Paul House's *Old Testament Theology* (1998) and Thomas Schreiner's *New Testament Theology* (2008), both of whom wrote their treatises while on the faculty of Southern Seminary. While one could argue that Schreiner's work is too recent for inclusion, there are other titles from 2008 that receive treatment. Also omitted is *A Theology for the Church*, a 2007 systematic theology text with contributions from numerous Southern Baptist theologians. There is little mention of either catechisms or hymnody, two crucial (though popular) sources of Baptist theology that have been recently highlighted by scholars such as Tom Nettles, Bill Leonard, and William Brackney.

Baptist Theology makes a significant contribution to the scholarly literature in the field of Baptist studies, particularly in North America. Though the book is perhaps a bit too cumbersome to be widely adopted as a classroom text, it is an invaluable resource for professors who teach Baptist history or courses in historical or systematic theology in a Baptist context. Garrett's work is also the one volume that scholars in other traditions will want to add to their libraries if they wish to have a one-stop treatment of Baptist thought. Garrett's study provides the perfect complement to Brackney's more accessible, but far less comprehensive *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought* (2003).

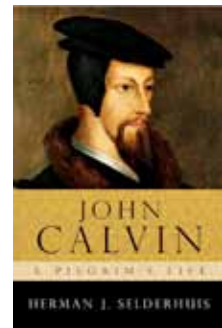
Nathan A. Finn
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
Wake Forest, North Carolina, USA

Herman J. Selderhuis. *John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life*. Translated by Albert Gootjes. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009. 287 pp. \$25.00.

Too many scholars have portrayed John Calvin as a stoic who opposed all fun in favor of dry doctrine disconnected from life. *John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life* by Herman Selderhuis is a helpful biography that corrects this mischaracterization. Selderhuis is professor of church history and church polity at the Theological University Apeldoorn in the Netherlands and author of several books, including *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms*.

Selderhuis argues that Calvin submitted to God's providence while simultaneously approaching life with emotion and striving for excellence. He claims to study Calvin "as neither friend nor enemy" (p. 8) and uses letters as his most important source. Ten chapters trace Calvin's life chronologically and classify each portion of his life with a thematic heading. For example, "Preacher" summarizes the years 1541 to 1546, during which time Calvin preached in Geneva and worked to impose godly order on the church (pp. 110–44). "Widower" describes 1549 to 1551. Selderhuis uses the chapter to explore Calvin's views on marriage along with his own experience in marriage (pp. 167–88). "Soldier" describes how Calvin fought for the cause of Christ until the last moments of his life (pp. 236–59). The author concludes that Calvin was a sincere and direct man who made an indelible impression on Christianity worldwide.

Selderhuis presents a well-written account not burdened by excessive quotations or references but supported by extensive research. Beginners will find the style accessible while Calvin scholars will find the arguments precise. Selderhuis also helpfully combats common mischaracterizations of Calvin. For



instance, he notes that Calvin did not rule Geneva as a tyrant (p. 128) and that “he was more flexible than the usual image of Calvin would lead us to think” (p. 154). Additionally, the author suggests topics for further research. The book’s greatest strength, however, is its ability to inspire Christian devotion through Calvin’s example. After noting that Calvin began each day with prayer, Selderhuis writes, “He prayed a lot because he expected so much from it” (p. 161). To explain Geneva’s transformation into a haven of Christian rest and prosperity, Selderhuis cites Calvin’s persistent Bible teaching: “It is difficult to estimate the influence of the daily exposition of the Bible and the years of biblical teaching given to the youth in Calvin’s Geneva” (p. 211). Such depictions of the Reformer’s commitment to Christ spur laymen and ministers alike to similar discipleship.

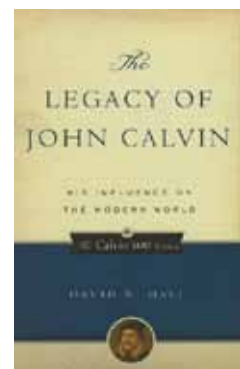
Despite its many strengths, the book has a couple of weaknesses. First, the citations are difficult to follow. Rather than footnotes or endnotes, the author lists sources by page in a section at the end of the work. Apart from careful searching, readers could miss the source list altogether. Also, though Selderhuis references arguments from secondary sources, he hardly ever cites those sources. Second, the book’s organizational scheme seems forced at times. In some chapters the material does not all fit the topical heading while in others, Selderhuis departs from his stated time period in order to explore the heading.

Overall, Selderhuis presents a helpful portrait of Calvin as scholar, pastor, friend, and family man. Scholars and students alike would do well to add this book to their libraries.

David Roach
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Louisville, Kentucky, USA

David W. Hall. *The Legacy of John Calvin: His Influence on the Modern World*. Calvin 500. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2008. 112 pp. \$12.99.

In my denomination the great reformer John Calvin might well benefit from a good public relations guru. Some of our people see him as a monster that burned his theological enemies at the stake. Some see him as the dour little man with a scruffy goatee and an affinity for headgear that looks like leather football helmets who invented the doctrine of election. Others see him as a hero whose writings are rich with biblical exegesis that edifies the soul, a man whose theology exists at the headwaters of the tributary from which their denominational stream originated. But most think John Calvin is a guy they vaguely remember from high school, which is to say the vast majority know neither the man nor the massive contribution he made to Western civilization.



In a brief compass of 112 pages, David W. Hall’s new work *The Legacy of John Calvin: His Influence on the Modern World* goes a long way toward remedying such ignorance of Calvin and his towering significance on the landscape of modern culture. Hall, who serves as senior pastor of Midway Presbyterian Church in Powder Springs, Georgia, outlines the main section of his short survey by detailing “Ten Ways Modern Culture is Different because of John Calvin.”

And what a profound difference Calvin made. For example, in the area of education, Hall points out that Calvin broke with medieval pedagogy that limited education primarily to the aristocratic elite and established the first college in Geneva. Calvin's Academy featured two levels of curricula: one for the public education of Geneva's youth and another for the training of Gospel ministers.

As to the uninformed old canard that Calvin majored on theological ideas and minored on ministerial compassion, Hall chronicles Calvin's care for orphans, the needy and displaced refugees through his mercy ministry, the Bourse Française. The Bourse became a pillar of societal welfare in Geneva and serves as a model for modern welfare reform that argues "teach a man to fish" as opposed to "give a man a fish" and keep him on the public dole. Further, Hall unpacks Calvin's lasting contributions to modern society in areas of law, freedom of the church, decentralized politics, the doctrine of calling or vocation, economics, music, and the printing press.

Hall argues that there are two types of leaders: leaders who predict future changes and those who change future predictions. Calvin was of the second stripe: "Calvin was of the type [who] observes the trajectory but determines that it needs correction," he writes. Calvin certainly brought about change in the church, but also saw to it that the body of Christ leavened the culture around it with the gospel in deep and meaningful ways.

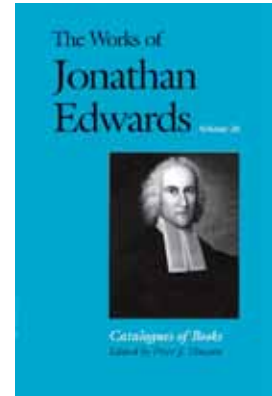
The work concludes with a brief outline of Calvin's life and death and includes a section of tributes to Calvin and his legacy from evangelical leaders, both contemporary and historical, ranging from Anglicans to Baptists, Independents and Methodists. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, a man from my own denomination, was enraptured by Calvin's view of the divine decrees and never shrunk back from proclaiming what he knew to be a biblical truth that cut hard against the grain of human pride: "I do not hesitate to say, that next to the doctrine of the crucifixion and resurrection of our blessed Lord—no doctrine had such prominence in the early Christian church as the doctrine of the election of grace. . . . There seems to be an inveterate prejudice in the human mind against this doctrine, and although most other doctrines will be received by professing Christians, some with caution, others with pleasure, yet this one seems to be most frequently disregarded and discarded."

Hall's new book serves as a much-needed reminder of Calvin's significance beyond the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The work is well written, compelling, readable, and brief enough to be read in one or two sittings. It is definitely excellent public relations for a well-deserving historical figure. May it gain a wide reading to correct many misconceptions about one of the great ministers in the history of the church.

Jeffrey Robinson
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Jonathan Edwards. *Catalogues of Books*. Edited by Peter J. Thuesen. The Works of Jonathan Edwards 26. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. 496 pp. £58.00/\$95.00.

In the fall of 2008 the capstone was placed upon what is arguably one of the most significant publishing monuments of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. After more than fifty years, the critical letterpress edition of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* finally came to a conclusion with the release of volume twenty-six of this august set. Begun in 1957 with the herculean efforts of Harvard University American literature professor Perry Miller, the Yale edition of Edwards' *Works* saw the general editorship pass from Miller to John Smith and finally to Harry S. Stout. And that is not all. With the arrival of the twenty-first century, the writings enter a new phase with the Jonathan Edwards Center website at Yale University: <http://edwards.yale.edu>. Even though this critical edition of Edwards' *Works* would be considered mammoth by almost anyone's assessment, the letterpress edition will not contain all of Edwards' writings. However, over the next few years, that lacuna will be filled with all the great Northampton pastor-theologian's work getting posted at the JEC website.



This final volume of the letterpress edition of Edwards' *Works* is comprised of his reading catalogue and account-book entrees, which open for the reader a window into Edwards' book-lending habits. Edwards scholars have previously been able to gain access to these documents by traveling to Yale's Beineke Library. Now his reading habits can be analyzed in a convenient format ably assisted by the helpful editorial introduction of Peter J. Thuesen. Readers could be forgiven for thinking that this might be the least interesting of all the volumes in the Yale *Works*. However, that initially plausible reaction would be quite wrong. For years scholars have debated back and forth about Edwards' intellectual influences. Was he a disciple of John Locke or was he more beholden to French Cartesian Nicolas Malebranche? Was his first love natural science, philosophy, or the Bible? These are the very kinds of questions that may find solutions in this volume.

Thuesen, echoing the ground-breaking work of Norman Fiering and other Edwards scholars, demonstrates that Edwards was not the lone intellectual prodigy living in a colonial wilderness that earlier generations of students of Edwards thought. Quite the contrary, Edwards was a member in good standing of what has been called the transatlantic republic of letters. While it is still quite true that Edwards was a brilliant thinker, he was no provincial. Despite the apparent geographical seclusion of the American colonies prior to the Revolutionary War, it is clear that Edwards kept his pulse on the intellectual currents of the mother country and indeed of much of Europe. Edwards was a *bona fide* citizen of the British Empire. Through regular and assiduous reading of newspapers, periodicals, other books, and correspondence with friends in the UK, Edwards was able to keep abreast of the latest intellectual trends of the day.

One thing is for certain. While Edwards read widely and truly was a renaissance man, it is clear that the center of his world was the Triune God of the Bible and his Word. It has been persuasively argued that Edwards was biblicistic and God-intoxicated. This volume is manifest evidence of that truth. This volume, along with some of its more recent companions in the Yale *Works* (the "Blank Bible" being one such example) clearly demonstrate that Edwards was a well-rounded reader, with interests in science, philosophy, geography, history, theology, biblical commentaries, languages, etiquette, and

more. Thuesen ably assists us with navigating our way around the seemingly unintelligible lists. It is said that you can tell a lot about someone by looking over his or her library. This volume will enable the contemporary reader to do just that.

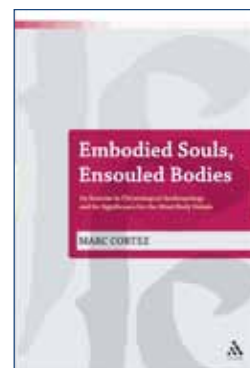
This volume is symbolic of an end of an era. For over fifty years Edwards scholars have waited (sometimes impatiently) for the next installment of the Yale *Works*. The wait is now over. But a new era of greater access to Edwards' writings in this letterpress edition of his work and the JEC website has begun. One can hope that it will yield even greater understanding of the one who has been called America's Augustine.

Jeffrey C. Waddington
Westminster Theological Seminary
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

— SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND BIOETHICS —

Marc Cortez. *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies: An Exercise in Christological Anthropology and Its Significance for the Mind/Body Debate*. T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology. London: T&T Clark, 2008. vi + 243 pp. £65.00/\$135.00.

Marc Cortez's book nicely fits the bill as the first volume in this series, which aims to present monographs "with a particular focus on constructive engagement with the subject through historical analysis or contemporary restatement." The book helps contemporary doctrinal construction in both ways: offering a historical analysis of Karl Barth's anthropology adjoined with a contemporary restatement of the mind/body debate, viewing its shape in light of Barth's christocentric theology. Readers interested in anthropology, dogmatic method, or the theology of Karl Barth will find this book worthwhile. It should be added that the volume proves an excellent entryway into philosophical debates regarding mind and body for the uninitiated. Dealing with wide swaths of literature, Cortez manages to show a keen sense of judgment, balance, and breadth. In addition, the book includes very few typos to detract from his compelling account.



Cortez introduces the terrain, and then he engages issues of christological method in chapter two. Chapters three and four focus on phenomenological and ontological components of anthropological debate. He then turns in chapters five and six to assessing nonreductive physicalism and holistic dualism, respectively. Finally, he concludes the book with a suggestion for further christological consideration of anthropology. The book's thesis is that the biblical portrayal of Christ sets the parameters within which we must think about human nature and by which various theories of human nature must be assessed. Cortez finds eight implications for human beings from the exegesis of the plot-line of the Gospels (p. 106). He applies them specifically to one major debate: the mind/body debate.

Two terminological issues arise throughout the book. First, does the book address the body/soul or the mind/body debate? Second, is "christological anthropology" equivalent to some form of "christocentric theology" and, if so, which? Cortez's comments in chapter three are necessary but not sufficient to address this second question, which will be related to how one assesses Barth's methodology

throughout his *Church Dogmatics* (especially after II/2). It would be helpful here to see Cortez deal with Barth's exegesis of christological types in the OT, to see if a "christocentric approach" and a "covenantal ontology" (both terms endorsed by Cortez) can be a fully canonical project.

It is helpful to plot this book within the world of Barth studies. Whereas George Hunsinger believes that it is unhelpful to speak of Barth having an ontology, for his remarks about being as such are piecemeal and *ad hoc*, Cortez joins John Webster in demurring and continuing to speak of Barth's ontology (what Webster calls a "moral ontology," Cortez refers to as a "covenantal ontology"). By this, neither Webster nor Cortez suggest that Barth believes there is a dogmatic perspective to be taken on every issue in thinking the human; rather, as Cortez puts it, "although such an account does not provide a specific theory of human nature, it can serve to *limit* the range of legitimate options for such a theory" (p. 108). The Word of God (and our dogmatic efforts to witness rightly to it, to whatever degree they are faithful) guides, but does not replace human intellectual efforts.

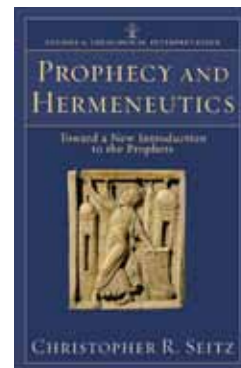
Furthermore, Cortez offers insight into how Barth thought about the relationship of body and soul. He notes the polemical attacks upon both monism and dualism in Barth's *oeuvre* (3.II), and he wisely moves beyond the hyperbole to suggest some sort of dogmatic superstructure. George Hunsinger's suggestion that Barth operates according to the "Chalcedonian pattern" in thinking about the relationship of divine and human reality arises in Cortez' exegesis of Barth's anthropology, with each of Hunsinger's three elements finding a correlate here (pp. 88n39, 93n55). Barth thinks the body and soul must be viewed together (intimacy), as really distinct, each in their own right (integrity), and in a certain order of soul preceding body (asymmetry). This "theological grammar" does play out across Barth's construal of divine and human communion (p. 93), and Cortez has done a great service in showing its manifestation in the realm of anthropology.

Finally, Cortez does suggest ways in which the body/mind debate may proceed according to a christological paradigm. He suggests strengths and weaknesses of both the nonreductive physicalist and the holistic dualist positions (pp. 154, 187). He points to lingering questions about each theory, noting possible systematic ramifications that might prove troubling (e.g., can nonreductive physicalism maintain a robust notion of human freedom?). In addition, Cortez suggests further application of Barth's christocentric paradigm, how reassessment of the biblical narratives might turn to various anthropological questions (e.g., Christ's two wills and the issue of compatibilism). "The point at every step, though, would be to recognize that we need to broaden the scope of our investigation and sharpen the focus of our christological vision, so that we begin to comprehend fully what it means to say that '[t]he nature of the man Jesus alone is the key to the problem of human nature' [III/2, 136]" (p. 197). Having savored this monograph, one surely hopes that Cortez will follow his final suggestions with more exegetical analysis and dogmatic reflection on christological anthropology in related works.

Michael Allen
Knox Theological Seminary
Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA

Christopher R. Seitz. *Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. 264 pp. £14.99/\$23.00.

This book is an ambitious attempt to understand anew the prophetic witness of the OT by taking seriously its canonical presentation, which also has relevance for history. The typical introduction to the prophets provides a historical presentation, arranging the prophets chronologically based on a critical reconstruction of the past. Consequently, Amos is frequently presented first and Jonah is last. This ignores the canonical presentation of the prophets, which has the major literary sequence of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, followed by the twelve Minor Prophets, which open with Hosea and close with Malachi. For Seitz, the problem with the historical critical reconstruction is that it is always dependent on new facts being discovered and is fraught with uncertainty: “Historical redescription virtually requires instability, for the past is constantly requiring fresh reconstructions of it once the Bible is seen chiefly as a *source* for this and not its *own presentation of it*” (p. 68). Moreover the reconstruction provides a fundamentally different context for the prophetic word than that of the canon. In the historical presentation, the prophets comprise a list of isolated individual voices, each with individual charisma. The canonical presentation emphasizes sacred authority as well as literary and thematic unity whose goal is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Yet the canonical presentation is equally historical as well for it presents “its own very sophisticated version of history” that is figural—a configured witness provided by the final form of the canon. Seitz cites Barth to the effect that biblical history is “a very particular history of reconciliation and revelation.” The only way to appreciate this is to have a paradigm with its own “unique presentation of time and of God’s accomplishing word within it . . . to allow the final form of the witness to have its say in just that form” (72). In the historical critical presentation, the prophets are “loners” who have been configured out of the biblical witness to Jesus Christ; Seitz wants to figure them back in, and it is only the canon that can do this.



Seitz essentially focuses on the twelve Minor Prophets to make his point for heuristic reasons. Most introductions to the prophets completely overlook the material form of the Minor Prophets. They constitute one book in the Hebrew Bible with Hosea at the beginning and Malachi at the end. Although it is true that the order found in the book follows general chronological sequence with the pre-exilic prophets followed by the post-exilic ones, a number of the prophets do not have historical notations to date them to a particular time, namely Joel, Obadiah, and Jonah. Historical critics generally date them to the exilic or post-exilic periods, resulting in a later treatment than would be the case if the canonical order was followed. But Seitz points out that what is gained for history is a loss for theology. Noting the work of literary critics who are studying the unity of the book of the Twelve, Seitz shows that there are important theological reasons for the placement of these particular books early in the canonical order. Hosea concludes with a call for Israel to repent while Joel gives an instance of repentance in its generation. Moreover, Joel concludes with the same quotation that initiates the book of Amos; Obadiah 1–10 is virtually a commentary on Joel 4:19 (MT); and Obadiah 15–21 expounds Amos 9:12. And while Obadiah focuses upon the judgment of a foreign nation, this is not the last word as the next text in the canonical sequence, Jonah, offers salvation to a foreign nation.

Moreover, Seitz advances additional theological reasons for a new understanding of the Minor Prophets. Hosea begins the prophetic collection to show the nature of the covenant that was made

with Israel. It was a covenant of love and mercy but it is not just any mercy: Hosea is a commentary on Exod 33–34 and in particular what I term the “apostles’ creed of the Old Testament” (Exod 34:6–7). This theme of mercy and grace as well as justice is developed in the ensuing prophetic witness virtually as a *leitmotif*: Joel, Jonah, Micah, Nahum. Here Seitz considers the work of Raymond Van Leeuwen and others in which the juxtaposition of mercy and judgment throughout the prophets has important hermeneutical significance.

Seitz is at his best when pointing out the literary connections between books and then trying to understand their theological significance. He notes the hermeneutical impact of the psalms in Jonah (chap. 2) and Habakkuk (ch.3) that prepare the way for the Psalter to follow in the Hebrew canon. But his comments are rich with profound insight:

Both psalms tell of audacious hope amid death, in the belly of a whale and the belly of history’s dark unfolding. Jonah’s tribute to the Almighty is so unanticipated—prior to his disgorgement on safe shores—that the Gordian knot of interpretation is regularly cut and the psalm excised or moved to a “better place” (how might we even know what that is?). In its present place, however, it is both a powerful reminder that praise is a lesson best learned when all is dark and that praise even so hard-won can be tragically short-lived. (p. 243)

Seitz’s work also demonstrates that the critical reconstruction of Jonah’s place in history often leads to hermeneutical distortion. For example, Blenkinsopp’s point that the late appearance in history of Jonah with his message of love shows that by this time prophecy is exhausted and that there is a new understanding of the prophetic message that “God’s ultimate will is always and everywhere to save” (p. 23). But this is a Jonah “figured out” of the canonical presentation. However, if Jonah does not have the last word, but is “figured in” to the prophetic witness, he is heard in harmony with his close canonical neighbor, Nahum, who deals with the same historical nation—Assyria. Consequently, Blenkinsopp’s conclusion is in need of just a bit of revision. The tenor of God’s grace must be harmonized with the bass of His judgment. Thus the strengths of this book are obvious: the witness of the canon itself and not a historically uncertain reconstruction, the literary associations and thematic unity that result, the hermeneutical significance of the canonical arrangement, and the exegetical insight that Seitz provides. This is a book that will be required reading for all future studies on the prophets. Seitz is to be commended for his yeoman service in this regard.

Yet this book is not without its weaknesses. Seitz is laudably trying to find a middle way between the extremes of faith and history with his canonical presentation. On the one hand there is the pious understanding of the prophets, which are understood for their dogmatic and religious value. On the other is the historicist view, which lays bare the historical background of the prophets focusing on their historical context while ignoring their moral and religious authority. Both views of course are wrong, for Scripture is neither disembodied faith nor can it be reduced to embodied history. “[This] faith-history dichotomy would suggest only two basic options but my judgment is that a canonical reading of the prophets averts such a cleavage” (p. 81n12). While I deeply sympathize with Seitz’s efforts, I can’t help but think that there is too large a gap between his “canonical history” and “ordinary history.” This was a problem that his mentor, Brevard Childs, in my judgment never completely overcame. Can there be a canonical meaning independent of historical meaning? I think there can be, if there is no historical claim in the “canonical” text. But what if the canon makes a historical claim? It seems to me that prophecy has at its heart historical claims. Historical verification was one of the criteria for biblical prophecy (Deut

18:15ff.). If Ahab came back alive from Ramoth-Gilead, then Micaiah was no prophet. All the people were witnesses (1 Kgs 22:28). I realize that a “theological history” and a “secular history” have different perspectives, but they must deal with the same unfolding of chronological reality; otherwise one of them must be the stuff of “fairy tales.” The theological maximum must have a historical minimum. The prophetic claim has for its *raison d'être* transcendence. This shows that ordinary history is not ordinary history but is also shaped by the God of the prophets, who is the God of all time. It is because He is the Lord of History (not now divided into secular and sacred) that prophecy can be prophecy.

Many of the prophetic headings and many of the details in their speeches show the importance of a common history to which everyone has access, which locates the prophetic words in a particular time and place. They were part and parcel of the same historical process that included everyone. But among other things what made them different was their ability to see the future, not in some clairvoyant sense but in a profound theological sense. Thus, the heading at the beginning of Amos (the words of Amos “two years before the earthquake” [Amos 1:1b]) not only resonates with the mention of the earthquake in the last days in Zech 14:5, but it points to something that Amos predicted would happen in ordinary history and gives his words instant credibility. If the canonical prophets were not actual prophets speaking their words in flesh and blood, their words would be timeless gnostic sayings. If they could be reduced to their historical times, they were not prophets. Their words are incarnational, transcendent, historically particularized expressions of the divine will.

This is a difficult problem and it will just not go away by asserting the importance of the canonical form and a specialized sophisticated version of history. On the one hand how can Sacred Scripture be treated as such by the believer and on the other hand as any other document when the believer uses the historical critical method? The biblical-theology movement of the 1950s and 1960s failed to do this because the historically critical minimum and the theological maximum were too often at odds with one another. The problem with the historical critical method is the anti-supernatural bias of its premises: for one it is based on assumptions that treat the canon like any other document. It is interesting that Paul’s understanding of the resurrection of Christ has no place for such a discrepancy between a sophisticated special version of history and ordinary history. In 1 Cor 15, he argues that the resurrection is the bedrock belief of Christianity without which it makes an empty claim. His understanding is based on sacred documents (according to the Scriptures) but also on historical “fact” (personal experience and eye-witnesses). As is often pointed out, people in the first century were not more naïve and credulous than people today (although our contemporary culture is rife with examples that prove the opposite). Yet Paul was sensitive to history, and if these historical “facts” had not happened, there would be a colossal problem for him. It seems to me that a critical historical method has to be worked out that can be the ally of Scripture, not its enemy, a tool that is not methodologically atheistic but that is open to theism. At any rate this is a tall order, but I think it is a necessary one to help us move forward to be able to treat the Bible truly as the canon.

While I think the historical problem is the main weakness of Seitz’s presentation, there are a few others. In a work that is laying the foundation for an introduction to the prophets that has Jesus Christ as its ultimate hermeneutical goal, it would have been nice to see a few more examples of figural interpretation in the light of the great Figure himself. If Christ himself embodies the nation of Israel, then it would have been interesting to see how this embodiment fulfilled the words of the prophets with their focus on the Son of Man (Ezekiel), the suffering servant (Isaiah), the new David (Hosea), the ruler from of old (Micah), the Davidic booth (Amos), the experience of Jonah, etc. The ease with which

Jesus saw his life and ministry combining and fulfilling these images of the future assumes the collective witness of the prophetic material. It would have been fascinating to see how Exod 34:6–7 with its dialectic of mercy and justice works its ways through the prophets to reach its culmination in the death of the God-man. In this regard, I am not only thinking of individual texts but also of larger complexes. For example a number of scholars have argued that the juxtaposition of judgment and salvation oracles in the prophets contributes to a pattern stressing the death and resurrection of Israel. The fact that the death of Jerusalem and its resurrection occurs at the midpoint of the Twelve can hardly be coincidental as Seitz points out. But it seems to me the redemptive historical significance of this fact in light of the NT would have been worth pondering. I am sure that that the author, master exegete that he is, could have added a stimulating chapter in which he sketched out just how the Prophets part of the Law and Prophets pointed to Christ. Perhaps another edition of this book could include such a chapter.

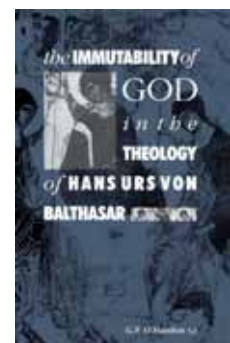
Thirdly, I was expecting some connection of the Prophets with their counterparts in the Hebrew Bible: the Former Prophets—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. As Seitz points out, the purpose of the historical superscriptions of many of the prophets is to relate them to the narratives in 1–2 Kings. But also as Freedman has shown, the pairing of four books of prophetic oracles with four “historical” books in the Hebrew canon is hardly coincidental. Moreover the strange silence of the Latter Prophets in the Former Prophets (Kings) is probably intentional. Although there are many theories as to why the narrative histories are included with the Prophets, it would be helpful to have a discussion of this particularly in a book that is dealing with the Prophets and the canon. As scholars have argued, the evidence of “canonical binding” between the beginning of the Former Prophets and the end of the Latter Prophets further argues for the integrity of this canonical division.

The above criticisms are not intended to derogate an extremely stimulating and thoughtful work, but are meant in the spirit of helping to lay a solid foundation for the study of the Prophetic Books in the future. I think that this book points the way forward to help us understand the prophets in their canonical form.

Stephen Dempster
Atlantic Baptist University
Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada

Gerard F. O’Hanlon. *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. 1990. Repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. xiii + 230 pp. £24.99/\$45.00.

A trend within contemporary studies on the doctrine of God has emerged over the last three decades, what Stanley Grenz calls “The Triumph of Relationality.” This turn toward relationality is an attempt by theologians like Jürgen Moltmann to safeguard God’s love and his immanent presence among and concern for his creation. These theologians believe that the classical notion of Christianity fails to do justice to the prevalent suffering and turmoil of the twentieth century thereby rendering the Gospel impotent in a modern world. Classical theism with its notions of God as the infinitely perfect being untouched (immutable) or unmoved by such suffering (impassible) is the culprit.



Gerard O'Hanlon provides us with a critical and integrative synopsis of one of the preeminent Roman Catholic theologians of the twentieth century, Hans Urs von Balthasar, who attempts to navigate through these deep doctrinal waters in order to respond to these criticisms. Balthasar does not respond, though, to the specific question of divine immutability or impassibility *per se*. He instead replies to these charges within the broader context of the God-world relationship, which is one reason why he arranges his trilogy—*The Glory of the Lord*, *Theo-Drama*, and *Theo-Logic*—not in typical systematic fashion, but rather in a symphonic approach that privileges God's self-revelation in Christ to articulate God's beauty, goodness, and truth. O'Hanlon's purpose, then, "is to establish what Balthasar has to say concerning the immutability of God and to assess the validity of his position" within the compendium of Balthasar's work without getting lost in the labyrinth of his thought (p. 6). A tall order indeed!

O'Hanlon contends that Balthasar's position on divine immutability and hence impassibility rests on the notion of an eternal kenosis within the immanent Trinity. He cites Balthasar's consideration of Phil 2:5–11 as the primary locus of the self-emptying of the eternal Logos, first by becoming incarnate and second by his subsequent death on the cross. As such, this second kenosis is contained within the first. It is this first kenosis that allows Balthasar to contend for some kind of "event" within the Godhead, "an event which consists in the loss of equality with God in respect of possession of the OT form of divine glory" (p. 12). How, though, can there be a sense of "loss" within the Godhead?

Balthasar defines this event within the Godhead, according to O'Hanlon, in terms of the intra-trinitarian love between the Father, Son, and Spirit whereby the Father gives himself without remainder over to the Son. In doing so, the Son and the Spirit reciprocate this self-giving love by giving everything back to the Father. Such divestitures not only reveal the dynamic, self-giving nature of God's love but also posit an infinite distance between the persons of the Godhead such that therein lies the *possibility* of all other earthly distances. As such, O'Hanlon maintains that Balthasar's position on God's immutability is "not merely to indicate [God's] reliability, but more importantly to point to that perfect divine fullness of being which can yet be reconciled with the element of 'ever-more,' a reconcilability which is remotely hinted at in this understanding of trinitarian love" (pp. 132–33).

O'Hanlon attempts to prove his hypothesis, that this divine eternal kenosis is at the heart of Balthasar's notion of divine immutability (chap. 4), by examining the incarnation (chap. 1), creation (chap. 2), and time and eternity (chap. 3) in relationship to God's immutability. Chapter 1 details Balthasar's navigation between those who univocally attribute mutability to God and the traditional philosophical understanding of divine immutability that posits a transcendent, static, and immovable God. O'Hanlon concludes this chapter with a sketch of Balthasar's *via media* that proceeds from God's self-revelation in Christ with its trinitarian presuppositions to the dramatic event of love in the eternal Godhead. Chapter 2 gives further reason as to why Balthasar posits such an event in God that stems from an analogical relationship between God and creation, highlighting the otherness and difference of the created order without compromising its unity. Chapter 3 surmises that time and eternity are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary so long as primacy rests with eternity understood as supra-temporality. O'Hanlon concludes his study by comparing Balthasar's position to others (chap. 5) and offering a final assessment (chap. 6).

O'Hanlon's criticisms of Balthasar do raise important concerns. He notes that, at times, Balthasar is imprecise and unclear, especially on matters of time and eternity. He attributes this imprecision, in part, to Balthasar's "close association with the Christian tradition of spirituality," although O'Hanlon believes that Balthasar's commitments to critical exegesis and ecclesiastical tradition provide balance.

O'Hanlon also suggests that Balthasar's imprecision can be attributed to his lack of engagement with opposing viewpoints (e.g. process theism), which would bring his position into clearer focus. Finally, a sustained analysis of Balthasar's use of Scripture is also needed to bring clarity and correction, I might add, to Balthasar's views.

O'Hanlon's brief account of Balthasar's position is not only an apt rendering but also provides readers with a superb introduction that traces the thread of divine immutability through several aspects of Balthasar's theology (i.e., Trinity, Christology, soteriology, creation, history of salvation, and eschatology). As such, O'Hanlon's rendering of Balthasar raises important questions for evangelicals. For example, how are we to construe the God-world relationship? Are *contemporary* conceptions of classical theism in accord with the patristic fathers and medieval divines, or have the likes of Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas been misrepresented? How does the trinitarian nature of God shape our understanding of his actions in the world and hence influence our conception of other doctrines (e.g., the nature of Scripture)? Evangelicals with their firm commitment to the authority of Scripture as well as their growing understanding of Church history should engage Balthasar, and O'Hanlon's work is an excellent starting point.

Stephen M. Garrett
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, Illinois, USA

Craig L. Blomberg and Sung Wook Chung, eds. *A Case for Historic Premillennialism: An Alternative to "Left Behind" Eschatology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009. xix + 184 pp. £12.99/\$24.99.

A Case for Historic Premillennialism (hereafter *CHP*) is a collection of essays edited by Craig L. Blomberg and Sung Wook Chung. Most of the essays were first presented as papers in a 2007 conference on historic premillennialism at Denver Seminary. *CHP's* arrival is timely since historic premillennialism has enjoyed little systematic defense and development since the work of George Eldon Ladd. The essays in *CHP* set out to fill this lacuna by presenting a defense of historic premillennialism and a critique of its rival, dispensationalism.

Timothy P. Webber begins the book with a fascinating survey of the history of premillennialism in which he chronicles the revival of premillennialism in the post-reformation era and the rise of dispensationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Webber's primary goal is to explain why "Left Behind" eschatology ultimately eclipsed nondispensational premillennialism in terms of size and influence in the twentieth century. His answer is that from the beginning, dispensationalism has always been a popular movement, marketed to "the *populace* . . . at a *populist* level" in a way that non-dispensational premillennialism never has (p. xvii).

Richard H. Hess follows with an essay examining what the OT "has to say about the future and especially about the events that people refer to as the great tribulation and the millennium" (p. 25). Hess argues that in the major OT prophets a pattern emerges that leads one to conclude that although "God preserves his faithful people through suffering and trials, there is no evidence that they are preserved out of such experiences" (p. 28), including the final great tribulation. The second part of Hess's essay advocates a literal view of the rebuilding of the Jewish temple in keeping with a literal, straightforward

reading of Ezek 40–48. Hess concludes that the OT Jewish expectation concerning the future should lead us to expect an earthly millennial kingdom in which God’s promises to the Jewish people find fulfillment.

Hélène Dallaire broadly surveys “the themes of millennialism, the afterlife, and resurrection in the Jewish literature of the biblical, intertestamental and rabbinic periods” (p. 38). She illustrates the broad variety of views on these themes within this vast body of literature and demonstrates that premillennialism is, by no means, incompatible with Jewish eschatological expectations.

Craig L. Blomberg’s article sets out to defend posttribulationism in the NT. He deals with issues such as imminence, the nature of the tribulation, and the NT expectation that Christians would experience the great tribulation. His exegesis of pertinent texts addresses the major issues surrounding the debate, showing that “without exception every relevant Scripture supports posttribulationism over pretribulationism” (p. 83).

Don J. Payne explores the “inner logic” (p. 90) and theological method that drives premillennialism. His general thesis is that although “both dispensational and nondispensational versions of premillennialism claim a similar hermeneutic” (p. 95) that stresses “a straightforward and objective reading of Scripture” (p. 93), the fact is that there are other factors that account for the variations within premillennialism. Payne’s argument is that a literal hermeneutic and a straightforward reading of the text raises certain tensions that require “both-and” exegetical conclusions that dispensationalists find difficult to deal with, betraying a greater dependence upon tradition, reason, and experience than they are generally willing to admit. Historic premillennialists, on the other hand, are much more willing to accept and live with these tensions, and therefore more consistently follow their own premillennial hermeneutical commitments.

Donald Fairbairn addresses questions concerning the millennial views of the early church. He argues that although in the third and fourth centuries there was a shift away from chiliasm, the consensus of the post-apostolic church was premillennialism. Furthermore, he shows that the patristic writers, with their view that the church is the fulfillment of OT hopes, align more closely with modern nondispensational premillennialism than with dispensationalism.

Sung Wook Chung proposes an approach to premillennialism from a Reformed covenantal perspective that emphasizes Gen 1:26–28 as a “kingdom mandate” that unconditionally “gives humankind dominion over the whole creation” (p. 137). Chung argues that by giving priority to this unconditional kingdom mandate in Gen 1:26–27, rather than overemphasizing the importance of Gen 2:15–17 and “the soteriological dimension of the covenant of grace throughout the Bible” (p. 134), one is led to expect the establishment of a literal millennial kingdom in keeping with the plain teaching of Rev 20:1–6.

Finally, Oscar A. Campos chronicles the impact that premillennialism has had on missions and church growth in Latin American evangelicalism. Campos’s essay explains how premillennialism, and especially the dispensational variety, has been largely responsible for the growth of the faith missions movement in Latin America in the twentieth century, and how modern progressive dispensationalism has opened the door to a more “holistic gospel.”

Although *CHP* addresses many important issues relating to nondispensational premillennialism and does an adequate job of refuting its rival, overall the work fails to make a clear, comprehensive case for historic premillennialism. As one might expect (given its origin), the feel of the book is more that of a series of papers presented at a conference on historic premillennialism, than of a monograph

intended to present a cohesive case for that system (as its title suggests). While several of the articles are excellent and make a strong positive contribution to the overall case, others, although good in their own right, contribute very little to the actual case for nondispensational premillennialism. The result is a work that offers many good arguments in favor of historic premillennialism and provides a helpful critique of “Left Behind” eschatology, but that never really defines either in a way that makes their fundamental differences clear (outside of their differing views of the timing of the rapture) or that advances a cohesive, systematic case for its preferred premillennial scheme. Perhaps the best way to summarize my impression of *CHP* is that I found its essays helpful and informative, but overall the book failed to deliver what its title had led me to expect.

A. J. Gibson
To Every Tribe Ministries
Los Fresnos, Texas, USA

Karl Barth. *Church Dogmatics*. 14 vols. Edited by Thomas F Torrance and Geoffrey Bromiley. Translated from the German *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*. London: T&T Clark, 2008. 8,936 pp. 1 CD-ROM. \$699.95. <http://www.logos.com/products/details/2607>

The fourteen volumes of Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* were published in English between 1936 and 1975 and have been in circulation since then without revision. This situation has now changed following the collaborative efforts of Princeton Theological Seminary and T&T Clark/Continuum. Together they have produced a revised and digitized edition of the *Dogmatics*. As stated on [the Princeton website](#), this new edition is available in three ways:



- A fully searchable CD-ROM version from Logos Bible Software, available from April 2008 (<http://www.logos.com/>)
- As part of the Digital Karl Barth Library in German and English from Alexander Street Press (<http://www.alexanderstreet.com/>)
- A new paperback print edition in 31 volumes, presenting the text in a new layout, incorporating the translations of Greek and Latin texts in a student-friendly format, available from December 2008 through T&T Clark.

What follows is a review of the first format, the digitized edition made available through the Libronix platform for Windows-based computers (Mac users can also now use the software: <http://www.macbiblesoftware.com/>).

Fourteen volumes on one CD ensures that installing the *Dogmatics* into your digital library is quick and painless. The Libronix platform makes available a number of options to begin working with the digital text: various window arrangements allow side-by-side display of the *Dogmatics* and a range of other texts which you might want to call on—anything from search results, to other parts of the *Dogmatics*, to Scripture passages, to other texts cited by Barth and that are already present in the user’s digital library. It is hard to imagine serious students of Barth (or any genuine book-lover) being happy

to own the *Dogmatics* in digital form only, not least because the new print edition in 31 volumes is so immensely attractive! Nevertheless, although the hard copies lend themselves to prolonged reading and reflection, the digital version comes into its own as an aid to detailed study on particular issues, and here there are a number of excellent advantages to Barth in electronic form.

One of the most attractive features to many students will be the translations of Barth's numerous Greek and Latin quotations, which surface so regularly in the already demanding small print sections of his work. In the digital edition, simply locating the cursor over the offending language reveals the translation in a pop-up window. Although the new print edition now provides these translations alongside the original language, for many the digital version will be a cheaper alternative to a brand new set of the *Dogmatics* simply for this feature. (It is worth pointing out that the current English translation of the German original has not, as far as I can discern, been corrected at certain points in either the digital or the new print version, e.g., *CD II/2*, p. 148, where the English reads 'elected God' but the German is 'erwählenden Gottes'. Instances such as these, and on more serious matters, occur throughout the English translations, and so we can be glad that the electronic format now makes the text of the *Dogmatics* a 'living text' which can be revised and corrected by future generations of Barth scholars).

Alongside this feature, the next stand-out benefits of the *CD* on CD are the search functions, the key-link features to other resources in the user's Libronix library, and the mark-up facilities which can be saved for future reference.

Clicking on 'Search' allows the reader to enter any word or topic of their choice and to have detailed results returned for their word or topic in the *Dogmatics*. One very nice feature, once the search results are returned, is to click 'Aligned hits in context'; this displays the search results with the surrounding sentence and also with each occurrence on any given page so that the reader is able to discern very quickly which references are relevant to their needs. Furthermore, a 'Reference Browser' function allows a search of, say, *Church Dogmatics II/2* for all Barth's references to Calvin's *Institutes*. This is done by specifying which sections of the *Institutes* you wish to search for (e.g., a search for Book III brings up all the times Barth quotes from that part in II/2). At this point it is worth saying that the more you have in your Libronix library, the greater the benefit of the digital *Dogmatics*. I currently operate Scholar's Library (Logos Bible Software 3), which contains the Beveridge translation of the *Institutes*. This means that once I have found the reference to *Inst.* 3.23.7 that I am interested in, a simple click on the red key-link to 3.23.7 displays that part of Calvin's text. Key-links such as these also operate for other texts (e.g., Thomas' *Summa*, which I do not have in Scholar's Library) and for all Scripture references cited by Barth—simply hovering the cursor over the text displays the reference in the Bible version(s) of my choice. Double-clicking on names in Barth's text will, depending on Libronix resources, display relevant information. So if you are raising an eyebrow at Barth's reading of *houtos* in John 1:1–2 and are interested to discover that he followed Adolf Schlatter in his interpretation, clicking on 'Schlatter' brings up an entry about him from the *Who's Who in Christian History* resource. (Sadly no such entry exists for E. F. Ströter if you are interested in the dispensationalist flavour of Barth's exegesis of Romans 9–11 in II/2). If wrestling with a particular part of the text, and particularly if you have been using the translation function or a key-link, a welcome option is the ability to mark up the text by writing a note. Highlighting a word or a passage, then right clicking, gives the opportunity to jot down whatever you wish. This note itself can then be formatted according to normal word processing options, and even categorized as being in support of the text, as a question, a comment, or an issue. Such notes are then

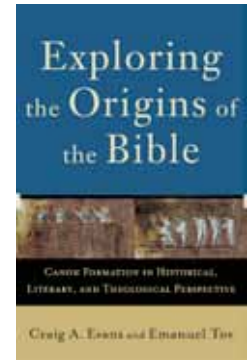
paper-clipped to the text and can be called up as required or simply visible on returning to that passage in the future.

Users more advanced than this reviewer will doubtless be attracted to other features which can be customised according to user level, but for any student wishing to examine particular issues in Barth's *magnum opus*, the digital edition could soon prove itself indispensable.

David Gibson
High Church, Hilton
Aberdeen, UK

Craig A. Evans and Emanuel Tov, eds. *Exploring the Origins of the Bible: Canon Formation in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 272 pp. \$22.99.

"*Exploring the Origins of the Bible* is the result of a special Spring session of the Hayward Lectures at Acadia Divinity College in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, that took place in April 2006" (p. 7). The book consists of eight essays derived from these lectures: Emmanuel Tov, "The Septuagint as Literary Analysis of Hebrew Scripture"; James H. Charlesworth, "Writing Ostensibly outside the Canon"; Stephen G. Dempster, "Torah, Torah, Torah: The Emergence of the Tripartite Canon"; R. Glenn Wooden, "The Role of 'the Septuagint' in the Formation of the Biblical Canons"; Craig A. Evans, "The Apocryphal Jesus: Assessing the Possibilities and Problems"; Stanley E. Porter, "Paul and the Process of Canonization"; Lee Martin McDonald, "Wherein Lies Authority? A Study of Books, Texts, and Translations"; and Jonathan R. Wilson, "Canon and Theology: What is at Stake?"



Exploring the Origins of the Bible is an introductory volume for a theological student to understand the various historical issues related to the compilation and growth of the canon. As with all such edited volumes, the various essays evince a varied quality and usefulness. The first six chapters serve admirably for the stated purpose of this volume. Emanuel Tov's essay is quite similar to material one finds in other works of his. Stanley Porter's essay takes the various theories given for the rise of the Pauline corpus and concludes that the evidence seems to support the thesis that the collecting of these letters began during Paul's life.

The final two essays, however, do not prove to be as helpful. Both McDonald's and Wilson's essays engage in some problematic argumentation. McDonald's essay has several deficiencies, including multiple logical fallacies and unsupported assumptions. For example, McDonald makes an appeal to authority when he says, "most scholars . . . most biblical scholars" without giving names or argumentation for the multiple-source theory of 2 Corinthians (p. 211). He then makes an unwarranted deduction that because none of the extant manuscripts support the multiple-source theory for 2 Corinthians, we must have sloppy manuscripts, and therefore the idea of seeking the "original manuscript" is too complex. (I do not have a settled position on the composition of 2 Corinthians; rather I am using this as an example of McDonald's method.)

Elsewhere McDonald engages in an ambiguous use of language to sow doubt and suspicion. He states, "Historically, of course, the church has never fully agreed on which books comprise its Bible" (p.

209). This sentence is deceptive and belies the fact that ecclesiastical bodies have generally agreed that there is a canon of Scripture, and the various bodies have identified a canon without sinking into despair because they are not in absolute agreement with other ecclesiastical bodies. A numerical plurality does not necessarily equate to qualitative pluralism.

This poisoning of the well does not seem unintentional on McDonald's part. In fact, this doubt plays into McDonald's communitarian hermeneutic, which vests authority in the person of God and not in the text. This in reality is part of McDonald's agenda. He seems to desire to muddy the waters in order to get those ecclesial bodies who do not agree to make their views more provisional. He takes a true statement that all authority is vested in the Lord Jesus Christ as Jesus stated in Matt 28:18: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." From this statement McDonald urges Christians not to place authority in Scripture, with the implication that such a move will somehow practically invalidate Christ's authority. In other words, McDonald is trying to bring up the specter of that dreaded "bibliolatry." Such veiled moves do not lessen the poisoning of the well or strengthen McDonald's argument. In fact it is better to say that McDonald spends the first thirty-four pages of the essay raising difficulties in the transmission of the text in order to bring in his alternate theory, which amounts to little more than a priesthood of textual critics. As Adolf von Harnack stated, "the *auctoritas interpretiva* is invariably the supreme and true authority" (cited in Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003], 1.63).

McDonald is careful to note that with all the problems in the transmission of the text, the churches are still not left wondering, who is Christ? Or what is his Gospel? So despite the various difficulties that McDonald raises and the call to worship Christ and not the text of Scripture, one is left at the end of the day wondering how the first thirty-four pages and the last two fit together. They seem like what Macbeth called "a tale . . . full of sound and fury signifying nothing." For after raising jeremiads concerning the lack of recoverability of the urtext of the NT, McDonald out of scholarly honesty is forced to admit, "Remarkably, the various translations and biblical canons present in churches today (Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Ethiopian, and Protestant) all reflect the message and identity of Jesus the Christ as well as the obligation of the church for worship and mission" (p. 238). One feels like quoting Kenneth Kitchen's response to the biblical minimalists: "Your fantasy agendas are irrelevant in and to the real world, both of today and of all preceding time back into remotest antiquity. Get real or (alas!) get lost!" (*On the Reliability of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], xiv.)

Despite the concluding two essays, which are works of postmodern *sturm und drang*, this volume could prove a helpful text for introducing students to the complexities in understanding the historical process in which the text of Scripture came to the church today. The reader must be aware, however, that it is from a historical-critical approach and lacks the theological and dogmatic sensitivity that one would expect when it comes to treating such a theological topic as how the Bible has come to the church today.

David G. Graves
Oikos Community Church
Hilliard, Ohio, USA

John Frame. *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*. A Theology of Lordship. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2008. 1,104 pp. \$45.99.

John Frame is Professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. The present volume is the third in his Lordship series, following *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (1987) and *The Doctrine of God* (2002). A final volume is projected, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*. Thus this book is important as part of a substantial work of systematic theology by an influential and prolific Reformed theologian.

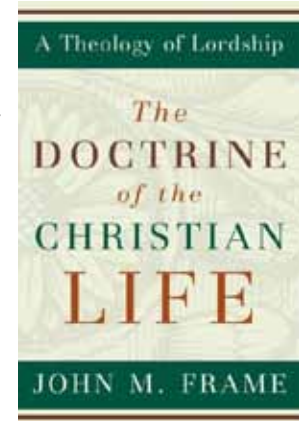
Frame first introduces the subject of ethics and surveys the field of non-Christian ethics. Then he discusses methodological issues for Christian ethics, engaging with non-Christian ethics and establishing the context for the discussion of ethical issues that follows. A full twenty-one chapters (almost 400 pages) are given to methodological issues. This is a nice contrast to books that only deal with contemporary issues, and there is plenty of application even here. Yet for readers who might be put off, it is possible to jump ahead without serious disconnect. The heart of the book follows, in which Frame discusses a biblical perspective on most significant ethical issues, covering twenty-three chapters and nearly 500 pages. After that he offers a nice treatment of Christ and culture and a final chapter dealing with personal spiritual maturity. The book concludes with twelve appendices consisting of previous book reviews and writings on various ethical matters.

The main section on ethical issues is structured by the Ten Commandments, in dialogue with the Westminster Confession of Faith. This is a fairly traditional Reformed exposition of the Decalogue, but with fresh insight. He examines the narrow and broad meanings of each command, with their application to all areas of life, including worship, rest, work, authority, life and death, marriage and sex, economics, communication and character. His exposition and application will be a valuable resource for those teaching or preaching on the Ten Commandments.

Consider the sixth commandment as an example of Frame's discussion. Its narrow meaning is a prohibition of all homicide unauthorized by God. It does not preclude all killing, for it is consistent with justified cases of capital punishment, war, and so on. It applies to cases such as murder, euthanasia, abortion, and suicide. More broadly, it includes negligent homicide and reckless disregard for human life (as in drunk driving, and perhaps the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or even unhealthy eating!). Indeed, it penetrates further, as Jesus indicates, to condemn hatred in the heart from which violence arises, and speech that provokes violence. It also implies a positive mandate to protect and preserve life and ultimately the demand to love others as oneself.

This is a book well worth reading. It is impressive for its breadth as well as its depth and illuminating discussion of many of the topics considered. It is a nice balance of traditional Christian teaching with some careful nuances.

In a book of this size I was not surprised to find points of disagreement. At times they were substantial, such as when Frame suggests that there is no clear biblical basis by which to reject a number of dubious actions made possible by modern technology, including genetic engineering "to improve certain kinds of intelligence" (p. 790). I agree with Frame that some are too quick to reject technology for fear of playing God, but surely we must discern limits to our self-making. Either he has not considered some of the serious concerns, or he simply considers them not to be ultimate. Early discussions of this issue by



Paul Ramsey and Oliver O'Donovan, as well as Karl Rahner, demonstrate sound biblical and theological reasons for restraint here. The problem is not Frame's methodology, grounded in *sola Scriptura*. That is, he is not saying that genetic engineering is unproblematic simply because the Bible does not explicitly condemn it. Indeed, when he asserts that Scripture "contains all the divine words needed for any aspect of human life" (p. 156), he includes the application of biblical principles to new situations. In my view, the problem is that he has failed to apply Scripture appropriately (or with his usual wisdom) in this case.

Concerning methodology, a book on the Christian life organized around the Ten Commandments might put off some readers, such as those with an aversion to an ethics of command. Frame accepts that there are other valid ways to organize Christian ethics, but his method serves his purposes well, covering a wide variety of issues while indicating primary moral concerns of the Bible. Indeed, many readers will gain an increased appreciation for the richness of the Ten Commandments, how they shape and relate to biblical ethics in general, and how adaptable and applicable they are to contemporary issues.

Others will have more foundational theological reasons to challenge Frame's basic orientation to *Christian* ethics, which presumes a strong continuity between the Old and New Testaments, law and gospel, etc. Even if one appreciates a basic unity, it is valid to ask whether Frame's account adequately presents the significance for Christian ethics of the gospel and its transforming power. An expansion of his last chapter, "Growing in Grace," might remedy this, as it examines sanctification, grace, the resurrection, union with Christ, the Holy Spirit, and other themes that are central concerns of the NT and critical for Christian ethics.

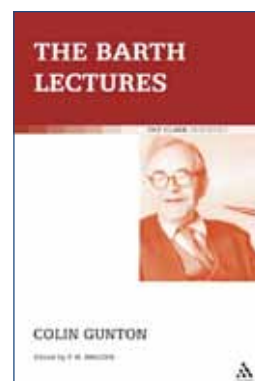
K. T. Magnuson

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Colin E. Gunton. *The Barth Lectures*. Transcribed and edited by Paul H. Brazier. New York: T&T Clark, 2007. xxiv + 285 pp. £25.00/\$48.95.

Sometimes a book can be pure reading pleasure. Every once in a while a great book is pure listening pleasure. This is the experience of listening to a master like Gunton in *The Barth Lectures*. For example, in the first chapter Gunton says:

Not everyone buys into Barth. I don't, all the way along the line, as I get older I get more and more dissatisfied with the details of his working out of the faith . . . over the years I think I have developed a reasonable view of this great man who is thoroughly exciting and particularly, I can guarantee, if you do this course, that you will be a better theologian by the third year, whether or not you agree with him—he is a great man to learn to think theologically with. (p. 10)



This book is the result of Paul Brazier's recording, transcription, and slight editing of Gunton's lectures on Barth at King's College from 1999 to 2001 (Course B406). The first three chapters of *The Barth Lectures* provide an overview of Barth's development with respect to Enlightenment thinkers such as Kant and Schleiermacher (chap. 1), the liberalism of Harnack and Herrmann, the eschatology of Johann Christoph Blumhardt, Barth's contemporaries such as Bultmann (chap. 2), and the quest for

a theological method in conversation with Harnack and Anselm (chap. 3). Chapter 4, “The Basis, Task and Situation of Theology,” begins Gunton’s work on the *Dogmatics*, which is carried on throughout the rest of the work. As an aside, this chapter also includes a comment about Barth-reception, which for Anglican reviewers such as myself is both striking yet explanatory:

The influence of empiricism, especially on the minds of English and American theologians, cannot be dismissed. The English, or to be more pertinent, the Anglican theological mind is shaped by a philosophical tradition that does not find Barth’s approach to theology easy to understand let alone agree with. . . . Part of our intellectual tradition makes it hard for us to understand—particularly an Anglican tradition. Anglicans on the whole like things to be nice and middle way, the *via media*. And there is not much of the middle way in Karl Barth! . . . Barth’s assertive style does make it difficult for mild-mannered establishment Anglicans to cope with. (p. 66)

Chapter 5 is entitled “Barth on the Trinity and the Personal God,” and contains the following comment, which is a classic example of the way in which Gunton comments on Barth’s theology:

The basis of all theology lies in the fact that revelation does happen. . . . This revelation is Christological: Jesus Christ is God’s self-unveiling. The Father cannot be unveiled, but the Father reveals through the Son. This is imparted through the Holy Spirit. A little artificial I actually think, but you can see what he is actually trying to do: he is trying to show that inherent in the structure of God’s presence in Jesus Christ is a Trinitarian view of God. . . . The point here is that in Jesus Christ we see the limits, the possibilities of the knowability of God. . . . So Barth in a way is still retaining this dialectical structure: veiling-unveiling, knowability-unknowability, revelation-hiddenness. . . . In the end you have only got paradox God preserves his privacy. (pp. 79–80)

The best work in this book may be chapter 7: “Election According to Church Dogmatics II/2.” Here Gunton makes a major call that not only reflects Barth’s theology in II/2, but further also in such volumes as in IV/1, 2 and 3. If there is a central idea in Barth’s theology, it is the idea of covenant, namely, “that from eternity God covenants to be the God who elects human beings into relation with himself” (p. 149).

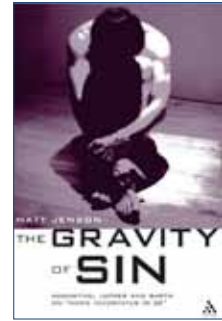
Another great chapter is chapter 11: “Church Dogmatics IV/1, 59.1—The Way of the Son into the Far Country.” In only twelve pages, Gunton provides a summary of the content and metaphysics behind a vital aspect of Barth’s Christology and ends with the following statement on Barth: “And when you are criticizing Barth it is only a question of where he puts a weight; he never forgets anything, he is too good a man for that” (p. 171).

The weakness of this work lies in its brevity, a limitation acknowledged by Christoph Schöbel in his insightful foreword. Schöbel’s foreword and Stephen E. Holmes’s introduction form a warm couple of personal testimonies to Gunton’s influence as a teacher, leader, and friend. In sum, we should all take Gunton’s advice and read as much of Barth as we can because “the people that write about him are much more boring than he is” (p. 9)! However, we may like to make at least one exception with *The Barth Lectures*.

Scott Harrower
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, Illinois, USA

Matt Jenson. *The Gravity of Sin: Augustine, Luther and Barth on 'Homo Incurvatus in Se.'* New York: T&T Clark, 2006. xi + 202 pp. £24.99/\$48.95.

What do we lose by understanding our sin simply as guilt or death? And what do we gain by understanding our sin in its vital connection to our relationship with God and those around us? Jenson's book explores such questions by developing the implications for the doctrine of sin resulting from the twentieth century's development of a relational ontology—the idea that the nature of a thing is constituted by its relationships. In doing this, he seeks to cultivate a rich and multifaceted understanding of sin held together by the metaphor of humanity curved in on itself: *homo incurvatus in se*.



The argument takes a historical shape, moving from Augustine's *City of God* to Luther's commentary on the book of Romans, exploring Daphne Hampson's feminist critique of Christian accounts of sin and concluding with a survey of Barth's hamartiology as seen in the *Church Dogmatics*. This structure allows Jenson to gradually set forth a vision of the doctrine of sin as incurvature construed within a relational ontology through its development in certain aspects of the thought of these key figures. It is important to recognize from the outset, however, that his is not at a book on the history of doctrine. Treating Barth after Daphne Hampson and altering the order of Barth's treatment of sin in *CD IV/1–3* are just two indications that Jenson's thesis is primarily a constructive argument rooted in the "metaphor of humanity 'curved in on itself' (*homo incurvatus in se*)" (p. 2). In other words, the roughly historical flow of the argument serves dogmatic purposes rather than strictly historical purposes. When understood in this framework this is an artful presentation of a significant development of a key doctrine.

According to Augustine, a "prideful (if futile) turning from God to self" is the paradigmatic sin (p. 7). However, as such it is "the willful re-direction of attention and love from God to the human self apart from God which results in alienation from God and the fracturing of human society" (p. 7). Jenson draws together the various strands of this aspect of Augustine's thought, using him as the basis for developing a relational understanding of sin rooted in incurvature. Augustine's contribution is somewhat "ambiguous," however, in that his "inward" spirituality risks undermining the relational understanding of creation and sin. In Luther, Jenson finds a radicalization of Augustine's thought that is potently developed in Luther's view of salvation in which we are "re-created in Christ as [we die] and [are] raised from the dead with him" (p. 57). This allows for a relational account of sin in which the remedy is firmly located outside of ourselves in Christ, circumventing certain Augustinian dangers.

Turning to feminist theology, Jenson explores the thought of Daphne Hampson, who offers a thoroughly relational account of sin rooted in experience in such a way as to distinguish gendered forms of sin. The result is a dismissal of traditional hamartiology as irrelevant to women. While Jenson notes significant problems in this argument, he appreciates that it (1) expansively broadens our understanding of sin and (2) raises the question of whether the metaphor of 'man curved in on himself' is sufficient to incorporate the contribution of feminist theology.

Jenson concludes his argument with the theology of Karl Barth, whose christologically oriented understanding of sin offers both the unity Jenson seeks (affirming sin as 'man curved in on himself') while simultaneously developing the diversity called for by the feminist critique, all in the context of a thoroughly relational ontology rooted in God's election to be the Lord of a people in the person and

work of Jesus Christ. The key is that Barth acknowledges three primary forms of sin (pride, sloth, and falsehood), each of which is developed “first and foremost by broken relationships in which people live for themselves rather than for God and others” (p. 131).

A weakness in this book is that the polemic edge of Jenson’s argument is almost entirely implicit. Jenson suggests that the relational turn within theological ontology is “one of the most striking features of the landscape of the Western mind in the last century” (p. 1). The significance Jenson attributes to this development as it relates to hamartiology could shine forth more brightly throughout the book. Drawing on certain elements in Augustine’s and Luther’s thought to develop his thesis, Jenson off-sets the significance of the relational turn in the twentieth century. How can the relational turn be such a momentous development if two of the most significant theologians in the history of the church argued for it centuries ago?

The key lies in the structure of Jenson’s account. He uses certain aspects from the history of theology to develop his own unique contribution to the development of the doctrine. The danger with this approach is that the argument can at times hide itself amongst the exposition of historical developments. I would greatly have appreciated a more robust exposition of the nature and role of original sin in the thought of these theologians, as it would have brought out more clearly some of the substantialist aspects of Augustine’s and Luther’s hamartiologies. This would ensure that the polemic edge of Jenson’s argument and the force of the changes set forth by Barth and feminist theologians would be all the more clear and compelling.

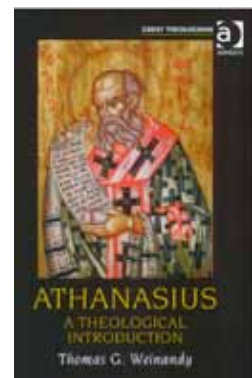
That said, Jenson’s book assists us in having a broader understanding of sin, capable of guiding us to a fuller understanding of freedom from the bondage of sin in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Adam J. Johnson
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, Illinois, USA

Thomas G. Weinandy. *Athanasius: A Theological Introduction*. Great Theologians. Burlington: Ashgate, 2007. ix + 150 pp. £16.99/\$29.95.

Weinandy’s book introduces us to Athanasius’ theology from the perspective that “the whole of Athanasius’ theological programme is thoroughly soteriological” (p. vii). He reads the Bible and therefore works out his theology “from beginning to end, as the historical narrative of the economy of salvation, that is, of God’s providential actions, beginning with the act of creation and culminating in the redemptive actions of the Son of God incarnate” (p. 11). Weinandy could just as well have titled the book *Athanasius: His Soteriological Theology*.

Weinandy begins the book with a brief but helpful survey of the main features of the bishop of Alexandria’s rather tumultuous life and then turns in chapters 2 and 3 to an exposition of the two-part *Adversus Gentes*. Part one of this work, *Contra Gentes*, seeks to refute a number of pagan errors in such a way as to develop an integrated account of the one God and his creation (and the origin of evil) through the relation between God and his Word on the one hand, and God’s creation and sustaining thereof through his Word on the other.



The whole, as Weinandy understands it, is thoroughly oriented towards establishing the knowledge and communion humankind is designed to have with God. These developments, centered on the Word of God, clearly set the stage for the second part of this work: *De Incarnatione*.

Weinandy proceeds to develop Athanasius' soteriology, emphasizing the Son of God as the bond between the two works and the consequent conjunction of protology, soteriology, and eschatology. Summarizing the Athanasian "dilemma," he carefully follows the argument of the book, noting that Athanasius develops Christ's life and work from incarnation to ascension as a soteriological whole. He concludes by noting the role of the full divinity of Christ, the recurring question of whether the Son merely takes on a human body, and the problematic absence of the Holy Spirit in the argument.

In the fourth chapter, Weinandy steps back to look at the big picture, summarizing Arius' theology, the Nicene Creed, and Athanasius' interpretation of the Creed. In this account Weinandy repeatedly emphasizes the basis of Athanasius' argument in the Creed's affirmation of the one God *as Father*, which in turn serves as the grounds upon which to affirm that the Son is *homoousion* with the Father. Soteriology is still the dominant concern, however, as Weinandy notes in the conclusion that because God's being is precisely that of the Father begetting the Son, Athanasius has a foundation in the being of God for the creative act through the relationship between begetting and creating. This in turn links the being of God and the saving work of the incarnate Son, as a matter of fulfilling his original creative purposes (p. 79). The Trinity is the basis for creation and the incarnation, and the incarnation is the means of our salvation or the fulfillment of creation through relationship with the Trinity.

In the fifth chapter, Weinandy develops Athanasius' incarnational soteriology by noting three essential features of his Christology, developing in particular the nature of the "becoming" in question. This development guides us into a further dialogue with Arius and the questions of the communication of idioms and of the soul of Christ. With this platform in place, Weinandy returns to his central concern, expanding on Athanasius' understanding of salvation as deification. Weinandy offers a balanced and helpful treatment of this central subject, while avoiding a reductionistic emphasis on this one aspect of Christ's saving work. He also notes that in this later stage of Athanasius' thought, the Holy Spirit begins to play a more significant role in his account of deification. In the next chapter, Weinandy turns his attention directly to the question of the divinity of the Holy Spirit through Athanasius' theological development. Weinandy explores this change, largely through an exposition of Athanasius' *Letters to Serapion*, noting both the Trinitarian and soteriological aspects of his theology of the Holy Spirit.

The seventh chapter wraps up Weinandy's development of Athanasius' soteriology by delving into the latter's *Festal Letters* and *Life of Antony*. This enables him to examine "some of the foundational principles for appropriating the salvation of Christ and so living a holy life" (p. 129), such as our response of repentance and faith, the Eucharist, and various Christian vocations. It also enables him to examine Athanasius' "perfect living illustration" (p. 129) of the holy life, as seen in Antony.

The concluding chapter examines the contemporary significance of Athanasius' theology in a number of areas, including Scripture and doctrine, the mystery of the Trinity, the authority of biblical language and the question of the communication of idioms in the incarnation. Given the consistent emphasis on Athanasius' soteriology throughout the book, Weinandy's conclusion strikes a discordant note, failing to explore the contemporary significance of Athanasius' primary theological concern to a matter of great contemporary interest: the doctrine of the atonement. Such a consideration would have been a fitting conclusion to the dominant theme of the book as well as a valuable contribution to current debates.

A second minor weakness of the book lies in Weinandy's insistence that Athanasius does not develop the causal link between the cross and its various effects. While the general point may in fact hold true, the work of F. M. Young and G. D. Dragas would suggest that Weinandy could have gone a little further in this direction in the exposition of Athanasius' thought.

Weinandy's introduction to Athanasius is an important work, familiarizing the reader with Athanasius' life, writings, and fundamental concerns. Throughout the book the centrality of soteriology clearly emerges, whether the topic is the doctrine of the Trinity or the life of Antony. The whole serves to elevate the significance of *On the Incarnation* both in Athanasius' thought and in the history of theology as a work of great genius on the central concern of the Christian faith. Hopefully this book will serve to bring Athanasius' soteriology more prominently into contemporary discussions alongside the other great masterpieces on this doctrine.

Adam J. Johnson
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, Illinois, USA

David Gibson and Daniel Strange, eds. *Engaging with Barth: Contemporary Evangelical Critiques*. Nottingham: Apollos, 2008; New York: T&T Clark, 2009. 408 pp. £19.99/\$39.95.

One of my earliest encounters with Karl Barth was being warned by an older Christian that he taught that the Bible only 'contained' the Word of God. A few years later another Christian friend told me that he had discovered that Barth was 'ok' since he had come across a quote in which Barth affirmed that the Bible was indeed 'the Word of God'. As Carl Trueman notes in the foreword to this volume, evangelicals seem to swing between 'infatuation' with Barth on one side to 'the kind of caricaturing that serves to do nothing other than break the Ninth Commandment' (p. 15) on the other.

Particularly for evangelicals who find themselves studying in the strange world of the secular biblical studies department, Barth so often seems like a breath of fresh air in contrast to the stale atmosphere of radical criticism. Here is a theologian who embraces the importance of Scripture, the sovereignty of God, and the centrality of Christ. However, the starkness of the contrast between Barth and 'liberal' scholarship can all too easily blind us to important differences between Barth and classical evangelicalism. The editors note that their aim is to challenge the view that Barth's theology is the 'most compelling account of orthodox, and indeed Reformed, post-Kantian Christianity' (p. 19).

At the same time, the contributors seek to avoid the trap of caricature. There is a recognition that Barth's position as one of the most significant theologians of the twentieth century warrants careful listening and engagement. Precisely where we disagree with him, as Trueman notes, we can have our thinking clarified and strengthened. However, too often evangelicals offer shallow critiques of Barth. In the long run these can be more harmful because once they are shown to be superficial, genuinely problematic aspects of Barth's theology can be inadvertently rehabilitated.



The essays in this book can be grouped into those which deal with Barth's methodology, those dealing with his relationship to historic Reformed theology, and those examining specific theological issues in Barth. Henri Blocher examines Barth's Christocentric method with its resultant tendency to rationalize evil. Sebastian Rehnman evaluates Barth's rejection of the law of noncontradiction and concludes that this cannot fail to bring into question the truthfulness of Christianity. Ryan Glomsrud argues that Barth's engagement with Reformed theology was substantially filtered through nineteenth-century misreadings of that tradition. A. T. B McGowan assesses Barth's use of the covenant-concept in his theology and argues that he has ultimately failed to ground his theology in the redemptive-historical context of Scripture. David Gibson's excellent chapter looks at Barth's doctrine of election through the lens of Romans 9–11. He shows that all too often where Barth argues for christological *reference* in the text he is actually making a christological *inference* and, as such, is in danger of totalizing the text in such a way that the 'complementary but distinct aspects of the biblical witness' are drowned out (p. 167). Mark Thompson deals with the crucial question of Barth's understanding of Scripture. Thompson's detailed critique is especially helpful given the context of his genuine appreciation of the positives in Barth's doctrine of Scripture. Mike Ovey explores Barth's Trinitarian theology and particularly its problematic commitment to the idea of a single divine subject. Garry Williams offers a devastating critique of Barth's view of the atonement. Not only is his understanding of the atonement deeply contradictory, Barth's 'weakening of any emphasis on history or eternity' (p. 271) leads to a Christ who 'is at decisive moments an abstracted and enforced principle rather than the Christ of the Scriptures' (p. 272). Paul Helm argues that rather than presenting the visibility of God, Barth's presentation eventually postulates a hidden God. Oliver Crisp examines Barth's understanding of reprobation in the light of Jonathan Edwards's account. Donald Macleod evaluates Barth's attempt to provide a theology for the *church*. Finally, Michael Horton provides a summary essay evaluating Barth's relationship to evangelical theology and concludes the book by noting that Confessional Reformed Christians have much to learn from Barth but where the latter diverges from the former, he 'represents a declension rather than a renewal of the great Reformation legacy' (p. 381).

In short, this book fulfils its goal of providing a robust and fair interaction with Barth across a number of important theological topics. As such, *Engaging with Barth* deserves the widest possible reading. Even those of us who may not come into direct contact with Barth need to realise that his influence is increasingly being felt in evangelical circles. As many of the authors point out, this is not *entirely* a bad thing considering the alternatives of liberalism or the rootless, popular distortions of evangelicalism that are so prevalent. Barth, at the very least, provides a God-centred theology that opposes the dominantly anthropocentric outlook of contemporary Christianity. Readers who work through the essays in this book, even if they have no prior interest in Barth himself, will benefit immensely from having to engage with serious theology operating at a deep level. However, for those readers who do regularly encounter Barth and are perhaps tempted to embrace him uncritically, this book is an important prophylactic. As a number of the authors point out, to follow Barth where he diverges from classical evangelical doctrine is fraught with danger.

Peter Orr
Durham University
Durham, England, UK

Gary L. W. Johnson and Ronald N. Gleason, eds. *Reforming or Conforming? Post-Conservative Evangelicals and the Emerging Church*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008. 304 pp. £20.00/\$20.00.

Gary L. W. Johnson and Ronald N. Gleason, senior pastors of churches in Arizona and California, respectively, edit this twelve-chapter book on post-conservative evangelicals and the emerging church movement (ECM).

The twelve essays cover a wide array of topics related to the theme: the problem of the humanity of Scripture (Paul Wells); the need for a metaphysic in an evangelical theological method (John Bolt); the foundationalist presuppositions in the nonfoundationalist theology of John Franke (Paul Helm); the necessity of creedal boundaries for the catholic Christianity of Brian McLaren (R. Scott Clark); the Princetonian understanding of right reason and Augustinian voluntarism as the proper framework from which to interpret their dogmatism (Paul Kjos Helseth); the Van Tillian notion of certainty rooted in the Reformed theological *principia* (Jeffrey C. Waddington); the shift from soteriology to ecclesiology in the theology of the ECM with a proposed Bavinckian solution (Ronald Gleason); the influence of N. T. Wright in McLaren's soteriology in *The Secret Message of Jesus* (Guy Prentiss Waters); the inherent dangers in the value and priority of diversity in the ECM (Phil Johnson); the "cultural entrapment" of the ECM at the expense of biblical truth and biblical doctrines important to the Christian faith (Martin Downes); McLaren's ambiguous doctrine of hell (Greg D. Gilbert); and an overview of postmodernism and the emergent church (Gary Gilley).



Space does not allow discussion of every chapter, but a few notable essays should be pointed out. First mention should no doubt be given to the essay by Paul Wells on Scripture. Wells notes that much discussion of Scripture in the past thirty years or so has been a reaction and defense to strikes by modernism and skepticism. He insightfully asks and concludes, "And where does the real problem lie, in so far as the doctrine of Scripture is concerned for evangelicals? Not primarily in its authority and inspiration, nor in its divine nature as Word of God, nor even in its inerrancy . . . but in its humanity" (p. 28).

After surveying four models typically used to explain the divine-human relationship found in the Scriptures (witness, accommodation, the analogy between Christ and the Bible, and the servant-form of Scripture), he concludes that these have shown themselves to have serious shortcomings. He then engages with Bloesch, Pinnock, and Enns whom he considers to have "in common a desire to take 'two-factor' theology seriously" (p. 42). Although he appreciates various aspects of their formulations, he finds Bloesch "theoretically inconsistent and self-contradictory," Pinnock's formulation as imposing limitations upon the work of God, and Enns's "provisional" confession of the Bible as the Word of God as "flawed and unacceptable" (p. 155).

Wells therefore proposes a way forward in which the humanity of the Scriptures is both taken seriously and used positively to further the discussion of the divine-human relationship in the Scriptures. He makes four suggestions regarding the humanity of Scripture: (1) it should be viewed within the "fundamental matrix . . . of a new humanity in the old" (p. 57); (2) it "has a particular *political* function, a function as broad as the creation, linked to the fashioning of the new humanity of the kingdom" (p. 58); (3) it is "Christ-centered . . . because *Christ is the conclusion of the whole historical process*" (p. 59); and

asserts (4) “there is no doubt a link that can be made between the humanity of Scripture and humanity in regeneration” (p. 60).

Despite the fact that this proposal makes no mention about how to deal with the problems posed by historical and textual criticism, it seems that this integrative and positive approach to the humanity of Scripture has much to offer. No doubt many will hope to see more from Wells on this.

The essays by Waters (“It’s ‘Wright,’ but Is It Right? An Assessment and Engagement of an ‘Emerging’ Rereading of the Ministry of Jesus”) and Gilbert (“Saved from the Wrath of God: An Examination of Brian McLaren’s Approach to the Doctrine of Hell”) are to be commended for their thoughtful and thorough engagement with McLaren’s writing and theology. The reader leaves these essays with concrete examples of what emergent theology can look like rather than the empty rhetoric that can often overtake these discussions.

Finally, while Phil Johnson’s essay (“Joyriding on the Downgrade at Breakneck Sped: The Dark Side of Diversity”) suffers from slippery-slope argumentation, he does a great job in setting the discussion, giving background regarding the difficulty of defining the ECM, and acknowledging its contributions while still critiquing its shortcomings. As an aside, readers unfamiliar with the ECM would have greatly benefited by an earlier sequencing of this chapter.

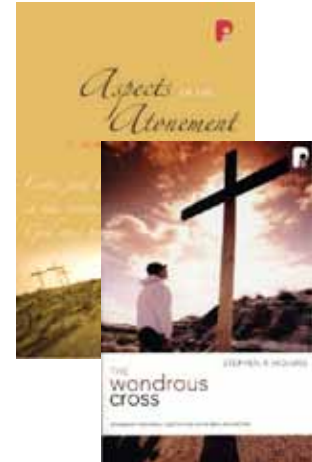
Readers of this volume will be pleased to find intelligent, well-researched essays full of footnotes containing helpful bibliography. After reading the somewhat off-putting and polemical introduction, this reader was relieved to find that the rest of the volume displayed balance and objective tenor, adding to its credibility as a useful resource. Moreover, many will be delighted to see the appropriation of Bavinck’s thought in the authors’ contributions. Weaknesses of the volume include the inconsistent caliber of the chapters, as well as the unwarranted blurring of post-conservative and emerging thought throughout the book. Moreover, rather than just pointing out flaws, some of the essayists could have interacted more seriously with the emerging positions. Despite its few shortcomings, this volume is a great resource and should prove beneficial to the seminary student or pastor who wishes to engage in these contemporary issues.

Armida Belmonte Stephens
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, Illinois, USA

I. Howard Marshall. *Aspects of the Atonement: Cross and Resurrection in the Reconciling of God and Humanity*. Exeter: Paternoster, 2008. 137 pp. £9.99.

Stephen R. Holmes. *The Wondrous Cross: Atonement and Penal Substitution in the Bible and History*. Exeter: Paternoster, 2007. 130 pp. £9.99/\$16.99.

That Christ bore the wrath of God in his suffering and death on the cross in the place of sinners is considered by many to be at the very heart of the gospel. While the central importance of penal substitution has been challenged in the past (e.g., Abelard, Socinus, Schleiermacher, Dodd, Aulen), a recent wave of negative critiques from within evangelicalism (e.g., Wright, Green and Baker, Chalke and Mann, McKnight) beckons scholars to reassess the issue. Among those offering their voice to this effort are I. Howard Marshall and Stephen Holmes.



Marshall offers a solid, exegetically based critique and defense of penal substitution. This short book (137 pp.) offers a concise yet comprehensive treatment of the key issues in the debate. Marshall provides the quality of work in the biblical text you would expect from this top NT scholar. The basic outline of the book is as follows:

Chapter 1: “The Penalty of Sin.” Marshall shows why fallen humanity needs a substitute-sacrifice. The gravity of sin and the consequential legitimacy of divine wrath and judgment are convincingly presented. The foundational biblical assumptions of his entire study are given as seven “basic affirmations:” (1) Salvation is by grace alone. (2) The Father’s and Son’s purposes and actions in the atonement are perfectly unified. (3) The decisive element in our salvation is the death and resurrection of Jesus. (4) Jesus’ death is the death of the Son of God and the sinless human being, the second Adam. (5) The incarnation was an essential condition of that atonement. (6) Salvation in Christ through Holy Spirit enabled faith. (7) The atonement delivers us from the guilt and power of sin and restores us to a right relationship with God. These affirmations are the basis for refuting Alan Mann and Steve Chalk’s views, which oppose penal substitution as leading to ideas of “cosmic child abuse.” With help from Henri Blocher and Trevor Hart, Marshall establishes the indispensable weight of complementary atonement metaphors to refute the thought that metaphors can lose their relevance. Marshall acknowledges that terms like penalty, anger, condemnation, and judgment are open to misunderstanding, yet affirms that they express the “heart of the matter” of Christ’s work.

Chapter 2: “The Substitutionary Death of Jesus.” Marshall leans on P. T. Forsyth and establishes the biblical basis for substitutionary atonement. He explains the holiness and wrath of God and how it relates to atonement concepts like sacrifice, curse, redemption, ransom, reconciliation, and forgiveness. This chapter responds mostly to Joel Green and Mark Baker and points out their sloppy handling of the NT teaching that leads them to reject penal substitution (he does this mostly in a substantial footnote [p. 33], which by itself is worth the price of the book). While Marshall thinks some evangelicals (e.g., Grudem) overstate the wrathful disposition of the Father toward the crucified Son, nonetheless, he finds the stunning clarity of the biblical teaching undeniably obvious. In light of Gal 3:13, he says, “Jesus bears the curse of God on our behalf. If that is not penal substitution I do not know what is.” He also assures Arminians that penal substitution does not depend on particular election or limited atonement.

Chapter 3: “Raised for our Justification.” Marshall discusses the neglected but necessary place of the resurrection in atonement theology. Here he brings Richard Gaffin and M. D. Hooker to the table for support as he grounds his view on careful exegesis of Rom 4:25; Jesus was “delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.” This chapter may be the most important contribution of the book.

Chapter 4: “Reconciliation: Its Centrality and Relevance.” Peter Stuhlmacher and Ralph P. Martin are brought in to support Marshall’s suggestion that the atonement is best conceived as reconciliation. Related words like peace and forgiveness are particularly relevant today due to the unique relational needs of humanity.

Because Marshall aptly grounds his presentation in clear exegesis, there is not much to find wrong with this book. The book does a good job of showing how vital a clear understanding of the Trinity is if penal substitution is going to be rightly understood. However, in Marshall’s effort to emphasize the unity of the persons of the Trinity, I think he starts to under-appreciate the necessary distinctions between them (pp. 55–76). While it is certainly true that Father and Son are completely one in nature and purpose, their distinctions enabled the atonement to be accomplished the way it was. The Son does not convince the Father to forgive, but the Son does bear the wrath of the Father in a way the Father does not. The most significant problem I found in the book was a passing affirmation of annihilationism (p. 30n48). In expressing his inclination toward this interpretation of 2 Thess 1:9, he says that he is moving away from his refutation of an annihilationist reading in his 1983 commentary on 1–2 Thessalonians. While this is in no way a major point of the book, it is a needless one to make and seems to open him to similar criticism with which he charges others in this book, namely, in denying eternal conscious punishment he offers “a simple denial of what Scripture says rather than . . . a convincing re-interpretation of what Scripture does say” (p. 54).

In *The Wondrous Cross*, Stephen Holmes has written a popular-level evaluation of penal substitution that shows both his theological acumen and pastoral concern. His academic and pastoral insights and experience enable him to write about deep theological issues with clarity, humor, and a worshipful tone. The hymn stanzas that begin each chapter serve not only to portray the many ways the atonement has been expressed by the church, but they are also excellent reminders that worship is the ultimate goal of all theology. The objective of the book is to examine penal substitution in light of the many “stories of the atonement” that the Bible and tradition have given so that they all are heard and carry the relative weight they should.

Chapter 1. Holmes begins by saying that “Christians have always been more concerned to stand under the cross than to understand it.” Although this seems like a bit of a false dichotomy Holmes’ play on words attempts to put the intellectual quest in perspective so that we do not take ourselves too seriously. This chapter establishes the tone, method, and outline of the book.

Chapter 2. OT pictures of the cross are examined for their typological import. These include sacrifice, justice, servant-hood, wholeness, healing, and representation.

Chapter 3. NT atonement metaphors of sacrifice, victory, ransom, healing and salvation, reconciliation, revelation, new covenant, and justification are discussed. Holmes emphasizes the need for all these “complementary models or stories of salvation that hint at and point towards the indescribable truth at the heart of the matter” (p. 41). He believes this is the pattern we find in the NT as well.

Chapter 4. Holmes examines the theories of the atonement prevalent in the first 1,500 years of Christian history. While there was not a lot of sustained reflection on how the cross accomplished

redemption, the themes of ransom and victory were the most common ways the effects of the cross were thought about. Anselm's satisfaction theory and Abelard's opposition to it are explained as well.

Chapter 5. Views of the atonement in and after the Reformation are explored in this chapter. Holmes sees Calvin as the first to provide a complete statement of penal substitution. Holmes discusses the atonement views of the counter-reformation, Reformed Orthodoxy, Evangelical Revivalism, Liberalism (Schleiermacher), Princeton theology (Hodge), Aulen, as well as Liberation and Feminist theology.

Chapter 6. Here Holmes provides his most sustained defense of his "many metaphors" idea. Building on the work of his mentor Colin Gunton in *The Actuality of the Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition*, he exhorts us to incorporate all of the various ways the cross is viewed in our understanding of the atonement.

Chapter 7–8. These chapters respond to criticisms of penal substitution.

Chapter 9. Holmes offers the implications of penal substitution for ethics, evangelism, discipleship, and holiness.

Appendix. Holmes finally evaluates the negative attacks on penal substitution by Green and Baker, Chalke and Mann.

The greatest strength of Holmes' book is his ability to convey complex theological issues in a way that an untrained thoughtful reader can easily understand. This book serves as a model of communicating theology with clear language, uncluttered with needless theological jargon. I do believe this effort was pushed a bit too far in that it led the publishers to eliminate all citations, leaving the reader often wondering where Holmes got his information. This is especially true when he is discussing church history.

Holmes seeks to rise above the fray of the heated debates currently raging around penal substitution. He is irenic to a fault, however. As the book closes he finally dives into the details of the current debate and responds to those working to discard penal substitution. He actually says in the last paragraph of the book that he is in both camps of the debate. It is always easier to appear irenic when you are not convinced that the issues being discussed are of utmost importance. If penal substitution is a potentially helpful metaphor depending on the cultural relevance it holds, there is nothing worth really getting worked up about when it is denied or dismissed. But for those who believe it is the foundation of all the other effects of the cross, the stakes in this discussion are great, and so the intensity of concern, conviction, and passion will be understandably high.

Another area of concern is that Holmes seems to treat atonement metaphors as if they only point to theological content rather than actually having theological content. Metaphors like penal substitution only hint at something mysterious happening at the cross rather than actually telling us something that is happening. At the cross, the Father pours out divine wrath on the Son as Christ suffers and dies in our place. That is more than a metaphor; it is the objective reality that saves sinners.

The most troubling aspect of Holmes's presentation is that he seems to allow cultural relevance to determine the importance of various views of the atonement. He believes that penal substitution has lost much of its compelling power because of so little sense of sin and guilt in contemporary society. And while it is not an entirely irrelevant concept yet, he says that he imagines a time when penal substitution "must be relegated to the history books, as a story that makes little sense to new cultures" (p. 121). This is taking contextualization to the point where the gospel is transformed by culture rather than being translated into the culture. It also misses the clear teaching of the NT when it tells us that the gospel has always been foolishness from the world's eyes. The meaning of the cross should not be changed by human perspectives; human perspectives need to be changed by it.

While Christ's bearing divine wrath in the place of rebellious humanity certainly does not exhaust what the NT says about the atonement, apart from it, Christ's work loses its power and effect, and all other and benefits of the atonement vanish. One hopes that the current controversy over penal substitution will ultimately serve to strengthen rather than weaken the church's grasp of the cross.

Erik Thoennes

Talbot School of Theology, Biola University

La Mirada, California, USA

Book Notes

Graeme Finlay, Stephen Lloyd, Stephen Pattemore, and David Swift. *Debating Darwin: Two Debates: Is Darwinism True and Does it Matter?* Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2009. 197 pp. £8.99.

This readable book addresses in debate-format the evolution-controversy among Christians; the first four chapters address theology, the last four science. After a helpful introduction coauthored by Finlay (evolutionist) and Swift (non-evolutionist), Lloyd develops three doctrinal arguments for the incompatibility of Christianity and neo-Darwinism, viz., historicity of Adam; global flood; and the origin of suffering. This is followed, in chapter 2, by Finlay and Pattemore, who argue for compatibility, emphasizing the importance of sound epistemology and textual hermeneutics. Specifically, Genesis 1–11 is a theological polemic against Israel's pagan neighbors, *not* a historical document. The three authors trade responses in the next two chapters (3–4). Lloyd's rejoinder in chapter 3 is insightful, noting for instance that literary textual features do not entail ahistoricity. For him, Finlay and Pattemore grant much more epistemic authority to science than is theologically warranted. Conversely, Finlay and Pattemore suggest that Lloyd ignores the hermeneutical significance of literary genre, dismisses overwhelming evidence in the historical sciences (cosmology, archeology, geology, etc.), and adopts a "cyclic" instead of a "linearly progressive" view of biblical narrative. The second half of the book is on science. Arguing for incompatibility, Swift stresses irreducible complexity, the micro- vs. macroevolution distinction, and problems with arguments from homology. In chapter 6, Finlay marshals an impressive array of evidence for neo-Darwinism (e.g., genetic markers like endogenous retroviruses and jumping genes). Counter-responses in chapters 7–8 conclude the book. While Finlay and Pattemore raise valid hermeneutical cautions in Part I, it is not clear that they adequately address the central theological concerns of Lloyd; and yet Swift's reply in Part II does not seem to do justice to Finlay's multi-faceted scientific argument for neo-Darwinism. In sum, the book does not resolve all the issues, but it succeeds as a respectful, stimulating, and instructive entry into an important conversation.

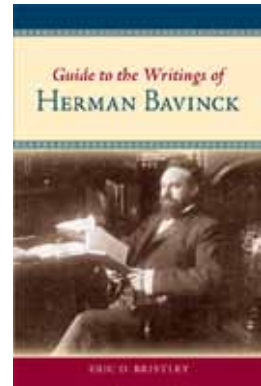
Hans Madueme

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Deerfield, Illinois, USA

Eric D. Bristley. *Guide to the Writings of Herman Bavinck (1854–1921)*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008. 157 pp. \$15.00.

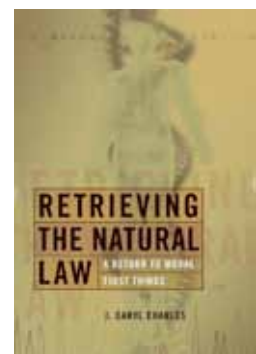
Sometimes eclipsed by the shadow of Kuyper, Bavinck was arguably the greatest theologian to hail from Holland, a John Calvin for the twentieth century. This small volume is brimming with bibliographical details of Bavinck’s scholarly labors. Very helpfully, it opens with an excellent biographical essay that covers the fascinating details of Bavinck’s fruitful life, including his student days at Leiden University, his professorships at Kampen and the Free University of Amsterdam, and his profound theological and, later, multi-disciplinary contributions to Christian thought. This is followed by John Bolt’s previously published essay, “Herman Bavinck Speaks English,” notifying the reader of all available Bavinck translations in English (including the important four-volume set *Reformed Dogmatics*, completed in 2008) as well as significant secondary literature devoted to Bavinck. Bristley’s bibliography proper begins on page 40. Everything you ever wanted to know about Bavinck is chronicled here—publications during his lifetime, those published posthumously, different versions of the *Reformed Dogmatics*, and his political discourses. Most of these titles are in Dutch, although there are occasional English annotations and various translated excerpts. Bavinck’s archives and letters are listed on pages 136–139, and the rest of the book (pp. 140–45) is devoted to biographical studies and secondary literature in Dutch, English, and Korean. Readers are also informed of the companion website www.bavinckguide.com as well as Ron Gleason’s helpful site www.hermanbavinck.com. A general index affords easy location of titles listed in Dutch or English. The book is geared to English students of Bavinck and others seeking to learn from this great theologian. Bristley’s opening essay is well crafted, and the entire book serves as an excellent reference to return to again and again. Highly recommended.



Hans Madueme
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, Illinois, USA

J. Daryl Charles. *Retrieving the Natural Law: A Return to Moral First Things*. Critical Issues in Bioethics. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 346 pp. £22.99/\$34.00.

The book’s main thesis is that Protestants need natural-law thinking. Charles faults the Protestant tradition for contributing to the absence of natural-law discourse, not least in its various historicist, existentialist, and pietistic tendencies (pp. 20–23). This “Protestant Prejudice” often results from two concerns, the first in worries that natural law reflects passé medieval thought that dubiously privileges biological innateness in human nature, the second in fears that it trivializes the noetic effects of sin (e.g., pp. 112–13). As Charles rebuts all these concerns, it is clear that he is intimately familiar with, and sympathetic to, the massive Catholic scholarship on this subject—though he himself is broadly Reformed and evangelical. He also

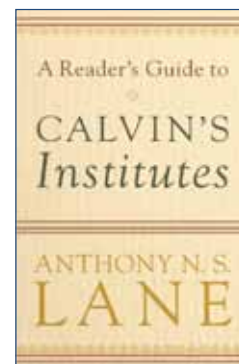


makes much of Karl Barth's huge influence among Protestants in saying "Nein!" to any concession to natural-law thinking—a fateful mistake, Charles argues (agreeing with the similar judgment in Grabill, *Rediscovering the Natural Law in Reformed Theological Ethics* [Eerdmans, 2006]). Having made a case for natural law in chapters 1–5, Charles then applies these insights, more constructively, to ethical and bioethical debates in chapter 6–7 (e.g., personhood, suffering, moral responsibility, and much more). The discussion is more focused in chapter 8 when he uses euthanasia as a test case, and then in chapter 9 the scope broadens to include "the natural law and public morality." Charles has successfully shown that natural law, rightly understood, is part of the Protestant heritage, though theologians will surely want to hear more about the role of revealed theology. Some might worry that parts of the book depend too heavily on Catholic sources (e.g., John Paul II and Aquinas). Later chapters were expansions of previously published material and did not always fit well with the whole (e.g., chap. 7). But the book, impressive in its catholicity and breadth of argument, deserves a wide hearing.

Hans Madueme
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, Illinois, USA

Anthony N. S. Lane. *A Reader's Guide to Calvin's Institutes*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009. 174 pp. £9.99/\$16.99.

In the midst of the much anticipated 500th anniversary of Calvin's birth, this little book is well timed. Lane is a historical theologian at the London School of Theology and already established as a first-rate Calvin scholar. But this is a different, more intentionally pedagogical book. Its aim is to help the reader benefit from Calvin's *Institutes*. Specifically, the guide is written for the McNeill-Battles translation; while other translations can be used, "a significant amount of material would no longer be relevant" (p. 9). The book is to be read *with* the *Institutes*, not as a stand-alone volume. Structurally, there are thirty-two chapters; each one assigns about eighteen pages from each of the thirty-two portions of the *Institutes*, with emphasis on Calvin's "positive theology" over the polemical and historical sections. Lane then offers his own annotations to those readings with occasional commentary on important footnotes in the McNeill-Battles edition. These notes help the reader as he or she works through Calvin's text. In addition to all this, the book opens with a biographical survey of Calvin's life, a list of the many editions of the *Institutes*, and an informed discussion of the main purpose and structure of the *Institutes*. In short, here is an excellent hermeneutical guide to Calvin's *Institutes*. College and seminary students and general readers new to Calvin will profit most from this book. Their gratitude is that of the Ethiopian eunuch as Lane takes them more fully into the rich meaning of Calvin's text.

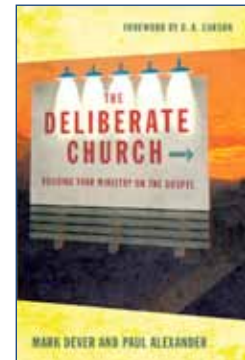


Hans Madueme
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, Illinois, USA

— ETHICS AND PASTORALIA —

Mark Dever and Paul Alexander. *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2005. 224 pp. £10.00/\$14.99.

The Deliberate Church is Dever's conclusion to his trilogy on church health, which began with the hugely popular *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, which was followed by *Polity*. (Cf. also Dever's short booklet *Display of God's Glory*). This book is Dever's attempt to be practical about the ecclesiology outlined in the previous works. It is a functional, hands-on approach to church life, offering suggestions that range from when to circulate the agenda for elders' meetings and even how to staple the necessary papers to a minister's weekly priorities. Dever contends that this 'Gospel-driven and governed' approach stands in direct contrast to a variety of church-methodologies currently on offer, primarily discerned in its plain, non-innovative, Word-orientation. Of course, ecclesiology is always set within a culture, so even Dever's suggestions will be contextualised and do not reflect 'divine purity', but his effort is to remove those aspects of church life that obscure the Gospel and to emphasise those that highlight it. 'Be *deliberate* about the gospel in the life of your church' is the message of this book.



Dever and Alexander divide the book into four sections: 'Gathering the Church', 'When the Church Gathers', 'Gathering Elders', 'When the Elders Gather'. Section one addresses issues surrounding the formal relationship of the church members such as evangelism, the roll, membership classes, and church discipline. Section two deals with the worship service itself, including preaching, reading the Bible, praying, music, and the sacraments/ordinances. Sections three and four are essentially detailed accounts of the qualifications of elders, their training, and the relationship between staff and non-staff elders.

In a book such as this one that is so specific in its approach, one can find a trivial objection for virtually any point raised, but that, it seems, is not the greatest insight to be gained. A better view is to consider the practical applications of some overarching concepts. First, as has been highlighted, Dever wants the gospel to be the focus of the church. Thus, elder meetings spend significant time in reading the Bible and in prayer; sermons are detailed, lengthy, and lack personal illustrations; and members and potential members are rigorously challenged regarding their personal faith. Second, Dever places a great priority (rightly) on the corporate nature of ecclesiology so that each practical application has as its backdrop the unity of the body of Christ—though there is very little talk of that concept outside the bounds of his local church, save a brief discussion on international mission. Third, leadership is a key feature of the church. Dever devotes approximately eighty-five pages to sections one and two on church membership and worship, and approximately seventy pages on elders. These broad concepts are the strength of the book.

I would offer a caution for the reader in regard to Dever's tone. Often the lines between 'helpful suggestion' and 'this is the right way to do it' can be blurred in this book, and the young pastor that seeks change in his new charge will find opposition and disappointment if Dever's approach is not handled with great patience and care. Some things you find here will not apply to your denomination or will be covered in some other way. Other practices may not be best for your congregation and you may have to find another tactic.

My one criticism is the same one I offer contemporary evangelicalism in general, which is that the book lacks a deep Trinitarian piety. The church is an image of God—a being in communion with the divine life of Father, Son, and Spirit; thus, it is imperative that the church exist the way God exists, and all of her ministries should directly reflect this fact. That God is Trinity is *the* distinguishing mark of the Christian faith, yet most would not be able to articulate what difference it makes to the life of the church and if we said ‘binity’ or ‘monad’ rather than ‘Trinity’ would not know the difference. Given the subtitle of the book, ‘Building Your Ministry on the Gospel’, I was hoping for more along these lines. To be fair to Dever, he from time to time alludes to the work of the Persons (and I am certain he embraces this point), but a more explicit Trinitarian connection and foundation would have been welcomed.

That being said, the fact that I am not Baptist, advocate shorter sermon-lengths and reside outside of the USA does not detract from the value of the book. We would do very well to hearken to Dever’s voice on being a deliberately gospel-oriented leader for a society that needs nothing more or less.

Jason M. Curtis
Rutherford House
Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

Graham Tomlin. *The Provocative Church*. 3d ed. London: SPCK, 2008. vi + 184 pp. £9.99/\$18.00.

It is not surprising that Tomlin’s work on evangelism has been reprinted on numerous occasions and is now in its third edition. It is not groundbreaking in the sense that it contains the secret to evangelism in the postmodern world or that it has particularly new and innovative strategies for today’s church. In fact, most of what this book offers is very old, yet it could not be more relevant.

The thesis of the book is that evangelism is best understood not as an apologetic method, a programme, a series of campaigns, or even regular, verbal discourse by the average Christian to the average non-Christian. Tomlin acknowledges that in a very real sense evangelism entails all of these events, yet the heart of it is the *hermeneutic of a community living under the lordship of Christ*. This, Tomlin emphasises, is the thrust of the Scripture, since most of the NT discussion of kingdom-living does not include detailed instructions or examples of ‘evangelistic outreach’ (as we have come to know it in the Billy Graham-generation), but rather teaching on what kingdom-living is like and how that is designed to draw those from outside the church. The church is first and foremost *be the church*, and evangelism lives and breathes as a result of that. It is not a programme that helps the church follow some specific commands, but it is the natural outworking of a healthy organism living under the lordship of Christ.

This highlights the most compelling feature of the book, which is how Tomlin grounds his conclusions on evangelism and his recommendations for the church in *theology*, and by doing so avoids two popular, often unhelpful, options. On the one hand there is the time-honoured approach of discerning the cultural mindset and confronting it with the aspects of Christian faith with which it will resonate. Tomlin does not dismiss this, as there is biblical evidence to suggest a time and place for it (e.g., Acts 17). On the other hand there is classic proof-texting that looks to the Bible for commands to evangelise, then builds ecclesiastical practices and even structures on ideas that may not be as grand as



they are often portrayed to be. Tomlin's approach is to take the big theological categories of *kingdom*, *Christology*, and *conversion* to develop a theology of evangelism that combines practical applications of it. On the whole I found this persuasive and enriching. Rarely does one read an accessible text on mission or evangelism and walk away having a lesson both in biblical exegesis and theologising.

In expositing the theological category of conversion, however, it becomes evident that Tomlin has taken several concepts and adjusted their meanings. His goal in this particular section (pp. 87–101) is to demonstrate that conversion is not only a 'moment in time', but also the lifelong growth of being translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. This being the case we would expect the church to engage all people with a view toward *complete conversion*. In other words, it is not just a matter of 'getting people in the club', but rather an issue of a lifetime of teaching and discipling in order to be transformed into the likeness of Christ. Fair enough. However, Tomlin, it seems to me, has replaced justification with *regeneration*, sanctification with *transformation*, and salvation with *conversion*. It could be argued the last two are synonymous, as it could for sanctification and transformation. However, I would contend that regeneration and justification are different acts in God's salvation and should be more sharply distinguished. Had he retained these more commonly used concepts the result of his argument would have remained the same, yet for some reason he opts for a different set of images and in doing so stretches their meaning a bit. It could be that Tomlin thought justification and sanctification carried too much theological baggage and thought these other biblical concepts made the point more clearly or in a fresh way. Again, I do not object to his overall point (indeed, I support it), but one must take note of this terminological departure.

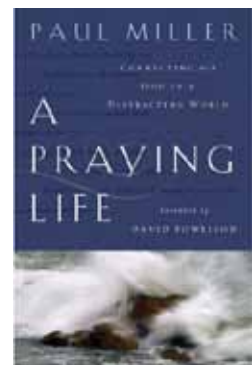
I commend the book to the reader. It includes a study guide at the end that contains questions for further biblical study and others for corporate reflection on practice. It is a valuable asset for the church—one that should certainly have a wide reach.

Jason M. Curtis
Rutherford House
Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

Paul E. Miller. *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2009. 288 pp. \$14.99.

Books on prayer should be a welcome addition to any Christian's library, and none more so than *A Praying Life*. In a fallen world, prayer seems unnatural because of our pride and useless because of our cynicism. We need help, and Paul Miller, co-founder (with his father, Dr. Jack Miller) of World Harvest Mission and current executive director of seejesus.net, offers that help with biblical wisdom and insight to the human heart. Miller's new book is a great companion for anyone who desires to grow spiritually in a life of prayer. The subtitle of the book, *Connecting with God in a Distracting World*, is just what the author helps the reader to do.

Unlike many books that take the reader through the facets of prayer (thanksgiving, intercession, waiting, confession, etc.), Miller starts where we start, as children struggling to get our requests before God. Through thirty-two chapters divided into



five parts, Miller takes the reader from his first unsteady steps and stammering words in prayer through the darkness of cynicism, and into the joy of asking God anything! Miller stresses the personal, Father-child relationship in prayer. In light of this emphasis, he writes, “Consequently, prayer is not the center of this book. Getting to know a person, God, is the center” (p. 20).

In the fourth part of the book, Miller shows us that our prayers are part of a bigger story, God’s story, a story in which prayer plays a significant role. If *A Praying Life* is anything, it is practical, and the fifth section of the book surveys several tools such as prayer-cards and a prayer-journal that help to make prayer a vital part of your everyday life. *A Praying Life* breathes the thick air of reality. The author peppers the entire book with personal stories of trials, doubts, struggles, and wonderful answers to prayer, especially regarding his autistic daughter, Kim. Miller is unafraid to bear his soul, and I found his transparency fresh and challenging.

Miller is at his best when dealing with the insidious nature of cynicism. The following quotations from the chapter “Following Jesus out of Cynicism” provide a sample of the scriptural wisdom he offers: “Jesus keeps in tension wariness about evil with a robust confidence in the goodness of his Father” (p. 83). “The feel of a praying life is cautious optimism—caution because of the Fall, optimism because of redemption” (p. 84). “Hope begins with the heart of God. As you grasp what the Father’s heart is like, how he loves to give, then prayer will begin to feel completely natural to you” (p. 85).

Miller also grapples with the hard reality of praying and praying and yet seeing no answers. But from the hardships he has faced come gems like this: “When God seems silent and our prayers go unanswered, the overwhelming temptation is to leave the story—to walk out of the desert and attempt to create a normal life. But when we persist in a spiritual vacuum, when we hang in there during ambiguity, we get to know God. In fact, that is how intimacy grows in all close relationships” (p. 192).

While I appreciate *A Praying Life* very much, two issues concern me. Following what appears to be a trend in evangelical writings on spirituality, Miller quotes approvingly from Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox authors. Generally the quotations in themselves are innocuous, but as Donald Whitney has demonstrated, one can write about the disciplines of the Christian life and find plenty of quotable materials in the Reformers, Puritans, and evangelical authors. These quotations effectively point the hungry reader to more substantial food.

Second, in an endnote discussing Philippians 2 and the *kenosis* of Christ, Miller writes, “We do not know how or to what extent Jesus was emptied of his divinity” (p. 272n2). Jesus emptied himself by taking the form of a servant. He was never emptied of any of his divinity, though aspects of it were veiled. I assume Miller believes this as well, and hopefully revisions of the book will correct this error.

If you want to grow in your knowledge of God and find help for a richer life of prayer, read this book. In spite of these two criticisms, it is one of the best works on prayer I have ever read.

Rhett Dodson
Presbyterian Church in America
Coatesville, Pennsylvania, USA

T. David Gordon. *Why Johnny Can't Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers*. Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2009. 112 pp. \$9.99.

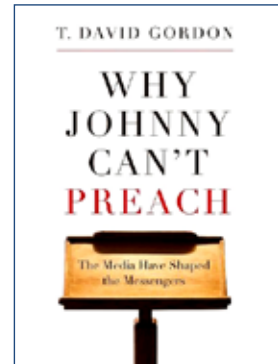
It is not uncommon to decry the state of preaching today, but T. David Gordon, a former pastor, seminary professor, and currently professor of religion at Grove City College, has set out to do something about it. While not offering a full-scale prescription to solve the problem, Gordon's analysis is a significant step toward correction. Playing off the popular titles *Why Johnny Can't Read* and *Why Johnny Can't Write* published in 1966 and 1990 respectively, Gordon analyzes the current plight of the pulpit.

The answer to *Why Johnny Can't Preach* is that the media have so shaped our culture that men do not have the necessary analytical tools to preach well. Gordon begins by arguing that Johnny (his generic name for anyone) most certainly cannot preach. Much of his evidence is anecdotal, but to those who have listened to a lot of preaching, the argument bears weight. For further proof, Gordon lists Robert Lewis Dabney's seven "cardinal requisites" of preaching and argues that most, if not all, are missing in the majority of sermons one hears today.

In the second chapter, Gordon argues that preaching has fallen on hard times because we have lost the ability to read texts. People can read, but most reading is done to acquire information, not to appreciate both what is written and the way it is written. Our culture has trained us to hurry in everything we do, but for readers, and especially preachers, the rush routine is deadly. Those who aspire to preach well must not only read but read at such a pace that they can ascertain the significance of the text. Gordon writes, "Our routines make us more efficient, as we attempt to scratch out some form of survival in this cursed environment, but those same routines can make us more like cogs in a machine and less like humans. Life becomes a series of tasks, with few uninterrupted moments to pause, to reflect, to appreciate" (p. 52).

The third chapter covers the second reason Gordon believes the church suffers from such poor preaching: Johnny can't write. Coupled with the inability to read texts is the inability to express oneself via the written word. The use of e-mail, instant messaging, and cell phones have put us in constant contact with many people, but these media have left us with the inability to compose logical, concise, and unified compositions. Furthermore, these media have depersonalized our conversations. We have lost the ability to read people, their expressions (or lack of expressions), and hence we are unable to engage others for any lengthy period of time and maintain their interest.

Gordon offers his own thoughts about the content of preaching in the fourth chapter. To encourage Christ-centered preaching, the author identifies four common types of sermons and labels them as failures. Moralism, the first of these failures, "occurs whenever the fundamental message of a sermon is 'be good; do good' (or some specific thereof)" (p. 80). The "How-To" sermon "reduces life and religion to technique, and suggests (implicitly, never explicitly) that a sinner *can* change his ways if he just has the right method" (p. 82). The introspective sermon turns the listener in upon himself so that all he or she can see is personal failure. Finally, Gordon identifies today's "So-Called Culture War" messages with the social gospel preaching of the early twentieth century. He believes "that cultural change is out of our hands" is "the basic subtext of everything the Bible teaches" (p. 86). To counter these failures, Gordon



encourages the faithful preaching of Christ. Since Christ is the object of our faith, the more we hear of him, the more we will trust him and turn away from our sin and efforts of self-righteousness.

Is it possible to teach Johnny to preach? Gordon answers in the affirmative in his fifth chapter, but it will take work, counter-cultural work, that trains would-be preachers to “cultivate those pre-homiletical sensibilities that are necessary to preach well” (p. 96). These would include, of course, the cultivation of the close reading of texts (Gordon suggests that reading poetry is a good skill to acquire for this) and the ability to compose well-written material. Second, pastors should instigate an annual review of their preaching. No minister will know whether or not his preaching is effective unless he receives some feedback from the congregation. Third, preachers must both read and write. Only by doing this hard work will their public proclamation of God’s word improve.

While I appreciate and agree with the author’s emphasis on Christ-centered preaching, I find his application unbalanced. Gordon asks whether there is any place, for example, for preaching about morality. He grants that there is in the overall teaching ministry of the church but rarely in the pulpit. He sees moral teaching, probing analysis of the listener’s spiritual condition, and culture critique as “occasional secondary results of Christ-centered preaching.” But I wonder, is it not possible to preach a series of Christ-centered expositions of the Ten Commandments instead of confining the lessons to a Sunday School class? While Gordon is correct to write, “The pulpit is the place to declare the fitness of Christ’s person, and the adequacy of both his humiliated and exalted work for sinners” (p. 91), unskilled preachers will reduce this advice to sermons that are one-dimensional, and every sermon will end up sounding the same. Men need to be taught how to preach Christ from all of Scripture so that they can apply every facet of the Bible in a gospel-centered way. This will still be Christ-centered preaching, but it will possess the variety and vibrancy of the Bible itself.

Gordon is right: Johnny can’t preach. But hopefully he will read enough to discover this slim volume and profit from it.

Rhett Dodson
 Presbyterian Church in America
 Coatesville, Pennsylvania, USA

Marion L. S. Carson. *The Pastoral Care of People with Mental Health Problems*. New Library of Pastoral Care. London: SPCK, 2008. 192 pp. \$21.32.

This is a welcome addition to titles published under the New Library of Pastoral Care. Marion Carson, with previous hospital and community experience as a mental health nurse in Glasgow, is a lecturer in NT and Pastoral Care at the International Christian College in the same city. She is therefore eminently qualified to address the complex issues which often face the Church in seeking to provide pastoral care for people experiencing mental health problems.

Seven substantial chapters address issues concerning mood disorders, anxiety/phobias/stress, schizophrenia, addictions, dementia, eating disorders/self-harm and personality disorders. Each chapter outlines relevant features of a condition, aetiology and treatment frameworks, but these are fully contextualised by Carson



by the use of several 'pastoral illustrations' in which each condition is further explored by way of a client's story. Helpful sections on general pastoral care link conditions to relevant theological and spiritual issues (e.g., Christian attitudes towards the body in the chapter on eating disorders) followed by more detailed discussion via particular pastoral problems.

By way of an example, the chapter on 'Addictions' centres on seven 'pastoral illustrations,' issues of aetiology (e.g., alcoholism as disease or learned behaviour) and resources for rehabilitation. Discussion on general pastoral approaches towards people with addiction-problems is followed by sensitive exploration of specific pastoral problems in the areas of forgiveness, co-dependency, self-protection of carers, and life after addiction.

A particular theme underlying Carson's book is that of realism. Pastoral care for those experiencing mental health problems can be hard, difficult, and motivation-sapping. Many well-meaning endeavours in 'Christian ministry' in this area succumb to combinations of naivety, ignorance, and a lack of experience in handling the complexity of people's lives. Carson is not afraid to draw attention towards the need for setting relationship boundaries and for pastoral carers to communicate with mental health professionals when they are presented with problems beyond their competency.

Written in simple and clear language and eschewing jargon, the book contains follow-up references and suggestions for further reading for each chapter. While this book will be highly suitable as a primer for theological students undertaking practical theology courses, it will also be useful for ministers, elders, and others working within local congregational pastoral settings. It is warmly recommended.

Andrew McKie

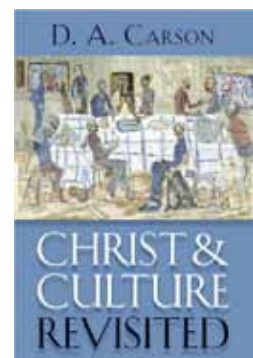
School of Nursing and Midwifery, The Robert Gordon University
Aberdeen, Scotland, UK

— MISSION AND CULTURE —

D. A. Carson. *Christ and Culture Revisited*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. xii + 243 pp. £12.99/\$24.00.

The author or editor of more than fifty commentaries, books on hermeneutics, or exegesis and theological studies, D. A. Carson here critiques H. Richard Niebuhr's 1953 *Christ and Culture*, in print and still cited after more than fifty years. Niebuhr listed five paradigms or traditions of Christian approaches to culture. Carson suggests a fuller approach.

Christ and Culture Revisited's first two chapters are from presentations at a conference at Vaux sur Seine, France; Chapter 3 is in question-and-answer format, expanding or clarifying those foundational chapters. Carson deflates the idea that Christianity's relation to culture can be reduced to a choice among five scriptural-doctrinal-historical complexes: Christ *against* culture, Christ *of* culture, Christ *above* culture, Christ and culture *in paradox*, or Christ *transforming* culture. Niebuhr's problem is, first, definitional: he makes an either-or dualism, "Christ" and all other "authority divested of Christ." But Christ cannot be separated from culture, a state of affairs most clear in the ultimate type where Christ is able to transform culture. Carson says, "If we do not recognize . . . the polarities that Niebuhr sets up . . . his elegant discussion . . . becomes incoherent" (p. 12). Secondly, not all of the types are



genuinely Christian. Niebuhr's second type, "Christ of culture," credits expressions of Christianity that were once influential but are discredited; for example, while he excludes groups with their own special revelations claiming to be Christian, he includes Gnostics and liberals. Carson notes that Gnosticism was never genuine Christianity, and the same applies to liberalism. Since neither can be said to be biblically supported, the second type is invalid (pp. 10, 16–19, 33–35). Thirdly, Niebuhr's exegesis is partial: for example, he uses John's Gospel to support his *Transforming* type as universalistic but neglects the gospel's particularism (pp. 36–39). Fourthly, Niebuhr thinks the canon includes dissonant theologies, but a strong case can be made that Scripture read sympathetically is harmonious (pp. 40–43). Fifthly, Niebuhr uses historical figures to exemplify each type, but often these figures could be also placed under another type. His handling of history is excessively stylized and unpersuasive (pp. 39–49, 61). Carson does not accept Niebuhr's (muted) relativism and disavows the legitimacy of the types. The types are aspects of the whole truth: "Is it possible that a merging of patterns sometimes brings greater fidelity to the biblical revelation than adopting any of the patterns in its purest form?" (pp. 40, 60). Carson believes that there is a narrower range of biblically sustainable options, and though he does not say so specifically, he likely thinks that the fundamentalist Christ *against* culture mistakes the fullness of the biblical witness, as does the Lutheran Christ and culture *in paradox*. Not a typology but biblical theology and its "great turning points" must govern a Christian response to culture.

Chapter 3 ends with a fifteen-page response to J. K. A. Smith's criticism of Carson's *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church*. The section shows the intricacy of a Christian engagement with (the cultural phenomenon of) postmodernism. Carson reiterates his appreciation for a soft postmodernism or perspectivalism that apprehends the possibility of Truth. The argument is careful and generous at points, and Carson prefaces the pages by saying that "those uninterested in debates over epistemology, postmodernism, and faith may safely skip to the next chapter" (p. 99). However, he is trenchant enough that the impression of a grudge match is unavoidable.

Chapter 4 turns to the possible goods and evils of secularism, democracy, freedom and power. Chapter 5 is a synoptic view of church and state, commencing with careful definition of terms. As Carson notes later, "debates about church and state are subsets of more comprehensive debates about Christ and culture (p. 145). The two chapters show that cultural analysis is much more than the choice of a Niebuhrian type. But reductionism is also possible in a redrawn set of types: Carson exposes Craig Carter's revised typology in *Rethinking Christ and Culture* (2007) as pivoted on the single axis of pacifism (pp. 218–22). Chapter 6 summarizes the book.

Christ and Culture Revisited is not a comprehensive treatise. It seems right that biblical theology "tends to safeguard Christians against the most egregious reductionisms" (82). It is not true that the author misses whole arenas of human activity or makes Christian cultural activity to be "churchy," as J. K. A. Smith suggested in a review (J. K. A. Smith, "Thinking Biblically about Culture," *Perspectives: A Journal of Reformed Thought* [February 2009]). Carson is concerned with social structures (pp. 48, 82, 218) under the biblical category of the Fall rather than Creation. He does not, however, show how the great biblical turning points may be used to instruct faithful Christians in a given area of culture. Albert Wolters, whose *Creation Regained* Carson cites, uses the turning points of Creation, Fall, and Redemption to outline a diagnostic scheme in which a creational structure, say, marriage, may be analyzed as moving in fallen or redemptive directions. The Christian task is discernment of creational good in either fallen or redemptive expression. Carson's proposal needs to be developed.

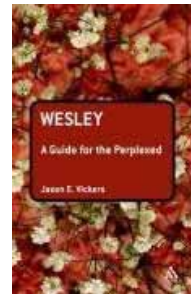
Carson's analyses of postmodernism, secularity, freedom, and the others go beyond biblical theology to draw on systematic theology. I noted use of doctrines of theological anthropology (p. 64),

revelation (p. 86), epistemology (pp. 99–114), sin (p. 60), atonement (p. 55), eschatology (pp. 53–54), common grace (p. 61), and close by, a theology of religions (pp. 11–12). As Carson writes political and epistemological analyses, he is working from specific biblical and theological understandings, doing no more or less than Christians have done to relate their faith to the world since Paul at Mars Hill (Acts 17). Most broadly, any proposal to relate Christianity to culture is coherent within its biblical-systematic-historical-linguistic framework. As one picks up Carson, Craig Carter, D. Stephen Long (cf. [the review of Long's *Theology and Culture*](#) in the previous *Themelios* issue), or any evangelical, mainstream, Catholic, or Orthodox proposals, one ought to look for the confessional commitments that sponsor it. Christ-and-culture reflection is not neutral or applicable across all schools of thought but arises from a matrix of biblical and systematic-theological commitments inevitably coloured, but not thereby negated, by the writer's location in place and time. Carson's significant advocacy in this book is that Christians must not accept relativizations or reductionisms but turn first to the biblical witness for a genuinely Christian response to culture.

Ted Newell
Atlantic Baptist University
Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada

Jason E. Vickers. *Wesley: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Continuum Guides for the Perplexed. London: T&T Clark, 2009. viii + 133 pp. £14.99/\$24.95.

It may seem surprising to find a book on John Wesley as part of a series aimed at the perplexed reader. After all, the author himself introduces Wesley as someone who “purposely wrote in the most straightforward English prose. Moreover, he steered clear of technical, philosophical or otherwise perplexing language” (p. 1). Vickers suggests three reasons that the life and thought of the eighteenth Century Evangelist and founder of the Methodist movement may be perplexing.



First, Wesley claimed to be fully committed to the Church of England, and yet his actions seemed to precipitate the creation of a new denomination, not least his ordaining of Methodist clergymen to serve in America. This has led some to suggest that “despite his insistence that he spoke ‘plain truth for plain people’ . . . Wesley’s words should not be taken at face value” (p. 2).

Second, scholars are polarised between those who regard Wesley as “a progressive figure . . . adapting Christianity to the modern age” and those who see him as a “reactionary figure who was determined to turn back the clock” (p. 2).

Third, there appears to be a mismatch between Wesley’s own self-identification as a “High Church Tory” (p. 2) and his commitment to politically progressive ideas such as constitutional rights and the emancipation of slaves.

Vickers proposes to resolve these dilemmas as follows. The first two might be resolved by observing that Wesley was simply a man of his time. He was a Trinitarian theologian with a strong commitment to a confessional state, making him typically Anglican. Vickers believes that the schism between Wesley and the Church of England has been overplayed, noting that he was never formally expelled from the Church. Wesley was able to justify his action in creating American clergy on the basis that they were serving outside of Great Britain where the Anglican Church was locked into the confessional state.

Vickers then goes on to tackle the third dilemma by reference to Wesley's theology as Trinitarian and Arminian. Wesley's primary concern was with the economic Trinity—how God relates to us as opposed to how the persons of the Trinity relate to each other (the imminent Trinity). He saw a generous Father who took the initiative in sending his Son and the Spirit actively at work in the believer's sanctification. Yet as an Arminian he emphasised that God's free grace provided a place for people to respond freely. Vickers argues that this theological framework supported Wesley's political framework where people had rights and freedoms within the context of a constitutional monarchy. Wesley is thus both progressive in his concern for these rights and freedoms and conservative in that he places them within the constitutional framework of the monarchy.

Vickers' argument is both illuminating and persuasive. His decision to engage with Wesley's ecclesiology and public theology provides a helpful corrective to pietistic trends within evangelicalism. Those looking for a hero of private, individualistic Christianity in Wesley should look again.

The final chapter does a useful job of explaining Wesley's brand of Arminian theology and linking his doctrine of God, his pneumatology, and his soteriology to his understanding of the Christian life and public theology.

However, there are two important weaknesses in the book which I believe stem from the problem noted in our introduction (and his). I expected "a guide for the perplexed" to take a complex subject matter and then describe it and explain it in broad terms for somebody new to the subject matter. In my opinion, Vickers fails to do this, first, because of his selection and structuring of material. He focuses on a narrow aspect of Wesley's thought (his ecclesiology and political thought) to the exclusion or marginalisation of other important aspects. This means that even though he does address the predestination-free grace controversy, it feels off-centre, left late in the book and there only to support discussion about other aspects of Wesley's thought. It also means that other important areas, such as Wesley's influence on hermeneutics (the so-called "Wesleyan Quadrilateral") are neglected.

Second, after the first chapter, there is a failure to tie together effectively Wesley's thinking with his biography. This seems strange for such an activist figure. Wesley's theology was arguably shaped by his own conversion experience, his concern for the salvation of others, and what happened when he preached. His political views were often shaped by his encounters with others. Consider, for example, how his own encounter with slaves in Georgia and his reading of accounts of that barbaric trade led him to strongly oppose it in his writing.

These deficiencies are perhaps products of the problem identified at the outset (both by reviewer and author), namely, that Wesley is not generally regarded as perplexing. Perhaps his expectation is that most readers, having encountered Wesley at a popular level, need to have their simplistic understanding of him corrected. The result is that the book feels more like it is taking a straightforward topic and making it perplexing.

Vickers's argument certainly has a place within Wesleyan studies., I would suggest, however, that it is better placed as a contribution to an advanced-level debate. What about those starting out in their discovery of Wesley? Ironically, I think Vickers would agree with me that the best place to start is with Wesley's own writings: his journal and his sermons.

Dave Williams
Oak Hill College
London, England, UK